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INCREASING FREE TIME, DIMINISHING FREE SPACE:

A reflexive study on Youth Unemployment.

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A reflexive study on Youth Unemployment

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The social condition of youth unemployment is a multi-faceted phenomena.
The differing experiences undergone by the youths in question lays bare
the fallacy of thinking and talking about 'the unemployed' per se as though
they were one social category born out of one social condition.   One
aim of this thesis is, therefore, to 'map' these different manifestations
and show how, in the process, unemployed youths develop strategies to
cope with their social existence.   These dimensions revolve around the
processes of 'internalization', 'amplification of normality','abstract
market relationships' and 'depersonalization'.

In attempting to identify these different social processes, special
reference has been made to gender and the ways in which normal symbols
and the power of patriarchy frame the individual's experience of
unemployment within the public and private spheres.   Further
theorization has been developed around the theme of 'dialectical control
relationships' by which unemployed youth try to influence their own
social conditions.   Here a number of dimensions have been identified
which manifest themselves in the wider social processes of 'internalization'
etc.

Major conclusions centre around the conceptualization that, in the
historical processes of deindustrialization and the international
reallocation of capital, unemployed youths of both genders enter into a
series of dialectical control relationships in order to acquire certain
degrees of influence over their material and affectual positions.   These
different control relationships, having acquired an intensity of their own,
produce an emphasis on small-scale, everyday activities which are then
located within a temporal dimension of a 'never ending present'.

Grounded in the ethnography of a small town, the research has been based
on the continual process of reflexivity, incorporating participant
observation and taped interviews, interpreted in the wider context of
youth unemployment.   The study has been portrayed from a developmental
stance, also with the political awareness of communicating to, and about,
disinherited groups and individuals.

Key words: Youth, unemployment, family, informal economies, reflexivity.

To my father

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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Chapter One

TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY.

(Preconceptions of Social Research)

'The researcher should be making it
clear where one is coming from in
taking a particular view'.
                    (Rowen & Reason, 1981. p.13 - 14)

'We cannot avoid taking sides, for
reasons firmly based in social structure'.
                    (Becker, 1967. p.240)

'Like all sciences, they make objective
meaning claims, or at least aspire to
do so, but in the case of social sciences,
these have to be within the context of
the human activity which has created
them and which cannot be understood
apart from this scheme of action'.
                    (Hughes, 1980. p.117)

'Knowledge of the world cannot be
advanced apart from the sociologists
knowledge of himself and his position
in the social world'.
                    (Gouldner, 1970. p.489)

Forms of understanding.

The praxis of social research is a dynamic developmental process, it is, at one and the same time, manifesting 'forms' which are philosophical, methodological, political and biographical. These 'forms', at any one time or stage in the research process, fundamentally overlap, and to separate and isolate any one without reference to the way in which it developed, i.e. was shaped by, and also shaped the other 'forms', is to reify and perpetuate 'forms' of knowledge, and ultimately social formations, which are manifestly unequal and fundamentally grounded on power and coercion. Therefore, any attempt at illuminating the complex nature of social research practice is problematical and fraught with extreme difficulties and tensions. But I would argue that this merely reinforces the need to meet these different issues head-on, and on no account either hide them away in the appendices or try to hide them altogether by pretending that they never actually happened. Therefore, one of the basic premises being argued here is that in any form of 'understanding', the individual researcher's history and personal biography becomes, whether conciously or not, grounded in his/her preconceptions, and that only by 'illuminating' these vague thoughts, impressions and ideas can anyone proceed with any form of social research, let alone any overall academic development.

It goes without saying that this idea leaves the researcher open to the many challenges of bias from many quarters of the establishment, and that the subsequent issues surrounding 'objectivity' are marshalled against such a stance. At the present time, I do not wish to enter into this debate, as not only do I

feel that it has been adequately covered elsewhere (Berger/Kellner, 1973; Becker, 1967) but also because I personally feel that the traditional arguments are spurious and fundamentally grounded in the 'form' of knowledge and social formation mentioned earlier.

A totally related, and no less important point, is Becker's idea that 'we must take sides', that we must be honest and say whose interests are being identified within the study, and not use the 'veil' of science when researching disadvantaged groups to further institution-alize their position. These sorts of ideas are also firmly embedded within the Feminist movement, and are not some idiosyncratic idea based on some abstract realm of thought, but are, to quote Becker, 'Firmly based in social structure' (op. cit. p.213).

Given this rationale then, the rest of the chapter will be given over to the process of 'illuminating these preconceptions, and basically, to paraphrase Rowen and Reason, to saying 'Where I'm coming from' and how certain ideas came out of this history and formulated certain basic ingredients which helped to shape and modify the emerging framework of this thesis. As a way of 'illuminating' these preconceptions, I have decided to split the analysis into two parts, one academic and the other personal.

Within the academic realm, three forms of understanding most influential to my own mode of thought were instigated during my B.A.Honours Degree at Birmingham Polytechnic. Two of these stemmed from research work, and the third derived from what may be termed 'the current academic climate'. The research work itself centred on areas concerning i) de-skilling (Walsgrove, 1982) and ii) religious growth (Nelson and Walsgrove, 1982), while

the'academic climate' was responding to the attack instituted by the Feminist movement.

The first piece of research, conducted with Dr.Geoffrey Nelson, was addressing the problem of why the membership of institutionalized religions (Catholic, C of E, Methodist and Baptist) was declining, while the membership of the so-called 'extreme' religions (Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Elim Penticostal etc.) were either maintaining a steady level or growing quite fast. The general findings were aimed at three inter-related levels, i)individual ii)organizational and iii)societal In general terms, it was argued that, as day-to-day life became more uncertain, certain individuals and social groups within the social formation would try to respond to this 'uncertainty' by trying to acquire beliefs and practices which would i) give sense and meaning to this bewildering confusion and ii) give an overall framework from within which to conduct their practical day-to-day activities. The outcome being that any group or organization that can perpetuate an ideological framework of fundamentalism which grounds everyday practice into a meaningful whole, will be more susceptible to retaining growth, rather than organizations where the ideological praxis allows for dissent and continued 'uncertainty'. The ethnographic works for this study were centred within the same town (Kidderminster) as that of the present study, and helped me further in gaining background information into the area. The important implication for me of this study were the many different ways in which individuals and groups developed strategies to cope in everyday life situations when the 'uncertainty' of an area is dramatically manifesting itself due to industrial reorganization.

In the light of the second area of research, the focus
centred on the then current debate (1979 - 81) within the Sociology
of Work, regarding deskilling, (Braverman, 1974; Littler, 1978;
More, 1978; Elger, 1979). This debate was responding to the seminal
work by Harry Braverman, and was mainly organized as a critique
around five major themes; i) the relationship between deskilling
and accumulation, ii) the significance of Taylorism, iii) working
class resistance, iv) monopoly capitalism and v) the historical
accuracy of Braverman's thesis. My own work, although mentioning
all five areas, concentrated mainly on workers' reactions, both
in a formal (Trade Union) and informal (sabotage) sense, to the
process of deskilling. The ethnographic work being carried out in
the carpet industry, again in Kidderminster. The emphasis there-
fore. was on 'struggle' at the point-of-production; or, to use
Goodrich's (1936) phrase, 'the frontier of control'.

Although not adequately theorized, this notion of 'control'
became an important, over-arching framework, with workers responding
to, and themselves creating, meaningful areas from within which
to challenge the process of deskilling. A further element in
this analysis was the role played by women i) at a theoretical
level in Braverman's analysis of the important increase in
women's participation in the workforce, and ii) at an ethnographic
level in relation to the Kidderminster weavers and the
introduction of women onto the looms and the subsequent 'fight'
by the male weavers to protect their own interests (strikes,
lock-outs, extra Union votes vis a vis women).
Although this insight by Braverman has been, quite rightly,
criticized (Benenson, 1984) as not addressing the problem as to
why women confront conditions different to those of men, it did

at the time further heighten my awareness of the importance of genderizing fully any subsequent piece of research.

Understandably, this so-called 'awareness' did not just appear to me in any abstract form from within my own research, but was fundamentally grounded in the devastating attack made by the Feminist movement during the 70's on the white male sociological establishment. Therefore, from a sociology of knowledge point of view, the historical context of this movement greatly influenced and contextualized my overall thought, the subsequent development of which, because of this focus, certainly high lighted the inadequacy of my own preconceptions around these issues, making me agree with William Bottomly (1978) that, 'It is still too easy to emerge with an Honours Degree and remain largely sociologically insensitive.'

As far as my own personal, as distinct from academic, preconceptions are concerned, these have certainly been influenced by the 'issues' surrounding the phenomena of unemployment, and therefore, I feel, must be adequately stated. They are also firmly embedded within the current contextualization of my research (Aston University), and this, I also feel, needs to be spelt out. These very important issues did, and still do, influence 'where I'm coming from' and hopefully the reader will, after reading the next section, begin to understand what I mean when I say that the next few pages took me four hours and a lifetime to write.

('Gone With the Wind', Mitchell, 1936)

Imagine the scene; it's the first day of a new term after the summer holidays, the time approximately 4.30 pm. The first day is nearly over, and you're sitting at your desk reading. Very slowly you become aware that the office you've been given looks incredibly bare; a desk, chair and a couple of empty bookcases, that's all. Not to worry though, it is your first day, your spirits are high and you'll soon have posters and notices all over the walls, books on shelves, papers and pens here, there and everywhere. The main thing is, you're here. You still can't totally understand it, but you feel ashamedly pleased, you're torn with mixed emotions.

You've stopped reading now, and you're reflecting how ironic the situation is. Nearly twenty years ago, you left school at fifteen, the 'C' stream of a glorified secondary modern, Sawston Village College, Cambridge, (they wouldn't admit to secondary moderns in that area). To leave classed as a 'non-hoper' is bad enough, but to do so in the middle of Cambridge, with its academic aura 'par excellence' pervading everything, just seemed to rub it in a bit more. You could tell the 'factory-fodder' kids in Cambridge, they're the ones who used to stand on the street corners, 'taking the piss' out of the undergraduates as they rode by on their bicycles, bolt upright, with their black gowns flapping, library books tied to the back of their bike or tucked firmly under their arm, surrounded by an aura of superiority; nowadays, the media talk of 'grad-bashing' - even without your Sociology degree you could have understood that. The words of a song suddenly force themselves into your

consciousness - 'If they could see me now, that little gang of mine,' - Jesus Christ, you'd never live it down! Somehow though, there's a strange feeling of being here by default, being here and yet not here. Oh, you've learned all about 'working class culture of deference', 'labelling' and 'self-fulfilling prophecies', you've read about and analyzed traditional working class discipline within the home,'and you're well aware of its ideological role of producing acquiescence in the face of authority, but somehow, even this knowledge does not totally negate the <u>feeling</u> of not belonging.

You've experienced it many times before, since you passed your degree at Birmingham Polytechnic; one way is when people at conferences, seminars, or even having an informal drink enquire, 'And which university did you go to?' 'I didn't, I went to Birmingham Poly,' and then you wait for the inevitable - 'Oh!' - the tone of their voice expresses it all, hidden beneath the tone are years of social inequality. Implicit within it is, of course, 'You've worked hard, I mean, <u>any</u> degree is difficult' - they have to make the last remark, their own cultural capital depends on it - but what they <u>really</u> mean is, 'I did my degree <u>properly</u> - at a university - you achieved yours through the back door - Tradesmans Entrance.' Occasionally, at times like this, you become conscious that you're actually fighting like mad trying to justify your degree, 'It was a great place, the standard and lecturers are extremely good', and at other times you think, 'Oh, stuff it!'

It's not just in academic life though, you've also experienced a change with friends, neighbours, acquaintances. Some of your old mates have dropped away, others go 'over the top' in their insistence that nothing has changed, some 'educated' people

who hardly used to notice you now just 'pop in'; the middle
class area that you live in now seems to be, if not accepting you,
at least not so hostile. You feel disgusted by it all. You consciously
reinforce the idea that you'll not be seduced by it; your
resistances go from one extreme to the other, from the sublime to
the ridiculous, such as arguing class-based politics on one hand
and refusing, on the other, to say 'lunch' instead of 'dinner'.

Suddenly, you're brought back to the situation, as students
go by along the corridor, you now become aware that you've left
your door open in order to see someone; a related aspect of your
position is forced upon you - isolation. Since one of your
supervisors introduced you to the other members of the department
and settled you into your office, you've seen and talked to no one.
You understand without question that everyone has their own work
to do, but it's more than that, it's a sort of structured
detachment, no real, living, homogenous entity exists The ivory
towers of academia seem so compartmentalized, not only on a
discipline, topic or epistemological basis, but also where it
really matters - between people. It's as though you are entombed
in your little office, surrounded by your personal effects.

The students have now gone to their lesson, and you sit
listening to the silence; your mind starts to run away again, and
you imagine the corridor outside to be like the Valley of the Kings
in classical Egypt; behind every door there's a Professor or Doctor
entombed with their Research Fellows, Officers and Assistants,
surrounded by files, hard-backs, paper-backs, tapes and dusty
copies of Parsons, all waiting to be transported by their project
across the Styx to a better life . You again become conscious of
the book you're reading - Adrian Sinfield, 'What Unemployment Means' -

and you start to think about how you and your family spent nine months on the dole, and the 'problems' that that caused. That was over six years ago now, in one way it seems like a life-time, in another, only yesterday. That word 'ironic' crosses your mind again; you'd been a Representative when you were made redundant, and you'd tried hard for nine months to find a similar job, but to no avail. You then went on a government training course in Social and Community Service; this course, in terms of a job, proved totally ineffective, both because of the shortage of jobs and because of the professional CQSW certificate prized by social workers and their departments, but in terms of further education, it proved extremely worthwhile, as Birmingham Poly classed it as an entrance qualification. Four years later, in the job market, a straight Honours Degree in Sociology, with research as its major option, again proved ineffective, but it did qualify you for a Post Graduate Teaching Course. At the end of this course, the county in which you lived (Hereford and Worcester) planned to make 360 teachers redundant, so the chance of acquiring a job in that field again proved extremely difficult, and you joined the hundreds of unemployed teachers looking for work. The opportunity to progress with your studies, working in your favourite field, research, and - hopefully - gaining - your Ph.D as well, seemed a wonderful chance, so here you are at university, studying to become more qualified, hoping that this leads to a job, and ironically (that word again) studying unemployment.

Consistently then, over the last seven years, the spectre of unemployment has raised its ugly head time and time again. One of the more traumatic periods had been over the previous

twelve months, when your Father was made redundant, due to a
decision within the firm's hierarchy. Some might have considered
it a political decision, others might not; the outcome was that
after nearly twenty years hard work, his services were 'no longer
required'. His family then watched the process whereby a capable,
competent, confident, loving human being became but a shadow of his
former self, and died, a year to the day after his redundancy, from
a heart attack.

You think of the times you sat with your Dad, talking about
the situation; you watched as application after application was turned
down - who, nowadays, wants a 60 year old Training Officer? You were
there on the few occasions when he conceded to break down and cry,
'Why don't they want me? I've still got a lot to offer', tears would
swell up in his eyes, and he'd get up and walk out. Other times he
would just sit, crumpled up, not knowing what more to do to find a job.
Most of the time though, he put on a brave face - Mom was there. One
side was his own sense of working-class masculinity, the other side
was his love and caring for his wife - your Mother. Mom had to be
protected at all costs, although this protection would now become
simply that of love, and not also of material kind. They had recently
moved to a bungalow, the type they had saved for all their working
lives, a place to retire to, see out the last few years at work and
settle back for the well-deserved rest. They were now going to lose
this. They couldn't afford the expense on unemployment pay. At times,
the pressures and worries were immense; 'Let's get a cheaper place,'
he'd say, 'and live within our means'. Another day you'd go and it
would be, 'We might just manage to stay on, somebody was telling
me we could get this and that from the Social - but I suppose when

we go, we won't get it'. All through, you supported your Father's hand, from the first 'degradation' of signing on to his last breath in the hospital bed. The <u>official</u> report mentions 'Myocardial Infarction' - heart attack - the <u>unofficial</u> report still needs to be written.

You're angry now, and the silence becomes even more oppressive, you try to concentrate on your book, but it's no good, you've had enough. You think you might as well go home. As you step onto the cold Birmingham street on that late autumn afternoon, you're struck by how <u>different</u> it all seems to where you've been all day; noise, hustle, bustle, traffic, lights, people, but at the same moment, you're also struck by how <u>similar</u> it all is. Tens, hundreds, thousands of individuals hurrying and scurrying around, seemingly oblivious to the needs, and totally indifferent to the presence of those they pass, like ships in the night, human beings in little worlds of their own, just as isolated as those in your own Valley of Kings.

Sitting on the homeward train making a few notes, you reflect on a day that was inconceivable to you twenty years, six years, or even two years ago. You reflect on a day you'll never forget, a day that started with the embodiment of all your hopes and aspirations and ended tempered with feelings of anger and sadness. Still,

<u>TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY.</u>

These academic and personal preconceptions certainly laid the basis and contextualized my initial thoughts and actions regarding the issues of unemployment and how social research may be initiated. Some of these preconceptions naturally changed over time, as contacts developed and new ideas were taken on board, others, on the other hand, were merely reinforced. The major point being made here is how important these different preconceptions are in any research project, and that they must, therefore, be stated, rather than 'hidden' or denied as having any impact at all. The following chapter expands upon these preconceptions in a developmental form. Chapter two consists of an explanation of the development of my research methods, from their original formal presentation through their eventual modifications in light of practical experience, while chapter three contextualizes the actual study in terms of an analysis of the sights and sounds of Kidderminster. Chapters four, five and six have been so located to reflect the generalized process by which the data for those chapters was collected, i.e. from initial contact in the 'public' world, through acceptance of 'sensitive' issues such as informal work, stealing etc. to the more 'private' world of family and kin, obtained by being invited into their homes. Chapter seven develops in an analytical form a process model of dialectical control relationships, which is then applied to the data outlined in the previous three chapters. Chapter eight concludes with an overall summary, and proposes a number of policy considerations based upon the findings highlighted in the main body of the thesis.

PUTTING THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.

(Helen Roberts, 1984. p.199)

'The primary objective in doctoral
research is not research, but to
obtain a doctorate ..... at a
formal review meeting, where one
could pass or fail'.

(C.Smith, 1984. p.31)

'So many dissertations and so much
research are done out of duty - out
of an enforced sense of what and
how one should do it - rather than
out of a lively curiosity'.

(J.Katz, 1976. p.123)

It can certainly be argued that any formal presentation of 'ideas' and research developments contributes to give the overall process a higher degree of structure and consistency than is actually the case in practice. Equally, I would certainly not like to give the contrary impression that the total opposite was also the 'normal' case in practice. Somewhere between the two would seem to be a fair reflection of the day to day lived experiences of the doctoral student. There were the occasional excursions into the realms on the one hand of 'sound ideas', knowing exactly where I was and what I was going to do next; and on the other hand, moments of total confusion, blind panic and subsequent recourse to the'home brew'.

With these contrasting features in mind then, I have split the description and analysis of my conceptual schemata and methodological criteria into two sections. Section one will deal with a more formal description and analysis of the overall research proposal, whilst section two will concentrate on the actual research in practice.

Finding a Peg.

The initial months of the research process could be described as 'trying to find a peg' (Bottomley, 1978). This 'peg' would be here to give form and structure to a series of concrete ideas, vague impressions, feelings and intuitions, which I had been cognitively gathering whilst 'sampling' the literature of youth unemployment. I think the term 'sampling' is an important one to make here, in that initially no intense, in-depth, systematic analysis of the literature was undertaken, it was more a process of high-lighting certain strands from within which a more 'grounded' approach could be undertaken (Glaser and Straus, 1968).

Even with this initial sampling, I could not help noticing certain structural themes within the literature on youth studies and, in particular, youth unemployment. These themes consisted of:

i) An overwhelming concern with the 'public' at the expense of the 'private'.

ii) The apparent neglect of gender in its insistence on the importance of males (McRobbie, 1980).

iii) The ethnic dimension, i.e. the importance of white males.

iv) Sexual practices (Dorn and South, 1982).

v) Emphasis on the 'unique' as opposed to the 'normal'.

vi) What may be termed the 'urbanism' of these studies (Coles, 1984).

Although the same could be said for most of the literature on youth unemployment (Allatt and Yeandle, 1984) there were however, certain other 'strains' which had started to emerge. It is difficult to describe them as 'themes' because they were not so well-developed, more like 'issues' which had been mentioned, rather than intensely and systematically developed. These 'issues were:

i) Informal/Social economy (Cohen, 1982)

ii) Coping strategies (Coffield, 1982)

iii) Non-registration (Roberts et al, 1982)

iv) The implications of unemployment for the creation of identity. (Kelvin et al, 1981).

It was at this stage that I thought that I had found my 'peg' in that, by adopting a familial focus, I could analyse the process of 'homelessness', i.e. what are the characteristics and conditions that lead up to a young adult leaving home, either voluntarily or involuntarily? Therefore, with great haste, I headed for the literature

on homelessness but, after a short time, I started to feel uneasy;
I'd found a 'peg' but was reluctant to put my coat on it. Clearly
an area of neglect had been found (familial perspective), but at
the same time, it tended, if this focus was adopted, to perpetuate
what I felt was an 'artificial' break between the so-called 'public'
and 'private' spheres of social life. Turning the focus on to the
'private' and away from the 'public' just to even things up would
be as misguided as to go on perpetuating the 'importance' of the
'public'. My 'peg' or focus, I felt, would need to 'link' in some
way or other the two realms.

Without wishing to bore the reader with any long involved
analysis of the 'theme' and 'issues' here, I do feel that a brief
description of some of the main points may help to elicit a 'feel'
or 'empathy' for the stage or position that I was in just prior to
the formulation of my methods.

At that point, as on many other occasions, not only at the
start but throughout the whole research process, I sat back and
tried to think about 'where I was at', i.e. what decisions about
the study had I already made? There were the major ones, such as
the fact that the study must be genderized; it must also have a
familial input, rather than a total focus. The study must be a
reflexive one, and emphasize qualitative rather than quantitative
data. At the same time, there were other so-called decisions that
were more problematical, such as being a 'linked' Ph.D student.
The project to which I was 'linked' had already started its work
in a small industrial town on the edge of the West Midlands
conurbation; my study therefore, would be on the youth of that area.
Most youth studies were based on highly-populated areas such as

cities and large industrial towns. Now, should I make this a distinct study of small-town youth, should I enter the specialist game, or should I tease out similarities and unique nuances with other youth studies, or what? On reflection, I seemed at this point to have enough small pegs to fill a cloakroom. I was trying, rightly or wrongly, to use as many of the so-called 'areas of neglect' as I could within one thesis. What I was looking for was an overall focus to link them together.

Without wishing to digress too far, but hopefully still within the 'spirit' of the developmental process I am trying to portray, I think that this last paragraph raises important issues which tended to appear time and time again, as to the contextualization of the whole research process, and what may be termed, in C.Smith's (1984) words, 'The criterion of making a significant contribution to knowledge remains, and the notion of the Ph.D as a tour de force goes unchallenged' (p.28). This notion of a significant contribution to knowledge, some would suggest, can be outweighed by the notion that, 'The primary objective in doctoral research is not research, but to obtain a doctorate' (Smith, op cit, p.31).

The point which I am trying to illustrate is that this 'cloakroom' full of small pegs was just one of the many times during the research process when these 'tensions' manifested themselves. Everyone around me was telling me of the need to 'focus in'; it wasn't that I couldn't see their reasons for this, it was just that, if I am honest, on one hand I wanted to make this 'significant contribution', and on the other hand, I was frightened of leaving out a relevant area which might manifest itself, in Smith's terms, 'At a formal review meeting, where one could pass or fail' (p.31).

As a way of illustration, you could say that while one part of my mind was consistently telling me to focus, another part was telling me to incorporate everything. This tension can be seen in the title of my half-termly report to my supervisors, which seemed to contain everything but the kitchen sink. Gloriously entitled, 'Youth Unemployment, Family Structure and Informal Social Relationships Situated Within the Historical Context of De-Industrialization', it consisted, in practical terms at that time, of a sample of only 38 people in Kidderminster'.

This focus-raising/inclusive tension was something I found cropping up time,and time again during the whole research process. Sometimes I could include new areas, at other times I couldn't; what to leave in and what to take out seemed to rest on so many variables that no precise guide-lines could be given; what was right at one stage could be just as wrong at another. It certainly brought home to me how I as a research instrument (O'Brien and McKee, 1982) was engaged in the 'social construction of reality' rather than being a passive, neutral researcher valuelessly analysing objective reality. At the time I am describing, I had, on one hand my 'areas of neglect' with their major focus on the 'private', and on the other my insistence on the need to retain the 'public'. What I therefore needed was a strong 'link pin'.

The way in which I eventually found this 'link pin' could best be described as one of those moments during the research process when things started to fall into place; achieved through a combination of persistent effort and bloody hard work - also what can only be described as a degree of 'luck'. Certainly, as a social

researcher, or social scientist, or whatever else you may care to label yourself, you will admit to hard work, sound ideas etc. but to what extent you will admit to 'luck' is debatable. I certainly do not want to propose a metaphysical realm of social research, but I do feel that if we are honest - or as honest as we can be - with ourselves and our readers, we must show how social research is 'done'; a process of interaction with human beings being a combination of faults, strengths, weaknesses, hard work, sound ideas - and luck, which all combine to create our knowledge about human beings achieved through so-called 'detached objectivity'. Relating this last paragraph to the point in my reasearch which we are discussing, the finding of my 'link pin' came about in the following way:

During the first week of my second term (January '83), I had been asked by Colin Bell and Lorna McKee, who were supervising my research at that time, to produce a short paper on the areas I was interested in focusing (that process again) on. Having proceeded to write this short paper, I duly gave copies to Colin and Lorna, prior to our discussion about these issues on the following Tuesday. The copy to Colin was given to him in haste as he was in conversation with someone else, and just as hastily he handed me an article, saying, 'Have you read this?' I hadn't, so I left clutching this piece of paper, resolving to read it sometime, but not right now, as I was off for an appointment with Richard Jenkins, who at that time was working at Aston's Ethnic Relations Unit. Towards the end of our discussion, he also gave me an article which he had received from Nigel South (op cit) the day before. This was to be the basis of a paper which they were to give at a BSA Conference in Bristol. Once again I left clutching an article, and headed for the train home.

On the train, and for the rest of that Friday evening, I became engrossed in these two articles. In one of them, Henry (1982) was theorizing on the nature of the informal economies, (Irregular, Hidden, Unofficial and Social). His part on the Social Economy I found extremely interesting in relation to my own work, especially the categories of 'domestic', 'household' and 'communal', and the examples of barter, self-help and housework. Nick Dorn and Nigel South, in the other article (op cit) were concluding that, 'The material position of youth is one of preparation for involvement with labour', and positing the idea of 'a concern with labour' as a generic category.

The rest of that Friday evening was spent primarily scribbling and drawing diagrams on bits of paper to try to tease out the links between my 'forgotten areas'. The next morning, I was up early working on these same ideas, only to be told to stop by my irate children, who reminded me of my promise to take them swimming. So there I was, watching them swimming, with my mind buzzing with thoughts of informal activities, domestic work, social economies, concepts of labour, work etc. and at the same time making cryptic notes to myself on the back of the entrance tickets for the baths.

It was at this stage that, slowly, a 'link pin' seemed to be emerging, in that although generally in youth/unemployment studies a 'public' focus had been adopted, this focus had concentrated upon work, but not work in its entirety, strictly in terms of its formal employment relationships. This neglect, even in the public sphere, of social and informal work could, I thought, if analysed, allow for a 'link' with the private world of social and domestic labour, thereby not only keeping the analysis materially based, but also avoiding a preoccupation with waged labour and those who specialize in it.

What I have tried to illustrate here is what is probably
one of the many ironies of social research; that all those months
of hard work, such as reading, note-taking, discussing, planning,
writing etc. had finally come together because, by chance, two
relevant articles had been given to me at almost the same moment,
and had finally crystalized at half past ten on a Saturday morning
in a crowded swimming baths in Kidderminster.

Having now found my elusive 'link' and 'peg' (seven months
into the research process), a more formal presentation of my ideas
needed to be instigated, not only for myself but also for my
supervisors, who also needed to be reassured that 'something was
beginning to take shape'. I have consciously decided to incorporate
a number of pages of this formal presentation here, without any
refinement of hindsight, which is seen in many other research
chapters, because I think it i)illustrates, when seen in relation
to the later section on research praxis, the absurdity of divorcing
theory from practice, i.e. taking the 'lived' experience out of
social research, and ii) illustrates yet again my own development
(or lack of it, at that time) when seen in relation to the other
forms of writing in subsequent chapters.

That First Report.

1. Youth Culture.

We can state from the outset that not only has the analysis of
youth unemployment been mainly conducted from within the 'public'
area of economic and social relationships, but also that this
'public area' is a major characteristic of youth culture studies.

As Angela McRobbie(1980) states, 'If we look for the structured absences in this youth literature, it is the sphere of family and domestic life that is missing'. Also, in referring to Paul Willis' study 'Learning to Labour' (1978), she suggests that, 'The family is the obverse face of hard, working-class culture, the softer sphere in which fathers, sons and boy-friends expect to be, and are, emotionally serviced. It is this link between the lads hard outer image and their private experiences - relations with parents, siblings and girl-friends - that still needs to be explored'. This emphasis on the lack of a familial focus is also supported by Nick Dorn and Nigel South (1982). In their article reviewing the historical development of youth culture theory, they suggest that, 'The omission is not simply one of gender, but also of a whole sphere of life - that of the family'. Their critique then goes on to analyse other 'forgotten' areas in relation to youth, such as the service sector, informal economy and forgotten forms of labour. These areas are then situated within the contemporary recognition that, 'The material position of youth is one of preparation for involvement with labour'. In doing so, they extend the concept of labour from its characteristic narrow focus upon the privilege of waged work.

Thus, they conclude in a section entitled 'The end of the sociology of youth cultures' that, 'A concern with labour as a generic category, without according any privilege to any particular kind of labour (e.g. that supposed to control the surplus value), keeps the analysis materially based whilst avoiding a preoccupation with waged labour and those who 'specialize' in this form of labour at the expense of other forms of labour inside and outside the home'.

2. Youth Unemployment.

As was suggested earlier, the 'problem' of youth unemployment has largely been conceptualized as residing in the public domain of economic and social relationships. Where a familial focus has been adopted, i.e. job advice, this has usually been tentative and tangential to the core of the research questions concerning the individuals perceptions and expectations of the role of work, training etc.

Thus the focus of youth unemployment is normally situated around such issues as public disorder (R.Taylor, 1982) and increased political conciousness, their experience of Government training schemes (Colin St.Leger, 1982), non-registration (Roberts et al, 1981/2), identity crisis (Breakwell, 1983), work as a source of identity, the implications of unemployment (Kelvin, 1981) and youth education and training (Schooling and Culture, 1982).

This is not to say that the familial effects of unemployment are totally neglected in current research (Popay, 1982; Rimmer, 1982; Bell and McKee, 1982), but within this familial perspective, this omission of youth unemployment remains. One exception to this is Pat Allatt's current research, in which she suggests the importance of adopting a familial perspective in her analysis of 'the effects of youth unemployment upon the intergenerational aspects of family structure'.

2.1 Although social critics may argue as to the consequences of youth unemployment, there seems to be a slow movement towards the idea that youth unemployment is structural in nature, rather than frictional or cyclical (Casson, 1979). The outcome of this is

that although youth unemployment rises and falls relatively
according to the trade cycle, the underlying trend is upward, even
in good times youth unemployment is rising faster than the general
trend (Youthaid, 1981).

2.2   Two consequences of the growth in structural youth unemployment
which are relevant to our study are, i) the growing hard-core of long
term unemployed youth (Unemployment Unit Bulletin, July 1981) and
the sub-employed nature of the majority of sixteen-plus youths (Roberts,
1982) and ii) the structural change in youth jobs increasingly moving
from the formal to the informal sector (Cohen, 1982). As Cohen
states, 'If you want to get some idea of what the old juvenille
market was like, have a look at the hidden economy today', although
Stuart Henry (1982) has argued that, 'Those members of the informal
economy who gain least are those with no exploitive power', i.e. the
unemployed; studies have highlighted the involvement of unemployed
youth in the informal economy (Roberts, 1982; Casson, 1979; Kitwood,
1980).

In Roberts' analysis, young people are handling transitory
episodes of joblessness within their prior frame of reference, and
are slowly becoming accustomed to periods of sub-employment, which
are being institutionalized by various policy measures. Watts (1978)
has suggested that careers education should teach young people to
regard their early period in the labour market as a period of
exploration, and to make them aware of opportunities in the various
informal economies.

3. The Formal/Informal Economy.

Traditionally, when analysing the economy, the characteristic

usually referred to by economists means the sector in which goods and services are produced for sale, are sold and are then purchased. This type of analysis derives from the basic characteristics of a market economy, with the result that, as Martin Lowenthal (1975) states, 'Social scientists and social planners at all levels, by accepting this traditional understanding of the economy, have tended to disregard the significance of women, the family and the community from their economic analysis and their economic policies'. He then suggests that, 'Increasing attention is being given to the informal economic activities which play a role in modern industrial societies.'

3.1   In an influential article analysing the development of the informal economy debate, Stuart Henry (op.cit.) suggests that the debate as to the significance and importance of the informal economy in post-industrial society has become grounded within two schools of thought;   i) where the informal economy is seen 'As a vehicle for entrepreneurial innovation, as the human side of capitalist enterprise, and even as the vanguard for an alternative society', and ii) a critical perspective which sees this idea, 'As a rather naive vision, a vision which masks a relationship of dependence on the dominant market economy, in which the informal economy is, at best, no more than a temporary buffer or survival mechanism for the poor'. Henry then suggests a four-fold typology (Irregular, Hidden, Unofficial, Social) as a means of systematically chartacterizing these informal economies, and goes on to expound the idea of a possibility of a third perspective which has two paradoxical and contrasting consequences, in that, 'At one level

they represent the colonization of the remains of human creativity. They are the manifestation of man's power over fellow man through which he 'connives at his own oppression',' and at another level, 'They are the means whereby people raise their consciousness'.

3.2 Another very important characteristic of the informal economy debate, and one which I have suggested is important in the previous sections on youth culture and youth unemployment, is that the analysis in this instance is firmly grounded around the household, with the family and its networks being the central pivot. As Gershuny and Pahl (1980) suggested, 'The main type of informal and officially unenumerated work is, of course, that which goes on in and around the home'. They are supported by Burn (1977), who states that, 'The instrument for this positive change will be the household - the family - revitalized as a powerful and relatively autonomous productive unit', and Henry (op.cit.) concurs that, 'These networks of informal economic activity revolve around the home'.

After 'sampling' this 'strain' in the literature then, a 'focus' had now started to emerge, i.e. 'forgotten forms of work', and by starting with some a priori assumptions, such as 'consciousness has something to do with labour in its many forms', I was able to concur with Professor Ray Pahl when he states that, 'Mine is to claim that work, that is, all kinds of work, has a direct relationship to other social and political behaviour'. (Pahl, 1982, p.5). I now hoped that by this focus I would be able to 'link' what I felt was a historically engendered 'split' between the 'public' and the 'private' spheres, characteristic of most work on youth, and explicitly prevalant in youth unemployment studies.

Having now found the 'peg', the 'problem' became one of how to attach it to the wall, i.e. what methodological tools would I

need to attempt any form of adequate analysis into these 'forgotten forms of work' (labour) and the differing issues deriving from them?

> 'In truth any particular project lends itself to a range of research methods, and research techniques are not as tightly connected to theoretical approaches as some would have us believe'.
>
> (F.Bechhofer, 1981. p.497)

4. Plan of proposed investigation.

In the initial stage, it is proposed that I will enter two large housing estates within a small industrial town within the Midlands. One housing estate will be characterized by council accomodation, while the other will be owner occupier. At a general level, the two estates are located very similarly; i) both are bounded on two sides by fields and pastures, on the third side a major road is located, while the remaining side of each estate is bounded in one case by a railway line and in the other by a small river. These structural features contribute to the impression that the estates are 'set apart' from the surrounding environment, i.e. you have to physically go on to and go off the estate. ii) In each case, there is one entrance at each end of the estate, with one major road running right through it and little closes and cul-de-sacs leading off that major road. iii) There is a major focus point to each estate, consisting of a piece of land for children to play on, surrounded by shops, a public house and on one estate a Community Centre.

4.1 It is proposed that the first stage of the research onto the estates will be in the form of what may be termed unsystematic intervention (Galton, 1984), i.e. not rigid data collection. The settings will be informal and the responses will range from non-verbal

(standard observation), oral (conversation with informants) and written responses (newspaper articles/letters, job adverts and sales in shop windows). It is also proposed that the role that I adopt throughout the whole research programme will be what can be termed 'open' in that no attempt will be made to deceive or mislead any individual or the community at large. From my own previous experience of research practice, just as much co-operation, if not more, can be gained by being open from the outset.

4.2 This type of entry onto the estates will be made at three different levels, i) official youth organizations, ii) public houses and iii) on the streets. The idea here being i) to make contact not only with registered unemployed youth, but also to assess the strength of non-registration. The importance of non-registration within a community has been highlighted by Roberts et al 1981-2. As a further justification for this emphasis, it has already been noted in a social service/community document (1981) concerning one of the estates, 'The apathy of the young unemployed who didn't bother to sign on'. ii) To identify key informants within the informal networks of the area; the proposed plan here being to initially talk to formal members of the community, (community workers, residents associations etc.) and then try to establish the identity of informants within the informal community. iii) To analyze such things as shop notice boards for information as to the extent of activity concerning 'jobbers' (baby sitting, child minding and odd jobs) and selling (car spares, clothes etc.)

4.3 The next stage of the research will be to move to a more systematic form of intervention, where the setting is unstructured

and the response form will be in terms of non-verbal (systematic observation), oral (interview data - open ended) and written (questionnaire - structured).

It is proposed that twenty unemployed youth from each estate will be interviewed (because the study of youth unemployment in the family is unresearched, the aim here is to identify the major issues involved. A strictly random sample is not therefore considered essential). There will be no criteria as to their inclusion in terms of i) length of unemployment and ii) whether on a Government scheme or not. Age range will be 16 - 24 and both genders will be included. Interview length will be flexible, depending upon situation (e.g. youth clubs and pubs are open for only a few hours, significant responders may not arrive until late or may have to leave early). Tape recorder will be used wherever possible, otherwise extended notes will be made at different points throughout the days field-work. Questions here will relate to youth perception of unemployment, relations with parents, types of labour engaged in etc.

4.4 Two important points need to be emphasised here, one in relation to gender and the other to the use of sensitizing concepts. With respect to gender it has been argued earlier that the traditional content of youth culture has neglected the role of young women from its analysis. Although Ann Campbell (1981) has analyzed the involvement of young women within youth culture, this is still a neglected topic, and has led Dorn and South (op.cit.) to state that, 'It is not simply that girls are absent from the discourse. They are often present, albeit in non-speaking roles, as objects of possession, and also as objects of fear and loathing. In other words, as witches, not as people. The species is male.'

If we accept this as legitimate criticism of traditional theory, we therefore need to take account of young women within our analysis. In doing so we must be aware that this raises issues that are problematical, such as some areas being barred to me (e.g. women's loos). It will also have profound implications for what is disclosed, witheld, pursued or neglected, and will also influence the places in which interviews can take place (i.e. not being placed in compromising situations). Arguments have certainly been made by feminist writers against mens' adequacy in research involving women, but, given this problematic, I do feel that by being aware and sensitive to the nature of my own gender, and to some of the effects that this may have for the whole research in question, a substantive and effective analysis can be made.

Based on their previous knowledge and experience in the field, researchers tend to try to develop and refine strategies and conceptualizations which will enable them to either form testable theories (deductive) or to create theories from the accumulation of empirical facts (inductive). In either instance we must have, at the initial stage, some 'idea' as to the way in which we are going to collect, select and appropriate certain facts of reality. The way I initially chose was through the use of sensitizing concepts.

The nature of the social world of everyday experiences is characterized by a distinctive, particular and unique character, which is itself situated within a context which is of a similar distinctive nature. Blumer (1955) states that, 'I think that it is this distinctive character of the empirical instance and of its setting which explains why our concepts are sensitizing and not definitive'. (p.20)

In any study we cannot address ourselves to what is covered only
by the abstraction of the concept, but we need to situate the
particular instance in order for us to be able to work through its
distinctive expression to formulate common features represented by
the concepts used. The idea here is that because reality is made up
of a multiplicity of phenomena and unique instances and happenings,
then the immediate observation is one which cannot be defined under
a definite class, but in order to understand these happenings in a
meaningful way, we need to make some sort of logical connection
between them, and sensitizing concepts help to point us through
the general in order to apprehend the distinctive, which we then relate
back to the general in order for us to be able to comprehend reality.

It is because we have no fixed objective reality that we can
instantly and comprehensively comprehend that we need concepts
which will guide us in developing a 'picture' of each distinctive
expression. If we leave Blumer's ideas on sensitizing concepts here
for a while and relate our exposition so far to the analysis, we
can distinguish two different but inter-related component parts
of the investigation that can be handled by the idea of sensitizing
concepts. In order to explain what is meant by this idea, we can say
that component one, in general terms, can be characterized as
'observation', and component two as 'understanding'.

If we address ourselves to 'observation' and relate this to
our earlier idea of developing a picture of each distinctive
expression, we can see that it is not possible to observe everything
at once. Even a camera has to be pointed in the right direction to
capture what is happening. Also the camera, like humans, must be
in focus. This 'focusing', it is argued here, is provided by the

adoption of sensitizing concepts, because, as Patton (1980) states,
'The observer must somehow organize the complex reality represented
by the programme so that observing that reality becomes manageable'
(p.121). This 'sensitizing' of reality is important in that it alerts
us to ways of organizing the experience and making decisions about
what to record. This is nicely summed up by Denzin (1978) when,
talking about the observer, he says that he, 'Moves from sensitizing
concepts to the immediate world of social experience, and permits
that world to shape and modify his conceptual framework. In this
way he moves continually between the realm of more general social
theory and the worlds of native people. Such an approach recognizes
that social phenomena, while displaying regularities, vary by time,
space and circumstance. The observer then, looks for repeatable
regularities (ritual patterns of dress, language, codes etc.) and
attempts to enter his subjects' closed world of interaction so as to
examine the character of private versus public acts and attitudes'
(p.96).

This last sentence of Denzin's is where we can bring into the
discussion the second component, understanding, which, for our
analytical purposes can be split again into two parts; firstly
during the process of trying to understand and account for human
relationships the participant observer shares in the life, activities
and sentiments of people in face to face relationships. In his
research, the participant observer is interested in people as
they are; to this end he finds his 'role' an indispensable part
of the process in seeking to apprehend, register, interpret and
conceptualize the whole phenomena in question. What is important
for our analysis is that this role adopted by the researcher,

whether general, specific or complementary (Bruyn, 1970) is based, initially, on his or her 'idea' of the role in question, whether this is explicit for everyone to see or not. Here the researcher, some would suggest, is labelling or stereotyping his initial formulation of his role; but it could also be argued that he is applying a method of 'sensitizing' himself to the initial stages of his role, which can be radically changed or modified according to the circumstances, and that in this process he is using sensitizing concepts.

Our second idea relates to the process of communication, in that Blumer raises the question of how these concepts (sensitized) can be communicated. He suggests that rather than by formal definition, 'It is accomplished instead by exposition, which yields a meaningful picture, abetted by apt illustrations which enable one to grasp the reference in terms of ones own experience'.

Examples of types of sensitizing concepts to be used.

Labour time: Luxton, 1980.

Production time: Luxton, 1980.

Short term reciprocity: Gouldner, 1960.

Long term reciprocity: Gouldner, 1960.

Doing nothing: Corrigan, 1979.

Informal economy: Henry, 1982.

Social economy: Lowenthal, 1981.

4.5 In order that both a familial perspective and public focus of youth unemployment may be gained, it is proposed that a subgroup of youth (10 youths, 5 male, 5 female) from each estate will be interviewed along with their parents. Although a minority of studies of the family have interviewed the spouses jointly (Allan, 1980), it is usually assumed that the natural unit of analysis in questionnaire mythology is the individual. As Allan states, 'There are few studies in any field of sociology that suggest otherwise'. Given this neglect, it can be seen that to interview individuals together, within a family concept is an unusual procedure.

In suggesting this type of methodology, I am not suggesting that this is a form of research technique superior to any other, merely that it could lead to data being generated which could not be obtained from interviews with individuals. It is the interaction of the individuals within the family and their immediate public settings as they create and negotiate their accounts, that provides the material that could not be obtained from individual interviews. It is not so much the final account which is of paramount importance, but the very processes involved in its negotiation, (I was not to realize it at the time, but this latter point became elevated to a prime position as the research progressed and developed).

Having elaborated on these ideas at a formal meeting with my supervisors, and taken their comments into account, Colin brought the meeting to a close with the statement, 'All right, go out and do it'. This was not said in a flippant way, but with the knowledge of someone who knew from experience that, 'He'll learn!', and I did, very quickly indeed!

'All right, go out and do it' - The praxis of social research.

For my part, being out 'in the field' was a totally absorbing experience; it was a time when ideas developed and changed and personal relationships acquired a unique 'intensity' of their own. Therefore, how to properly do justice to this complex phenomenon seems in one way to be fraught with extreme difficulties, which ultimately will not do justice to its interrelated complexity, and in another to 'totally negate' these issues by relegating them to the 'backwoods' of an appendix, like some so-called 'misbegotten' eighteenth century criminal, destined to be quietly forgotten by never showing themselves again on these 'shores' or main pages of a thesis, seems 'criminal' and an easy way out. In saying this, the 'problem' still remains, i.e. that of accounting, in as systematic a way as is possible, the complexities of research praxis. Having carefully considered this problem, I have decided to attempt my exposition by dividing my account into what may be termed substantive issues; i) the process of 'finding' unemployed youth, ii) role adoption/adaption, iii) taking 'gender seriously', iv) the interview as a process of everyday life and v) what may be termed 'outside influences'. Again, it must be reiterated that these 'areas' do not exist either in isolation or 'just linked' to others, but must be seen as an overlapping, dynamic, ever-changing process, which, for exposition only, are being artificially separated. With these qualifications in mind then, I now turn to my first constructed category, that of 'finding' unemployed youth.

'Finding' Unemployed Youth.

As was stated earlier, (p. 32), because of the 'problem' of
non-registration identified by Roberts (op.cit.), I had decided
to find my unemployed youth by a process more conducive to their
apparent condition than by just 'artificially creating' a sample
from those youths 'signing on'. Just standing outside the Benefit
Office seemed to me to create not only more methodological
problems than it solved, but also to run the risk of discreting
what was in fact a dynamic process. It was with this 'idea' of
process in mind then, the 'idea' that social life must be articulate
in terms of the dynamic unfolding process that it is, rather than
as a static 'photograph', that I entered my first housing estate
'looking' for unemployed youth to observe and interact with. It
was at this point that my first assumption and illusion was
shattered. The literature on youth, both from academic circles
and via 'common sense' assumptions transmitted by the media, is
one of youth, and unemployed youth in particular, either standing
on street corners (see front cover of E.Cashmore's 'No Future', 1984),
or wandering aimlessly around seeking excitement (Dorn and South, 1983),
or, in Allison James' (1982-3) term, running around 'doing
nothing' as a way of release for their alienated condition. At the
very least, the 'street', as the context of the traditional focus
of youth, their public sphere, is portrayed as a living, dynamic
entity, viewed either as a contextual place of resistance to the
ravages of industrial monopoly capitalism, or, plainly, 'where-it's-at'
but in this case, neither could be near to what I was experiencing
at that moment - the street was dead!

At the very least I had expected it - to paraphrase Julie
Andrews - to be 'alive with the sound of music', even if this
meant that there was only one cassette amongst a large group, let
alone the current liking for 'ghetto blasters'. It wasn't that the
youths were doing nothing - there weren't any about! Nor were there
any other people, old, young, middle aged - nothing! I wandered
around these and similar streets during the day for the next few
weeks with the same result - nothing and no one! I wasn't clear
in my ideas then, but that first day had introduced me to a
phenomena which I have since termed 'the social isolation of
unemployed youth', (see chapter on Time, Coping Strategies and
Identity Creation).

This 'social isolation' was also a significant factor in the
evenings, but, at that time, they did give me a better opportunity
to make contact. Then, to a degree, <u>male</u> unemployed youth became
'visible', but again, not in the ways I had assumed. There were
no 'gangs' or groups of male unemployed youths interacting
together as a visible entity, but perhaps one or two unemployed in
a group of five or six, the others being in employment; or perhaps
one employed and one unemployed in a pair of friends. Young
unemployed women, on the other hand, were conspicuous by their
absence, but when they did 'emerge', they seemed to follow the
same patterns as the lads.

A further complication arose in that, when contact was made,
any further contact, either in terms of a more 'formal' interview,
or just joining the groups - as I did on many occasions - could
prove ineffectual as a way of gathering further data about that
individual, but in another way highlighted by default certain

processes that were going on within the home. By way of explanation, let me say that on many occasions when I called at the address given to me by an individual I found that, for many different reasons, they were not there. Now you may think that they did this on purpose, because they did not wish to speak to me, but in defence I would say that the address was usually that of their parents, i.e. where they themselves 'lived' (I use 'lived' here temuously, as I develop this argument later), and that contact could be made via the address, however temuous this might be. What I am trying to say is that for some unemployed youths, of both sexes, the 'nomadic' way of life becomes one way of coping with certain pressures (see chapter six, Process of Homelessness).

These kinds of 'problems' then, made contact with the young unemployed more problematic than I had at first envisaged. Even within the town itself, 'focal points' were used in a transitory way, as 'places-to-move-on-to' rather than 'places-in-themselves'.

I did eventually find my way to the steps of the benefit office, however reluctant I had been in the beginning; however, this was mostly to 'supplement' and widen my contacts, rather than form a substantial sample. Now, in no way diverting attention from the 'problem' of finding unemployed youth, I do feel that that last sentence does highlight once again the statement that, 'The context of the research is different to that for other researchers', (Smith, op.cit.); this is not to suggest that research for a doctorate is the only type of research influenced by context, just that, 'The constraints imposed will be different', (Smith, op.cit.). To relate what I mean by this to the discussion on 'finding unemployed youth', let me say that, due to time

constraints, certain aspects of the research process must be finished at a specific stage, or problems of 'finishing' may occur due to completion of funding, finding and maintaining equipment etc. There is also pressure on departments, instigated by 'leaks' that, 'the extra years extension will no longer be automatic', and statements such as, 'We might lose a few good theses in the process'. All this combines to produce from day one the constant feeling that, to quote the White Rabbit, 'I'm late, I'm late, for a very important date. No time to say 'Hello - Goodbye', I'm late, I'm late, I'm late!'. Or, rephrased more academically when Glaser and Straus (op. cit.) suggest that, 'The tempo of the research is difficult to know beforehand......how does the sociologist who intends to generate theory anticipate the amount of time necessary for data collection and for the whole project?' (1967, p.74).

But back to the benefit office. This time pressure was brought home very forcibly to me when both my supervisors suggested at a meeting that I consider carefully whether there would be enough time left (I had now been in the field for about six months) for me to pursue more fully what I have termed my 'sensitizing stage', and that I may, however reluctantly, need to consider 'widening' my contacts 'instantly'. As I would soon be applying for my third year, which again, for the E.S.R.C. is not automatic (I believe one out of three got it that year), I agreed. Therefore, due on one hand to the structural position of 'isolated' youth and certain 'nomadic' features, and on the other hand to 'pressurized-time', I half reluctantly found myself on the pavement outside the benefit office, supplementing my unemployed contacts. I say 'half' because by that time I was slowly coming to the opinion

that my two estates were 'artificial' constructs, and that by comparing them, and thus implicitly keeping them distinct, I was failing to grasp their interconnectiveness, especially for the youth. On many occasions I found youth from both estates interacting with each other and also with others from different parts of the town. Therefore, by whatever way I increased my contacts, I was explicitly reflecting and acknowledging this process. The breakdown of my taped respondents can be seen in table 2:2. A conscious effort was made to reflect an equal spread across the different socio-economic groups, rather than just reflecting the actual socio-economic spread within the town, so that I could analyze each area in depth (see table 2:1). I was also able on many occasions, to supplement the taped data with extracts from my extensive field notes made during the process of participant observation.

2:1   Socio-Economic Spread of Taped Respondents.

Class	M	F	Total
Professional	4	3	7
Managerial	3	2	5
Skilled	3	3	6
Semi-skilled	6	5	11
Unskilled	6	5	11
TOTAL	22	18	40

2:2   Numbers and Age Range of Respondents on Taped Interviews

Age	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Male	1	1	6	4	2	1			2	1
Female	2	4	5	5	3	1		1	1	

I was now beginning to form, by this methodological process, a 'mental map' (Marsden, 1982. p.4) of the different features surrounding the lives of the young unemployed, rather than any attempt at statistical analysis. Another totally overlapping point in my contacts and relationships with unemployed youth was the role that I adopted. Should I appear as someone's 'friend' (Whyte, 1943), or should I 'go it alone'? It is to this analysis that the next section is devoted.

Role Adoption/Adaption.

As I stated earlier, in the initial stage I had decided to be 'open', to 'come clean' as to my reasons for conducting the research in question. Who I was, and what I was doing, would be given freely to any contact made. I thought that it was no good pretending to be something I wasn't; also, there are certain responsibilities which one has to bear in mind when researching into groups which are in a disadvantaged position within society (Roberts, 1984; Finch, 1984). Therefore, how I achieved this information would be as much an issue as how I chose to portray and disseminate the findings. I therefore felt that I not only needed to be 'open' but, in Goffman's (1969) terms of the 'presentation of self', I needed to be me. Some would say that this is as problematic as it is illuminating, but what I am trying to convey is that while on one hand I was

acutely aware of the need to be 'open' about my activities, also
to understand myself as part of the 'research instrument' and my
differing effects on the interactions and eventual outcomes, on
the other hand I was, for lack of a better description, me. I didn't
want to pretend, I was well aware that there were already many different
types of 'power relations' in progress (Scott, 1984), such as my
being male, white and over twenty years older than some of my
respondents and also, most pertinent of all for this study, in
employment. I was not only getting paid - 'The Importance of the
Wage' (Wills, 1984) - but, whichever way you looked at it - and
some of my respondents did look at it in this way - while being
with them I also stood to gain both status-wise (Ph.D.) and
financially (better job?) out of their personal troubles, even if
it was a 'public issue' (C.W.Mills, 1977).

These 'personal troubles' were certainly influenced by the
'public issue' articulated within the individuals contextualization,
so much so that, at certain times during the research, I 'felt' that
there was either a collective 'closing of ranks' about soliciting
information (see Coffield, 'Sociological Review'), or the
individual themselves became reluctant to give information. This
contradiction produces an inherent tension in my position as a
researcher, and raises the moral dilemma of the personal, i.e.
respecting peoples wishes if they do not wish to tell you something.
What right has a sociologist got to pry into other peoples affairs?
Surely the research itself is not a good enough justification;
certainly not the 'Common Good' that will be just as condescending
and elitist in its assumptions. No, it falls squarely upon the
individual researcher, his/her perceived ideas and assumptions

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concerning developments and slants about the underlying focus behind the discrete instances they are observing. As Janet Finch (op.cit.) suggests from her research on clergymen's wives, 'I found that I had to look more closely at the structural position in which these women were placed, and to make a clear distinction between structural position and women's own experience of it', (p.84).

This 'distinction' therefore becomes more than merely an analytical framework, it is also embodied with 'political' derivatives as well. My own perspectives focused on the fact that the 'contextualizations' which surround the lives of the young unemployed and which produced the conditions which manifested themselves at certain times as fear, uncertainty, suspicion, control, understanding, warmth and 'activity vibrance' and at other times as 'powerlessness', need to be articulated and brought out into the open, especially in a climate where the ravages of the international reduction of capital and the process of de-industrialization is producing divided loyalties amongst some people and great suffering and hardship amongst others.

It was at times like these that I became aware that I was acutely 'listening' to conversations in which I was not directly engaged, such as standing with one group of individuals and listening to another group. On reflection, I found 'that on some occasions I was doing this unconsciously, at other times deliberately. On these occasions I became exasperated, the data I was collecting from this type of situation was extremely valuable, especially when incorporated into the other data, but was any data gained like this worth invading their 'privacy'? For the vast proportion of the time, I

felt that people were being 'open' with me, as I was with them; it was in these other areas that the 'tensions' developed.

Whether I actually resolved this 'tension' in practice remains doubtful in my own mind. On occasion I felt that I justified this type of practice, at other times, definitely not. It seems that what you gain on the swings you lose on the roundabouts; perhaps this is what makes research so extremely stimulating in one way and so extremely problematical in another. In essence it reflects the contradictions inherent in the social life it purports to portray.

At a practical level, one way in which I tried to lessen this 'tension' was by investing as much of _me_ in the relationships as I could. Giving details of my own life and soliciting information about Social Security benefits, jobs etc. as often as I could. This 'giving' of information as a way of not simply facilitating data collection but also as a political decision of non-exploitation seems to be a very important part of researching into socially disadvantaged groups, and one which generally seems to be left out of the methodological courses (Bell, 1978) and 'core' textbooks. As Finch (1984) states, 'That exploitation is not simply that these techniques can be used by other than bona fide researchers; but it is an ever-present possibility for the most serious and morally upright of researchers, feminists included. It seems to me that the crux of this exploitative potential lies in the relationship established between interviewer and interviewee' (p. 81).

In most cases, what could be termed 'deal giving' operated successfully, with raport being maintained on both sides, but on a few occasions forms of conflict did manifest themselves. These conflicts took the forms of individuals not turning up for interviews,

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arriving late, or insisting where and when the interview was to take place, i.e. defining the grounds of contact. This also meant that at times, 'significant others' were 'drafted' in for the interview; on the face of it, it would seem that they were there to give moral support, but an interesting point is that this 'need of support' was only deemed appropriate by young women, and also that these 'significant others' sometimes tried to control and influence at a distance.

Very often, during those interviews conducted within the home, Mother would keep 'popping in and out', with the consequence that the nature of the interview changed at times, and more 'stilted' information became the norm. Also, in many cases, young women expressed such ideas as:

'My boyfriend told me not to say too much'

and

'He said I've to watch what I am saying'.

The significance of this being that at no time were these 'outside' controls used by young men; no-one said that their girl-friend told them not to say too much, (these and other controls over young women will be described and analyzed in later chapters). At the present, suffice it to say that the social condition of young unemployed women was certainly framed within masculine forms of discourse.

Other 'tensions' were more specific, as in the next example; this took place on the private housing estate; when I initially started there, the reactions of most of the youths (employed - unemployed - students) were those of interest and inquisitivness as to what I was doing. Some in an egotistical way 'liked' being researched, others wanted to know if I could provide them with a

youth club or 'something' to do on the estate. Slowly, as the
novelty wore off and it became apparent that I couldn't or wouldn't
deliver the 'goods' in terms of amenities etc. what could be termed
the 'spectre of indifference' set in. Nobody was bothered; why should
they be? The collective perception was that only one person was going
to benefit from all this - me!

The evening in question started off in the same way as many
previous occasions; I'd been sitting on the grass for some time with
a mixed group of youths, who had moved away slowly in ones and twoes
to talk with other friends who were sitting on the pavement outside
a row of shops a few yards away. In the end I was left on my own, so
I got up to walk towards this 'new' group. I could see one of the
lads telling the others something, and as I got nearer, I realized
that he was boasting about how he had twice failed to turn up for
appointments with me at a cafe in the centre of town, and how funny
it was to have twice left me waiting there. Some of the others agreed,
and I was quickly becoming an object of derision.

I was frantically thinking of what to do now, literally
'thinking on my feet'; should I brazen it out and have it out with
him, or walk away and try another day? Should I turn the tables and
make him look a fool in front of his mates - he'd done enough silly
things in the few weeks that I'd known him to succeed in that, but
what would be the consequences of this type of 'one up man ship'?
To let him get away with it would do me no good whatsoever, social
research is difficult enough as it is, without being treated like
a fool by the people you're interviewing.

Then I noticed that part of the 'group' was spread out along the
pavement with their backs to the shop walls, but that one lad was

actually sitting in a shop doorway. Perhaps this was my chance;
by sitting between him and the rest of the group, I could still
convey the impression, by talking to him, that everything was
still all right. As long as I could engage him in conversation,
my presence could still be justified. Hastily, I sat down on the
pavement and stuck my legs out across the doorway, blocking him in.
I was trying to give the impression of relaxed informality, but my
mind was buzzing with a multitude of thoughts and questions. How
long I could sustain this 'presence' I wasn't sure, but I had to try,
I really felt that if I gave way now, any meaningful future work in
this district would be lost, the ground would have been cut from
under me - the word would soon get around that here was someone to
have a laugh with, play him for a fool, a wally, anything, anything
but what he wants.

The thing that 'saved' the situation was actually the dynamics
of the group itself. Although this question of 'dynamics' will be
expanded upon later (p.173 -174), I will very briefly illustrate
here how it helped my situation. As I have stated, I was sprawled
on the pavement, my legs across the shop doorway blocking the lad's
escape (maybe this gives a new meaning to 'open' and 'closed' questions).
I was very conscious of how ludicrous the situation must look, but I
pressed on, constantly trying to create the 'right' atmosphere by
seeming to ask relevant and meaningful questions - what those
questions were I couldn't even remember that same night when writing
up my field notes - I simply remember trying frantically to create
and perpetuate a 'front'. My head was buzzing with thoughts, the type
of questions became irrelevant, I was trying to pretend that I hadn't

even been aware of their 'micky taking', I simply thought that whoever could keep going the longest would win. Make no mistake, there was a battle going on, a battle for the mind of every individual member of that group, and again make no mistake, I was losing fifteen to one. Billy, now carried away with his new-found status, was mimicking me, interviewing other members of the group; his questions had them rolling with laughter - 'Did you brush your teeth this morning?' 'When did you last see your Mother?' - these and other types of questions were hurled at the others as he paraded up and down the line, walking between their stretched out legs. With the contest ebbing further and further away from me, I seriously considered changing my tack and 'having a go' verbally at him. I was quite certain that I could make him look just as much of an idiot as he was making me look, but the nature of this would be very cruel. Realistically, I knew that I could never do this, not because it wouldn't have succeeded, but because I didn't want to. To be so instrumental is certainly not what I consider that research is, or should be, about. Once more the inadequate sterility of the textbooks and method courses manifested itself - where are the 'lived experiences' which condition the way in which research is taught or portrayed? The closest approach is a generalized discussion as to whether a researcher should or should not play a covert role within the research process; where's the discussion or written work about the type of problem which I was now facing and all the other types of 'lived experiences'?

I was just considering another form of strategy, when two 'mates' of my 'captive' appeared on the scene, and joined us in the doorway of the shop. As we started to talk, three of the other group left to 'go on' somewhere else. As I was to learn later, this type

of movement between members of a group was part of their generalized
interaction pattern (p. 173). The process of the group was not one of
a rigid, hierarchical form, characteristic of 'gangs', but one based
on a series of loose associations, with individuals coming and going
alone, or in twoes and threes over a long period of time. One nearby
resident was heard to say:

'These bloody kids have been here all night'.
On the face of it yes, they had, but the - for me - important point,
was that it was not the same ones all the time.

Over the next half an hour, there were many such 'comings and
goings', the net result being that at the end of that time, there
were twelve of us around the shop doorway, and three left sitting
along the shop wall. Suddenly a car pulled up, and the young man
inside shouted to those by the wall, two out of the three stood up,
walked over and got into the car, which rushed away with its tyres
screaming in a symbolically macho way, leaving Billy alone. Now it
was <u>his</u> turn to stand out like a sore thumb, to feel awkward about
his situation. Grabbing the initiative, I invited him to join us,
eagerly he accepted, which at one stroke lessened his felt pressure
and held out in the same moment a vague act of friendship, based
not on a longstanding relationship, but on immediate empathy for
the 'situation' of the other. It was not a time for either to
'gloat' over the other, but a time to reflect on what might have
been.

This 'might have been' manifested itself on one other occasion,
when confronted with opposition from a group of young women. As
will be developed later in chapters three, four and five, Kidderminster
has developed, for various reasons, a tradition of the 'girls night out'.

Here, groups of both single and married young women have a regular 'night out', usually manifested around some form of drink, e.g. darts playing, disco, meal etc. On these occasions, men, in the form of husbands or boy-friends, are relegated to a taxying and/or 'staying in with the kids' role. Whatever the outing, it is always very definitely women led. The problem arose when I tried to 'tag along' on one of these occasions. If I had reflected upon it more, perhaps I would have thought better of it, but as they say 'it seemed like a good idea at the time'; also, very often in research, when a chance presents itself, you either take it or miss it.

On this occasion the 'chance' came about during an interview with a young woman, aged 19, who had been unemployed for 18 months. The conversation turned to her friends and how often she saw them, and she stated that she would be seeing them that evening, for a drink, and would I like to come along? Jumping at the chance to observe, discuss, and, given the limitations of being male, try to understand a woman's perspective, I eagerly agreed. An interesting aside here is that even for Diane, who invited me, the breaking of the 'norm' also came as somewhat of a shock, even she had not perceived the intensity of the 'rules' governing the 'girls night out'.

When we arrived at one of the local town pubs that evening, most of the 'group' of young women were already there, laughing and joking. Two or three drinks had already been drunk, and others lined the bar, as someone had just bought a 'round'. As soon as they noticed me with Diane, the mood changed:

'What's he doing here?'

and

'It's _our_ night out'

became the general accusations aimed at her. Looks from others assured me that I was not welcome, I had invaded their space - a space which was consciously constructed, not in symbolic terms of patriarchy, but in concrete terms of men!

For a few minutes, the exchanges went to and fro between the women as to why I should or should not be there, until it was finally agreed that I could come and talk to them on another night. Having agreed a time and place, I left, once again reflecting on 'what might have been' but certainly conscious of the power of a group of young women when consciously articulated. This form of control exercised by these young women over certain conditions of their existence was a further instance where I was fast becoming unhappy about what I have previously called my 'link-pin'.

This 'link-pin' was concerned with a generic conception of labour and forms of consciousness which may stem from it. However, I was now becoming more concerned with how unemployed youth attempt to control aspects of their everyday existence, and also the forms of consciousness which develop from these forms of control. This was brought home to me forcibly one day while interacting with a mixed group of lads (employed - unemployed - students) in one of their homes. We had been there for the greater part of a morning, when someone suggested that they should go into town and 'buy a record or something', visit a cafe for a few games on the machines, then return home before going out again that evening. The lad whose home we were in needed to borrow some money before he could go, and he also hoped that his Mother would fetch the group back by car later that day. A process of negotiation started with his Mother, resulting in his having to clean certain parts of the house before

he could go. Observing him go through this negotiation process further convinced me that what tended to influence his consciousness about his position was not production (cleaning) or consumption (cafe) activities per se, but the relationships he had to enter into in the pursuit of controlling his resource needs. These relationships are based on relative degrees of domination and subordination, and manifest themselves in different forms of control dimensions. These control forms will be mentioned in greater depths in later chapters, and form the basis of the analytical framework in chapter seven; for now, suffice to say that the focus was now towards these control forms for the rest of the fieldwork.

A further point which I feel needs to be reflected upon relates to the impact of national and local concerns mediated through the media, their impact on the 'availability of the data' and their subsequent relationships to how these 'findings' are presented. The major example of this process within this study is the impact of the campaign against so-called 'social security fiddles'.

I had been out in the field for approximately three to four months when the 'campaign' in both national and local press started. Headline news in the local paper (The Kidderminster Shuttle) reported upon taxi drivers and window cleaners who had been caught working while claiming benefit. This had happened when, as the local Fraud Squad officer told me:

'We have one of our purges'.

Every so often this happens, and, coupled with anonymous phone calls and letters received everyweek, the impact on a small town can be extremely pervasive for a few weeks or months. In my own

case this had serious implications in that people both young and old who were in receipt of benefits just stopped speaking about it, whether they were or had been involved or not. Every time I approached the subject, I could feel people 'backing away'. They then became reluctant to answer further questions, even when these were what could be termed 'innocent'. Trying to elicit information at this time proved extremely difficult, even the simple act of appearing as a stranger in an area was looked upon with suspicion. I became increasingly aware of how I was being 'viewed' and of the 'impact' that this was having upon the 'findings'. Slowly, over a period of time, this pressure wore off and so-called 'normality' resumed, but I was left in no doubt as to the fear, suspicion and uneasiness that can be created in a community and how it pervades the lived experiences of those who live there.

This 'awareness' coupled with Becker's statement about 'taking sides' which I mentioned earlier has had important implications for the way in which I have reported the findings within the chapter on the Informal and Social Economy. In keeping with the rest of the study, quotes have still been used, but names, ages, gender and length of unemployment have not been included. Having promised anonymity when collecting the data I have not betrayed this trust. This moral and political position pervades every aspect of my study, and as Finch (op.cit.) suggests, this does not mean that we have to, 'be defensive about the relationship of our political commitments to our work' (p.87), but hopefully that by stating such commitments I, like her, 'was producing better sociology' (p.87).

Chapter Three

THE PRICE GOES UP, AND THE CUPS GET SMALLER.

(A Journey Through the Sights, Sounds
and Statistics of Kidderminster.)

'There's nothing around here, it's
a dead loss'.   (Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years)

'Union membership in Kidderminster has
dropped by 50% in the last five years'.
('Kidderminster Times & Stourport News' 7.10.82)

'As far as I can see, there's nothing
in Kiddy for us or the kids'.
(Bell & McKee, 1984. p.3)

'The first sound in the mornings was
the clumping of the mill-girls' clogs
down the cobbled street. Earlier than
that, I suppose, there were factory
whistles which I was never awake to hear'.
(Orwell, 1937: p.1)

So said George Orwell, in the first sentence of his perceptive study
of a Northern textile town. My own textile town awoke somewhat
differently. Gone are the days of the disciplined whistle which symbol-
ically summoned the workforce to another day of drudging labour; gone
also are the cobbled streets and the mill-girls' clogs. But what is
still there is the underlying spirit, a spirit born out of the
necessity to toil for ones daily bread. This necessity creates its
own discipline; the cobbled streets are now A roads, B roads, ringways
and motorways; the wooden clogs have been exchanged for fashionable,
flimsy, bright leather shoes, but the spirit remains; its manifestations
may have radically changed in some cases, but in others only minor
alterations are perceptable. It is the aim of this chapter to set out
this spirit and its different manifestations, and to try to portray
a picture and a feeling with which the reader may empathise, and which
contextualizes the overall framework of this study.

Over the last ten years, certain aspects of Kidderminster have
changed dramatically; factories have closed, unemployment has risen
considerably, crime figures and drug abuse have increased, unpaid
rents have doubled and the towns' only remaining cinema has shut down.
As Bell and McKee (1985) suggest:

'Images of empty factories; poor amenities; burgeoning
consumerism in the growth of supermarkets, and new dual
carriageways being built to lead out and away from the
town hit our consciousness with a force when we
surveyed our respondents experiences'. (p.3)

It is these images that convey the waning spirit of the town, from the major ones of Trade Union leaders expressing concern about their falling membership due to job losses:

> 'Union membership in Kidderminster has dropped by
> 50% in the last five years'
> ('Kidderminster Times and Stourport News', 7.10.82)

to the minor ones of town dignitaries lamenting the lack of entries in the annual 'Best Kept Garden' competition.

From the quantative facts of the growth of unemployment from 503 in 1974 to 5,812 in 1983 (figures from local Job Centre), to the more qualitative aspects which I observed, such as a young Mother and Father vainly searching all their pockets, and eventually tipping out the contents of her handbag onto the table in a cafe in order to find enough pennies to buy their child a cake while they shared one cup of tea between them.

Symbolically, the cafe becomes an important place in the process of 'going into town' for the unemployed. For a short period you are behaving like other 'shoppers'; you have denied yourself and your family many things as you walked around and around the shops, looking for the cheap items, 'special offers' and damaged goods - which you consciously knew to be on a shelf or in a basket separated from the other goods. You can now try, after feeling 'degraded', to 'normalize' your existence by 'having a drink'. Just, as important, it's warm in there, there are lights, people, movement - back home there is cold, isolation and depression. But even here, in the facade of plenty with its well-stocked cases, you could tell the squeeze was on, when over a period of time I noticed that 'as the prices went up, the cups became smaller'. To me, this is what expresses a manifestation of that underlying spirit of a town.

The town 'awakes' in a number of ways; in one way it starts
with the carpet factory workers arriving between 5.30 and 6.00 am
to start their 'early' (6 am to 2 pm) shift. It must be remembered
that these 'early starters' have already been up since 4.30 or 5.00 am,
just being involved in the process of 'getting ready for work'. Here
both men and women have evolved, over time, family rituals to facilitate,
on a daily basis, this 'getting ready' process, and this generally
develops, with repetition, into set patterns of arriving at work. The
same groups of people arriving together by car, bus, or just walking
together can therefore be observed over a number of days. Other
individuals arrive by being 'dropped off' by their husband or wife -
and it is very noticeable how many men 'drop' their wives off and
appropriate the car for themselves. Over a short spell, the streets
adjacent to the factories become alive with people scurrying to work '
in order not to be late to 'clock-on' and subsequently 'lose a quarter',
i.e. a loss of fifteen minutes money for being over two minutes late.
Most of the older women carry shopping bags with their handbags tucked
inside, while the younger women tend to separate the two. The men,
both old and young, generally carry army-type haversacks or duffle
bags for their flasks and sandwiches. These workers have, however,
declined in numbers dramatically over the last twenty years, as may
be seen from the table on the next page.

Within the manufacturing sector as a whole, the 1981 census shows
that throughout the county the workforce decreased from 90,850 to
83,840 in ten years, a reduction of 7.7%, while for Kidderminster and
its outlying regions the figure was 27.5%. This is also expressed over
a longer historical period by reference to a compilation of the major
employers workforce numbers and the amount of carpet produced.

3:1 Production and Number of Employees in the Carpet Industry 1912 - 1982.

(Tomkinson and Hall, 1985. p.80)

Despite the decreased number of carpet workers, there are still enough to give the town a second abrupt awakening at about 7.15 am, when what is termed the 'Day Shift' starts to arrive. On this shift, the overwhelming number of workers are women.

Although the carpet trade has contracted, over the period of ten years from 1971 - 81 the number of economically active women in the county increased by 18,032 (18.9%), from 95,410 in 1971 to 113,452 in 1981. Table 3:2 shows that for the Wyre Forest, of which Kidderminster is the major urban connurbation, the trend can be expressed as:

3:2 Economically Active Women in Wyre Forest 1971 - 1981.

1971			1981		
Single	Married	Total	Single	Married	Total
4,560	10,730	15,290	5,124	11,507	16,631

A point relating to this growth is that, historically, certain patriarchal formations have been gathered by the local male workers, in response to what could be argued as the growing basis of the local women's economic independency, i.e. their weekly wage, and also by local capitalists in the process of exerting further control over their running costs and ultimate profit. Initially, the factory owners tried to introduce women workers on to the new spool looms in the late 1800's in an attempt to lower costs by paying lower wages and thus increasing their profits, as they had in many Northern textile towns. This was realistically interpreted by the male workers as an attack on their wages and conditions secured by their Trade Union, and was vigorously opposed (Walsgrove, 1982).

On the outskirts of the town, and in places slicing straight through, the town is awakened yet again by another work force - the commuters - at about the same time. The steady stream of traffic makes its way mainly towards the West Midlands connurbation; a twenty mile drive, with major congestion at the other end, means that people have to start out early. It is noticeable that the central electoral wards of the town recorded the lowest levels of travel to work by car in the area, and therefore the major participants in this steady stream not only live outside the town, but pass it by. 'Kiddy', in their perceptions, becomes a place which you go through to get to somewhere else. This 'somewhere else' increased for many people during the decade 1971 - 81, rising from 19,680 (49.26%) to 25,760 (66.39%) travelling mainly by car, with a decline in the use of public transport from 13.25% in 1971 to 5.83% in 1981.

The effects that this decrease in public transport has had on the geographical mobility of the unemployed, especially for those in outlying areas, can be seen in their many complaints to me about 'exorbitant' fares (e.g. 87p for 3 miles), and their annoyance about the irregularity of the services. This is another reason for their isolation; on the days when they do 'go into town' many of the unemployed walk. From three or four miles out, you can see people walking; young, middle-aged (the old get a cheap bus pass), men, women, children, whole families; walking, whether in sun or rain, walking; that is the other spirit which lies behind these figures.

Returning to the daily pattern, once the early surge, and second stage of factory workers and commuters have 'gone in' or

'gone through' as the case may be, the town goes quiet once more. Not for long, really only a short time, but enough to perceive the break. As though having once been woken, the town turns over for 'another few minutes' doze, only to be roused again before it has had time to 'snuggle down' by the sound of the flurry of office and shop workers heading for their places of employment.

Table 3:3 shows that this second form of awakening has increased, whilst manufacturing has declined.

3:3 Swing from Manufacturing to Service Sector Employment 1971-81.

	Persons employed		% change.
	1971	1981	
Service sector:	16,540	21,120	+ 27.7
Manufacturing sector:	19,960	14,470	- 25.5

(Source: Census data 1981)

Again, the inner wards of the town have a higher level of unemployed in the service sector than the 9.9% average throughout the county.

Observing these service sector workers, it can be seen that their daily clothes differ appreciably from those of the earlier factory workers; here clothes take on a more fashionable look, with modern styles of shoes, coats and bags becoming the norm. Very often, the local town centre cafes resound with these office and shop workers having a quiet drink before their daily grind begins. Here again it is possible to observe, over a cup of tea or coffee, the different manifestations of power in such things as dress, talk, newspapers, bags or briefcases, etc. between the lower office and shop assistants and their overseers in terms of middle management.

Also at this time in the morning, school children make their impact, enlivening the scene. The streets abound with coaches full of children from the outlying rural areas, cars carrying parents who are dropping children off at school and many children making their way to school on foot, strung out along the pavements leading to their school gates. This slow train of young people has all the hallmarks of the existence of alienated youth, with a slow, grudging acceptance of another day at school. On the other hand, in the outlying areas of the town, the 'chosen few' attend the more prosperous private schools. Those who attend these centres of private education on a daily basis do not, however, have to walk, trudging their way there through rain or snow like the council estate kids, but are almost invariably driven there, usually in what 'ordinary folk' term their:

'Flashy second cars'.

This scene in Kidderminster reflects the growing trend of a greater division of wealth and material existence between certain sections of society (Field, 1986) which is reflected locally in the monthly increases in house prices for private homes and the growing number of families owing rent in council accommodation. This growth in rent arrears is also the subject of vigorous criticism in the local press, with headlines suggesting that we:

' SHAME THEM. '

The method of achieving this being:

' Their names being made public in the
Housing Committee minutes'.

('Kidderminster Shuttle' 29.11.85)

This growing social division of wealth also manifests itself
outside many schools in terms of 'second' family cars. Within
the local area, the census returns show that these second cars
have increased by approximately 10% between 1971 and 1981. Overall,
the car ownership levels were:

3:4 Car Ownership levels within Wyre Forest 1971 - 1981.

KEY

Two or more cars

One car

No car

(Source: Census data 1981)
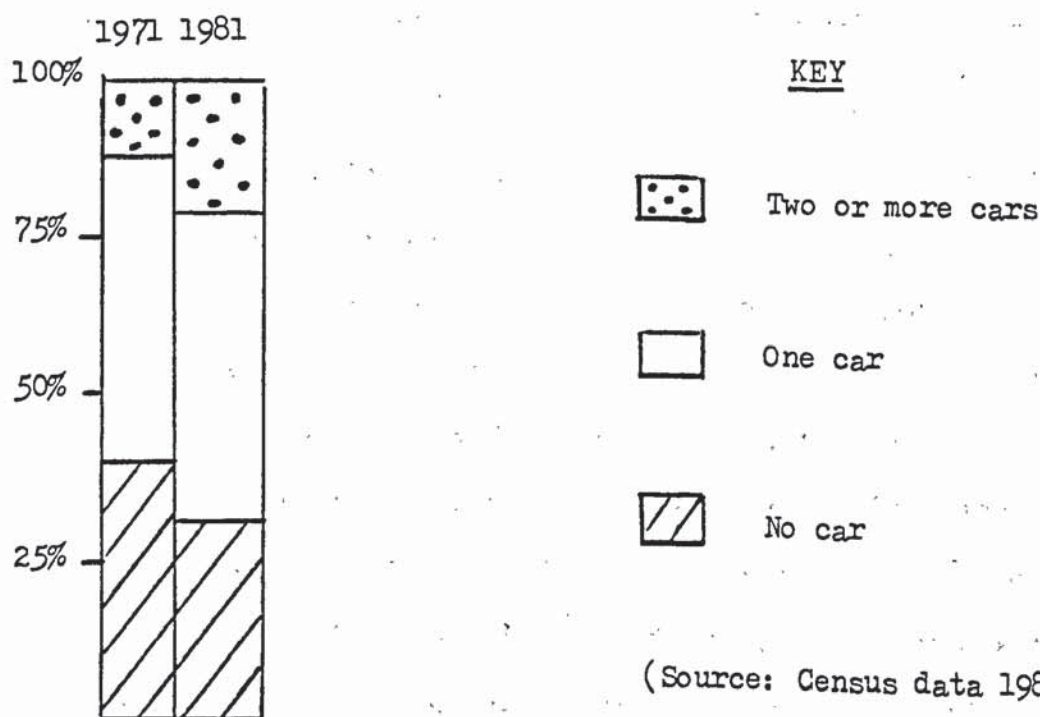
Once the children are at school, slowly the early shoppers
begin to appear. These can be split into a number of distinct
groups; there are the shoppers who have money to spend, and
who stride confidently from shop to shop with baskets and bags
bulging more and more - baskets which are usually made out of
good quality materials and which become symbols of their conspicuous
consumption. Other shopper's main function seems to be 'window
shopping', the confident strides replaced by the dull trailing

from shop to shop, generally 'looking' rather than buying becomes
their norm. Carrying symbols seem to be plastic shopping bags,
rather than the quality leather, wicker or canvas ones, with their
concave sides looking conspicuous by their emptyness. Worse still
are those individuals with no carrying symbols at all, walking the
streets and shops merely as a way of filling in time, spending
hours over one or two cups of tea, then moving on to somewhere
else, as though never being part of the 'normal' world of shoppers.

About now, 10 to 10.30 am, the first of those who have to
endure the indignity of 'signing-on' start to arrive at the dole
office. This is situated nearly on the crest of a hill, so for many
the indignity is compounded by the long haul upwards, in order to
receive their entitlement. The way back is no better; staring up
the hill at them, like a face whose eyes always seem to be following
you, no matter where you are, is a symbol of their times and
misfortunes, a huge 'FOR SALE' sign screwed to the wall of an empty
carpet factory. The rows of empty windows, now covered with the
grime of neglect and decay, transmit only a feeling of emptiness
and hopelessness, where once lights of hope and prosperity shone
through at any hour of the day. Back on the hill, activity comes
in short bursts as the isolated unemployed come together to 'sign
on', brought together not for collective expression, but for
instrumental administrative purposes only. Inside, lines of
individuals face the counter, some nervously moving their weight
from foot to foot, others embarrassed and trying to 'hide', while
a few take on an argumentative stance, geeing themselves up for the
symbolic integration of 'signing on'.

Having survived this 'assault', it's ironic that the first
sight to meet their eyes as they descend the steps clutching their
attendance card is the graveyard directly opposite! Even this
seems to be redundant, with old entrance gates locked, the lodge
boarded up and the graves overgrown for the want of some care and
attention.

Historically, the numbers of unemployed in Kidderminster and
district have increased during general periods of national
economic decline. Since 1923 these are represented as follows:

3:5 Number of Unemployed in Kidderminster and District 1923 - 1982.

(Tomkinson and Hall, 1985. p.94)

An important point to be remembered here is that these figures have been collected under a number of different and modified procedures, and that it is therefore difficult to analyze and theorize about such trends when the base figure has consistently changed. Having made this point we can, however, tentatively observe a number of phases.

Prior to the outbreak of the second world war, the pattern seems to have been relatively stable, with a sudden dramatic increase just prior to 1932. This figure again falls in 1936, but rises again dramatically in 1937. The real decline in unemployment comes in the immediate post-war years, but again, from the late 50's we have a steady rise in numbers, until in the early 1970's, figures match those of the pre-war period. From 1974 there is again a dramatic increase to the latest figure of 5,395 (Job Centre figure, 8.5.86).

Redundancies over this latter period have mainly been in the textiles and metal goods industries. Here, although classification has changed again for the 1985 figures, table 3:7 shows this steep increase to be confined almost entirely to these industries. (Manpower Intelligence Unit figures, 1985).

REDUNDANCIES BY INDUSTRY 1978 - 83

Industry	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983 (to date)
Food, Drink and Tobacco		224	98	187	79	88
Metal manufacture	28			64		
Mechanical engineering		96	11	25		
Metal goods			249		275	290
Textiles	791	325	1739	81	215	444
Timber, Furniture		33	40			
Construction			64		34	
Transport and Communication				12		
Distributive trades	27		14	29		12
Insurance, Banking etc.			47			
Professional and Scientific services.	52	15				
Miscellaneous Services			14		103	38
Public Administration and Defence				16	20	

3:7 ## REDUNDANCIES BY INDUSTRY MAY 1985 - JULY 1985

Industry	
Agriculture	0
Energy and Water	0
Extraction of Minerals	23
Metal Goods	473
Other Manufacturers	40
Construction	0
Distributive trades	78
Transport and Communication	0
Insurance, Banking etc.	0
Other services	52

(Source: Manpower Intelligence Unit, Birmingham).

In terms of the numbers of unemployed youths within the Kidderminster area, these can be seen in the comparative figures for young men and young women given in table 3:8. Generally, across the age groups, there are more unemployed male than female youth, with the largest section of young unemployed amongst 20-24 year olds who have been out of employment for 7 - 26 weeks, with the figure remaining high for up to four years. This shows the build-up of the unemployment problem for youth in Kidderminster.

3:8 Youth Unemployment by Age and Duration: Ages 16 - 24, 1983 - 86. (January figures given for each year).

	Males				Females			
Weeks Age 16	83	84	85	86	83	84	85	86
1 - 6	25	18	7	18	21	15	5	10
7 - 26	48	45	36	32	35	24	35	31
27 - 52	2	2	1	1	4	2	3	2
53 - 104	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
105 - 208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Over 208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age 17	83	84	85	86	83	84	85	86
1 - 6	31	28	35	19	23	25	22	22
7 - 26	57	75	74	54	40	63	42	39
27 - 52	24	36	29	27	27	29	22	16
53 - 104	22	24	23	13	14	22	15	21
105 - 208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Over 208	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	MALES					FEMALES			
Weeks Age 18	83	84	85	86		83	84	85	86
1 - 6	28	32	26	22		19	23	28	20
7 - 26	51	89	81	84		64	90	73	62
27 - 52	33	33	30	40		33	43	29	32
53 - 104	46	39	45	31		22	33	35	27
104 - 208	8	14	15	12		11	12	9	10
Over 208	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0

	MALES					FEMALES			
Weeks Age 19	83	84	85	86		83	84	85	86
1 - 6	10	18	22	22		17	26	14	23
7 - 26	50	66	63	56		31	58	49	51
27 - 52	28	37	32	28		22	31	25	19
53 - 104	40	35	36	26		29	43	28	30
104 - 208	21	36	18	31		15	19	22	18
Over 208	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0

	MALES					FEMALES			
Weeks Age 20-24	83	84	85	86		83	84	85	86
1 - 6	50	67	83	95		48	55	69	57
7 - 26	137	187	196	209		114	131	128	144
27 - 52	89	104	124	120		82	85	91	81
53 - 104	105	108	102	118		38	75	64	70
105 - 208	141	142	110	82		37	60	49	52
Over 208	0	32	66	77		0	15	24	31

(Source: Manpower Intelligence
Unit, Birmingham.)

Figures for the under 18's must also be situated and understood
within the wider context of 'special measures' designed by the
state for young people who have not found employment or taken
up educational provision. Within the Kidderminster and district
catchment area, the figures since 1983 can be seen in table 3:9.
Out of approximately 1,000 + school leavers each year, at least
half are taken up on Government schemes, with less than a quarter
finding employment. Also, there are a growing number of young
people who are not bothering to register at the local careers
office. This may reflect a trend towards education, not just amongst
full time students, but also part time unemployed students. Alternatively,
it may reflect a growing awareness of the lack of credibility of
a service which is currently structured within a declining
industrial base, and where the term 'career' is even more a middle
class form of discourse.

3:9   Young People Notified at the Local Careers Centre, 1983 - 86.
       (Numbers based on Oct. figures for '83, '84, '85 and June '86)

	83	84	85	86
YOP WEEP	16			
Y.T.S.	460	706	669	477
Community Projects	143	127	83	
Started work	214	241	142	53
No contact	25	38	48	
Approximate leavers	1,063	1,122	1,043	468

(Source: Kidderminster Careers
Centre).

To summarize, overall unemployment levels more than doubled between 1980 and 1984; in April 1980 the unemployment rate was 6.9% of the workforce, while in April 1983 it was 14.7%, culminating, in the last few months of the study, in 15.4% compared with the national average of 13.4%.

This increase in unemployment has certainly hit the poorest section of the community hardest, and can be seen in statistical form in the differences in the numbers within occupational categories:

3:10 Changes in Employment by Occupation 1971 - 1981.

Occupation	1971	1981	% change
Employers/Professional	5,330	7,160	+ 34.3%
Non-manual	10,250	11,850	+ 15.6%
Skilled	13,090	10,400	- 20.6%
Semi/Un-skilled	11,100	9,120	- 17.8%

(Source: Census data 1981)

and, at a more subjective level, it can be seen in the formation of a version of a glorified soup-kitchen within the centre of Kidderminster, where the poor, homeless or unemployed etc. can get a drink or a meal at reduced rates.

By now though, we are at mid-day, and the fortunate, in terms of the power of the wage, are demanding their food. Many of the pubs now cater for these individuals with a whole range of enticements, and the town centre ones in particular get fairly full. For many of the women workers however, this is the only time in which to conduct their 'other job', so relaxation is cut short in order to 'get some food in' or do any other necessary shopping. At dinnertime, therefore, the town again resounds with women hurrying about in order to get back for the next 'clocking in'.

On Cattle Market day (Thursday), the town abounds with trucks of many shapes and sizes. People in 'farm' clothes now mingle with the 'ordinary' passersby, symbolically giving the town a 'rural atmosphere' characteristic of its actual location on the boundary between the West Midlands and the 'gateway' to mid-Wales. Here again the numbers of workers have declined from 1,281 in 1963 to 796 in 1986. This decrease in numbers is also reflected in the power - or lack of it - exercised by the farmworkers, who have seen their wages fall, despite a pay rise awarded by the Agricultural Wages Board. Failure by some local farmers to implement this increase resulted in a local Union official saying:

> 'I know workers who work a 75 hour week
> and take home £90 after tax. Some even
> lower ..... the claim went to arbitration,
> but the rise wasn't implemented.'
>
> (Kidderminster Shuttle: 29.11.85)

After mid-day, the first of the shift workers are leaving, after their 'early' shift, and are being replaced by those on the 'late' - i.e. 2 pm to 10 pm - shift. Cars, bikes and walkers again start to leave the town, this time though, the nature of their leaving expresses a more oppositional form to the contingencies of the labour process than did their arrival in the early morning. Now it is characteristic to see the workers streaming out of the factory gates, most walking very quickly, some actually running. Striding now with a degree of purpose, a purpose which has been negated in time for the past eight hours, the time during which an individual has deferred themselves in order that now they can get on with the business of 'living'. This may sound rather obvious to some, while to others it may be a totally inappropriate statement, but I would

argue that one only has to observe the burst of energy as the workers come out of the factory gate - like the 'fountain' when a bottle of lemonade is shaken before opening - to see what I mean.

This 'pent-up' appearance however, slowly disipates itself along the surrounding streets. Follow any group of workers - old or young - to the bus stop, and you can see how their daily toil soon takes its toll. Row upon row of weary travellers wait to be taken home, encapsulated in a resigned psychical stance embodying all the spent effort of the day. A psychical stance which, by tomorrow morning, will be recouped just enough to withstand another process of appropriation, an appropriation which becomes embedded in every line which characterizes the face of an old carpet worker.

Shortly after this exodus takes place, children again become part of the scene, having been released from their own 'daily grind'. Shuffling home becomes, for them, a caricature of their elders, enacted in an alienated form throughout their daily lives. This is also the time when you are most likely to see more of the young unemployed, as they become more confident about being seen on the streets (p.109). Mixing with sixth formers, college students and young shift workers tends to 'hide' the young unemployed from the public glare. About this time, these groups now manifest themselves in their own street sub-culture, a culture becoming increasingly mediated by state agencies in forms of surveillance and control, rather than in its direct relationship to capital. In a formal sense, these sub-cultures are mediated by the police, careers officers, social workers and other 'helping' agencies. It is here that local 'youth figures' tend to play an important part, as significant

others, in the lives of some young people. In very general terms, the young people tend to split into two groups, 'clubables' and 'unclubables'. In terms of the latter, these can only be reached by informal methods of social contact, on the streets, in the cafes and arcades and this becomes the norm for contact. Here a detached youth worker is able to give advice and assistance, with the bulk of his/her work in terms of contacts, being from about this time (late afternoon).

By way of illustration, over an approximately nine month period during part of my intensive field work, the local Youth Liaison Officer met with about 4,000 problems and requests for information. These he broke down into the following areas:

3:11 Categories of Problems, Queries and Requests for Information From Youth Liaison Officer.

Problems

1. Boredom........................ 100% of all contacts
2. Cash, benefits, debt............ 283
3. Depression and isolation........ 178
4. Family stress and tension....... 158
5. Homelessness.................... 101
6. Legal........................... 59
7. Alcohol and/or drug abuse....... 46
8. Mental stress and breakdown..... 36
9. Incest and sexual............... 28
10. Industrial relations............ 18
11. Marital breakdown............... 12

Queries and requests for Information

1. Work............................ 857
2. Activities...................... 503
3. Training/Education.............. 489
4. Organizing projects............. 453
5. Other (various) 401
6. Government schemes.............. 121
7. Voluntary work 102
8. Colleges........................ 78
9. Holidays........................ 72
10. Setting up business............. 2

Mingling with the conspicuous youth now on the streets are the day shift factory workers, shop and office staff. All these people are now heading home, which for most of them means away from the actual town centre, going home to different parts of the town and the surrounding areas, areas which have become designated as 'bad' or 'good' areas; some whose addresses hang like shackles about their occupants. People in certain areas complain about being embarrassed when having to give their address, and in some cases how it actually goes 'against' them at an interview, because of the generalized labels which employers attach to all who live there. These housing 'problem areas' tend to be concentrated in the local authority housing areas and the private rented sector (27.3% and 7.6% respectively). They also receive their stigma construction from their counterparts within the so-called salubrious neighbour-hoods, where the percentage of owner occupiers is well above the county figure (67.2% - 61.1%). This number again reflects the growing wealth gap within the community, and it has grown substantially from its 1971 (census) figure of 54%.

Streaming through and away with the rest of the local workers at this time are the commuters returning home from their 'daily grind'. As in the morning, Kidderminster is just a place they go through, a place on the way home to their evening meal and their 'own time'.

For a short period now, the town goes 'dead', a lull before the evening's activity, such as it is. For some of the young unemployed, this activity usually centres around the pub; a warm place, some-where to socialize, act like other youths - be 'normal'. This

'normalization' process is developed in greater depth in chapter four, suffice it to say here that this process becomes an important element in the creation of the youth's overall identity. Other young people - i.e. the 'clubables' - are catered for in a number of ways, but for the majority, nothing really exists in the way of entertainment:

> 'There's nothing around here, it's
> a dead loss'.
> > Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

This is also felt by older adults:

> 'As far as I can see, there's nothing
> in Kiddy for us or the kids'.
> > (Bell and McKee, 1984. p.3)

The evening's activity - or lack of it - is abruptly agitated at 10 pm, when once again factory workers pour out onto the streets after finishing their 2 to 10 shift. Mingling with their daytime counterparts they make their way home, too late to really enjoy their 'own' time, they retire to bed. These changing shift patterns not only disrupt the '.free' time of the worker, but also that of the whole family; another factor being the disruption of the temporal clock in terms of sleep patterns, meals etc.

Slowly now, people start to leave the town after their nights' activity, symbolical red tail-lights once again disappear from the town centre, last buses having gone a long while ago, leaving some individuals with no alternative but to walk. The town now takes on an 'empty' feeling; streetlights shine for the odd passing car or late-night walker - these walkers now contain a high percentage of the young, male, unemployed. Historically they may once have taken their 'girl' home, now, having slept late, there is no feeling or need of sleep, late night sessions now become the norm. Young women,

on the other hand, are still expected to be 'indoors' by now. Late
night sessions are only allowed for them if they stay at a friends'
home or have a girl friend staying with them overnight.

At last, the town comes to rest.

Chapter Four

TEMPORAL FRAMEWORKS, COPING STRATEGIES AND IDENTITY CREATION.

'I'm not one of the unemployed.'
                    Mick: unemployed 2 years.

'They used to call me a lady of
leisure - until I cracked up.'
                    Jane: unemployed 18 months.

'I don't know what the exact time
is, but it seems like afternoon.'
                    Michael: unemployed 9 months.

'I just want to be normal - you
know, like everyone else.'
                    Philip: unemployed 1 year.

What the previous quotes, and many more like them, have in common is that they highlight and problematize certain aspects of the complex phenomena surrounding youth unemployment. How can a lad, unemployed for two years, vehemently state that he is not one of the unemployed? What issues do we need to appropriate to adequately understand how 'free time' can become violently oppressive? And in what sense does 'time' become so irrelevant that it just 'seems like afternoon'? It is to these, and issues like them, that the next chapter is devoted.

I will start by considering the problem of time in the experience of the young unemployed, and subsequently relate this to certain coping strategies and how, by the use of individual and collective experiences, these coping strategies facilitate identity creation.

Temporal Frameworks.

> 'I don't know what the exact time is,
> but it seems like afternoon'.
> > Michael, 19: unemployed 9 months

> 'I don't do it all at once, I have
> a break now and then, it gives me
> something to do, makes time seem
> less endless'.
> > Elaine, 17: unemployed 6 months.

The notion of time, as these two quotes suggest, is an extremely problematical phenomena in the lives of most young unemployed people. How they cope with this amorphous imposition, enveloping their very being, is ultimately connected with their overall feelings of control, and subsequent identity. The paradox being that the very temporal form given to, and those created by, the young unemployed themselves, 'negate' the actual radical potentiality of their position, here understood in terms of temporal frameworks and modes of being, and also tends to locate them in a never-ending present and a 'being' of de-personalization.

As a way of introduction, I would suggest that these two quotes emphasize the historical debate on the qualitative and quantitative nature of time. In the quantitative paradigm, time is conceptualized as continuous, homogenous, as atomistic equal parts, is absolute and is fundamentally 'being'. In contrast, the qualitative paradigm conceptualizes time as heterogeneous, relativistic, unequivalent and as a plurality of forms is in the process of 'becoming'. The former one can be conceptualized, in a Kantian sense, as a form of consciousness in which time is a universal category, inherent in the mind, and in the latter case, as Starkey (1985) suggests, a collective phenomena in which, 'Consciousness is an active tension of different durees'. This collective phenomena has historically been located firmly within the Durkheimian tradition, in which the 'Foundation of the category of time is the rhythm of social life', (Durkheim, 1915. p.22). This relativistic concept of time paradoxically highlights that in the Western societies, the dominant concept of time is a bourgeois one of absolutism, quantification, and one in which social life is geared to economic production and profit. This emergence of the quantification of time is aptly illustrated in E.P.Thompson's famous paper 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism' (1967) in which he analyses the spread of watches and the dominance of clock time which facilitates the concern, 'Simultaneously with time sense in its technological conditioning, and with time measurement as a means of labour exploitation'. The importance of the commodification of time in the historical development of capitalism is also fundamental to Weber (1930) in his analysis of the rationalization and bureaucratization of Western society. Therefore, in capitalist society, because of its insistence on the commodification of time, based on fundamentally

economic criteria, there is an idea that 'time is a scarce resource'.
Therefore, we are told that we must not only 'save time' in as many ways
as possible, but also use whatever 'free time' we have in meaningful and
constructive ways. This, as Aronowitz (1980) has shown, is spurious,
because in terms of capitalist social relations 'free time' is a specific
form of alienation, one in which 'free time' is a deferred form of
gratification, consistent with 'selling' your 'soul' or labour. As
Weber said, wasting time was, 'The first, and in principle, the deadliest
of sins', (Weber, op.cit. p.157). We can, I would suggest, therefore
highlight the cultural imperatives which impose themselves on the very
conception which society has of its members who find themselves with
'time' on their hands, such as the 'idle rich' and the 'unemployed'. The
latter term receiving greater condemnation because of its supposed
'parasitical' nature and continued self-infliction.

The economic ethic then, is a temporal structure based on the clock.
Work provides guidelines by which we are supposed to structure time and
our lives. The classic study by Jahoda et.al. (1933) suggests just this
idea. Work imparts a rhythm to our daily existence; take this away and we
find ourselves 'lost' in a world symbolized in the language of the
unemployed as 'boredom'. But I suggest that concentrating only on the
negative aspects of this seriously misleads any notion of 'time' experienced
by the unemployed either collectively or individually. I must state
quite clearly that I am not maintaining that the temporal frameworks
experienced by the unemployed are manifest in spheres of meaningful
activity, but they are also, I contend, not subjected to the realm of
totally amorphous existence. There is certainly a degree of time structure,
both imposed from the outside and created by the young unemployed them-
selves. It is to the interaction between these that I now turn my attention.

Within the temporal frameworks experienced by the young
unemployed, I would suggest that there are three major processes
which are generated, involving i) a daily, ii) a fortnightly
and, in an embryonic form, a third form of long-term attitude.
In terms of the fortnightly process, there are five characteristics,
which I have termed:

i) Fortnightly

ii) Hanging-on Days

iii) Winding-down Days

iv) Living Days

v) Existing Days.

4:1   FORTNIGHTLY TEMPORAL FRAMEWORKS.

Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.
Hanging-on Days		Living Days		Winding-down Days					Living Days		Existing Days		
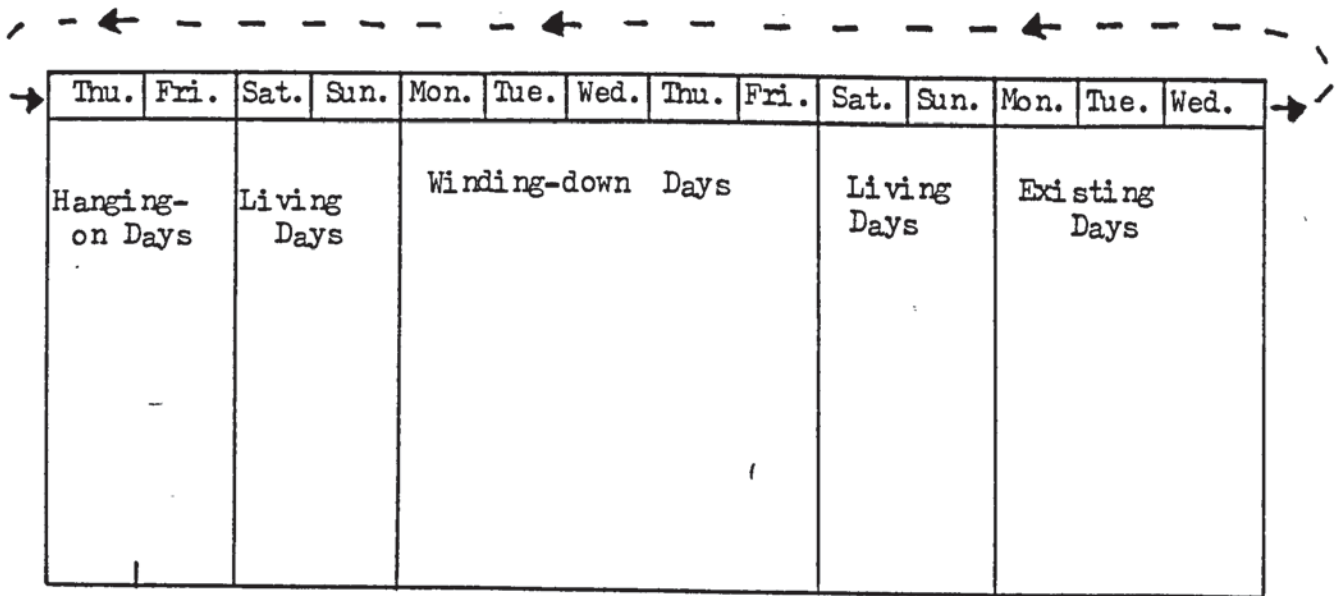
'Sign On' Day.

The daily process is characterised by three forms, which
are i) amorphous and ii) quasi-amorphous in character and
iii) based on clock time. The embryonic long-term attitude
will depend on a variety of factors, particularly the length
of time spent out of employment.

4:2   DAILY TEMPORAL FRAMEWORKS.
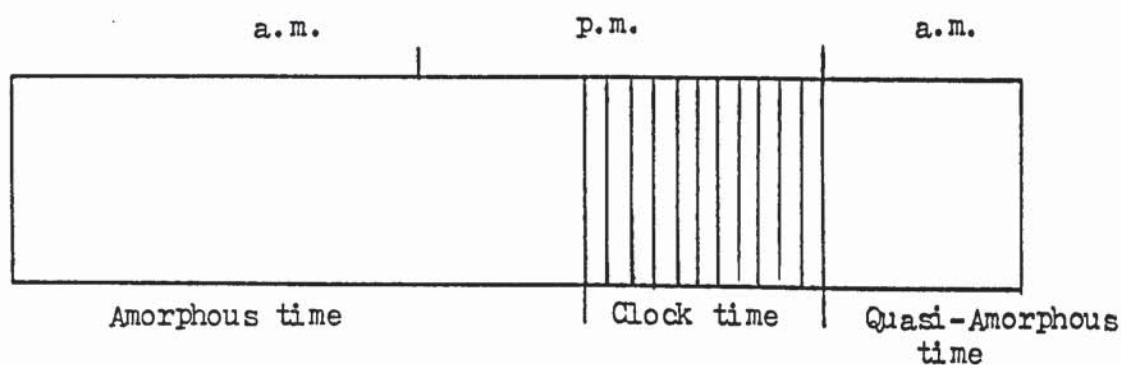
In order to understand how these different temporal
frameworks operate, the next section will be devoted to an
analysis of how they are reflexed in the lives of the young
unemployed.

<u>Fortnightly Process.</u>

This cycle provides an important structure, and is geared by the day the giro arrives. The possibility of constructive action is constrained by this economic fact, and produces a consciouness limited to this time factor:

> 'You can't plan very far ahead. I
> suppose I go from one giro to
> another.'
>> Jane: unemployed 18 months.

This emphasis placed on the day the giro arrived was characteristic of nearly all discussions with unemployed youth of both sexes. Even where resources were in greater abundance, and rational legitimation would allow calling on them, as was the case of most middle class youths, the 'feelings' of individual control, as seen in remarks such as:

> 'It's <u>my</u> money.'

were constantly referred to.

This emphasis on control, and being able to do what they liked with their own money, make the mechanisms of achieving this of real symbolical significance. 'Signing on day' therefore, becomes another important day in this fortnightly process. The fact that it is imposed from the outside, and forces the declarer to testify every two weeks to his/her continued submission to authority, naturally produces a variety of responses to this symbolic subjugation. In some cases, individuals try to dismiss the day altogether:

> 'I don't mind signing on, it gets
> me out of the house.'
>> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

Others become angry about having to go; one lad who I was waiting for outside the office came out and stormed off, I caught up with him a few hundred yards down the road, and asked him:

> 'What's the matter John?'   'Nothing.'

As we walked a little further, I enquired, 'Have they stopped some
of your money?' 'No, it's nothing like that, but I tell you, one day
I'm going to smash that smiling bitch straight in the fucking face.'

The violent sexism of this and the rest of the conversation
resulted from a situation where subjection and felt degradation
were bitterly experienced, and were then transferred, as a means of
control, to an area in which the individual - and in this case,
male power - was ultimate.

Hanging-on Days.

This temporal framework exists between the day a youth 'signs on'
and the day the giro arrives. It is here that time is experienced in
terms of tenseness, the days can't go by quickly enough:

'I wish my money would arrive'.

Time here expresses a unique intensity; things can be planned and
hoped for, but, at the same time, it must not be rushed. There's
nothing you can do for two or three days, and what about if the
giro's late again?

> 'I don't know what those bastards
> up there get up to, I stopped in
> all day on Saturday for that fucking
> money. I had to go cap in hand to
> my old man'.
>   Ian, 20: unemployed 2½ years.

Once the giro _has_ arrived, giving the possibility of some action,
we turn to what I have called:

Living Days

Here, time is organized around activities with other, employed
people, usually at the weekend. Here time becomes segmented once
again, based on the clock. It's a time when 'normal living' can
again be resumed, even if this reduces action for the rest of the

week, resigning yourself once again to a slower temporal order:

> 'I'm always out on a weekend,
> even if I have to stay in the
> rest of the week.'
>>   Eileen, 19: unemployed 6 months.

Existing Days

This emphasis on 'staying in' is another phenomena of another temporal framework, in which the first week after the giro arrives is characterized by more activity in the evenings than occurs during the latter part of the fortnight before the next signing on day. This lead to what I have termed 'Winding-down Days'.

Winding-down Days.

Here the dominant temporal experience is one of waiting, structured by the constant reference to signing on day:

> 'I'll stay in mostly this week,
> I've no money left, and it's
> still four days until I sign on'.
>>   Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

> 'This is the part that really
> pisses me off. Nothing to do,
> no money; I just think about
> signing on, because when I've
> done that, I know I'll soon
> have money and can go out and
> do something'.
>>   Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

Here days hang heaviest. There are very few daily markers by which to structure, or even to give tenuous form, to the amorphous imposition being experienced. Getting up late is one, and is likely to be greater in this period than at any other time:

> 'I'm usually in bed until 11 or 12.30'.
>>   Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

This can lead to the problem of getting to sleep:

> 'If I stay in bed until dinner time,
> it's at least 2 or 3 o'clock at night
> when I go to bed'.
>
> Andrew, 19: unemployed 6 months.

Here then, in many different ways, a new structure emerges, in which emotions experienced by the young unemployed are grounded. This fortnightly process, with its periods of highs and lows, action and waiting, is further interspersed with what I have termed 'The Daily Round'.

The Daily Round.

This daily round can, I suggest, be split into three forms. The first is a temporal framework that is experienced mainly in terms of isolation. This occurs even when parent(s) or siblings are at home. Keeping 'out of the way' is thought of by most youths as a way of lessening the excessive burden they feel imposed on their family. Also, 'being around' and interacting in any meaningful way is extremely difficult when the cultural imperatives are strongly sounding 'YOU SHOULD BE OUT'. Most unemployed youths feel most at ease during the latter part of the afternoon and evening when, as Coffield et.al. (1983) state, they feel less distinguishable from the employed. It is difficult, I would suggest, if not completely impossible, to flick a switch day in and day out, month in and month out - possibly even year in and year out - and move from being bored, depressed, worried and ill at ease all day, to being in a light-hearted carefree mood conducive to social interaction at night. How they cope with, and structure, time before this period becomes, therefore, extremely important in finding if any benefit can be made of this so-called 'normal' time.

One way, as I have already mentioned, is to stay in bed. You can't stay there all day, but the 'time' left is shorter to structure, or endure. Another way is to break down any domestic work which has to be done into stages, e.g. dusting, then having a fag, hoovering, then having a drink etc. This device is mainly used by young women; lads, because they do not have as much domestic work imposed upon them, have to create other markers:

> 'He said he would come this morning - I'll give him until 10.30 and then ring him'.
>> Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

It was not that this lad was in any rush to see his mate, as he went on to say:

> 'I don't know what we're going to do when he gets here'.

It was just that he had set a marker - 10.30 - and now the problem became how to cope until then, rather than having to cope with a whole morning, which is an amorphous temporal framework, with no identifiable features to help it along. The problem is made worse by your being made conscious that you are in control of your time, that your time is your own, but that your resources are totally inadequate to use it in any meaningful form. Here again, time hangs heavy, although the dominant temporal experience is now 'hanging around' doing nothing, it is not 'waiting'. Waiting implies expectation. Here there is nothing to expect. Slowly, very slowly, this semi-amorphous time gives way to a time structure which is out of your control, one which is segmented by family, friends, interaction on streets, in pubs etc. One that is based upon the dominant temporal framework - employment - and is overseen by the

tyranny of the clock. Exact, segmented clock time replaces those
vague feelings expressed at the start of this chapter:

> 'I don't know what the exact time
> is, but it seems like afternoon'.
>> Michael, 18: unemployed 9 months.

At the end of the evening, when the pubs, discos and cafs are
shut, family and friends gone to bed, you are again left, either on
your own or with two or three friends, caught again in that semi-
amorphous state where nothing is expected:

> 'I just go back to somebody's
> house, and we just sit there,
> smoking and drinking, nothing
> happens really.'
>> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

It is either in these long periods of isolation, where
consciousness needs to assert itself, or in contact with those in
authority, that recourse to expressions of the future are likely
to assert themselves. In one way, there is a kind of class
dimension to this, in that I was forceably struck by the youths that
I met from the council homes expressing opinions such as:

> 'I don't see it changing in the near future.'
>> Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

and going as far as:

> 'I might never have a job, I don't know'.
>> Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

whilst those on the private, 'up-market' areas were more optimistic:

> 'I suppose I'll get a job later on,
> it can't go on like this for ever'.
>> Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

This optimistic/pessimistic attitude is, I would argue,
fundamentally grounded in the material conditions of their
existence. Interspersed with this class perspective is a phenomena
which complexes the time problematic even more, one which is
attributable to nearly all unemployed youth, which arises from

the discrepancy between where they are now and where they would like to be if the future could be held at bay. Some forms of existense can, in some way, be controlled, but on the other hand as the consciousness of the future is negated, the tighter becomes the trap of the present. Looking for employment gives some form of time structure and hope for the future, but even that quickly and painfully recedes away:

> 'At the start I looked very hard. Job
> Centre, papers, but you get pissed
> off though, nothing there; I hardly
> go now'.
> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

When you do go, you can get even further trapped in this 'temporal discrepancy':

> 'Just to stand there in a queue made
> you feel ill. You don't feel like
> yourself, you feel like some other
> person; you just stood there, you
> know, you weren't yourself any more'.
> Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

The outcome being then that this 'temporal discrepancy' results in a form of DEPERSONALIZATION, one in which, from a time perspective, the longer the unemployment continues, the more the individual will be lost to the future, trapped in a never-ending present.

This 'depersonalization', grounded in the temporal frameworks of capitalist social relationships, cannot be broken until, as Marcuse suggests, 'The power of time' over our lives is broken. But, paradoxically, this 'power of time', of quantifiable, atomistic, technocratic, capitalist temporal relationships is the one actually being pursued by most unemployed youths. Therefore, because their recourse to adequate resources to pursue any meaningful alternative is denied them, their radical potentiality is totally negated. For most unemployed young people, boredom and isolation are the major

problems of these temporal frameworks; how they cope with this,
i.e. what strategies and techniques they adopt, will have a
direct bearing on their own self-esteem, identity and physical
well-being. It is to these different types of coping strategies
that I now turn my attention.

Coping Strategies

'They used to call me a lady of
leisure - until I cracked up'.
                    Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

'I've learned to cope'.
                    Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

It is certainly the case in my own research, and has been
commented upon by others, that there is a differential impact in
theform and structure of unemployment along and within gender and
class divisions. Young unemployed women, as a whole, are subjected
to more periods of isolation than are young unemployed men; but
there is also a greater propensity for young working class women
to have more, and longer, periods of isolation. Sometimes, they
are forced into unemployment, and consequently isolation, for the
dole money:

'I could have got on a course at college,
but me Mum didn't want me to go, because,
you know, she couldn't afford to. My Dad
was on short time. She said that if I went
to college I wouldn't get any money....I
could have gone if I had got a grant,
bringing some money in'.
                    Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Therefore, because of the lack of family resources due to
parents'unstable jobs, their own self-development is sacrificed
for the need for food on the table. Another factor can be
accomodation; you find it difficult to have a friend to stay the
night when you are already sharing your bedroom with two younger

sisters. Also, lack of any money given by parents means that you

stay in more, which can be bearable if somebody visits, but:

> 'Three of my mates are at college all day.
> I never see them, 'cos they have too much
> homework to do. I see Maureen about twice
> a month on a Friday night, another friend
> has a job, so I never see her in the day.
> I've seen her— what —once, in two months.
> Nanette comes once a week, sometimes
> twice, I sometimes go there, but really,
> that's the only friend'.
>> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

As I have already stated, this isolation can also be problematic

for young lads:

> 'Instead of talking with someone, I
> go into my bedroom and sit there'.
>> Andrew, 19: unemployed 6 months.

It is within these periods of isolation that the tensions and

frustrations of their lives cognitively manifest themselves. If you

do not somehow 'cope' with these pressures, the end consequences

can sometimes be extremely serious:

> 'One second I was lying on the bed, and
> I just got up and jumped through the
> bedroom window'.
>> Ian, 20: unemployed 2½ years.

> 'When I got home, I don't remember taking
> them, I'd had a lot to drink. I took twenty
> tablets that our Nan had left'.
>> Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Even if these pressures do not result in fatal consequences, the

- dare we say - 'normal' consequences can be ones of drugs (joints,

pills and glue-sniffing).

> 'I've took drugs, but only with
> friends; nothing hard like'.
>> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

There may also be increased consumption of cigarettes, drink or food:

> 'I was nine stone; after 18 months
> I was twelve stone'.
>> Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Bouts of anger, crying or deep depression are also common:

> 'You feel like cutting your throat.
> first of all you get up. You've got
> nothing to do at all. You keep passing
> mirrors and you think, 'Jesus Christ, I'm
> getting worse,' and you can't do anything
> about it. Then to compensate, I ate, I was
> piling the weight on; nobody said anything,
> 'cos I started to get nasty. Then I started
> to get drunk, and when I sobered up, I was
> eating all the time. It's terrible. Then when
> you've eaten and drunk to the extent you
> can't take any more, you cry, 'cos you don't
> feel life's worth living any more'.
>   Jane, 18; unemployed 18 months.

> 'Cry...... I've never cried so much....I
> couldn't cry any more for the rest of
> my life. Every day three or four times'.
>   Veronica, 19: unemployed 3 years.

What these quotes have in common is that they are all products of self abusement, all internalizations of the 'individualistic failure' notion which is extremely pervasive amongst the unemployed. This ideology of 'individualism' is an extremely important one, and I will return to it later. What I <u>can</u> state is that if you do not constantly, consciously attend (as Cohen and Taylor state) to the 'state of your mind', there is a good possibility that some form of self abusement will result, (Cohen & Taylor, 1976).

In these frequent periods of isolation and boredom, one way of 'attending to the state of your mind' is through the realm of day-dreaming and fantasy. Here you can 'distance' yourself from your material circumstances, the harsh realities of isolation, boredom, powerlessness - i.e. unemployment - can be subtly manipulated. But this recourse to day-dreaming, fantasy, does not occur in the abstract, i.e. they don't just 'do it', but it is fundamentally grounded, both in its <u>form</u> as well as its <u>content</u>, in the material

conditions of their existence. As a way of explanation, we can
say that in the process of attending to your mind, the recourse to
think rational, constructive, happy thoughts becomes of vital
importance. If you have been down the long hard road of boredom,
frustration, depression, self-abusement, this importance becomes a
necessity. Therefore, the dimensions of isolation, boredom,
frustration, lack of money etc. present themselves as objective
forces - i.e. imposed from the 'outside' on to the cognitive
constructs of the individual. As I have already stated, to submit to
these forces could, and does, have serious consequences. Therefore,
the determinate stance becomes oppositional, the actual _form_ forces
itself onto the individual as a way of surviving unemployment.

In terms of _content_, the essence is what I would call, to
paraphrase Cohen, 'the amplification of normality'. Normal,
everyday structures and social relationships become, on the one
hand, elevated to the forefront of the mind, and on the other hand,
viewed in pragmatic, realistic terms. These day-dreams and fantasies
consist of such things as bike-riding, getting married, taking a
girl out, having children, what it would be like to have a job,
having a car, buying clothes, a house ------------

> 'Just having a house of your own, being
> at home and just doing the housework.
> Being at home, waiting for them to come
> home and doing their tea for them. That's
> all, you know?'
>
> Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.
>
> 'Sitting there, typing all day'.
>
> Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.
>
> 'I fantasize about having a girl-friend,
> y'know, and just, I don't know, taking
> her out to dinner; nothing way out'.
>
> Billy, 18: unemployed 1 year.
>
> 'That's all I fantasize about, having
> someone to cook for'.
>
> Eileen, 19 : unemployed 6 months.

'I fantasize about having a bike and
riding about ... I'm trying to buy one'.
                          Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

'I don't fantasize about anything sexual
or romantic you know... you know it's
not going to happen, like, so you don't
fantasize about it like; you only fantasize
about those things that are going to happen'.
                          Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

Their fantasies are about things which are conceptualized as i)
normal and ii) realizable. As Diane states, 'You only fantasize
about those things that are going to happen'.

The question to which we must now address ourselves is why should
the young unemployed idolize the 'normal'? Why should they give
prominence to the 'normal' categories of everyday life? The easy
answer would be that it is precisely those structures and
categories of the normal which are closed to the young unemployed,
and this leads them to fantasize about them. I feel that this
fundamentally misses one of the major characteristics of these
fantasies, that of 'attainability', and I also feel that the
other major characteristic, i.e. the 'normal', can be more
realistically reinterpreted around this idea of individualism.

Although the emergence and influence of individualism in
England is a problematic and debatable point, in that some writers,
notably MacFarlane (1978, p. 53), suggest that, 'The majority
of ordinary people in England, from at least the thirteenth
century, were rampant individualists, highly mobile both
geographically and socially, economically 'rational', market-
orientated and acquisitive, ego-centred in kinship and
social life', while other sociologists have suggested that
it was, 'Only the rise of classical political economy in
the eighteenth century that made individualism respectable'.

Berger et al (1973, p. 175) have suggested that it is, in fact, modern society which, 'Has given birth to ideologies and ethical systems of intense individualism'. We can certainly concur with Richard Jenkins, (198 ,p. 131) that it is, 'In fact, one of the dominant cultural principles of our society, as unavoidable as the language in which it finds expression'.

It is therefore my contention that the processes of 'individualism' operate at three major inter-linked levels with regard to youth unemployment. i) At the structural/institutional level; ii) at the level of implementation of state policy and iii) as the intended/ unintended consequences on the consciousness of youth of their own survival tactics. It is to the last of these three that the rest of this chapter is addressed, together with its subsequent relationship to identity and control.

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

> 'In their circumstances it was inevitable,
> at first, that they should be haunted by a
> feeling of personal degradation. That was
> the attitude towards unemployment in those
> days: it was a disaster which happened to
> you as an individual and for which you were
> to blame'.
> (George Orwell: The Road to Wigan Pier).

This quote from Orwell, although written over 40 years ago, concerning young unemployed miners and cotton-workers, highlights the perceived individuality of the situation, and it is currently interesting, although not surprising, that both psychologists and sociologists have recently again shown interest in the question of whom the unemployed hold responsible for their situation. One recent psychological study by Glynis Breakwell (1983, p. 8) of unemployed youth suggests that, 'Basically, the unemployed (youth) explained unemployment in general in terms of the system, the government or

world economic climate. However, they explained their own unemployment in terms of personal inadequacy'. This is reinforced from a sociological position in the work of Frank Coffield, who, in a review of Jenkins' book in an article in 'New Society' (November 1983, p. 20) states that, 'I for one shall look forward to more on the ideology of individualism, so prevalent in the North-East, where the young unemployed explain other people's unemployment by reference to economic decline and governmental decisions, but blame themselves for their own'.

In addressing the question as to why unemployed youth should blame themselves for their own situation, it is my contention that rather than youth solely and passively internalising the notions of individual failure endemic in the ideological apparatus of this society, it is also brought about by the conscious and unconscious consequences of the youth's own actions. This relationship results in a 'Catch 22' situation for unemployed youth in that, in the process of coping with unemployment, they use strategies and survival tactics which confirm their own individualism.

In one way, implicit in accounts of coping strategies and survival tactics, can be seen a 'celebration' of the creative and innovative qualities of youth. Instead of being seen as apathetic, passive, fatalistic and doomed to the dictates of an uncaring society, youth is conceptualized as an active, creative agent. Given the problems associated with unemployment, i.e. depression, frustration, boredom, isolation, lack of money and powerlessness, the ability of young people to create meaningful areas is seen as an aspect of human potentiality, from within which radicalization can occur.

In returning to my own theme, I would tentatively suggest that, although these strategies may hold certain potentialities for liberation, freedom and radicalism, these are currently operating at a latent level, while at a manifest level these strategies are confirming to the young person the 'individualism' of their own actions. However, as a point of qualification, I would also suggest that where a collectivist form of action, in the type of strategies adopted, is undertaken, then this has important implications for the overall process of identity and control. This point will be developed later in the paper, but before that I wish to return to our discussion on the 'Catch 22' situation.

An example of this type of individualistic situation can be seen in one form of survival tactic, in that virtually all the youths expressed how frustrated and despondent they had become when, after applying for many jobs, they were still on the dole. At the start, they were full of enthusiasm; twice weekly visits to careers officers, Job Centres, writing numerous application forms, walking around industrial estates 'knocking' at firms for jobs, the odd interview, scanning all the papers; these were all tactics in looking for work.

> 'Well, when I was first unemployed, I used
> to go down the Job Centre two or three times
> a week didn't I? I also went to the careers
> office.....buy some of the papers, and just
> generally look everywhere. I had a lot of
> people looking out for me, I been for a few
> interviews, but nothing turned up'.
> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

After a while though, these tactics became extremely frustrating and depressing; the careers office could only offer 'schemes', not 'real jobs'; the Job Centre is experienced as

'a dead loss' and 'a waste of time going'; it is a depressing experience

being one of many young people after one job:

> 'When I went for the interviews, there must
> have been about two hundred lads the same
> age as me going for four places.....just to
> stand there in that queue made you feel ill,
> you didn't feel like yourself, you felt like
> some other person; you just stood there y'know,
> you weren't yourself any more'.
>   Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

Walking around doors of firms being told, 'We don't need anybody' -

'You're not qualified' - 'You're too young' - 'You're too old' - 'No

experience' etc. knocks your confidence and self-worth considerably:

> 'I thought, 'What chance have I got getting
> a job?', you know it really frightened me,
> it did, it frightened me, you know? I was
> up at night thinking, 'What am I going to
> do?' and all the rest of it'.
>   Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

At home, this can then manifest itself in the young becoming moody

and irritable:

> 'You get ratty and everything, like, and
> Dad says,'Hey, don't get talking to me
> like that,' and our Mother starts'.
>   Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

> 'She snaps at me sometimes..... she gets
> very moody. Then I have to watch what I
> say to her'.
>   Mother of unemployed 19 year old.

One way around this problem, and a way of retaining your own

self-respect and the 'equilibrium' within the home is to slow down

your rate of looking and wait for 'banker' jobs (i.e. those that you

really stand a chance of getting). Another is to place certain

standards or 'conditions' on the jobs you apply for:

> 'I mean, it's right what they say about
> depression, 'cos since I applied for
> that job at ----- a few weeks ago, I
> haven't looked at any papers, I haven't
> even been to the Job Centre'.
>   Nicola,19: unemployed 11 months.

The overall outcome of this is that, in the process of coping

with depression and frustration which can, as we have seen, have

fatal consequences, you internalize the idea that it is also your own

fault that you are unemployed:

> 'I suppose it's partly my fault, I could
> look more often than I do'.
>> Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

Another tactic is to blame failure onto their own education - or lack

of it:

> 'I was thrown out of three O-level classes
> you know. If I'd been sensible and thought
> about it, you know, I'd have had three
> O-levels by now'.
>> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

Therefore, in the process of coping, they justify and rationalize

their own position to themselves, but in the same process, they blame

themselves.

A tactic already mentioned is the one described by Coffield et al

in their article ('New Society' 2nd June 1983, p. 332) on the

survival tactics of the young unemployed, in which they state that,

'In the early evening they are more relaxed about being seen on the

streets, because they feel less distinguishable from the employed.

The desire to be an ordinary member of society is evident.' (my emphasis).

At one level, this can be seen in their actions regarding conspicuous

consumption. Many young unemployed spend most of their dole money

all in one go:

> 'When you've got it, you blow it all
> at once'.
>> Eileen, 19: unemployed 6 months.

Or spend as much as they can on consumer goods:

> 'I go to Kidder nearly every week..... go
> shopping like, clothes, records, blow most
> of it like'.
>> Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

In this process of being 'ordinary', socializing becomes of paramount importance to the unemployed. 'Paying your way' in these situations is also seen as being important, even if you have to pay for it through enforced isolation:

> 'We used to buy rounds, not every night
> I'd go out; some weeks I wouldn't go
> out for a couple of weeks, save some
> money up, then go out on a drinking
> session'.
>   Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

The problem then manifests itself later in the week in the form of lack of money. The basic fact that the amount of dole money given is inadequate to live on is certainly understood by those attempting to live on it. The problem comes when you have to justify why you have no money to such people as careers officers, parents etc. over such things as bus fares to interviews, stamps for applications and going out in the week. Whatever you say, or however much you think you've justified it to them and yourself, you're still left, if they can't or won't give you any money, broke - and you know that it was <u>you</u> who spent it. Thus, when Coffield (1983, p. 334) states that, 'Their spending makes sense in human, if not in economic terms', this coping strategy still leaves them feeling individually responsible for being broke.

Even when humour is consciously used as a coping mechanism, it also tends to be 'individualistic':

> 'I'm really crazy, I do stupid things like.
> Not dangerous things like. I'll be walking
> down a street and suddenly burst into song -
> you know what I mean - or start wolf-whistling
> at old ladies. Really crazy things..... I seem
> to do it when I'm on my own, not with my
> mates'.
>   Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

A related strategy for coping with wanting to be like other
people is that in these long periods of isolation, the young unemployed
- as I suggested earlier - day-dream and fantasize about the normal.
It is in this link between wanting to be like others and fantasizing
the normal that a form of identity creation can take place, and it is to
the question of identity that I now address myself:

Identity Creation.

> 'To be or not to be, that is the question'. (Hamlet)
>
> 'Know thyself'. (Socrates)
>
> 'I yam what I yam'. (Popeye)
>
> 'I'm not one of the unemployed'. (Mick: unemployed 2 years)

The question of identity construction as a problematical feature
of most young people's lives has been analysed and documented by many
studies. With reference to the young unemployed, current research,
(Breakwell, 1984) shows that in the early stages, their beliefs
about how others see them have great implications for their own sense
of self. As Breakwell states, (1984, p. 7) 'Clearly, their
attributions about the attitudes of others, in this case, leave
them feeling that they are regarded as inferior'. As one lad said to me:

> 'If you meet a girl, and you're out of
> work, unemployed, it's all right; but
> if you've known her for quite a bit and
> you're still unemployed, they look at
> you in a different way, as if you're a
> non-hoper'.   Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

This has important consequences in that, for some of the young
unemployed, a differentiation and hierarchical form is constructed
in the group to which they currently belong. This split occurs not
only between the employed and the unemployed, but also within the

latter category:

> 'I'm not a yobbo, not one of them that
> don't want to work'.
> > Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

> 'I'm not one of the unemployed'.
> > Mick 20: unemployed 2 years.

> 'I am unemployed, but I don't do like
> Joe Bloggs up the road who don't do
> nothing, dosses round the town, like'.
> > Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

Within my own research, this insistance on being a 'certain type' of unemployed person, one of the 'real' unemployed, became more evident when speaking to youths whose parents could be classified as skilled working and lower middle class. On the other hand, the criteria of 'doesn't want to work' can also incorporate the criteria of 'Can't get a job'. This resulted in the lad, unemployed for two years, saying, 'I'm not one of the unemployed', the idea here being that this lad had maintained that he could get a job at any time that he liked, but not a 'real' job. Therefore, in his criteria, he was not unemployed; the unemployed 'can't get a job' - he could, but he didn't want 'any old job', the question of self-respect, alluded to earlier, can be referred to here. However much we feel that this lad is mistaken about being able to find employment any time he likes, the result of this coping strategy is a further social expression of the differentation within the unemployed as a whole. Also, at a middle class level, the 'idea' of 'taking a holiday' after taking exams and before starting employment or further studies was used by parents and youths alike as a way of maintaining a 'respectable distance' between themselves and the unemployed. I would also suggest that this 'social differentation' does not only exist at the level of ideas, i.e. in the

consciousness of the young unemployed, but is related in a concrete

way to the historical development and institutionalization of the

'poor' and the 'undeserving poor', to the working class notion of

'rough' and 'respectable', forged on the backs of the notion of skill,

worker and work-shy, and fundamentally grounded in the distinction

and perpetuation of capital and labour power. One interesting

phenomena about this question of being objectively unemployed or

subjectively unemployed is, who do the unemployed identify with?

> 'Most of the time I just think I'm the
> same as everybody else really'.
> > Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

> 'Well, like, I don't think of myself
> as unemployed, I'm me, like other
> people'.
> > Maurice, 18: unemployed 18 months.

> 'I'm just one of the lads really'.
> > Paul, 19: unemployed $2\frac{1}{2}$ years.

> 'I just want to be normal, you know,
> like everyone else'.
> > Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

This process of identity creation based on 'being like everybody

else', being 'normal', is conceptualized from a form of knowledge

based mainly on observation and the use of stereo-typifications

embedded within the youths' cultural domain. The 'stereo-type' thinking

is illustrated by my earlier quote of the lad who had fantasized

about having a girl-friend and taking her out to dinner. Personally,

he had never experienced taking a young woman out to dinner, and so

he could only rely for this 'normalization' of his thoughts on

observations made unconsciously while being in other restaurants,

and, in Cohen and Taylor's terms (1956, p. 52) through the use

of 'cultural scripts' based on stereo-typifications. This form of

knowledge places certain restrictions on thought, in that what

processes are conceptualized are constructed from 'givens', the
perimeters are not broken, in that the 'normal' cannot be concept-
ualized and subtly manipulated by engaging with the 'unique'. Another
problem is that although this form of knowledge is based on others,
'collective' in its empathy, it is highly individualistic, in that
it does not need anyone else for its actual implementation, it is
not based on any form of collective action.

During these long periods of isolation then, unemployed youth/s
would seem to be consciously and unconsciously socializing themselves
into the formal/informal categories of their cultural domain. A
specific form of self-surveillance would seem to be taking place,
grounded in terms of thoughts and action.

Therefore, the argument so far is that unemployed youth are
actively engaged in the overall process of 'policing' themselves.
This is achieved by adopting individualistic strategies to cope with
unemployment, and by using day-dreams and fantasies based on stereo-
typifications and cultural scripts with which to 'identify' and
normalize their existence. In saying this, a qualification must
be made; it is certainly obvious that not all unemployed youth
are actively engaged in this process of 'policing'. In some
instances, the impact of these integrated processes of
individualism are not only mediated and greatly relieved, but
virtually extinguished altogether, by the adoption of a
'collective' approach to coping with unemployment.

Although many other examples could be given, I would like to
illustrate this last point by the data from three case studies; the
aim here would be to identify three forms of collectivism and their
subsequent relationship to identity and control.

John.

John, who had started an apprenticeship within the engineering industry and had then lost his job when the firm closed down, had been unemployed for just over three years when I first made contact with him. His initial reaction after being made redundant was very similar to that of the other youths within the study, in that the process of his job search followed the normal pattern of Job Centre, a few interviews, calling 'on spec' at a few firms, asking friends and family etc. Although just managing to cope with this self-sapping experience of job search, what did really depress him was:

> 'What got me was that, been through school, done all your homework at school, never played truant, been to college and passed all your exams, been to work, you hadn't been a trouble-maker, you'd been on time, you know, then they just fling you out on your ear'.

John's survival tactics were, again, what I have termed the 'Catch 22' kind, and long periods of isolation were experienced:

> 'It's when you've got nothing to do, when you're able to sit at home and think about your actual predicament, when your mind isn't thinking about something else .....
> well, I sit at home thinking about the fact that I've got no money, so you can't go out to the pub and really meet people, you can't go down town and buy a record, you can't go on holiday - all things that a lot of people used to at least take for granted; it's boring. I say when you've got nothing to take your mind off it, that your just end up sitting at home watching telly, reading a few books and letting your beard grow'.

During these periods, when depressed, recourse to day-dreaming, fantasizing and, in John's case, remembering what his work and social life had been like, became his major coping tactic:

> 'I do a lot of remembering..... going on holiday with my old school friends; when I used to own a motorbike, and going on a hundred miles ride around the Clent Hills

and Ludlow area; the social life I used to
have. I used to have lots of people I could
talk to down town, big pub crawls around the
area like'.

At this point I would again reiterate Coffield in saying that in John's

case, the desire to be an ordinary member of society is evident.

Being with, and socializing with, people who are working continues

to be part of John's immediate culture, outside his home.

It was during this period that John made friends with a group of

people who had important implications for the type of coping strategies

which he pursued and for his overall identity formation. The group

itself consisted of youths of both sexes, in a range of age groups,

some in work and others unemployed. Because two of the group had

their own home together, this became the base for many group inter-

actions. Many areas of life had become a joint venture, and John

started to contribute to this:

> 'It's a car that I share the use of with
> four or five other people. We bought it for
> about eighty quid, and we keep it on the road
> using bits of an old car we bought. We put
> money in each week to pay for its tax, MOT
> and insurance'.

> 'We make home-made beer. I've stayed there
> all day and they've made your dinner for
> you. I've had other meals there if I've
> baby-sat. I also spend some nights there'.

> 'I put about a fiver a week in for food'.

This collective activity by the group also extended itself to

marches, demos and other forms of political activity. This daily

round of 'collective' life experiences does, I would argue here,

overshadow the more individualistic moments. This can be illustrated

by the fact that, although John does not apply for every vacancy he

sees, and sets himself certain standards similar to the ones high-

lighted earlier as one way of maintaining a degree of self-respect,

he also does not internalize the notion which suggests that because
of these strategies he is at all responsible for his unemployment:

> 'The fact I haven't gone mad writing for
> every job, saying I would work for any
> wage, I would work unpaid overtime; I've
> set myself a standard of job that I'd
> apply for nowadays. But if a job that's
> advertized don't pay enough, then I ain't
> bloody gonna try for it, sod 'em..... so
> I'm not feeling guilty about being unemployed,
> I'm not demoralized about being unemployed,
> it's not me that's to blame'.

This 'over-shadowing' of the more individualistic moments by
collective experiences helps to negate any form of self-blame and
lays the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the system;
as John says, 'I'm not to blame'.

> 'I blame the people who have the control of
> the means of producing things, that's who
> I blame, because they claim they aren't
> making enough profit, they chuck me on the
> scrap heap of the dole ..... and I channel
> any anger I feel towards them, in constructive
> activity as I see it'.

This internalization of who's to blame, and the collective coping
strategies which underlie it, produce in John a more realistic
interpretation of his identity:

> 'I see myself as an <u>unemployed</u> draughtsman'.

The cultural scripts which John has recourse to use are also
mediated by this collective experience, in that although John may
think about 'normal' activities such as 'getting a job', 'having
a drink', 'being with friends', 'buying records' etc. it is only
done at an abstract generalizable level, while at the particular
level, these situations do not wholly embody the stereo-
typifications and resulting power relations characteristic of this
society. Thus the conscious/unconscious process of socializing

oneself into the norms and values of a particular cultural domain
as an aspect of being normal are seriously threatened, or, as in
John's case, the process of 'internal policing' is negated.

This process of resistance through collectivism has also been
mentioned by Howard and White (1984). They analyse this process
of 'collectivism' at a more formal institutional level by an
investigation into the centres for the unemployed in both
Wolverhampton and Liverpool. They argue that, i) the unemployed
have come to 'recognize and identify themselves as unemployed,
without passively accepting unemployment', and ii) 'They have
come to challenge the prevailing assumption of unemployment by
organizing and agitating collectively on behalf of the
unemployed.'

One point that must be stressed is that 'collectivism' per se
does not necessarily lead to a total negation of all the worst
effects of unemployment such as poverty, depression etc.,
although it tends to mediate these effects; the tensions of trying
to cognitively operate within a society increasingly based on
the retention of 'otherness' and 'particularity' (Piccone, 1976)
articulated around the notions of 'individualism' and 'self-help',
can prove, in some cases, extremely difficult to manage. As
John said:

> 'Depression lasts two or three days ....
> it's just got a bit more frequent in
> the last year ..... I don't know why,
> I must be getting old'.

Thus, although John is operating within some form of
collectivism, the boundaries are interlocked within the rest of

the local culture and tend to produce experiental areas which embody increasing contradictions and tensions.

This problematic - i.e. the contradictions and tensions inherent in the interaction between the collective experience and the family culture can be illustrated by an analysis of another form of collectivism. This form is not so intense as the form found in John's experience, but still carries residues of controlling influences when members are apart, and forms a relatively 'stable' base from which to 'control' the external environment.

Diane.

Diane, aged 19, unemployed two years, belonged to such a group. The group consisted of between twelve and twenty young women, aged 16 to 20, some in employment, one or two at college, the rest unemployed. They came together in numbers of three and four daily, and met collectively in a large group two or three times a week. Their individual home backgrounds ranged from the small self-employed, office manager and representative, to the skilled working class. Nearly all of their parents were buying their own homes, either on private estates or in 'good pockets' on council estates. As Diane said:

'We've got no snobs, or real roughs'.

The daily interaction takes place mainly from the afternoon onwards, either in someone's home, the pub, or walking around the town. The larger collective usually meets in the pub, interspersed with discos, parties and a few trips to Birmingham. The daily group did not always consist of the same members, so contact with the larger collectivity was always emphasised.

This concept of a 'group' is important in two ways, and relates to the continuing problematic on the interaction between class and gender. In a class way, the experiences of the 'group' were very similar to those found on the middle class estate mentioned earlier, in the chapter on the social economy, in that individuals came together in twos and threes and then interacted within a larger group, before moving away again in small groups, normally the same people they came with, but this not always being the case. In another way, the mode of the group reflected the gender of its members, in that the male definition of the 'public' was strongly resisted:

> 'We don't call it a gang, it's a sort
> of group. There's no leader, a few
> with more ideas'.

On another class variable, their initial call over the resources which each individual had generally reflected their parents resources, but at another level, the way in which some of these resouces were distributed did not 'fit' the pattern exhibited by mixed groups or in young, male only groups. As was stated earlier, more use was made of long-term reciprocity, exchanges were not specified in either their pay-back time, or the amount involved; the criteria seemed to rest on variables such as length of friendship, common position etc.

Even when conflict did manifest itself, it seemed to be at the level of the 'individual' versus the 'group'; as Diane said:

> 'If she puts rocker music on the
> juke-box, the girls just look at
> her and she won't do it again'.

This form of control exercised by the group produces a very strong influence over its members both when they are together and also, in certain spheres, when they are on their own, e.g. buying

clothes that will be 'acceptable' to the group. Also, this collective experience gives a relatively stable bedrock from which to control, negotiate and give understandable form to the problems and tensions which may dominate their lives in the long hours, days, and in some cases, weeks in which individuals are away from the group. For Diane, the major 'problem' associated with unemployment starts to set in when, in her Mother's words:

> 'She packed up looking for a job;
> we kept on to her, her Dad even
> threatened to kick her out. I don't
> think he really would have done, but
> we had to get her to see that she
> must keep trying, didn't we?'

This type of coping strategy - i.e. not consistently looking for work as a way of maintaining some self-respect - was mentioned earlier; therefore, for Diane, this became, because of a lack of understanding on the part of her parents, a major ground for contention onto which all the other 'problems' could be dumped. These 'problems' became, at one stage, so intense that Diane left home for a short period. It is argued here that only her constant interaction and identity with the 'group' during this period gave her the stable framework from which to cope. As she said:

> 'I could quite easily hit the pill
> bottle tonight, but I ain't gonna,
> they ain't worth it, they're not
> good enough reason for me to do that'.

It also helped her to be more realistic as to her own identity, as being part of a group of young women and, in her own term:

> 'Me? I'm one of Maggie Thatcher's
> little artists, I'm drawing the
> dole, like millions of other
> poor sods'.

We now turn to our last formation of the process of identity creation, one that has as its major characteristic the process of instrumentalism, where the collectivity is used, not as a means of producing a high degree of solidarity, but as a mechanism for increasing individualism as a form of control and as a mark of self-identity.

Michael.

Michael, 18, unemployed 9 months, lives with his parents in an upper middle class area. Both parents have current professional status, and the overall income for the home is substantial. In material terms, Michael would seem to want for nothing; he has his own appartment within the house, well furnished, TV, video, stereo system, heating, lighting and food. Both parents give him enough extra money for him to be able to go for days without cashing his unemployment giro. On the effectual side, their social relationships are heavily imbued with the characteristics of their business and commercial class; individualism, control, power and social mobility are the order of the day. The Father justifies his social mobility by subscribing to the ideology of self-sufficiency and hard work. Michael has internalized this, in speaking of his Father he said:

> 'He's one of those people who's done
> everything himself'.

He speaks of both parents 'detachment' in that he feels he is living on his own:

> 'I'm practically living in a flat here,
> my Mum's not here all the time, when
> she is we go our separate ways'.

This 'detachment' can further be illustrated when, again talking of

his Mother, Michael says:

> 'I don't think of her as my Mother,
> she's Mrs. --------, Consultant'.

It is within this framework of individualistic socialization which

appears to have characterized the major part of Michael's life that

we must situate his current position. The emphasis here has been

one of individualistic achievement; his two sisters, who had left

home after passing their degrees, had also 'achieved' in the family's

eyes. Now it was his turn. The route he had chosen was through music,

he was trying to form a 'group', and his parents had sanctioned

this by reluctantly agreeing to his leaving school at 16, and

basically giving him time to literally 'get his act together'.

He could now 'do his own thing' for a few years, although:

> 'Mum and Dad did put a time limit
> on it when I left school - two
> years'.

After that, he would have to conform to the 'acceptable' mode of

achieving for the middle classes i.e. education:

> 'I suppose I'll have to go to college,
> get a few A-levels and then do a
> degree somewhere'.

The almost casual way in which he talked about getting his A-levels

and a degree was, for me, indicative of his whole socialization

of 'achievement' and 'control'. It was, on the one hand, for his

parents, a safety valve, a net to catch him and to reassure them

-selves in this transitory time; Michael, on the other hand, found

the structure of achievement and success, inherent, it seemed to

him, within the family, a constant strain. He had chosen his

route and he must succeed:

> 'You've got to realize that a lot
> of my life is staked upon getting
> some ---- being heard by the masses,
> it's very important to me'.

His 'group' therefore became the way to success and achievement;
they were not real friends or mates, just individuals who had
'got together'. He talked incessantly about forming another group
with different people, he didn't know who, just 'some others'. The
thing was not the success of the group, just him, as an individual.
The mechanism to achieve this was the instrumental form of collect-
ivism inherent in the nature of the group. Also, his overall
individual identity was totally grounded in his music, and his
individualized home life. The 'realism' inherent in his statement:

> 'I'm an unemployed musician',

reflected the basic fact that his 'hopes' for the future gave a
core framework in which meaning and substance could be given to
his everyday life.

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

Conclusion.

We have therefore analysed how, in a variety of temporal frameworks,
unemployed youths of both sexes are subjected to a structural
process of 'depersonalization', and how, by using a variety of
coping strategies, these temporal frameworks become embodied with
meaning and significance, from within which a relatively stable form
of identity creation can take place. I also think that it is only
when we further analyse the social categories of the unemployed,
their need for worthwhile jobs, and their insistence, by the majority,
that they are like everyone else - i.e. 'normal', that we can in any
way begin to understand the statement made by the lad, unemployed for
two years, that:

> 'I'm not one of the unemployed'.

Chapter Five

IS IT BETTER TO 'MAKE' AND 'LIFT' THAN TO

SUCCUMB TO THE DICTATES OF CAPITAL?

'It is not whether you fiddle or not, but
how much'.

'I will not have him becoming one of those
so-called scroungers'.

'Have me, you pay me less than them'.

'Rich bastards are fair game'.

'I know it's her down the road - if her
ever tells on one of mine, I'll have her'.

The significance of the informal and social economy in the lives
of the population at large, and especially for the poor and unemployed,
has grown into an important issue over the last few years, for both
Government and social analysts alike. These issues have been gaining
momentum increasingly over the last five years, but the early
conceptualization can be regarded as appearing within the work of
what may be termed economic anthropology, (Firth, 1967). This work
centred around the formalist/substantive debate which addressed the
issue as to whether, 'Models and assumptions of formal, Western
economists are applicable in the analysis of non-Western societies'
(Jenkins, 1980. p. $_2$). The sophistication of the debate developed
within the work of Frankenberg, (1967); Shalins, (1972) and Davis,(1973),
and it is to the latter's work that we turn for what could be termed
the relationship between the conceptualization and its relationship
to industrial society. As Davis points out: 'Profit is not the only
possible relation between things; classification of Britain as a
market economy is only possible if we ignore exchanges and productive
activities concerned with non-commodities' (Davis, op.cit. p.164)

Davis began this classification in an earlier work in 1972
(p.408 - 429), which identified four spheres of activity;
i) market sub-economy, ii) redistributive sub-economy, iii) domestic
sub-economy and iv) the gift sub-economy. It is here that my
earlier conception of the public and private realms are related
around the different ideas of exchange. During the years, these
conceptions of 'exchange' have taken many different forms, such as
legal, quasi-legal and illegality (Henry, 1978; Ditton, 1978;
Lowenthal, 1975; Gurshuny and Pahl, 1980). This has resulted in a

further profusion of work during the last few years (Gerry, 1983; Wallace, 1984; Gurshuny and Mills, 1983; Cornish, 1984; Henry, 1984; Pahl, 1985). These studies, and many others in popular articles, biographies and programmes on the television and radio, have resulted in the overall debate on the significance of the informal economy and its relationship to industrial society, becoming split into what Henry shows are two opposing perspectives. In one perspective 'The informal economy is presented as an alternative form of work, which has the potential to absorb unemployment' (p.460). Grounded within this framework is the assumption that a human side of capitalism is possible, in the form of benevolent entrepreneurialship, and furthermore, it is hailed as the vanguard of an alternative society. From the other perspective, it is seen as naive, and one which, 'Masks the relationship of dependence of the dominant market economy' (p.460). It is here that the informal is perceived as a survival mechanism for the poor, rather than a new vision of a human side of capitalism. Henry himself goes on to propound a third form of dialectical perspective, in which in one form he sees, like Illich (1981), the 'informal' as being, 'The colonization of the remains of human creativity' (p. 473), a manifestation of man's power over man, one through which he, 'connives at his own oppression', and at another level, the 'means by which people raise their consciousness'. This dialectical characterization of the informal has certain merits, and is certainly substantiated by my own data. Therefore, although I wish to pursue this type of formation throughout the rest of the chapter, I must state that my own conclusions are, in part, at varience with those of Henry.

A summation of the criteria which distinguishes the informal results in Henry stipulating a four-fold typology; i) Irregular, based on moonlighting, ii) Hidden, based on fiddling or stolen goods, iii) Unofficial, based on perks and favours and iv) The Social, based on barter and housework (p. 463).

Another major issue concerns the area of deviance. This arises from the conceptualization of any activity outside the 'legal, capitalist framework' as an informal activity. By adopting such a definition, Henry and others not only reinforce the existing power relations they try so hard to analyse, but fundamentally miss the point that on some occasions, to certain individuals, this so-called 'informality' is for them a formal, fundamental category. A related aspect is that in the process of stipulating fixed and distinct categories, it is possible to lose the subtle and distinct nuances which may result from either an individual or a group operating across the categories. This idea will be teased out at a later stage, suffice it to say now that an example of this might be an individual who could be working within what is termed the 'irregular economy' - i.e. moonlighting - and is also able to fiddle in the terms of the orthodox perspectives. Therefore, aspects of the 'hidden economy' will also impinge onto the irregular framework, thereby 'informalizing the informal'. Having said that, certain generalized categories may be appropriate, but at the same time a high degree of flexibility must be allowed, permitting the incorporation of two or more categories, and even of people's own definition of the situation. Although it might be said that people's own definition of the situation is only another form of legitimation, it does have the ability to take that situation out of the dominant

mode and juxtapose it dialectically between two others, thereby creating a completely different mode which could be completely missed by a more orthodox perspective.

My own data has certainly highlighted the importance of the framework (irregular, hidden etc.) which Henry and others have identified, while at the same time transposing this into another framework, so that I feel that probably the most appropriate way of addressing the rest of this chapter would be to take each orthodox category and show how it can still be useful in analysing certain phenomena, while in other cases it is fundamentally deficient and therefore needs to lend itself to adaptibility.

Irregular Economy.

Any analysis of the irregular economy must first of all address itself to what types of production/consumption activities can be categorized within its framework, and also address itself to the question of who is likely to be involved in those activities. A celebrated quote from Pahl and Gurshuny suggests that, 'Over the last couple of centuries, the aggregate effect has been an overall shift from household/community production to formal industrial production. But it may be that the most significant transformation in the future will be from the formal economy to the underground and household economies' (1980, p.8). In returning to my focus on unemployment, I would suggest from my own analysis that the participation of the unemployed in general in the informal economy in the form of 'doing a bit on the side' is very small scale and sporadic in its occurence. This vein is supported by, for instance, Harris' study; he found that those still in employment were able to use the tools and materials from the workplace as a form of flexible

capital with which to engage in suitable 'out of work' activities.

Also, the social network built up and maintained by 'going out to

work' resulted in a steady flow of contacts from which these types

of activities could be pursued. For the unemployed, this is not the

case; having no ready money to buy, or access to, capital resources

like tools or materials becomes a major barrier to engaging in any

of these activities. Also, as social networks become reduced, due

to the many other factors outlined previously - isolation etc. - then

their ability to 'work on the side' becomes highly constrained.

An important point to remember here is that for some of the

unemployed, this is not perceived as illegal activity, but on the

contrary, is grounded in the very strategies highlighted by

Lowenthal (op.cit.) as 'survival mechanisms of the poor'. As

one lad said:

> 'I don't get very much, just a few
> quid every now and again. If I didn't
> get that, I'd either be permanently
> broke or else in debt.'
> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

Sometimes, this legitimation can also be reinforced by other family

members:

> 'They say it's stealing, but I'd
> like to see her (Mrs. Thatcher)
> son (Mark) live on what she gets.
> Her'd soon be upping the benefits'.
> Mother of 19 year old.

Occasionally, legitimation becomes very emotional:

> 'Look, it's up to them, if they don't
> want me to do something on the side
> then they're going to have to give me
> more. If they don't, it's up to them.
> Them bastards have got money, so why
> shouldn't I have some, eh? It's all
> right isn't it? I don't think it's
> wrong, I mean, if I was in work, I'd
> probably think it's wrong, but not now,
> bollocks to 'em'.
> Ian, 20: unemployed 2½ years.

An interesting point here is that it is extremely difficult to say when, if ever, someone totally accepts that the situation has changed, or whether they are only saying such things to try to convince themselves that they are right. In other words, everyone knows that it's against the 'law', but that in itself does not make it wrong - or does it? Even the language used suggests that there is a perception of the 'illegality' of 'working on the side', but on the other hand, there is an awareness that what is being done is the only meaningful alternative open at that time. People's experiences of power relationships then, force them into experiential areas, where to 'survive' poverty, certain forms of resistance need to be adopted. The outcome of this is that once these forms are adopted, they are reinforced by the nature of that adoption, resulting in perceptions grounded in their own 'legality'. Also, certain actions convince people that they are wrong, e.g. not informing the DHSS. This dialectical position will raise its head many times during this chapter, and, if I am honest, I cannot say that I have totally resolved its paradox. However, perhaps it is precisely because of its ambiguity that in trying to 'hold it steady' for some form of analysis, so much of it is unclear.

For the vast majority of the young unemployed however, even this type of survival strategy is also extremely limited in what they have to offer. Generally, they have no skills to sell, only their physical labour. Especially for the school-leaver, the one thing which they do try to do is to hold on to the part-time job which they had when they were still at school:

> 'I help out at the chippy down
> the road. I've done it since I
> was at school'.
>> Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

'I work at the hairdressers all
day on Saturday. She says I can
carry on when I leave school if
I want to'.
                    Younger (15) sister of Ann, 18.

'I do a bit of baby-sitting, they
usually give me something - they're
quite good really. I started when I
was at school, in the fifth year'.
                    Liz, 17: unemployed 10 months.

The list of jobs done while at school which my respondents gave
was endless. The problem remains that many of these tend to dry up
once they have left school. This can be for many reasons, e.g.
i) youth's new-found status after leaving school makes them think
that certain jobs are 'just for kids' and ii) they also expect more
money. This is not to argue that youths are pricing themselves out
of work, but that they are, more realistically, asking for a fair
rate of pay, comparable with other workers, not just holiday or
pocket money:

'I used to have a paper round when
I was at school, but you grow out
of that, don't you?'
                    Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

Also, employers perceptions change about what work youths will be
prepared to do, or the amount they should be paid for a job. This
ambiguity can result in employers not asking youths to work when
they have left school, but finding other 'school-kids', to whom the
same assumptions apply. Employers are also often reluctant to pay more
for a job just because an individual has left school. Some individuals,
while they are still at school, also anticipate that on leaving, they
will find 'adult' work if they look hard enough, with the result that
they give up their 'kid's' job. My own data, based upon taped
interviews with pupils within different classroom contexts, and also
certain periods spent observing at the same school, gives evidence to

support these statements.

These perceptions are further reinforced by one or two individuals who do manage to acquire jobs before leaving school officially. I was also struck very forcibly by whole classrooms full of eager young people with only a few weeks left at school, maintaining steadfastly that, given time and a bit of effort, they could find a job. They certainly appreciated that the spectre of unemployment was a problem, and that many young people in the district were without work, but the fact remained that _they_ would find work. Certainly, youth in areas with very high rates of long-term unemployment may not be so optimistic, and certainly the history of the local area, in terms of high unemployment activity cannot be ruled out as a variable in their perceived optimism; but on the other hand, the seeds of individualistic achievement of failure permiated by the school, and also those factors mentioned in the previous chapter on Coping Strategies, was very strongly in evidence here.

In returning to my discussion on the skills - or lack of them - held by young people, it is certainly a fact that in the case of lads, employers prefer to hire 'on the side' men who can turn their hand to a range of tasks, rather than young lads who are only good for fetching and carrying. Even in the so-called 'Formal Sector', many young people I spoke to complained about the cards in the Job Centre advertising for such things as 'Experienced 18 year old':

> 'Where the fuck you going to find an
> experienced 18 year old around here?
>
> Even the 25 year olds, if they've only
> had an odd job, couldn't get that one'.
>> John, 21: unemployed 3 years.

Even young women find a problem there too:

> 'They're all the same - 'Must be
> experienced' - it's a joke.'
>> Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

Back in the so-called 'Informal Sector', their lack of experience still plays a major part in their downfall:

> 'I did get a bit of a job once, on the
> side. It was, er, on a building site ...
> all they wanted me to do was mix cement -
> I didn't even last the bloody week out'.
> Paul, 19: unemployed 2½ years.

So even the ability, or experience, to pace oneself out for the day is lacking. This is not surprising, as the lack of constant, physical daily work is meaningless to them. From an employers point of view, even the fetching and carrying is able to be done on the cheap. This results in very inconsistent work being available in this sector. It is here that cheap labour can be taken on and 'fired' as necessary, although if we are to follow Roberts' (1982) argument, unemployed youth of both sexes are able, in part, to use this form of exploitation to their own advantage, in that a 'third way' - in Roberts' terms - is being used as a way of facilitating the transition from school to full time work. Within this 'third way', unemployed youths are, 'Handling transitory episodes of joblessness within their own prior frames of reference' (p.23).

This is not to suggest that young people do not want work, but that many of the types of work available to them are so meaningless and boring that one way of coping with this oppressive labour within both the Formal and Informal sectors is to try to structure when, and for how long, you work. This is a very tenuous activity, and more fail than succeed, because who, nowadays, can find a job just when one is required? But within this framework, once you _can_ find employment, however exploitative, you work until you 'feel' that you have the money for what you want, then you leave - if you're not 'laid off' first.

Returning to the discussion on the 'ambiguity' of the criteria included within the 'Informal' category, it can be seen that implicit within the discussion so far upon the irregular economy is the fact that the whole area is imbued with criteria that could just as easily be labelled as being within other areas, e.g. social, hidden etc. What I would now like to do, by way of two case studies, is to highlight these other processes, thereby making the analysis more sophisticated than is made possible by static forms of typologizing. Although I must state that they are locally based examples, and certainly, wider ethnography would need to be undertaken in order to make wider generalizations about the issues under discussion, I do feel that these two case studies are good examples of the differing processes which I am trying to illustrate; they also illustrate the social class/gender dimension which is extremely important in any discussion of social and economic relationships. The first case study will look at how a group of unemployed, middle-class youth of both sexes entered the field (literally) of the Irregular Economy, and the impact that it had on their social organization; while the second case study will examine the situation of some unemployed working-class youths, again of both sexes, whose activities could certainly be described as them wanting 'a fair days pay' for 'a fair days work'.

Becoming 'field-wise'.

Because, as was stated earlier, the local area is situated on three sides by countryside, with a general 'green belt' on the other side, farming and its related activities have become a major feature of the town and its surrounding life. Over the last decade, the countryside has teemed every summer weekend with trippers from the nearby urban comurbation of the West Midlands, whose centre,

Birmingham, is about twenty-five miles away. One of the major pastimes for these trippers during the day is to stop off and 'pick your own' fruit and vegetables at one of the local farms. This type of activity has now become not only acceptable, but actually a form of status for some of the 'townees' when they arrive home to tell people that they have had some 'quality' wholesome, fresh food, picked in pleasant surroundings, rather than the usual tinned or frozen items picked up in stuffy, crowded supermarkets. The local people who run a freezer very often stock part of it with this type of 'quality' food, and therefore, they also take time out to 'pick your own'. One outcome of this is that alongside the historical activity of 'farm picking' engaged in for centuries by gypsies, agricultural labourers and their families and, for certain crops (e.g. hops) complete families of industrial workers from the cities (Claxton, 1911), there has developed an 'acceptable' way for middle-class youngsters to earn money. The way that this 'acceptable' dimension has been constructed and maintained is that the activity itself is imbued with a 'school holiday' aura, which has meant that 'youngsters' of the middle-class can engage in the activity, while at the same time 'distancing' it from the so-called 'normal' middle-class paths of income generation.

Relating this to my own focus, I would suggest that this idea of 'having fun' has become a 'legitimate' way, during the summer, for unemployed youths to earn a small sum of money which is 'accepted' by their parents because of i) the 'distancing' factor and ii) that they are actually working for some money, rather than, in their terms:

> 'Just relying on handouts, either
> off his Father or I'
>
> (Mum)
>
> 'I mean, I'm not bothered, within reason,
> what he does, as long as he learns to
> stand on his own two feet .... I will
> not have him becoming one of these so-
> called scroungers'.
>
> (Dad)

Also included in this 'legitimation' of 'picking' comes any activity that can be labelled as 'working-down-on-the-farm', e.g. haymaking, pony-grooming, egg collecting, flushing for the guns etc. All have their niche in creating the odd pound or two. In terms of my own case study, it is within the area of 'bean picking' that my analysis will develop, (I use the term 'beans' as a pseudonym for the real crop).

Field-Corner Society.

It started for me one weekday evening, while I was sitting talking to a group which had an age range of 15 to 20 and included both sexes, but was what could be termed middle-class in composition (the definition of middle-class and working-class being adopted here is the one developed by Erikson (1984).

The group itself was spread over one corner of a small grassed playing area on the outskirts of a private estate. The individuals who did not actually come from that area also lived in their parents private housing, which included properties currently valued at between £50,000 and £100,000; double fronted garages were the norm rather than the exception, as were swimming pools, and the only regular working-class 'visitors' were the milkman and postman. Individuals came to this corner in ones twoes and threes, staying for a short time then leaving, not necessarily with the people they had arrived with. The result was that when someone suggested that they go 'picking' tomorrow, the group involved did not consist of 'best mates', or have any collective sense of identity in the sense of a 'gang', but were 'discrete' individuals who, in the words of one of them will:

'Just turn up'.

An interesting point here is that the discussion soon got round
to whether or not to phone before turning up at the farm, because
one young woman said that she had seen an advertizment for fruit
pickers a short time ago in the local paper (The Kidderminster Shuttle)
and when she had rung up, they had said they had had over 400
enquiries in the last four days! This was further illustrated when
one lad said that when he had phoned for the same job:

'They asked me how many O-levels I'd got!'

I must admit that this still astounds me. I think that I had grown
accustomed to stories of youths having to have O-levels to stack
shelves in supermarkets, but to pick fruit? This point had first
come to my attention while I was assisting on the study done by
Colin Bell and Lorna McKee (op.cit.) when one of their respondents
had mentioned that they had asked her how many O-levels and CSE's
she had when she applied for a shelf stackers job. At first, I
simply thought that this was a way of sifting through the enquiries
(especially if you have over 400 for one advert.), but after observing
and reflecting upon the situation, I feel that this reflects a more
subtle form of 'control' by the farmer, as I will explain as I
proceed with this analysis.

The 'group' decided to meet next day at the farm, not going
as a group but making their own ways there. Some conned one of
their parents into giving them a lift, others came on bikes and
motor-bikes, two even had their own cars, but interestingly, brought
nobody with them. Those who 'just turned up' consisted of four or
five unemployed, three of that years school leavers playing truant
or supposedly at home studying for exams, two 'knocking a day off
work' while still getting paid and one lad who was actually on his
official holidays.

Once there, they decided to split up and all work on their own,
within earshot so that they could speak to one another but with no
co-operation to help each other fill their baskets or boxes, just an
initial straight individualistic effort, for, as one lad said,
effectively reflecting his socialization:

'Your money then reflects the effort you've put in'.

This idea was to change by the end of the day, but for now they
started to 'pick'. By mid-morning the novelty of picking was wearing
thin, by mid-day it had gone altogether. Horseplay and fooling around
became the order of the day. Nobody had 'earned' more than £2.50 that
morning, so first it was slyly throwing bits of the produce at each
other, growing eventually into what seemed like a full-scale battle.
There seemed to be no gender distinction here, everyone was fed up,
sore, throwing sometimes and generally had 'had enough'. It was then
that the feeling of 'being done' was expressed, and words like
exploitation received a full airing. It was at this point that the
'fiddling' crept in, as a way of compensation, a form of resistance.
Some bright spark who had been here before had seen someone putting
leaves into the collection of produce, in order to fill their
container quickly; as no care had to be taken in handling the leaves,
as there was handling the produce, this produced results very swiftly.
This 'idea' was accepted by one or two lads, and some form of
collective effort ensued. With the leaves placed in the bottom third
of the container, they decided to hand it in for weighing. As they
approached the truck, on which stood a full-time farm hand weighing
the beans, they were stopped short by seeing some other lads being
'told off' for trying the same trick. Apparently, like them, they
had also placed the leaves in the bottom of the container, but had

forgotten that when it was tipped upside down, the leaves became

visible at the top. The 'trick' really lay in placing the leaves

in the middle in such a way as to be hidden during weighing. Certain

of the more 'knowledgable' pickers could get away with it, but it

needed a great deal of skill in its presentation. Another way of

fiddling was to work with a 'weigher' and either receive tokens

to hand in for cash, which you then shared, or just to get the

'weigher' to turn a 'blind eye' to a shortfall in weight. Both ways

required co-operation, and could only be achieved over long time

periods by coming back to the same farm for a whole 'picking'

season, or even over two or three years.

Now this is an instance where I feel the so-called 'O-level

criteria' begins to play its part, in that it is not simply a way

of reducing the numbers of applicants but a way of selecting a

certain 'type' of person. Basically, the farmer can be sure each

year that a certain number of what could be termed 'quality'

pickers will turn up. These are individuals who come back, year

after year and are on first name terms with each other and with the

farmer. Along with them come the individuals who will also 'work' a

full shift because they need every little bit of money they can earn

(a real survival mechanism for the poor). After them comes every-

body else, a mixture - from the farmers point of view - of

'good 'uns' and 'bad 'uns'. As one farmer said:

> 'We have some right ones some times...
> ...generally they're good, although
> they think it's easy money.....If they
> don't work, I tells them to clear off'.

One way of avoiding trouble - and by 'trouble, the farmers mean

someone who tries to get something for nothing - is to 'vet' in some

way the individuals who apply for the job. I would suggest that
it is within this process that the function of the 'O-level criteria'
can be found. Those with the O-levels do not come every day throughout
the season, let alone every year; their individual families are
also not usually 'of the land' or used to developing 'strategies'
within this context, therefore the likelihood of resisting control
strategies adopted by the farmer to increase his profitability are
likely to be restricted in their use and effectiveness. This is not
to say that only the poor will 'cheat' (or develop resistance
strategies - depending on your point of view), on the contrary, these
are pursued equally by the rich as well (but for very different
reasons). It is simply that this form of exploitation is centred
around individuals whose main chance of resistance is grounded within
certain skills which are built up over time from long periods of
toil and sweat and backbreaking work, not from a 'fun day out'.

   For the middle-class youths themselves, this lack of 'resistance
skills' produces a situation where more 'overt' forms of resistance
rather than 'subtle' ones become the pattern. During the afternoon,
there was much to-ing and fro-ing across the fields as pickers
worked harder to get the last ounce of weight for their days effort.
With their initial individualistic strategy gone, the youths needed
help if they were to achieve any form of negation to the structure
of their exploitation; this was achieved by co-opting a couple of
small working-class children into their strategy. How it worked was
that, once weighed, the produce was placed in stacked containers
at the edge of the field. The youths then 'conned' the small boys
(who were there with their parents), by offering them 10p for every
container which they could steal and bring to them without anyone

seeing. They then placed this produce in their own containers and
proceeded to have it weighed; the result was that at the end of
the day, because not everyone had joined in, they had still only
made a few pounds each. The overall amount was denounced as:

'Definitely not worth the effort'.

They did not feel that they would be going again, unless someone
could come up with something better than this. Tired and annoyed,
they trudged across the field to their bikes and cars, vowing they
would never return; however, later in the evening, after a couple
of drinks, when others had run out of cash and they were still able
to buy not only their own drinks, cigarettes etc. but some for others,
to store up 'social capital' for the future (this concept is discussed
later in the chapter), they were ready to conceed that the extra bit
of money was useful, if not totally 'worth the effort'. From within
a different context, they were able to reflect on the day and its
issues, and by the process of 'distancing' they were able to maintain
the view that 'picking' was hard work, but - and this was, for me,
the key point:

'It does give you a bit extra'.

and

'It was something different'.

Before going on to analyse the different processes which have
been raised, and their relationship to the nature of the so-called
'Informal', I would like to develop the other case study, which
again serves to highlight the many different features that may
exist within the framework of one phenomena.

<u>A 'Fair Days Work' for a 'Fair Days Pay'</u>.

This case study, although emphasising a different form of
collective resistance to the exploitation of manual labour, is centred
mainly around the life of one young lad, rather than the lives of
a group as was the first. Although Tony was of working-class origin,
he stood no more chance of acquiring work within the Irregular
Economy than did his middle-class counterparts. He had no skills to
offer, and if anything was 'disadvantaged' in employment terms by his
educational background and physical appearance. He was not as striking
as a punk or a skinhead, but his ear-ring, tattoos and shabby jeans
did contrast with the 'presentation of self' (Goffman, op.cit.)
given by the middle-class youths mentioned earlier. His immediate
situation was also different in that, with his Father also on temporary
work (he had lost his job twice in the previous nine months), he
was having to hand over to his Mother a fairly substantial part of
his dole money. with no leeway to acquire 'favours' in return in
terms of money for jobs around the house, clothes etc. He was lucky
even:

> 'If I get a fucking fag off 'em....
> (pause)....thinking about it, it's me
> that gives them one!'

This desperate situation called, in the most part, for desperate
measures, in terms of having to find something to bring in some
money. This means finding something, but what? Because there are
no 'real jobs', the only place to turn is to the so-called 'Informal'
and because here the pay is inevitably poor and the exploitation
greater, one will have to work longer hours in order to achieve
any benefit at all. If Tony was keeping all the money himself, he
would probably - in relative terms - cope, but in a family with two

younger children to cope with as well, the situation was hopeless.

Many times during the year, travelling fairs are seen around the locality of Kidderminster and its outlying areas; just recently, Tony had heard from a friend that at some fairs, 'casuals' were needed, so on this occasion he had decided to:

'See what it's all about'.

There was no car for lifts, no bike to be ridden, no money for bus fares, so he had no other choice but to walk. He said that he had a few half-hearted gestures at 'thumbing a lift', but he knew from past experience that no one would stop. His rationalization for this was:

'It's probably the way I look that puts them off'.

Whatever the reason, no one stopped, so he trudged on. When he got to the fair, he spoke to the man in charge - and was told to come back the next day at 9.30 - 10.00 am, when he would 'see what he could do'. He 'couldn't promise anything', but 'he'd see'.

After trudging back, this slim chance was all he had to go on, but in his situation, he had to take it. So the next morning he again walked there, only to find that he was one of a number of others, all hopeful of being 'taken on'. This 'hiring' procedure basically took the form of a 'theatrical production' every morning, as the management and the workers themselves tried to 'mask' or pull a veil over the true situation. By this 'veil', forms of exploitation and power relationships were diluted, and the youngsters could achieve a modicum of self-respect by rationalizing their disappointment on to external factors. The whole performance started when the manager came out of his 'office' and looked at the sky, and seemed to 'ponder' on what the weather would be like for the rest of the day.

He then said things like:

'It's not looking good today'.

or

'I wonder what today is going to bring?'

The lads - and it _is_ mainly lads - on the other hand, always responded
by insisting that:

'It's going to be dry today'.

They also enlisted the help of the professionals:

'It said on the telly it was going
to be sunny today'.

With this, the manager tried to emphasise his point of view, only to
be contradicted by shouts of:

'He's right, I heard it as well!'

'Go on, if it rains you can
always lay us off'.

Sometimes they even further their own exploitation by shouting:

'Have me, you pay me less than him'.'

This is not taken by the others - as it could well be - as being
against them, but as part of the ritual that must be gone through
in order to get a job. The 'performance' would be brought to an end
when the manager had finally chosen the number of lads that he wants.
Most certainly he knows how many he wants before he comes outside,
but this 'performance' did give those waiting a slim chance of
influencing his decision by two or three more. For the rest, they
are told to come back at about 2 pm, by which time the afternoon
visitors will be arriving and decisions will again be made as to
how many more workers may be needed, and the whole performance will
start all over agin.

On this occasion, Tony was lucky enough (or unlucky, depending

on your point of view) to be taken on. He was working for 50p an
hour, from 10 am to 11 pm - 13 hours a day, and then the long walk
home. Only to walk back the next day for another stint of being, in
some people's terms, 'a scruffy, workshy scrounger'. In other people's
terms, especially his Mother's, he was:

> 'A good lad really, he does his best,
> but there's not much round here'.

This was not the only form of exploitation on offer during the
day however, and each hour saw strategies and counter-strategies
being adopted in order to try to elevate this degree of exploitation.
In some cases, the processes under analysis were so complex that, in
teasing them out, they produced criteria that in some cases were
extremely difficult to place in any formal rigid category. By way of
example, I would like to illustrate this complex process by concentrating
on one major issue, again described in the last case study; that of
being 'on the make'.

Within everyday language, and within the context of 'work',
this concept of being 'on the make' would normally be associated with
illegality, especially from an employer's perspective, and as something
to be strongly resisted and punished if brought to his or her
attention. Here, on the contrary, some forms of 'making' were not
only condonned by management, but 'making' was an over-riding
expectation, with only 'excess' being punished. Even from the
employee's point of view:

> 'It's not whether you fiddle or not, but how much'.

Also, from their perspective, the contrary to 'making excess' was
punished - i.e. that of not 'helping' at all.

These conflicts would start, as was stated earlier, with management choosing who would work, and stating the amount of pay. The next thing was to place individuals on to certain rides, amusements etc. There they would join the one or two full-time workers, who already had their own 'making' strategies going on. Each lad would have his preference as to where he would like to work, and here the 'trick' was to get yourself placed there without seeming too keen, as this might get the manager reflecting as to why this keeness arose, inevitably concluding that 'they had a good thing going' and trying to put a stop to it. Also, changing the staff around to different rides etc. slowed down the 'making' as this needed a fine degree of skill, or else they became careless and extremely obvious in their efforts to strike up a decent wage. As the manager said:

'It's obvious they will try _something_.'

Especially on the wages that they were paid, but what he would not tolerate was them 'going over the top':

> 'Some get too greedy; but you've
> got to expect the odd quid or
> two, ain't ya?'

He then went on to explain that if he 'came down' too hard:

'I'd not have anyone turning up'.

So the 'making' was not only used, but also actually created, to facilitate their labour needs and ultimate profitability. A further legitimation given by management to the process of 'making' was their 'turning a blind eye' to fiddling the customer. Again, this could not be done to excess, but 'making your money' was quite acceptable. This was aided by the fact that no drinks were provided free for the workers throughout the whole day, and the only way they could get any refreshment was to buy it at the fair's cafeteria; so

management didn't mind _some_ fiddling, as much of this money eventually
came back to them in that way.

Once the lads were in position on the rides etc. the process of
'making' and 'controlling the make' began. An interesting point here
is the overall temporal framework of the 'make'. On sunny days, this
activity was a long drawn out affair, with 10, or at the most 20p
being'made' with each transaction, and a final flurry at the end of
the day as a 'topping-up'. However, on cloudy or rainy days, activity
was far more intense because of the possibility of being laid off.
This resulted in the management either rushing around presenting
a visible form on the cloudy days, or creeping around trying to be
invisible, spying on individuals at certain times during the day
when the weather was fine. Therefore, the tempo of the work changed
not only with the amount of customers that one had to deal with, but
also with the mental activity of staying 'on top'. This tempo could
also change throughout the day, for many other reasons, and it is
therefore interesting that to structure their time, the employees
still used the terms of the clock, in that the 'makes' were gauged
at so many per hour, giving an hourly wage that was meaningful to
work for in their terms, so that they did not feel under-rated and
abused any more than was necessary.

I have mentioned the terms 'making' and 'make' during this section
many times, without so far elaborating on the way in which these
processes are developed; therefore the remainder of this section
will address these issues and also the counter-aspect of management
control, while finishing the section with a generalized account of
the main issues raised so far during this chapter.

<u>On the 'make'.</u>

The process of 'making' at the fairground can be split into
many different areas, and each one can be seen within the overall
battle of control and resistance. Each area must be seen not just
as a response, but also, in many cases, an initiative process
pursued by an active group imposing their own 'control' upon the
situation. Our initial discussion concerning the process of
'making' will start by describing a major area which lends itself
to this process, that of 'ticket sales'. Most fairs generally
operate one of two systems for paying for rides etc., either
paying at each individual amusement or buying a book of tickets
from a booth, with a certain number handed to the attendant for
each 'go' on a ride. As a process of control, it can be seen that
the first of these, which involves dealing with cash, gives more
opportunities for 'making' (something on the side) than does one
dealing with tickets. It therefore goes without saying that where
a more static form of site has been established, there is more
liklihood that the 'ticket' or 'token' system will prevail,
although at certain times each system can be incorporated into
the other as circumstances dictate. At the fair in question, the
latter system was in use; tickets and tokens were used when it was
not too busy, and both tickets and cash when it was crowded, to
avoid queues developing around the ticket booth, as this might
put people off if they thought they might have to wait for a long
time. It also kept people circulating, and thereby subjected them
to more enticement.

Tony was initially instructed that he was on no account to
take any money, if people offered cash he was to send them to the
ticket booth. He was placed on a ride with another lad, who had

worked there for a long time, and who told Tony:

'I'll show you the ropes'.

This 'instruction' started fairly quickly, due to not only the
weather situation, but also the fact that you needed to be made
'wise' quickly if you were not to 'queer the pitch' for the others.
This collective aspect became, I noted, extremely important here, in
combating the control of management. Tony, whose job was to collect
the tickets, rip them up, and place them in a box, from whence they
were taken away at the end of the day to be counted by the management,
as a way of checking on the cash taken, was told to 'palm' one or two
every now and then and give them to the more experienced lad. He later
took them to the booth to be 'sold' again, and the cash thus made was
split between the group involved. In this way it was possible to get
round management control and 'make a bob or two'. Naturally, the
management knew the tricks of the trade, having been born into a
fair environment, and they kept constant vigil over these 'tricks'.
This included spot checks, in which they made youths turn out their
pockets, spying round corners, getting others to watch 'tricks'
going on and, in some notable cases, even setting up lads to be
caught. All this needed a fairly elaborate system of detection and
produced an equally elaborate system of 'stooging' (as used in POW
camps during the Second World War) by the youths themselves, including
an incredible 'tic-tac' system which would show you, or anyone who
needed to know - e.g. before you made a 'series' of 'tricks' - where
members of management were and what they were doing. It was an
amazing, and highly efficient, system to watch, and was all the
more interesting when you consider the general atmosphere of fun
and laughter which permeated the whole context, and which hid an

underlying process of exploitation and resistance.

This 'to-ing and fro-ing' between management and workers took many forms, such as on the 'Dodgem Cars'; here, customers bought a token from a booth and placed it in a slot on top of the car, then to get the car to start when the power is switched on, they pushed the token right in and so began to drive. Tony, who was changed to this ride in the afternoon, supposedly to help to move the cars around, was once again instructed on how to 'make'. This was again a collective effort, as, if the ride was stopped a few seconds before it should be, there was no way in which the token could be pushed through the slot when the next customer attempted this. One of the lads would then jump on to the car and lean forward to 'help' the customer who was struggling to get the token in. The token was once again 'palmed', with the unsuspecting customer assuming that it had fallen through the slot, and then it was taken to the booth to be 'recycled' again. Naturally, this cannot be done at every turn, but was used on the odd occasion to - once again - 'make' a pound or two. The lads on this ride told me that a short time before, the owners had changed the boxes on the cars, supposedly to stop this kind of 'trick' happening. The car would then only go if the token was in the box. This seriously held up any form of 'making' until someone:

> 'Put Polyfilla in the slots and
> buggered them up.....we said
> someone must have done it that
> night after we'd gone'.

Another lad said:

> 'They couldn't get it out so they
> had to put the old ones back on..
> ....they're up the corner now in
> the workshop (laugh). They knew it
> was us, but they couldn't prove it'.

Then he added more seriously:

'They watch us like fucking hawks now'.

As was stated previously, it was quite legitimate to 'make' off the customer, and this happened especially when the system changed to cash as well as tokens during the busy afternoons. Here the legitimation used was the guise of 'tea money'. An example might be when a child came with 50p for a 20p ride and, having given the money to the attendant, who deliberately fumbled with the change, rushed off in excitement to get onto the ride without waiting for their change. This was then deliberately placed away from the other money and in full view of the customer's window, so that if an irate parent appeared demanding their change, the lad could appear to quite legitimately say that the child didn't wait, he couldn't remember who it was, and to 'prove' it:

'Look, here it is, your exact change!'

It worked every time, with the parent, if not actually apologizing, certainly scolding the child for not waiting. When the management came round to collect the money, as they did very frequently when the cash system was in operation, it was certainly legitimate to say, when they enquired: 'What's this?' - pointing to the money on the side, 'Oh, that's my tea money'. This they didn't mind, because the money would be spent at their 'Cafe'; however, this again became an ideal way of facilitating a 'make', as, if this money was placed in your pocket, it could be replaced by some out of the box - a process which could be repeated every now and again, with the pretence to management when they come round again that it was still the same money, just waiting for when you had a drink.

An interesting point here is that a form of social consciousness
did enter into the 'makes' in that many poor kids were given 'free'
rides by the young workers, and a conscious choice was made to overtly
discriminate between, in their terms, the 'visible rich' and 'visible
poor'. This was frowned upon by management, and if spotted, the lad
could get into trouble. It was very obvious when some families came
round that their parents couldn't afford to 'treat' them to many
turns on amusements, and the children just stood looking, obviously
wishing that they could have a go. When called by their parents
their expressions were those, not of disappointment, but of
resigned indifference born out of years of reduced expectations and
the practical application of not getting very much, if anything at
all. These 'kids' were then given as many rides as they wanted, very
often actually being taken to the next ride, with the 'nod' being
given by one worker to the other. In the workers terms however, on
the other hand:

'Rich bastards are fair game'.

When they came around, however they were perceived, any chance to
'make' from them became acceptable. This was legitimated and
expressed as:

'They got it, so they can pay for
it. What's it to them?'

This form of social consciousness is born for them out of their own
reduced circumstances, and in many cases it is further legitimated
by their home life and their parents or guardians attitudes.

Returning to the subject of 'making tea money', the circumstances
were that no time was given for official breaks, and individuals
must work throughout the whole of their 13 hour shift if they
wanted the job. This would not be officially admitted, but the

unwritten and unspoken rule was that you eat and drink 'on the job'.
Management themselves were further 'on the make' in that, after not
allowing their workers a break, they also expected them to pay for
any drinks, hot dogs, hamburgers etc. that they had, and to pay
the full price too! This 'make' was further assisted by having no
roll in the cafe till, so that what was rung up gave no indication
as to how much had been taken during the day. This exploitation -
being forced to work all day, making them buy their own food and
drink - resulted, because of the greed of the management in trying
to 'make' still more by 'fiddling' the till, in a system which was
left wide open for the young workers to exploit for themselves as a
way of 'getting their own back'. This was worked by a lad asking the
manager if he would stand-in for him while he went to get a drink.
The manager was always willing to do this because they were buying
from him, but this kept him tied in one spot for a while, with the
opportunity now available for other workers to develop their 'making'.
The individual going for refreshment could develop his own 'make'
with the assistant working behind the counter, away from prying eyes.
Here the worker would ask for, say, a hamburger and a cup of tea, and
would hand over 50p; the assistant would then go through the ritual
of ringing up the prices on the till - and then give the same amount
of money, or even more, back to the youth as his 'change' with no
one being any the wiser, as because of their own greed, management
was unable to prove anything. The worker would then go back to his
ride and enter into a round of banter with the manager about him
being a 'measly bugger' for not giving them a free drink, with the
manager rejoining that they were all 'scrounging bastards' who
already got their tea money free. Having played out this verbal

game, they could then both go away satisfied, feeling that another battle, if not the war, had been won.

Sometimes the youngsters were caught, either through sheer stupidity, such as pockets bulging with small change, or through systematic management spying activities. One way round the first of these was to change the coins into notes and hide them in a coat pocket or your shoes (not so easy now with the advent of £1 coins'.) Sometimes this could prove awkward, especially if the youngster was asked to turn out his pockets, and also to take off his shoes. If this happened, it was usually in the:

> 'Afternoon, if they feel they've
> had a bad day'.

One way in which the young workers got round this was for a friend, someone they know well, who is going round the fair, to be given some money to be 'held' for them until the next day. That way, money is transferred out of the fair without having been held all day, thereby lessening the risk. This might cost a 'drink' for the mate who was given the money, but for the young worker it was worth it. Other ways in which family, friends and acquaintances were used to facilitate the 'making' were either in terms of them being allowed on to rides etc. for instant payment in non-cash terms e.g. drinks, food or cigarettes, and in storing up what I have termed 'social capital' such as favours etc.

However, sometimes this 'collective' norm was violated, with a lad trying to 'make' on his own, or trying to 'make' off the other lads by not sharing the correct amount of money that he had taken. This usually happened when somebody felt aggrieved at not being wanted by the others on their rides etc., or when somebody was really short of money that week, and might owe his parents, especially his Father,

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money that he had borrowed. For those of long-standing at the fair, this was really an act of desperation, whereas new lads might be more prone to try this. Once it got around that somebody had tried to 'screw' his mates, the individual was usually given a degree of social isolation, depending on his status within the group.

The management tried hard to have the last laugh; one way of doing this was to pay the young workers their wages in 1p, 2p or 10p coins. These were placed in a wage packet and given to them near some fruit machines. The youngsters then had to walk back past all the enticing machines, and they generally succumbed, and wasted a lot of their hard-earned money, giving back to management what little wages they had been paid, but not what they had 'made'. This had already been made invisible, and constituted their main money at the end of the day.

What we have highlighted here is an array of interlocking phenomena which, if placed within a rigid form of typology, would not have been able to absorb the subtle nuances which are characteristic of everyday social life. This is not to say that the social aspects are deliberately omitted from this form of typology, but they do appear more implicit than explicit, and certainly many studies (Ditton, 1978; Klockars, 1975) have, for a long time, highlighted the complex nature of these processes, which have unfortunately been ignored in an enthusiasm to formalize the analysis. As Jenkins (1980) states, by doing this, 'They subsume within the purview of one analytical model a number of phenomena which may, in fact, be quite distinct when looked at from the actor's point of view' (Jenkins, op.cit. p. 6).

Thus we have seen so far that if we adopt an establishment
point of view, one which defines any movement away from the formal
legal adaption to employment, we can only understand it by reference
to the criteria of deviance. The process is then seen and conceptualized
as an informality, a process whereby the 'rules' of society are,
if not broken, then certainly amenable to a degree of bending. An
interesting point here is that for the individuals themselves, this
dual conception can also be perceived in a way which allows an
alternative definition to hold sway, one in which the pressures
currently being experienced are perceived as paramount, giving an
existential framework in which the norms and values associated with
these pressures take precedence.

They therefore operate with a conception of what is 'right' which
is based on their needs and experiences, rather than one based on
the legal formality promulgated from within the ideological state
apparatus. This question of what is 'right' is tempered in its action
by the perceived power of the alternative perspective. It is not that
they are holding two conflicting conceptions, but that they judge the
ability to act on the basis of how strongly they perceive the alter-
native ideological agencies. 'Taking a chance' is therefore not one
based at that particular time solely on their perception of what is
'right' or 'wrong', but rather one couched in relationships of
perceived power.

A further point which is related to these issues concerns
conception and terminology. An example would be if someone was
working in the Irregular Economy - e.g. Tony - he would, by standard
definition, be operating 'Informally'. Now, when he is 'on the make',

he is again acting informally in that situation. He is bringing
aspects of the Unofficial and Hidden Economies into his activity,
thereby 'informalizing the informal'. When he combines aspects of
the Social Economy as well, the terminology and conception becomes
torturous. Take the lads who are working at the fair full-time, i.e.
in a formal capacity; when they 'make', they enter the world of
the Unofficial Economy, but Tony is already <u>in</u> the Unofficial by
fiddling the State; when he fiddles the fair, is he twice as much
involved? And if he fiddles the fair lads, how many 'Informalities'
is he involved in then? Now there's a conception to contend with -
Treble Informalization!

Although taking issue with these static forms of typologizing,
I have mentioned them because they do achieve a certain degree of
illumination, and my intention during this chapter is not to totally
do away with them, but to modify them in some way to accommodate these
different processes. Therefore, if we return to the differing dimensions
of the 'Informal' produced by Henry (op.cit.), we can see that the
next category is the Hidden Economy.

<u>The Hidden Economy.</u>

The Hidden Economy includes activities such as pilfering,
fiddling and trading in stolen goods. This economy, which is sometimes
called the 'Underground' or 'Secondary' economy, uses money as its
means of exchange. It is, in Henry's terms, 'parasitic' upon the
regular economy, and its historical context means that yesterday's
perks become today's fiddles, when activities which has always
been viewed by both employer and employee as payments in kind
are redefined to become theft. This historical contextualization is

extremely important and is relevant to each one of the dimensions
under discussion. It may also go some way towards explaining the
process whereby individuals and groups come to 'hold' and 'legitimate'
activities which are at variance with the Establishment point of view.
Having possibly been handed down through a number of generations, the
collective wisdom is to appropriate certain areas and develop
generalized and specific strategies to cope with them. These
strategies will, naturally, change over time, with some developing
into other forms, whilst others are 'lost', possibly for ever (Ditton,
op.cit.). What I have termed 'collective wisdom' however, has another
side which, from the community's point of view is a total negation
of the co-operation basis which generally sustain s a community's
ethos. This 'negation' is framed in a deep-seated attitude which arises
and characterizes any social group over a period of time. This
'negation' of community seems to have always been a factor in working-
class life. However, an important qualification made by Seabrook (1982)
which I feel closely substantiates part of my own overall perspective,
is that in this historical epoch, 'People are set increasingly
against one another' (Unemployment 1982, p.32). This point is
important because it gives a 'link' with my previous section, of
the so-called 'Irregular Economy', and once again highlights the
overlapping complexity of the processes under discussion. As I
stated earlier, during my actual fieldwork the 'issues' surrounding
the emotive subject of 'social security fiddling' were made
prominent at both a local and national level. During discussion
with officers from the local Fraud Squad, it was made clear to
me that 'every now and then' they have what they term a 'purge',
i.e. they crack down in their own area on people they feel are

'fiddling'. They suggested that this lessens the amount of people involved for some time, especially if they make an 'example' of one or two individuals. This then gets reported in the local papers, usually as headline news, and so produces a string of phone calls from people offering more information which the police can then follow up. So, in Cohen's terms, the 'amplification of deviance' goes on. From our point of view, the interesting thing is how the community responds to these types of 'purge'.

One of the main ways is by identifying the officers concerned in investigating a reported 'fiddle'. This usually comes about by someone 'spotting' them, usually sitting in a car, somewhere near the home of their 'target'. The message is then passed on 'over the fence', 'down the pub', 'at the shops' etc. so that individuals can be a little more 'careful'. Another tried and tested way is to ring the local police station as an anonymous caller, and report that some men are sitting in their car for a long while and that they seem to be watching the children either going to and from school or playing. You can be reasonably sure that the police will respond to this, which usually produces an awkward scene, w th the fraud officer having to admit who they are and then leave the scene as their 'cover' has been 'blown'. This phenomena is much more characteristic in working-class areas than in any other, and it is within this framework that the young men and women appropriate this knowledge and in time develop their own 'collective wisdom' to be used as the need arises. Usually though, youths are subjected to the 'spot check' conducted at the dole office, and this type of incident will then get 'blown up' due to them telling someone about it and it being passed on, and soon it is not uncommon for a whole area to be buzzing with talk of 'snoopers'. This talk highlights one

of the negative aspects of community resistance; in actual fact
this type of resistance is not really community based, but is mainly
concerned with, and connected to, what could be termed 'street
resistance', i.e. people living in close proximity to one another.
The negative aspect comes when someone who is either left out of
the 'informality' of the area, or actually does not want to take
any part in it, or even has a grudge against a certain family or one
of its members, will then 'split' on them by telling 'Authority'.
This is a quote from the local paper:

> 'I did it to feed my family; if
> I had not been grasses on, you
> would never have found out'.
> (Kidderminster Shuttle: 4.7.85)

Pahl (1984) also sees this as stemming from such things as
the new ideological stance of the radical right, introduced by
Mrs. Thatcher in 1979, which tended to 'encourage a more punitive
approach to scroungers, and low paid workers were certainly not
discouraged from displaying aggressive envy to those unemployed
people with large families who sometimes appeared to be 'doing better
on the dole'' (p.95).

One of the local Fraud Officers told me that at least three
or four phone calls or letters are sent to them each week, telling
them of individuals 'known' to be fiddling. This is reflected back
in the local area by individuals being labelled as 'Ones to watch
out for'. These you must be careful not to 'say anything' in front
of, as one woman said to me:

> 'I know it's her down the road...
> .... if here ever tells on one of
> mine I'll have her'.

This type of threat, and the process of ostracization, become
mechanisms and strategies used by some members of an area to

maintain a barrier between themselves and other individuals within
that area, thereby shielding themselves and protecting their own
vunerability.

As I mentioned earlier (p. 158) this dimension of the 'Hidden'
economy is also characterized by the criteria of handling stolen
property. From within my own research at least seven areas came to
light. (Here a qualification must be added, in that I am not trying
to make any claim to have highlighted all the possible 'crimes'
taking place within that area, and certainly my data only relates
to my focus on youth unemployment. Having said that, I am in no
way trying to suggest that it is the unemployed, either as a majority
or even a significant minority, who are involved in this type of
activity; merely that certain issues were brought to my attention
and that the description and analysis gives a 'range' by which we
may understand the phenomena better).

As I have said, the phenomena of 'stolen' items seemed to span
a series of activities, stretching along a continuum from certain
activities that 'most' people engaged in at some time, to activities
which needed a high degree of sophistication in their execution. The
first of these was at a more generalized level in that whenever
someone enquired about where he or she could get something, there
always seemed to be someone expressing the fact that:

'I've got a mate who, er........'

could 'get' the item in question, or might possibly know where one
might be found. Depending on how much the imdividual who wanted the
goods could 'pester' the person who 'had a mate', then they would
either be 'put in touch' with this person directly, or the 'mate'
would do the transaction for them. There certainly seemed to be a
kind of 'performance' which had to be staged, with the individual

who had indicated that they were 'in the know' now trying to
evade the issue by stating such things as:

> 'Next time I see him, I'll ask
> him for you'.

<center>or</center>

> 'Leave it with me----------'

This type of statement elicited the response:

> 'You won't forget now, will you?'

<center>and</center>

> 'When will you know?'

This type of evasive action probably resulted from the initial
statement of 'good intent' being just that; 'good intent' - a
degree of sociability. However, another way to look at this might be
not wanting to appear too 'keen' as other people would then question
whether you were 'making' something out of it for yourself, and if
so, how much?

Payment was certainly in cash, with the 'mate' sometimes getting
what was known as a 'back hander', i.e. some kind of favour from the
person selling the goods. These general types of transaction were
usually superceeded by the more specific category, such as items
which had:

> 'Fallen off the back of a lorry'.

Here the essence of 'criminality' really tinged the conversation,
with asides such as:

> 'No questions asked'.

<center>and</center>

> 'Now keep your mouth shut, won't you?'

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For the young unemployed, the problem of entering any of these types of transactions was that the individual was already there, wanting 'cash in hand'. Rustling up the money was certainly a problem, although the lower-priced articles could be obtained, leaving the costlier ones for those in employment. A trip on any Friday night around certain of the local pubs etc. would see these types of transactions in progress, conducted _for_ the employed _by_ the employed, i.e. by those with the opportunity for those with the money, with the young unemployed generally left on the side-lines, waiting for, at best, a favour from the 'person with a mate'.

Another step along the continuum would be in the direction of actual involvement in 'taking something'. Because of its location to the countryside, one aspect of this which appeared on a number of occasions was the act of poaching. Here, unemployed working-class lads with ferrets would go and catch the odd rabbit or two, to give to their Mothers or to sell 'down the road'. Others used powerful air-guns 'over the back' of the estate, and one or two might even:

> 'Pinch any vegetables from out of the fields'.

> or even from

'People's gardens'.

Taking trout from private lakes and streams is also an acceptable strategy. Most of these practices however could not be counted on as being instigated by being unemployed, as most of the individuals involved had been doing these things for a number of years while still at school. What the experience of unemployment _did_ do, however, was to exacerbate these practices and give fuller legitimation to the idea of 'having to survive'. In some cases this literally meant 'food on the table', in others 'survival' meant acquiring a few 'treats' which helped to make life tolerable.

It was certainly the case that in no way was this 'criminality' or 'radical redistribution of resources', solely a working-class phenomena; the middle-class youths also played their part. In some ways, the middle-class youth had access to areas which were usually denied their working-class counterparts, but there was also a substantial overlap. As a way of illustration, I will now, by turning my attention to focus mainly on middle-class youth, explain a few 'Hidden' areas which manifested themselves during my actual fieldwork.

What is interesting in this focus is how on some occasions the youths were able to collude with their Fathers to gain 'illegal' access to resources which would facilitate their 'social life'. In these cases it was certainly more of a case of 'facilitating mechanisms' rather than the 'servicing mechanisms' of the poor. Before discussing this, I would like to start by describing three situations, two concerning young men, the other two or three young women. In the first situation, the young man (Michael) was 18-19 years of age, had been unemployed since leaving school and was now into his ninth month of unemployment. His examination results had been good, but not brilliant, and he was not interested in his parent's hopes of a university place for him. One of the usual 'paths' for the middle-class youth was therefore out for him, the only way Michael saw was:

> 'If a good job comes along, I'll take it......but I've seen nothing that interests me yet'.

Why he had truned to 'lifting' things he did not know, all his so-called friends thought he was:

> 'A pratt'.

However, these same 'friends' were still prepared to take the 'things' from him, even on occasions suggesting that he get them a particular item. As another lad said of him:

> 'They just use him. They'd give
> him a couple of quid for a
> brand new pair of jeans'.

Michael went around seemingly 'collecting orders', but his life was actually a vicious circle. His 'friends' thought he was 'a pratt', used him and then let him drop for a few days from their 'group'. Michael felt rejected, and so tried harder to be accepted. One way in which he did this was to buy 'his mates' a drink; doing this every night became expensive. He needed cash, but he couldn't always be asking his parents, so he 'lifted' to raise the money. His so-called friends got the best of both worlds, he sold them brand-new goods for a low price _and_ he spent most of the money on them!

A further point in accounting for Michael's predilection for 'lifting' was that although his frinds and acquaintances thought he was 'a pratt', there was a kind of 'aura' surrounding him, a definite 'Jack-the-Lad' image, one in which his 'devil-may-care' attitude prevailed and contrasted sharply with the more serious, academic, rationalistic attitude that stemmed from his home and to which he 'should' aspire. In a peculiar way, a romantic negation of the middle-class ethos. It was here that he latched onto his status, the maintenance of self-respect for being out doing what the others were 'afraid' to do, and the kudos of having got away with it once more. In each act then, there was a confirmation of self and a gesture of defiance at an abstract system which waited to pounce on him 'somewhere out there'.

In another way, the other lad, David, stole not to be 'accepted' by his peers, but because:

> 'If I wanted something and I
> couldn't afford it, I'd just
> take it'.

I asked for an example, he pointed to the chair, smiled and said:

> 'Like that coat'.

On the chair was a leather jacket. David went on to explain that it was not a 'thing' he did very often, only when money was in really short supply. Most of his mates, since leaving school, had taken something or other; some had even taken 'things' while still at school, although he felt that having to ask their parents for money had really started it. From David's perspective, he felt that when he was at school or college his parents had accepted that he hadn't any money, and felt that it was their place to provide for him; now he was unemployed, he was sure that they felt that to give him money was to condone his existence. His Mother, he said:

> 'Is a snob'.

She had told all her friends that:

> 'I'm having a long break after taking all my exams'.

He said that his parents were not bothered what job he had, as long as he had one, and he felt that they thought that by them not giving him any 'extras' he would be forced to take one, even if it was not the one he wanted. David was not prepared to succumb to this, so he 'lifted' when the need arose.

In many ways, the 'problem' of criminality and deviance has traditionally been conceptualized by the sociological establishment as being mainly a gender (male) and class (working) perspective, with the focus on women in general, and middle-class women in particular,

conspicuous by its absence (Dorn and South, 1982). Without wishing to enter the debate as to why this should be so, I would like to describe an example which is contrary to the established position; that of a small group of two, sometimes three, young middle-class women who used the phenomena of 'lifting' from shops as one of a number of methods of acquiring scarce resources.

The young women themselves had left school two or three years earlier, and had had one or two 'insignificant' jobs since then. All three lived with their parents, although one of them had lived with her boyfriend at his flat for a short time; when this relationship had ended, she had returned home. The others had subsequently 'joined in':

'You've no money to do anything'

was the standard statement. 'Lifting' was one way - amongst many - to counteract this; rationalized by such statements as:

'With X number of O-levels
I am not stacking in Sainsburys'.'

They felt betrayed, cajoled for years by the standard forms of 'deferred gratification', 'If you work hard now, you'll be able to get a good job when you leave, or maybe go on to college'. But what happens to the middle-class kid that does not want any more formal education? With no decent employment, let alone good prospects; parents who seem 'out of touch' with today's realities, and a social location where conspicuous consumption is a standard part of everyday life, it would seem small wonder that a few of these seemingly scarce resources should be acquired in 'deviant' ways.

They had all tried - and still did - other ways to earn money, such as babysitting, but:

'Everyone's at it now.'

This again raises an interesting issue in relation to our discussion on the different 'Informal' economies, in that the ways open to acquire resources are certainly gender specific, with traditional power structures similar to the 'Formal' economy still in existence. Social norms can also play their part in what is 'acceptable' for a young middle-class woman to work at outside formal employment. 'Helping' out in a shop is acceptable, but selling 'door to door', or working 'behind a bar' are not; as one of these young women said:

> 'She (her Mother) wouldn't want me
> to do these kind of jobs, so what
> am I left with?......It's no good
> pointing this out, I've tried'.

It's no good to keep on asking for money and things because you already know the answer; your social milieu does more than just suggest that you should have cultural symbols such as fashionable clothes, stockings, make-up, records, books etc. and still go out to places for enjoyment. So with the so-called 'Formal' and 'Informal' employment markets both drastically reduced, if not non-existent in some areas, the only mode of acquiring these resources is to 'lift' them.

The way in which these young women suggested to me that they did this was to work as a team, with one of them distracting the shop assistant, one 'lifting' an item, and one keeping watch. The chances of being caught in all of the cases I have illustrated are very high indeed, but it seems that in a society which is in the process of erecting a vast barrier between the rich and the poor, or between the employed and the unemployed, then for some, it is worth the 'risk'.

A further form of 'illegality' from the Establishment's point of view centres around the use - or misuse - of drugs. Recently, both nationally and locally (Kidderminster) there has been a 'moral panic'

over their use, with Governmental and local groups setting up
Advice Units to administer 'help' to those who require this perceived
'help', whether the individuals are concerned with this or not. This
'moral panic' has produced a situation locally where the price of
drugs and their availability have gone 'hand in hand' with each other.
When the drugs are in short supply, the price goes up; when there's
a plentiful supply, it goes down. Although the market mechanism
creates a series of fluctuations in the price and availability,
this seems to be overcome by those individuals who use the so-called
'soft' drugs. In this situation, they turn to 'tablets', 'glue',
'cider' etc.:

> 'Anything that's cheap and available'.

They can either use these in isolation - e.g. when their parents
are out - or late at night at a friend's house (see p. 101). Public
places can also become 'sites' for this activity. In the centre of
Kidderminster there are some public toilets, and often the ladies
toilets are littered with glue bottles and tubes and plastic bags;
my wife tells me that the smell of the glue is overwhelming.

Generally, the 'dope' comes from the nearest big city, Birmingham,
brought in in small quantities by 'someone' going up to 'see someone'.
As one lad said:

> 'If I wants any, there's a bloke
> down the road gets it...I 'think
> it's from somewhere in Birmingham'.

Some youths undoubtedly 'lift' things to pay for their 'fix', but my
own data only recorded one case of this aspect of the drug scene,
and again this was only small scale stuff, only now and again, when
funds from parents tended to dry up.

We can now see again the problem of trying to lump all of these phenomena under one heading, and the misleading analysis which could result from this exercise. Certainly, some of the first category ('fiddling') and of the second ('lifting') could fit into this section, and therefore we see how difficult it is to formulate conclusively within one category between a lad who 'makes' by 'lifting' money to help his family put food on the table, and another who is involved in 'lifting' to engage in conspicuous consumption, while a third is involved in 'lifting' to help sustain a habit brought on by boredom and depression. I feel that only a <u>very</u> generous form of analysis could possibly equate these different forms within one total framework, and it is only by 'teasing' out all their different forms that a more worthwhile analysis can be developed, one which, although locating the 'actors' in some form of structural framework, also allows for their perceptions and actions to influence their structural forms.

The Unofficial Economy.

Henry's third aggregate dimension, that of the Unofficial Economy, is only appropriate to the unemployed in a diffuse way, and manifests itself mainly within the 'Social Economy'. As stated on page 47 , a major feature of the 'public' existence of the young unemployed located within the Kidderminster area is that they are to be found in mixed groups of employed and unemployed, those still at school and those at college. One outcome of this is that those in employment can and do secure 'perks' and 'favours', and these will manifest themselves in the group context, sometimes to the benefit of all those within it, unemployed as well. One youth was allowed to bring his firm's van home in an evening, and as long as he put petrol into it, could use it to go out at evenings and weekends. Because of

this, the benefits to him and his mates were many, with being
'mobile' the main one. For his two mates who were unemployed, this
meant being picked up and transported about in the evenings, with
consequent immense savings in bus fares and/or walking home late at
night.

Social Capital.

The generalized critique for this section splits the 'Social
Economy' into two dimensions; one is connected to the 'public' sphere
while the other relates to the 'private' domain. This has a tradition
which includes divisions by Lowenthal, 1975; Ferman and Berndt, 1981;
and developed by Pahl and Gershuny, 1980, who, following Burns, 1977,
identify a 'household' and 'communal' economy. The first dimension
they define, as does Jenkins (1980) as, 'Production, not for money,
by members of a household and predominantly for members of a household,
of goods and services for which approximate substitutes might other-
wise be purchased for money' (Jenkins, 1980. p.10); while the second
dimension is characterized by, 'Production, not for money or barter,
by an individual or group, of commodities that might otherwise be
purchased and of which the producers are not principle consumers'
(Jenkins, 1980. p.10). A further point, which is also relevant to
this analysis, is that the Social Economy is also conceived as a
distinct sphere (Davis, 1972/3; Henry, 1980; Lowenthal, 1975) with
its own particular mode of discourse, although, as Jenkins (op.cit.)
points out, this produces a contradiction in Henry's work, in that
he sees these activities sometimes framed in a universal language
of the market place. This contradiction between a discrete mode
of discourse and a universal mode of discourse will be developed
and become an important point later in the chapter.

Although we must be careful when distinguishing discrete spheres between the public and private realms of social life, because in many ways they tend to overlap, I would like to start to introduce some more of my own data by concentrating mainly on those issues relevant to the outside of the home, although, as will become apparent, what goes on out there can be greatly influenced by what has taken place within the youth's own familial context (for analysis of domestic labour, see pgs. 202 -208).

A major phenomena, which struck me forcibly from the start of my fieldwork, was the lack of any discernable 'gangs' of youths in the different locations of the town. I expected, especially in the working-class district, to find some. This assumption stemmed partly from my own working-class experiences and also from the 'common sense' drawn from other sociological studies on youth (Griffin, 1986 etc.). These assumptions were confounded by locating not gangs, but what could be called a series of loose associations drawn together by specific circumstances rather than continued involvement. This was a significant feature of both the poorer, working-class areas as well as the more 'affluent' middle-class areas. What tended to happen was that one or two locations within the area became the generalized meeting place (pub, shop, front wall, swings etc.) with individuals just 'turning up' or arriving in two's and three's, having called for someone en route. They would then interact with the others for a short time, and disperse, not necessarily with the same people that they had arrived with. This fact first came to my attention when a resident living near one of these 'meeting places' came out and complained to another passing adult that:

'These kids are a bloody nuisance,
they've been out here all night -
it's the same every day'.

The so-called 'kids', mostly in their mid-teens, <u>had</u> been there
most of the evening; but, as I looked around I became aware that they
were not the same 'kids' who had been there all evening. Certainly,
one or two had, but the majority hadn't. What had happened was that
when I arrived, a number of youths of both sexes were talking and
just generally 'doing nothing'; over a period of time others had
joined them and some had left. Small groups now sat around on the
grass, some talking to each other group to group, but mostly
staying in their 'own' group. Occasionally, one, two or three
individuals would get up and walk away, not necessarily all from
one group. When those individuals had gone, they had made no
discernable 'effect' on the pressure of the group at large, and if
others had then strolled up and taken their places, the effect was
even less noticeable. For a short time then, I had been unaware of
this unfolding phenomenon which, if missed completely, could have
proved difficult later on when observing their process of 'reciprocity'.

This process was happening at each of the different meeting
places, although in the middle-class areas the mobility was even more
marked. Within this context then, no overall leader was allowed to
develop, although one or two 'significant others' could emerge for
a short period of time, but their influence would disappear when
they too 'went their own way'. This 'effect' of mobility tended to
produce groups who had a loosely knit pattern or structure, which
had important implications on their forms of interaction. By this
I mean that when one or two individuals joined a group, they would
enter into negotiations with other people in this group, say for

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a 'fag' or a drink, and state what the terms should be, e.g.:

> 'John, give us a fag will you?..
> Go on, I'll give you a go on my bike'.

<div align="center">or</div>

1st lad:	'Give us a drink'.
2nd lad:	'What's it worth?'
1st	'Nothing'.
2nd.	'Fuck off then'.
1st.	'Oh all right, have a fag'.
2nd.	'Make it two'.

This type of interaction was a fundamental part of their 'scene', with an emphasis on short term reciprocity, but again from a negotiated stance. Needless to say, the middle-class youth were able to operate more efficiently in this 'short term' area because their ability to acquire and accumulate resources was greater, whereas the working-class youths were subjected to a higher degree of long term reciprocity, although this again was negotiated and specified, in most cases giving very firm details. Here the discourse was conducted more in terms of 'lending' rather than 'give-me'. An example was when I heard someone say:

> 'Lend us some money for a drink will
> you? I'll pay it back on Saturday
> when me dole money comes'.

For the middle-class youths this was a way of achieving in a concrete way the abstract notion inherent in their social milieu, that of 'individualism', by which they were able to come to a situation supposedly as an 'individual', interact by way of negotiation, and thereby still feel some control over the situation; then the process of short term reciprocity discharged their 'obligation' and they could move away again as an 'isolated individual', reiterating, in their terms, the middle-class 'ideal' of individual destiny. For the working-class youths, this process could, if a more collectivist

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notion of their existence is adopted, challenge that basis.
Although some accounts criticize the 'romantic' notions of the
working-class championed by such current sociologists as Seabrook
(op.cit.) and the current work by Newby et.al. (1983) highlights the
growing privatization of the working-class, there is still an
inherent assumption, based on the one hand on some sociological
accounts and on the other hand on gut feelings, or even 'ideology',
that a significant form of collectivism still exists within working-
class life and that this is what forms the basis of many of their
struggles against capital. Whichever theory takes your preference,
it can certainly be hypothesize that this 'trend' into the forms
of relationships, 'framed' within an abstraction of the 'contractual'
market mechanism, will certainly erode the 'social' bases of their
existence, although this point has been criticized (see Pahl, 1984).

The antithesis of this penetration of the 'forces of the market'
are where good friends of either sex interact; here the process
tends to be in terms of long term reciprocity, with the emphasis
on non-specific contractual terms. Also, a clear gender dimension
is apparent, in that when young women interact with young men on a
generalized basis, they operate at the contractual level of short
term reciprocity, while in all-women groups their emphasis would
be, again, on non-specific contractual relationships. This is
not the same for the lads, who tend, in groups, to operate along
the 'abstraction' of market forces. Another qualification for this
penetration of what seems contractual market forces impinging on
what has been perceived as social relationships, is in the relation
to the overall temporal framework as mentioned in chapter . Here,
the generalized temporal framework consists of a clear dimension
during the first week after the dole money has arrived, where

unemployed youth of both sexes, attempting to be 'normal', involve themselves in conspicuous consumption. This is then framed by the criteria of short term reciprocity, which later changes as the resources tend to run out, into long term reciprocity, both within a contractual framework.

Conclusion.

The major points of this chapter have raised the issues as to the problem of characterizing the data in terms of sensitizing concepts which relate to a static form of typology. In one way the data is clearly different and can fit in to some form of conceptual framework such as Henry's (op.cit.), but in another way it does not do justice to the complex nature of this type of social phenomena; either in terms of definition, or over a series of action, the nature and therefore the category can change, with the resulting confusion of what constitutes each separate category. It is therefore suggested that any analysis of formal, informal social activities etc. must be analysed over a _series_ of actions so as to identify the distinct and subtle changes in and within dimensions. Because of the need to acquire adequate resources to physically live on, or to operate in terms that are considered 'normal' within their social milieu, unemployed youths of both sexes need to enter in to relationships with those who have the resources they require, either inside or outside the familial context. In the process, the young unemployed are further exploited and are expected to work for long hours for even less money than the official going rate for the job. The fact that there seem to be a growing number of the unemployed

prepared to enter into these explicit exploitative relationships
through socially enforced circumstances, only tends to exacerbate
their exploitation; as one manager said to me:

> 'If they're not happy, they
> can piss off. There's plenty
> more where they came from'.

One outcome of this increased exploitation is for the social
process of 'making' and 'lifting' to develop for some in
both intensity and frequency, paradoxically, sometimes even with
the blessings of management. But for the majority of the young
unemployed, the process of 'making' is just as much a pipe-dream
as a so-called 'real job'; therefore, the only consistant
alternative is to 'lift'. Why more of the young unemployed are
not involved in this area may be, for some, a question of non-
opportunity or fear, and for others, so-called 'moral abstention'.
Only time will tell. With the process of contractual market
relationships also impinging on to what was, in the past, one
area - i.e. the social - deemed, if not entirely free from
exploitative criteria, then certainly an area cushioned from
these pressures, it would seem that the young unemployed could
be further fenced in, with the only viable alternative to 'make'
or 'lift' rather than submit to the dictates of capital.

Chapter Six

'FAMILY LIFE'   or   'EXISTENCE'?

'Things are a bit dodgy at our house at the moment'.
<div align="right">Male, 17: unemployed 6 months.</div>

'His bloody mates are always here'.
<div align="right">Dad.</div>

'They feel sorry for you at first, but then
they get sick of you moping about'.
<div align="right">Female, 20: unemployed 18 months.</div>

'They say it's my fault'.
<div align="right">Mum.</div>

'I'm more closer to me Mum nowadays'.
<div align="right">Male, 20: unemployed 2 years.</div>

'They said, "If you're good, you can come home"'.
<div align="right">Female, 19: unemployed 2 years.</div>

'When I cry, me Mum and Dad usually walk away'.
<div align="right">Female, 18: unemployed 18 months.</div>

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS.

As was stated earlier, a major problem arises with any concept
-ualization of the 'condition' of unemployed youth, in that there
is not just 'a condition', but rather a whole range of 'conditions',
influenced by such variables as gender, access to scarce resources,
familial and community relations, social class and, not least, the
condition of the local labour market. These and many other variables
intertwine to problematize any straightforward 'view' of the
situation regarding youths' relationships within a familial
context.

The method which I have chosen as a way of 'searching
through' this complex problematic is, firstly, to divide the
chapter into four sections. In the first, I will describe and
analyse what may be described as the affectual relationships
with parents; in the second the problem of the control and access
to material resources; in the third what may be termed domestic
labour and in the fourth I will focus on the contact and
influence of the extended family. Needless to say, in each of
these sections many variables will still arise and intertwine,
but it is felt that, through the whole of this buzzing confusion,
some form of 'mental map' will begin to emerge.

Within the first three sections (affectual, material resources,
domestic) I have also decided to organize each section around one major
variable which I feel 'emerged' during the investigation; that
of the parent(s)/brother(s)/sister(s) and youths current
relationship with the labour market. The figure on the next page
is the diagram illustrating these relationships.

<u>Affectual relationships with parents:</u> <u>Parents relationships to</u>
<u>labour market.</u>

1. Both parents in employment.   2. Both parents out of employment.

3. Mother at home.   4. Father at home.
   Father in employment.   Mother in employment.

5. Single parent in/out employment.

These relationships became important structural features from
within which, or to which, the unemployed youths could either
control, negotiate or submit. Needless to say, these categories
should not be seen as 'static', but may represent different
dimensions of family life over time. A very important point which
will also be made is that although I am using these categories as
an organizational device, they must not be seen as solely distinct
units - i.e. family units - but must also be seen as reflecting
the 'differentation' of each family member. I therefore begin
this chapter by analysing the affectual relationships where both
parents are in full-time employment.

Affectual Relationships with Parents.

As far as affectual relationships are concerned, there are two
major areas where families' relationships to the labour market are
important; i) in terms of who is at home during the main part of
the day and ii) in terms of the pressures that arise due to the
actual wage situation/money within the household.

Where the first of these is concerned, who is at home during
the day has important implications for the level of what may be
termed 'atmosphere' within the home. This was an issue that was

constantly referred to in comments such as:

'Things are a bit dodgy at our house at the moment'. Brian, 18:
                                                                     unemployed 4 month

'I can't do that at the moment, the atmosphere's
not right'. Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

It is also used as a measure by which to judge either how the
individual may proceed with certain discrete acts, or as a general
'pointer' to the everyday scene. As was stated in the preceding
chapter, an important concomitant in the life of the young
unemployed is the extent to which most youths experience a high
degree of isolation from the public world during the day, either
being confined generally to the home or, more specifically, to
the bedroom. If both your parents are in employment, your inter-
action with them is probably only for a short time during tea-time
or part of the evening. The chances of them getting, or even
seeming to get, 'on top of you' are, in one way, drastically
reduced. As one lad said about his relationship with his parents,
both of whom worked:

'We don't really have one like, 'cos we never
see much of each other. I don't see them at
all sometimes, even at weekends'. Michael, 18: unemployed 9
                                                                    months.

However, in another way, this tea-time interaction, such as, 'What
have you done today?', 'Where have you been?', 'Have you looked
for a job?', 'What do you want money for now?', 'I don't care who's
going, you're not', 'Why didn't you put the hoover round?' 'You
could at least have made your bed and washed up', 'You don't
really want a job, do you?' can, at these times, become
extremely tense and oppressive. Also, because your parents are out
for most of the day, your friends (days off college, shift work,

part time, unemployed) tend to congregate at your house, away from the familial pressures at their own homes. This can then become a source of resentment, as one Dad said:

'His bloody mates are always here'.

The fact was that they were not there all day, only from mid-afternoon, but to the Dad, they were always there when he came home. This used to cause many arguments at the tea-table after they'd gone, and in one instance when I was present, the Dad even threatened that he would:

'Ban all the little scrounging bastards from
ever setting foot in the place'.

At another level, not seeing their sons or daughters all day could make parents more predisposed to a form of discussion conducted in a less emotional way, although many parents that I spoke to (in all categories) found communicating with their children extremely difficult:

'You don't know what to say for the best'. Mum.

'When I cry, me Mum and Dad usually walk away'. Daughter.

The statement made by the Mother was, for me, significant of another major factor, that of the differential involvement between Mother and Father in their relationships towards their unemployed son or daughter. Although this idea can be illustrated most aptly within my next category, where the Mother is at home and the Father is in paid employment, it is also a fundamental aspect of my other categories. There are two sides to this coin of the role of the Mother, i) where the Mother, with what can be termed her own 'free will' gives emotional support such as love, affection, encouragement and differing degrees of discipline and ii) where the Mother becomes

the 'policing agent' for the Father. An example can illustrate this
point; in one home, although the parents had talked about their son's
'situation', it was the Father's definition that had become paramount
- i.e. he ought to look harder for a job. However, the outcome was
that it was the Mother who had to implement this policy, with the
result that the lad's idea was that it was Mum who was 'always on
at him', while Dad:

> 'Was more constructive, he used to ask
> people for me. Mum was less constructive,
> just used to chuck me out of the house
> and say, 'Get down the Job Centre' and all
> the rest of it, and woke me up early in the
> mornings'. Billy, 18: unemployed 1 year.

Many times, while in the houses of unemployed youths, I have heard
their Mother say such things as:

> 'Have you done what your Father told you last night?'

Or:
> 'It's all right for you, it's me that he'll keep
> on at - 'Why didn't I make you do this, why
> didn't I make you do that?''.

In these cases, the power and authority of the Father is channelled
through the Mother onto the youth; the dual role of Patriarchy -
control over women and children - is, in this instance, lucidly
illustrated. If a Father works locally, or is on shift work, these
patriarchal pressures can manifest themselves at any time during the
day; one lad said about being unemployed during the summer months:

> 'Just before me Dad comes home at dinner time,
> I go to the top of the garden and sit behind the
> fence. Then when he's gone, I come in again'.
> Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

However, the other side of the coin as far as Fathers are concerned
is the problem that the 'cultural imperatives' embedded within
Patriarchy and articulated around the notion of 'masculinity'

preclude any consistant overt show of physical affection between
a Father and his older children, especially sons. Love, warmth
and affection can, therefore, only really be shown through
compensatory forms such as 'degrees of understanding', or embodied
within 'material resources'. Even the Mother's own personal feelings
are not always easy to direct, in that the Mother generally has the
'mopping up' role to play when the youngster comes home, after
experiencing the degradation of 'looking for work' and being
constantly rejected. As one young woman said:

> 'They're not with you when you go looking ---
> No, No, No, No, Maybe, No, No, -------'.

What can the Mother really do then? The Mothers of the young unemployed
experience this scene so often that the meaningful alternatives just
run out, they have nothing else to give. As Diane said:

> 'You go home, all miserable. Mum gives you
> a cup of tea. That's no compensation, a
> cup of tea!'.

It is at times like these, when all the meaningful alternatives
have run out, that parents usually feel that even their slightest
encouragements are of no real use, and they are very ofter 'snappy'
at their children as an indication of these felt frustrations.
As one young woman said:

> 'The times Mum's said to me, 'Put a smile
> on your face!' I said, 'Why should I?'
> then she said, 'Oh, go out and look for
> a job!'.   Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

It seems that the patterns of behaviour that parents have developed
over the years to show their children that they still love them
become no longer appropriate, and as far as many parents are
concerned, no meaningful and consistent alternative is available
to them.

At the other end of the continuum, where both parents are at home all day, the tensions inherent in this situation manifest themselves far more frequently. Here the Patriarchal forms of power and authority grounded in the role of 'breadwinner' are inappropriate. As long as the Father remains unemployed, the forms of control already illustrated become extremely problematical. It becomes very difficult to apply pressure to your child to find work if unemployment consistently stares you in the face. It is in this type of situation that a 'silent level' of what may be termed 'acceptable effort' in looking for work becomes the norm. Both parents and youths can negotiate their own 'effort' in relation to the other. This can change over time, as the effects of the effort, in terms of self-identity and respect, manifest themselves. The effects of this 'silent level' mean that the whole house has markers by which to gauge its individual and collective strategies. In some cases, these collective strategies are born out of feelings that 'we must all pull together'. This is grounded in their common material circumstances, and can result in uniting the family around such issues. The 'atmosphere' inherent in this type of situation can be seen in such statements as:

> 'We all have our differences, like all
> families, but generally we all pull
> together'.   Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

Sometimes however, this 'generally pulling together' idea does not do justice to the differential impact on each family member.

Current research findings, such as those reported by Colin Bell and Lorna McKee, show that where the male head of the household is unemployed, the physical and social effects on the wife can be just as great, and sometimes far more serious, as those for

together' - became an over-riding factor emanating from this area. In making this remark, I must state at once that these remarks are made on studying very few single-parent families; a further qualification being that the families interviewed consisted of a Mother and an unemployed son; there were daughters, but none of working age. I do, however, feel that the amount of time spent with each family gave me the basis for analyzing this situation in depth; nevertheless, I appreciate the problems involved, and would like the reader to treat this section more as an exploratory analysis, suggesting 'tentative ideas' rather than in any way a pronouncement on the many issues surrounding the relationships between youth unemployment and single-parent families.

With these qualifications in mind then, I would like to sketch in a few background details of these case studies. In both cases, the lads were 18 years old and unemployed since leaving school; both lived on a private estate and one of the Mothers was in employment. Both had acquired the traditional role that when the Father is not there, the son looks after the Mother. This resulted in them both being very protective towards, and sensitive about, issues raised about their Mothers. They seemed to be very involved in the discrete, day to day financial arrangements of the family, far more than any of the other unemployed lads were; for instance, they knew exactly what resources were coming into the home, and on what basis money was spent, as opposed to other youths, who could only talk in general terms, very often with no real idea at all. Their involvement in domestic work was also at a higher level. On one hand, we can look at this as a slow process in which the male consistently grounds himself from an early age into the controlled framework which surrounds the life of women in the home, and this 'consistent

the unemployed husband. Couple this with one or more unemployed teenagers living in the same house, and the consequence for the Mother can be dramatically multiplied. It is here that the delicate balancing act which the Mother is constantly engaged in, in relation to her husband and children, becomes changed in nature; in the previous category, the conflictual dual role of the Mother, as emotional support and 'policing agent' is generally equipoised from day to day, in this category, her role is generally modified to one in which she must not be 'seen' or 'felt' to be favouring one individual more than another. This requires constant attention to every detail, and can become an acute source of mental and physical stress for the Mother. In these situations, the 'needs' of the Mother are forced even further into the background than they already were. A major difficulty with this 'balancing act' . is that, in some cases, it is the Mother who comes to be perceived by the rest of the family as the 'problem'. She is caught in the dilemma of trying to please everyone, and pleasing no one. Her resources, both physical and mental, are so stretched and strained that very soon she is unable to respond adequately enough in the eyes of her family. On extreme occasions, the objective position - i.e. unemployment - occupied by both the Father and child or children can result in them turning against the Mother and abusing her both physically and mentally as the focus of their pent-up frustrations.

An example may be given, in that in one instance, as I approached the house of a young woman who I had previously arranged to interview, the front door smashed violently open and three people (Father, Mother and daughter) literally fell out onto the

ground outside. Both the Mother and the daughter were screaming, the daughter kicking and punching the Mother, while the Mother tried to fend off the raging Father because of his sheer size and strength. At the same time, and in as many seconds, the girl spat at the Mother, called her 'a fucking bitch' and stormed off up the road, while the Father threatened the Mother with verbal abuse and then walked into the house, slamming the door, leaving her in a crumpled heap, partly on the pathway and partly across the earth bordering the lawn. After a minute or two she stood, huddled over the garden gate, crying, her eyes red and swollen, blood dripping from a cut on her lip and her apron ripped down one side. As I tried, totally inadequately I felt, to help her, she just looked at me, drained of emotion, and said:

'They say it's my fault'.

She went on to explain that since the Father had been made redundant, about nine months earlier, he and the daughter, who had been unemployed for well over two years, had turned against her, scorning whatever little she had to offer, going out to Kidderminster in the day and leaving her alone, spending what money they could on themselves, leaving her barely enough to scrape by on and then blaming her for the inadequate situation within the household. (At the time of writing this, the Mother has gone to stay with her sister; the Father and daughter declined to be interviewed.)

Being young, unemployed and at the same time being part of a single-parent family can, in many instances, exacerbate the material conditions already mentioned. It is therefore significant, I feel, that a major issue mentioned earlier - i.e. 'we must all pull

involvement' was seen by the Mother, on a practical level, as being very beneficial to her. At another level, this also produced a feeling in her that the son understood her position, and in these circumstances, every little helped. As one lad said:

'I'm very close to my Mum now'.

Both lads were looking for employment on many occasions. The general 'cut-off point' referred to earlier for the maintenance of self-esteem, was generally negated. I would argue here that this arose because other mechanisms were available for the maintenance of self esteem within the household. Being thought of by significant others as contributing in a worthwhile way to the overall maintenance of the family could, I would suggest, help one in maintaining positive attitudes towards seeking employment in the face of severe frustration. The 'continual involvement' then, produced an over-riding atmosphere of 'pulling together' which seemed to facilitate differing amounts and kinds of affectual relationships within the household. It is interesting to speculate here whether the same type and amount of involvement would have occurred if the unemployed youths had been young women.

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

One further problem area for unemployed youth is where affectual relationships become so strained that there is a complete breakdown, with the consequence that the youth leaves home, either on a temporary or a permanent basis. In one way, the process of leaving tends to flow along a continuum, which can stop at any time, or change direction, only to restart again if the circumstances dictate. A general framework emerging from the data is one which can be

divided and analyzed in four component parts.

Figure 6:2   Processes of Homelessness.

'Switching off'   'Staying out'   'Temporary leaving'   'Permanently leaving'

Switching Off.

Within this category, the process undergone by the unemployed
youth is one of 'withdrawal' or 'switching off'. Arguments are
suspended, because whatever is said, the youth is 'shut off'. They
place a veil over the everyday face-to-face proceedings. Language
is also restricted to such mono-syllables as, 'Yeh' 'No' 'Maybe'
'Don't know', and in these types of cases, parents and youths are
living a kind of life that is commonly expressed as 'we're not on
speaking terms'. Here, non-verbal communication becomes the
'measure' by which life is rationalized. Here the differential
impact of the parents on the lives of the unemployed youths is
noted. You may not have spoken to your Mum and Dad for days, weeks
or even months:

> 'I haven't spoken to them now for ---oh,
> well over six months'.   Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

But - your Mum is still cooking your tea, doing your washing, most,
if not all, your ironing, changing your bed linen if not actually
making your bed, and doing many more 'little' things which show
and tell you 'something', however unconscious these things may be.
It is when these 'types' of things stop, and you're still not
talking, that they are suddenly forced into consciousness. In
these cases, a different level of 'switching off' occurs, you are
now alone. You're physically located in a house, but you're
homeless; you don't 'live' there any more, you 'exist'. Although

this 'hidden' form of homelessness has been mentioned before, I was forcibly struck, during my fieldwork, by the growing numbers of unemployed youth who I spoke to who tended towards this form of 'internalized existence.'

Staying Out.

One way in which unemployed youths of both sexes try to alleviate this form of 'existence' is to spend the odd 'night out' once or twice a week, at their mates. This tends initially to lower the 'charged' atmosphere within the home, and in some cases it can be enough to maintain it at an 'acceptable' level for all family members. In these cases, the process of leaving home is muted; on one hand, the youth is at home with their parents, on the other, they're staying at their mates. In these cases, where they are actually 'living' becomes problematical, and can depend on not only the context, but also the individuals and the language used within that context as they try to conceptualize and rationalize their immediate position. A range of examples will illustrate what I mean by this; in many formal contexts, such as Careers Offices, Job Centres, job interviews, talking with most officials, they will state, when asked where they 'live', their home address, where their parents live. On other occasions, when talking to Youth Workers, the general public, some mates, Advice Workers etc. they will say that they mostly stay at their mates, the rest of the time they're at home. They know they don't 'live' at their mates' house, and this is expressed in their language, e.g.:

'I'm not stopping here'.

'I stay here at some time every week'.

However, both their own Mothers and their mates' Mums can inter-
nalize thoughts that they <u>do</u> live there:

'We hardly see him, he bloody lives round there'.

'I reckon this is her second home'.

'I think to myself sometimes that he lives here'.

But the youths also know that they don't live - in a qualitative
sense - at home:

'It's difficult to say what I mean, because
I don't live here (mates house), and I
don't class that I live there (parents
house), but in another way, if anyone asked me
where I lived, I'd say at home (parents house).'

John, 21: unemployed 3 years

These expressive feelings of living, staying and being somewhere
can and do change over time, with the resulting consequence that
for the individuals concerned, the notion of 'home life' becomes
extremely problematical and difficult to existentially keep up
with and come to terms with.

When the situation becomes so tense and problematical, another
solution is to leave home for a period of time. How long depends on
a number of factors, such as whether you can find suitable accomm-
odation and the resources for its upkeep etc. It is debatable whether
the youths leave with a clear notion that this is only a temporary
measure; normally they just want to 'get away' for a time. In some
cases, this 'getting away' results in a tour of their mates houses,
staying the odd night here and there in different places, sometimes
interspersed with sleeping 'rough'. At other times, 'getting away'
means shacking up at someones house until you're kicked out.
Sometimes parents are seen on the odd trips back to their house,
at other times, no contact at all is made for a long time. It is

in these kinds of temporary situations that unemployed youths feel
themselves extremely vunerable. They are subjected to the 'whims'
of their mates parents, there is no-where to call their own, not
even a bedroom. You get an odd pair of jeans washed here, someones
Mum irons your shirt, you have to ask if you can do this and that,
constantly mindful that you are a 'guest' in someone else's house;
you try to become as unobtrusive as a piece of furniture, but you
stick out like a sore thumb, you don't really belong. You stay
until you 'sense' that it is no longer right, and then you move
on, to become an unwelcome guest somewhere else. In many cases
now, the only alternative is to return home, however much you may
not want to, there's no other way out. You're tired, fed-up and
mentally worn out from playing the 'unwanted guest'. Previously
you left home to get away from the intense problems there; you were
annoyed, tired, fed-up and mentally exhausted, you needed to get
away for a 'rest'; now, ironically, you return for a 'rest'. In
this type of situation, the parents usually agree, subject to their
ground rules:

> 'They said, "If you're good, you can
> come home".'
>
> Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

Now a more direct form of control becomes the norm. For the youths
concerned, this form of control is usually lessened in intensity
by them conforming to their parents will and losing any sense of
personalization, and also by them becoming physically and mentally
isolated from the family in order to retain any sense of personal
identity (see chapter on Identity Creation). These different
modes of 'getting away' can, in many ways, lead to a situation
which is identified as 'Permanently Leaving'.

<u>Permanently Leaving.</u>

This process usually takes one of two forms; one in which that parents and youth still continue to communicate:

> 'I see them about once or twice a week'.
>> Veronica, 19: unemployed 3 years.

and the other in which no contact at all is maintained:

> 'I haven't spoken to them since the day I left'.
>> Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

In the first instance, the data suggests that where contact is still maintained, then a more equitable situation tends to develop between family members; money, odd pieces of furniture, washing and meals are given as help by parents. Here, affectual concern is being shown positively, through help and understanding, rather than through the negative form of direct sanctions produced by the frustrations of feeling 'helpless'. These affectual concerns, it is argued here, do not exist in a vacuum, but are grounded in the material conditions surrounding the youth's existence; it is to these material conditions that we now turn.

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

ACCESS TO, AND CONTROL OVER, MATERIAL RESOURCES.

In this section, on a general level, our categories of the parents' relationship to the labour market can once again be useful. Where both parents are in employment, and there is a fairly high standard of material resources coming into the home in the form of two wages, then this has important repercussions for the overall material resources surrounding the life of the young unemployed adult. In general, those youngsters who fell into this category, or where the head of the household was on a 'good' wage (£10,000 up), were expected to contribute less in money terms than those in any

other category:

> 'I give a fiver to my Mum' (This is over a fortnight).
> Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

In some instances, the whole of the dole cheque remains solely in

the hands of the unemployed youth:

> 'I don't give my Mum anything, because they're
> both on good money, so I just do the housework
> really'.
> Liz, 17: unemployed 10 months.

> 'At the moment, I can go out four nights a
> week, I can smoke, buy a record, even put
> some away, because my Mum and Dad don't
> ask for anything'.
> Mary, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Very often, the small amounts that these youths give over in 'board

money' is able to be recouped by the end of the fortnight. In a very

interesting way, this process of 'recouping' tends to be gender

specific, in that, in general terms, it is the young men who receive

money or material goods for doing jobs or 'favours', while the

young women are 'expected' to work and receive nothing for this, and

can only acquire these resources by having to ask for them or being

given them 'out of pity':

> 'The logs are dropped at the bottom of
> the drive, I have to lift them all the
> way round the back and chop them up
> so he'll give me a fiver'.
> Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

> 'She gives me bits and bobs'.
> Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

> 'Mum used to feel sorry for me, and
> go out and buy me a cardigan or a top'.
> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

Because the type of job, or the frequency of it, was gender specific,

this resulted in those jobs done for the Father being 'paid' for,

while those for the Mother might be paid for or not. This part again

reiterates issues raised in the last section, ones in which it is

the young women who are subjected to higher levels of authority

and subsequent deeper dependancy within the home vis a vis young men.

In all cases however, any money borrowed from the Father had to

be 'paid back' while, again, that borrowed from the Mother could,

in some circumstances, be 'scrounged':

> 'I have to pay my Dad back'.

> 'Ten pounds a week used to go to
> the old chap for my bike'.

> 'I scrounge off Mum'.

What is significant here is that unless the Mother has her own

money, equivalent to that acquired by the Father - either in terms

of his 'pocket money', to dispose of as he liked, or because he

retained outright control of the wage packet - the money or other

material resources 'given' to the children was actually found out of

the housekeeping. This could put another strain on the Mother when

finances were acutely balanced, so that if anyone was given, borrowed

or scrounged money and failed to 'give it back', it was normally

the Mother who went without in an effort to 'make ends meet'. One

qualification to the point about having to pay back the Father is

that, in the category where the Father had his own resources in

adequate supply, he would, on occasions, not keep all of the money

returned:

> 'He sometimes gives it me back. Say if
> he'd lent me a fiver, I'd give it him
> back and he'd give me four back - keep
> a pound, just to know that I'd given
> him something back'.
>
> Michael,18: unemployed 9 months.

The dual side of the Father can be seen again here, in that on one

side, symbolized in the four pounds he returned, was embodied the

love and affection that he felt towards his son, while on the other side, making him pay it back symbolized his relative control and authority over him.

As was stated earlier, it was in those categories where the financial resources were 'tight', or totally inadequate, that the expectation of the contribution made by the youngster was greatest. Over half, almost two thirds of the total dole money being demanded. In two cases, both young women, they had to hand over all their money, and were then given back 'pocket money'. This demand/ contribution, on the other hand, did not entitle them to use other resources as they felt the need; food, gas and electricity were also rationed:

> 'If I've got two bars of the fire on
> when he comes home, he'll turn one off'.
> Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

> 'One thing the old bloke goes on about
> is having a bath. He's got this thing
> about the immersion heater'.
> Eileen, 19: unemployed 6 months.

Even watching T.V., which is a strategy for coping with the amorphous time mentioned earlier (p. 97), can be subjected to 'Official' - i.e. parental - definition, in that, when asked how parents reacted to them watching television during the day, the usual comment was:

> 'It would depend what's on'.

Whereas when they (the parents) were in at night, no apparent discrimination was made, the youths felt that it was 'just left on'.

Generally, houses in these categories that I visited during the winter months were extremely cold (even when they did not expect me). From the outside they looked as if there was no-one in; no lights were on, and a feeling of damp depression pervaded every-

thing. In this situation, you became acutely aware of the total inadequacy of the material resources relating to these families; even accepting a hot drink (tea/coffee) meant that there would be less for someone else. Alternately, to refuse would further injure someone's self-esteem; you sensed that whatever your excuse was for not having a drink, it would be seen straight through. The 'realism' grounded in these conditions is made starkly self-evident. At another level, just to sit and talk to an unemployed youth in a centrally-heated house with three cars on the driveway, swimming pool in the garden, a choice of different types of tea, ground coffee, cheese and biscuits, a video, a hi-fi, gadgets everywhere, subdued lighting, plush furnishings, a deep-pile carpet etc. produced another group of feelings which certainly grounds the continuing problematic of the notion of 'objectivity' into a fatuous statement.

In some of the cases where individuals had moved away from home, parents had contributed either in monetary terms or with physical objects such as chairs, tables beds etc. In some cases, help had come in both forms. General visits back to the parents home produced the 'odd fiver' or item of food which all helped out. In these types of cases, the process of leaving home had been achieved with little trouble, and the general atmosphere within the family relationships were likely to become strained but manageable.. In instances where youths had left but relationships had been irrevocably broken, then recourse to parental help was non-existent; these youths, as stated earlier, were either sleeping rough, staying with friends for one or two nights before moving on, or had been able to acquire some form of fixed abode. In all cases,

acquiring and manipulating material resources proved an extremely arduous task.

Another area of gender difference is the one relating to the use of mail order catalogues. Young women used this form of credit far more than young men as a way of controlling their megre resources, evn when a lad's Mother 'ran a club'. Although it was not a lot of monetary layout each week:

> 'There's two pound goes on my club'.
>
> 'I pay five pounds per fortnight - it used to be five pounds per week'.
>
> 'Buy something out of the club, no more than a pound a week'.

This would purchase forty to fifty pounds worth of goods, which could be clothes or, in some cases, Christmas presents. By paying a consistent amount - say two pounds - they could buy something every four to five weeks, when the amount owed had decreased, then they could 'top it up' again. The lads, on the other hand:

> 'Don't get involved in them'.

If they ever <u>did</u> get involved, it would be a 'one off' occasion, which would be paid off and then forgotten. If the dole money was not spent all at once, as mentioned on page 109, then it was the young women who generally seemed to proportion their money into discrete areas, such as tights, make-up, records, clothes, saving for holidays or Christmas etc. Whereas generally the young men, after paying for their board, would 'pocket' the money until it was gone. We may argue here that this mode of budgeting is a result of many years of unconscious socialization, where Mother is generally held as being 'responsible' for the day-to-day

budgeting of the family, young girls internalize this and then
unconsciously reproduce it in later years. As an eighteen year
old woman said:

> 'I've done it for years, even when
> my Mum and Dad used to give me
> pocket money'.
> >   Mary, 18: unemployed 18 months.

This issue of 'pocket money' is another important variable, in
that it seems that strategies for getting money from parents are
already being developed, the 'ground rules' being established during
the later school years, especially during the last year. This
mode of acquiring money and favours then became the framework
from within which further developments could be made, rather than
starting afresh when the individual left school. These 'ground
rules' were part of the everyday scene, they act as 'pointers'
for the family, new ideas and directions are tested and made
sense of by this already established framework. As was mentioned
previously (p. 181), the general 'atmosphere within the home
was one of these important 'pointers' for gauging whether you
could act in a certain way and ask for money and other resources.
They are also used by the youths themselves to know when they
should 'pay up' their debts. If the atmosphere was too tense,
you either did not ask for money, or you gave some money as a way
of smoothing your way:

> 'There's always money there to
> keep it under that certain level'.
> >   Mark, 18: unemployed 1 year.

Material resources within the family then are not just static
entities, they can be consciously manipulated and used as a means
of facilitating everyday life. How far families and individuals
can manipulate these resources will, naturally, depend to a great

extent on the level of resources available in the first place. In
homes where resources are 'freely' available, unemployed youths
of both sexes have the greatest chance of using them in ways that
are more constructive to their particular needs than do unemployed
youths from materially deficient homes. Having made that point at
a very general level, we must also remember that the issue of
gender greatly affects these conditions, and reiterate the notion
that in homes which are both 'rich' and 'poor' in material resources,
women generally, and for our purpose at present, young women in
particular, are subjected to different ground rules vis a vis
young men in pursuit of material resources. These ground rules
can, and in most cases do, become an oppressive framework from
within which lads are paid a wage for things done for the family
or individuals, while young women are 'given' material resources
which are unrelated to their efforts within the home, this further
continuing and deepening their dependency. For young working class
women, the 'double bind' of very little material resources coupled
with acute dependency is, to them, very problematic:

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

DOMESTIC LABOUR.

'She says, "Why don't you help me, get
yourself occupied?" but you don't want
to do housework, you want to do <u>work</u>
work, you want to earn your living'.
                 Jane, 18: unemployed 18 months.

'I do everything at the moment, washing,
cooking. My brother (also unemployed)
does nothing'.
                 Mary, 18: unemployed 18 months.

'I wouldn't see the role of mother passed
on to me'.   Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

'They just expect me to do it'.
                 Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

By analysing the role which domestic labour plays in the life of a young unemployed adult, many issues are raised which further facilitate our discussion into the realm of familial structure and social relationships. Within the domestic labour debate as a whole, the major theoretical issue concerns the extent to which domestic labour either creates or facilitates surplus value (class struggle), or whether it mainly reflects aspects of the unequal relationship between men and women (sex struggle), (E.Kaluzynska, 'Feminist Review', 1980). Within the unemployment literature, one of the major interests has been the extent to which men, when they become unemployed, contribute to the domestic work within the home (Morris, McKee and Martin, 1984)and the implication that this may have for their relationship with their spouse. The general concensus from these works suggests that, especially for families where the man is situated within a manual job, there has been very little, if any, change in the traditional segregated roles, as exemplified by such works as Anne Oakley's 'The Sociology of Housework' (1974). Very much the same result seems to be produced as a result of the effects of unemployment on white collar workers; those men already contributing to domestic activity carrying on with it after becoming unemployed, while those who previously engaged in very little domestic work still retained their segregated role. As far as youth studies as a whole are concerned, very little emphasis has been placed on these issues; as Dorn and South (1982, p. 26) state, 'Youth culture studies should pay attention to the role of household labour, and to its divisions between the sexes. This, we suggest, is part of the hidden social structure underpinning youth social structure, boys, girls and mixed.' This 'attention' alluded to

by Dorn and South would, I feel, be greatly enhanced by the
distinction made by   M. Luxton,   (1980, p. 20/21) between
'production time' and 'labour time'. 'Production time measures the
duration of a task from start to finish, labour time measures the
specific period during which a worker actually expends labour.'
It is within this distinction that I feel that the first point
regarding unemployed youth and domestic labour can be made, i.e.
that, generally, young women perform far more domestic tasks than
do young men:

> 'I just clean up the living room
> during the week, and on Saturday
> the whole house'.
> > Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

> 'Mum used to do it all - she still does'.
> > Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

> 'Me Mum has got her hands full just
> keeping this place tidy with me about'.
> > Paul, 19: unemployed 2½ years.

> 'I do everything at the moment, my
> brother (also unemployed) does nothing'.
> > Mary, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Having made this general point however, several qualifications must
be made later in this section. An interesting point is that where
the young lads did do domestic work, these jobs were given as
individual tasks by the Mother:

> 'Tim, could you hoover the hall
> please, before you go out'.

But as a range of tasks by the Father, such as that mentioned earlier,
when the lad had to:

> 'Lift them (the logs) all the way round
> the back.....chop all the wood, and then
> light the fire'
> > Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

In contrast to this, the young women, when given work to do, were
given a range:

> 'We share it between us, Mum would do
> the upstairs, I would do the down'.
>   Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

It is very important here to see that the structural relationships
between sons and their Mothers was one in which the ability to
'negotiate' was endemic in each task, while daughters, on the other
hand, were confined to a smaller space for their negotiations, the
normal comment being:

> 'They just expect me to do it'.
>   Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

The 'they' here is important, in that, for the young women, the
limited 'negotiational space' characterized the relationship between
here and both her parents, whereas for the young men, the limited
'negotiational space' in terms of 'expectations' extended only to
that occupied by the Father, whereas the Mother/son, male/female
relationship was structurally different and allowed a greater freedom
of expression by the young men.

Within our distinction between production time and labour time,
we see now one of the mechanisms which is required for the continuing
socialization of young women into the realm of 'domesticity'. This
imposition of housework onto the backs of the young women was not
just passively accepted, but was very often a basis for arguments,
and in most cases this structural exploitation was actively used, as
I mentioned earlier (p. 97), as a coping strategy for structuring
the amorphous time during the morning. In relation to my earlier
discussion of the effectual and material resources, the lads, having
the opportunity to 'negotiate' their involvement in domestic work,
could acquire far more resources (money, cigarettes, lifts etc.)
than could the young women.

In terms of the types of domestic work performed by either sex, this resulted in everyone being accountable for the cleanliness of their own bedroom, young lads were usually asked only to vacuum or wash up, whereas young women were expected to perform all types of tasks; washing, ironing, vacuuming, shopping, preparing meals etc. Alternatively, young women were rarely asked to mow the lawn, dig the garden, paint sections of the house etc. The main discrepancy here lies in the fact that these latter jobs are only done occasionally, whereas the household tasks are virtually an everyday affair.

A related point is the extent to which these domestic tasks were not just a new imposition to everyone vis a vis unemployment, but were strongly related to domestic work either before leaving school or becoming unemployed. As one young woman said:

'I've been doing it for a long time now, even when I was at school'.
                                    Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

In contrast, the lads used to say such things as:

'When I was at work, nothing really, just my bedroom once a week, but nothing else'. John, 21: unemployed 3 years.

This point about the 'conditions' within the home before unemployment being important as 'pointers' to the way in which the family should respond was mentioned earlier regarding pocket money etc. (p. 201) This imposition of the amount of domestic work prior to leaving school seems to be strongly related to families where the material resources are extremely inadequate. Here, work which was done was seen as contributing in some way to the overall family maintenance, while the work performed in materially rich households can take on

a different aspect, such as:

>'She just used to ask me to keep me occupied'.
>Liz, 17: unemployed 10 months.

This distinction across and within gender divisions is an important qualification to my earlier point about young women as a whole doing more domestic work than young men, in that it was the young working class women who performed far more domestic tasks than either the young middle class women or the young men as a whole category.

For unemployed lads who had both parents in full time employment or where their single parent (Mother) was in full time employment, the situation was slightly different. These two categories of lads were involved in a greater amount of domestic work than other young lads. Although it seemed at first sight that these lads were involved with a 'range' of tasks, it quickly became apparent that each task had been 'negotiated'; also each task had been sub-divided, again giving room for a greater degree of control. One example of this was when I saw a lad hoovering the whole of the downstairs of his house; on the face of it, it would seem that one 'negotiation' - i.e. hoovering - had taken place with his Mother. However, contrary to this, I had earlier observed him 'negotiating' with his Mother for hoovering each specific room. The outcome was that the material resources and favours accruing to this lad were far greater than those for the young woman who I also observed, who was told by her Mother, as she was putting her coat on:

>'Oh Mary, put the hoover round
>before you go out, will you?'

and then just walked out.

Very often in professional households, where both parents worked in what is termed 'dual careers', a once or twice weekly

cleaner (female), came in to 'help out'. This naturally had
implications for the amount of work done, or even expected to be
done, by the unemployed child/ren of the house. In these cases,
young women seemed only to contribute on a daily basis in the
preparation of the evening meal, while young lads did nothing at
all.

Where one parent was at home all day, this too had implications
greater for the amount of work done by young women than by young men.
As was stated before, young women do far more work anyway, and it is
within these differential power frameworks that the ideological
'expectations' manifest themselves in concrete form:

> 'We share it between us, Mum does
> the upstairs, I do down'.
>   Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

i.e. two women working together in 'their' world, while young men
are structurally separate, doing individualized tasks and sub-
tasks or, in lots of cases, doing nothing at all. This is also
structured in their language, in that all the lads expressed it
in terms of 'helping Mum out' and 'paying their way' rather than
as a contribution towards a 'perceived need'. This differential
power framework then, produces the traditions for the differing
nature of domestic work experienced between the sexes in the young
unemployed, the core of which can be illustrated aptly by the lad
who can control the grounds of his involvement:

> 'I wouldn't see the role of Mother passed
> on to me'.   Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

while this control is negated for the young woman:

> 'They just expect me to do it'.
>   Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

CONTACT AND SOCIABILITY WITH KIN.

Initial involvement regarding unemployment.

An important point here is the extent to which the immediate
family members got in touch with their wider kin on behalf of the
youth who was leaving school, to ask about job opportunities in
their spheres. This was also supplemented by the youths themselves,
by visits, letters, telephone calls etc:

> 'We asked all my aunts and uncles at the start'.
>
> Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

and was, in some cases, maintained at a high level:

> 'They're still looking, they ring or tell
> my Mum if they see anything at all'.
>
> (Philip)

Most of the time though, this initial burst dies straight away,
a 'general map' of the possibilities of a job having been
established. Within this 'general map' certain kin become more
appropriate in terms of their job contacts than others, and it was
these kin who were then placed on a different plane or level in
relation to what can be termed their 'job creativeness'. In terms
of Allen's 'Rules of Relevance', they were certainly under an
obligation not only to report any job which casually came to their
notice, but also actively to check about any jobs that were
being, or might be, created in their place of work. Failure to
do this could bring problems in terms of 'family feelings', as
one lad said:

> 'I was bloody annoyed I was; this kid
> I know went straight down there and
> got a job, and me fucking uncle, who
> works there, hadn't even said there
> was a job going, and he knows I'm on
> the fucking dole'.
>
> Paul, 19: unemployed 2½ years.

This 'job creativeness' on the part of kin was therefore an ongoing thing. Naturally, jobs do not become available every day of the week, or month or year, the point being made was that when they <u>did</u>, other members of the family were under a 'felt' obligation to report them.

The youths themselves were not under the same type of consistent obligation to enquire from these members about job availability. This was reflected in many discussions I had with unemployed youths, when after explaining their reasons for 'suspending' their job seeking, they then proceded to explain how they kept in touch with the current job situation by:

'People keep an eye out for me'.

'If anything's going, they let me know'.

From discussions with people just leaving school, and corroborated by those who had left, it seemed that for most youths, their first enquiry about a job had developed through these informal messages, rather than through the more formal ones of Careers Office and Job Centre. The problem was though, that it quickly dried up, and for most youths further enquiries had come through the more formal mechanisms of papers, Careers Office and Job Centre.

Contact with Grandparents.

In some of this finding out about jobs etc. grandparents were not always in an ideal situation, as they were often retired from employment. But for some youths, interaction with their grandparents proved useful in terms of their own self-esteem, in that although contact had been continued from when they were at school, and certainly had elements of concern and interest embedded in them,

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when they were unemployed, the 'little jobs' which the youths could
do for their grandparents became rated at a high significance level,
and both sexes felt worthwhile at being able to contribute to
their grandparents lives:

> 'I do a few little jobs for them each
> time I go'.
>> Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

> 'Nan occasionally gives me a packet
> of fags or a drink if I do anything,
> but I don't do it for that, I like
> doing it and it helps them, that's
> what it's all about'.
>> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

These 'little jobs' were again genderized, similarly to those
within the domestic labour section of this chapter. In these cases,
Nan and Grandad became for the unemployed youths the 'softer side'
of the harsh realities of their everyday lives. They were regarded
with affection even when they were felt to be a 'problem' by other
members of the family. This is seen in the language used by one
lad, who laughingly said about his Nan:

> 'Oh, she's a bugger, she is'.'

At another level, there were many youths however who had
little, if any, constant contact with their grandparents, and were
kept informed as to their 'situation' by their parents. Also, in
a lot of cases, grandparents lived in other areas of the district,
or in different parts of the country, and therefore direct face-to-
face daily/weekly contact, even by parents, was at a limited level.
At a general level, this contact by the parents did seem to fall
into that type of pattern noted in other studies, (Rosser and Harris,
1965, p.227) where contact between the working classes, especially
Mothers and their parents (and especially her Mother) did seem to

be on a 'popping-in' basis, while with the middle class Mothers, contact seemed to be arranged around distinct visits. The Fathers contact also seemed to follow the general pattern (Young and Willmott 1962, p. 73/75; Allen, 1979, p.93/99) with working class men visiting their parents at regular intervals, and, in some cases, at the same specific time:

> 'He sees them every Sunday morning
> without fail, and occasionally in
> the week'.
>> Parent of 19 year old.

For the youths themselves, this class pattern still seemed to be appropriate, with working class youths 'popping in' to see their grandparents while they were 'out':

> 'I see my Nan every week; the last
> time I saw her was when I called
> in as I was coming back from Kidder'.
>> Mick, 20: unemployed 2 years.

While the middle class youths generally arranged distinct visiting times:

> 'I usually give them a ring first,
> to see if they will be in'.
>> Mary, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Contact with other kin.

For working class youths, this tended to be either on a very ad hoc basis, or with intense interaction with one or two kin; this latter case would usually be a younger brother or sister of their parents, and so 'nearer' their own age group. These couples usually had one or two young children, so there was usually the chance for the young women to pick up some baby-sitting money; the young men, on the other hand, could earn a bob or two by cutting the grass etc.

For middle class youths, infrequent contact with other relatives was usually the norm.

Where the significant others, in terms of kin, were also experiencing a period of hardship in terms of unemployment:

> 'She lost her job in the carpets, and
> he was made redundant when X's closed
> down'.

Then both groups, youths and couples, tended to become a sort of mutual support group:

> 'They don't mind me going down there,
> I think it breaks the day up. I try
> to take a packet of fags with me,
> because they give me a bit of dinner.
> I make sure I don't sponge off 'em,
> 'cos they ain't got much in any case'.
> > Paul, 19: unemployed 2½ years.

For information on most of their other relatives, the youth's Mothers seem to be the focal point of information. It seems to be her who either meets them in the street or town, pays visits, or is the one who auntie 'pops in' to see; she also writes letters, cards etc.

+   +   +   +   +   +   +

Conclusion.

One of the major arguments not only of this chapter but of the whole study is the extent to which unemployed youths have different experiences of the 'condition of unemployment' along and within class, gender and age divisions, another important variable being their parents current relationship to the labour market. Having both your parents 'in' employment can, in many cases, reduce your material hardship, although affectually meaningful relationships with them may be problematic. One of the major variables highlighted is the

different gender experiences surrounding unemployment. For young women, the familial context of unemployment produces a framework in which many forms of 'control' open to young men are denied to them. Even within this genderized division, not all young women experience the same 'intensity' of control. For young women living in homes where the material resources are totally inadequate, the framework of oppression is intensified. In general terms, the experiences of the parent/s to their son/daughter's unemployment is also strongly related to gender, with the Mother playing, in most cases (and not on her own terms) the role of 'support', however inadequate she feels, while at other times acting as 'policing agent' for the Father. The total incompatability of the roles producing feelings of inadequacy and frustration, while the Father's role, on the other hand, also embedded with conflictual aspects of authority, control, tenderness and understanding, results in, not feelings of frustration and individual inadequacy like those experienced by the Mother, but a feeling of growing self-paternalism. For the unemployed youths themselves, this familial framework of 'control' contextualizes for them a situation where, to paraphrase Marx, 'In the social production of their existence, unemployed youth inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of their will'. These 'relations' being grounded and experienced not in terms of a meaningful 'family life' but more in terms of an oppressive, genderized 'existence'.

Chapter Seven

CONTROL OR UNCERTAINTY?

'We would contrast the great certainties
in economic thought in the last century
with the great uncertainty with which
problems are faced in our time'.
<div align="right">(Galbraith, 1977. p.7)</div>

'The labour movement, which prides
itself on its historical roots,
appeared curiously blind to ordinary
people's determination to control a
small part of their environment and
to fashion it in their own way'.
<div align="right">(Pahl, 1984. p.325)</div>

Every historical era has its own over-riding emotional
element. During the 50's, this was exemplified by MacMillan's
'You've never had it so good' statement. For the 60's young, the
major emotional element became one of 'hopefulness'; 'do your
own thing' became the order of the day, the Beatles, soon
followed by hippies and flower-power became its symbols, and
'consume, consume' its watchword. Twenty years on, all this has
changed. In the 1980's, 'uncertainty' is now the major emotional
element, with unemployment, police surveillance, homelessness,
privatization and riots its social expressions and 'consume'
and 'despair' its conflicting watchwords.

The phenomena of 'uncertainty' I would argue, pervades every
aspect of everyday life; from the major world issues such as the
possibility of nuclear war through to the uncertainty of ones
own 'personal' troubles (C. Wright Mills, 1977). Although this
'uncertainty' has always existed in different historical forms,
it is my contention that in certain historical periods its
'intensity' is exacerbated, giving rise to fear, anger and
frustration. Who, within the majority of the population, can say
for certain that nuclear war will <u>not</u> happen, that they <u>will</u> be
in employment next week or that their company will <u>not</u> go
bankrupt? Who can even say whether they will be alive tomorrow?
I would contend, and it is the major premise of this chapter,
that it is the continuing development of the Patriarchal
Capitalist mode of production in its pursuit of the creation of
surplus value which exacerbates, in certain historical moments,
this 'uncertainty of tomorrow'. I further suggest that a major

phenomenon of this 'uncertainty of tomorrow' is that individuals,
groups and social formations require and necessitate varying degrees
of 'control'. As Pahl suggests: 'If one can control just a
small part of this large and threatening world, then one has
achieved something worthwhile' (Pahl, 1984: p. 324). He goes on
to emphasise: 'The labour movement, which prides itself on its
historical roots, appeared curiously blind to ordinary people's
determination to control a small part of their environment and
to fashion it in their own way' (Pahl, 1984: p. 325).

    'Control' then, is seen as a way of people exercising a
degree of freedom in their lives, also a way of alleviating some
of the social pressures which constrain their very being. As
Gorz suggests: 'The freedom ..... is the freedom to create a
private niche protecting ones own personal life against all
pressures and external social obligations ..... its importance
varies inversely with the degree of job satisfaction and in
direct proportion with the intensity of social pressures' (Gorz,
1982: p. 80 - 88).

    In highlighting the possible spheres of freedom outside
employment, Gorz's remark about its importance varying with the
intensity of social pressure is especially relevant for my
discussion of youth unemployment. As I have illustrated in the
last chapters, the social pressures on most of the young unemployed
are immense, and therefore their ability to control these
pressures, to use Pahl's terms, or to find 'private niches'
in Gorz's, becomes extremely important and problematical,
especially if they are going to attend, to use Cohen's phrase,
to 'the state of their mind' and not commit acts of destruction

to either themselves, their family or their close friends.

Because it is within these different processes of 'striving for control' that this reflexive thesis of youth unemployment must be seen, I would now like, by way of illustration, to highlight some indicators which I feel exemplify this generalized process of control within contemporary society. These are:

a) Growth of Monopoly Capitalism as a form of control over the instability of the market, and competition among capitals.

b) The deindustrialization of Britain due to the international reorganization of capital, in relation to the declining rate of profit (Gaffikin and Nickson, 1984).

c) The process of rationalization, and deskilling of certain sections of industry and commerce, and the use of personnel departments as a means of controlling costs. (Braverman, 1974).

d) Intervention by the state in trying to secure the conditions for the creation and realization of surplus value (Pierson, 1984)

   i) implementation of monetarism and control over the money supply (Mishra, 1984)

   ii) the use of unemployment as a measure to control wages (Labour Research, June 1984.)

iii) Trade Union legislation, and the use of the courts, police and army for its implementation (Cox and Golden, 1977.)

iv) attempts to supress imformation by its opposition to the Freedom of Information Bill, ban on Trade Unions - e.g. at GCHQ - and the abolition of the Metropolitan Councils (Stewart, 1984).

   v) increased spending on police and army and new law and order legislation (Thompson, 1984).

   vi) entrenchment of Patriarchy in the Government's family policies (Land, 1983)

vii) increasing involvement in the Stock Exchange, due
to it reaching its highest and lowest levels ever
over the last two years (Labour Research, 1984).

e) The incorporation of science in the technical control of

life (Habermas, 1972).

f) Decline in mass membership of political parties, and the

growth of pressure groups and local issue politics as a

way of exerting more influence (Nelson, 1981).

g) The growing use of the informal and social economies as a

means of countering the problems of the formal economy

(Pahl, 1984).

h) Growth in fundamentalism (religion/politics) as a way of

making sense and controlling your everyday life (Nelson and

Walsgrove, 1981).

i) Increasing use of violence (verbal and physical) by men in

their control over women and children (Stead, 1983).

j) Emphasis on the 'private self' due to increasing loss of

control in the public sphere (Lasch, 1983)

   i) personal health: keep fit; yoga; diet; jogging.

   ii) use of 'personal style' to facilitate identity creation.

   iii) use of drugs (pot, pills, drink, tobacco etc.) as a
   form of controlled rebellion of the inner self.

k) Current discourse of employment/unemployment framed in terms

of control:

         i) flexibility
         ii) social skills
         iii) education for life
         iv) transferable skills   (Atkinson et.al. 1982)

l) Growth in illegitimate activities; crime, drugs, petty theft,

mugging, fiddling etc. as legitimate processes become
more inflexible (Henry, 1982).

m) Dramatic increases in 'chance' or 'luck' shows; bingo,
arcade amusements etc. as formal opportunity structures
struggle to deliver the goods.

n) Increasing hedonism, i.e. the 'now' short temporal framework,
which is easier to control than the long term future (Lasch, 1978)

I would argue that these and many other phenomena exemplify
the many social processes which characterize individuals' groups'
and social formations' attempts to control the conditions of their
social existence. This emphasis on individuals, groups and social
formations has, within sociology, resulted in control being
conceptualized implicitly and explicitly within such terms as
'intentional action', 'social control', 'structuration' and
'praxis'; 'control theory', 'workers/management control', 'agency'
and 'structural determination'.

Without wishing to reiterate these debates here, I would
like to address them in a diffuse form by setting out as
systematically as possible a preliminary framework of control
which will, hopefully, not be characterized by the major
problematic inherent in most forms of typologizing, that of
'static conceptualization'.

One of the first points to mention concerning my own conception
of 'control' is that it is relevant at two analytical levels. In
one form, a more specific analysis is possible in order to tease
out many of the subtle nuances within the social situation. A

second point is that 'control' is not static, but a dynamic entity,
i.e. 'control in action'. It is also 'something' which is not
embedded in an individual or group, but a phenomenon which is
embedded in a dialectical relationship, or a series of dialectical
relationships existing between an individual and the social
formation which surrounds that particular event. Therefore, it is
in this way that I feel that an individual's consciousness is
influenced by the dialectical relationships they enter into, and
does not just stem from their production and consumption activities.

'Control' in this analytical framework, as illustrated in
diagram 7:1, is divided into four dimensions; (direct/direct;
compensatory/secondary; symbolic/ideological; subjective/secondary
ideological), and also sub-divided within these areas into three
or four further dimensions (see diagram 7:2). By way of illustration,
we can say that the first dimension of control is what I have
termed 'direct', and that this is then divided into three forms:

> a) change in individuals's or social formation's
>   material circumstances.
>
> b) change in individual's material circumstances
>   but no change in the social formation.
>
> c) changes in the individual's material circumstances
>   which also reinforce the social formation.

The overall outcomes of these 'control relationships' will,
naturally, depend on the potential power of the agencies involved
and their adopted strategies or unintentional actions. The first
form may develop a situation where radical changes may take place,
or merely minor modifications through the process of gradual
change. The second form may develop from a dialectical process
where an individual changes his/her material circumstances - e.g.

7:1   Dialectical Control Relationships. (i)

Major Dimensions.

Social Formation

Direct control

Secondary control

Ideological control

Secondary Ideological control

Historical Context

Immediate
Social
Existence

Wider Social Formation

Structural Forms

Individual

Direct control

Compensatory control

Symbolic control

Subjective control
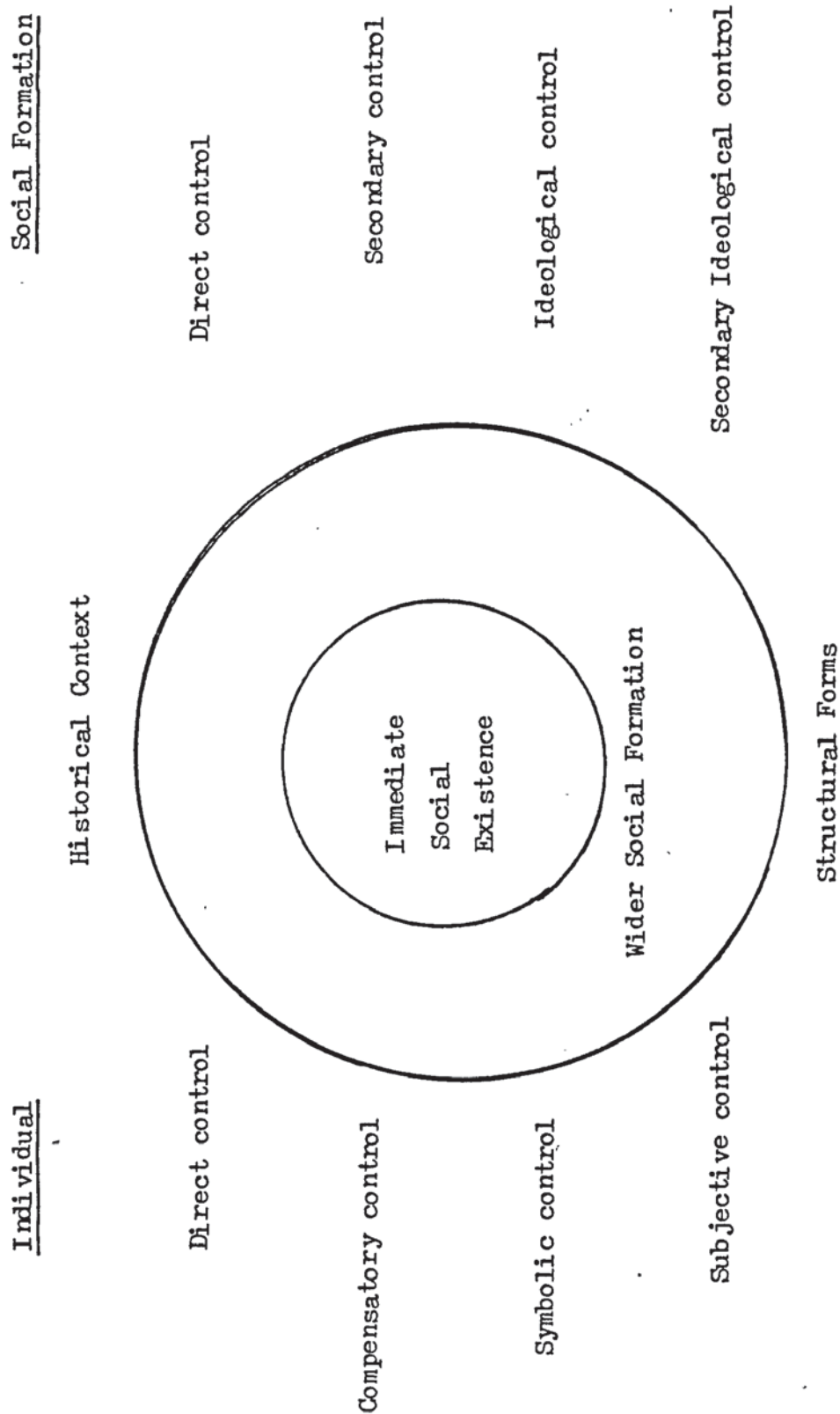
7:2　Dialectical Control Relationships (ii)

Major Dimensions

Individual		Social Formation
Direct		Direct
	Sub-dimensions	
a) individual change		social formation change
b) individual change		no change in social formation
c) individual change		social formation reinforced.

finding employment - but this merely reinforces the social formation in terms of waged labour.

One outcome of this conscious form of direct control from an individual perspective is that it may actually produce a feeling within a person that they can actually 'influence' their own situation, and in some radical forms they might; in other circumstances their 'felt' influences and changes only reinforce the wider social formation.

The second dialectical control dimension (compensatory/ secondary) comes into play when the 'direct' forms of control have not in any form been negated, and from the view of the social formation this only intensifies the control relationships for future interactions. The second sub-division within this dimension may stem from an individual's failing to succeed in a direct form; this can result in their turning to compensatory measures as a way of influencing their situation, e.g. where an individual's failure to secure employment results in them possibly turning to 'fiddling' or 'making' in order to acquire adequate resources to live on.

The third sub-division is still further removed from the direct form, in that not only does it leave the initial dimensions untouched, but it may also reinforce the social formation which frames their material existence. An example of this may be where an individual, again failing to acquire employment, turns to sport to compensate for his/her loss of status and feelings of individual inadequacy (p.104), thereby finding status and self-worth in another form (sport) which, by its social acceptability, also does not challenge the social formation of society.

Symbolic/ideological control is the next dialectic dimension, which, although framed in terms of symbols etc. also involves action. Here, an example might be the lad who 'religiously' goes down to enquire at the Job Centre every week, although he 'knows' the outcome beforehand. In this case, symbolic control helps to lower the tensions at home (p. 182).

Within the last dimension (subjective/secondary ideological) the dialectical control relationships manifest themselves at the level of 'ideas'. In this form, the direct material circumstances are not directly challenged, although this, in some cases, leads to a situation where these 'abstract ideas' might manifest themselves at the level of symbollic control. In its second form, from an individual's perspective, the outcome of the dialectical confront-ation may produce a situation where their subjective ideas seem prominent, but this only reinforces the wider ideological framework which actually manifests itself in the 'mind' of the individual. My discussion on the normalization of fantasy (p. 103 - 5) is relevant here. The major outcome for the secondary ideological element is merely to reproduce the major 'ideas' inherent at a societal level; again, for any substantial change to be made concerning the individual, it needs to manifest legitimate ideas within a strong ideological framework; failure to do so may result in a crisis of legitimation (Habermas, op.cit.).

Although these control dimensions must be seen as an overlapping process, with the individual/social formation moving between the different dimensions as the need arises, it must be understood that the three dimensions of control - compensatory, symbolic and subjective - are all sub-divisions of the direct form of control and

are only brought into action when the direct form of control vis a vis individual/social formation is found to be inadequate, this direct form being historically and contextually situated. The social formation in the process model must also be conceptualized not in any abstract form - thereby reifying its conception - but as a process of historically interacting human beings, who are implementing their own control dimensions, whether consciously or not, thereby manifesting the 'antithesis' of the control dimension which, overall, manifests itself in the 'synthesis' of the dialectical control relationships.

<u>Summary of main points so far.</u>

a) The conception of control is not a static one, but is conceptualized as a dynamic process.

b) Control is not something that an individual or group has, but is embedded in a dialectical relationship or series of dialectical relationships between the individual and social formation.

c) The social formation is conceptualized as a process of historically interacting human beings.

d) There are four dimensions of dialectical control relationships:

      1.   Direct   Direct
      2.   Compensatory   Secondary
      3.   Symbolic   Ideological
      4.   Subjective   Secondary Ideological.

e) Within each dimension there are a number of sub-divisions.

f) Although all dimensions must be seen as an overlapping process, it must be understood that dimensions 2, 3 and 4 only come into play for the individual or social formation when a positive outcome has been negated by the other side.

g) All dialectical control relationships are exercised through a historical context and must not be seen as any form of abstraction.

Having highlighted the major features and dimensions of my conception of the different dialectical control relationships existing between the individual and the social formation, I would now like to apply this process conception to the ethnographic data contained within the preceeding three chapters. In attempting to do so, I have decided that the best way to proceed is to locate this analysis within four major existential areas which I feel are important to the young unemployed, and within which they try to exercise a certain degree of everyday control. These are not necessarily the only major areas of their everyday life, but those which I feel play an integral part within the overall process of social existence. These areas are: i) access to material resources, ii) structuring time, iii) creation of self-identity and iv) affectual.

Material Relationships.

Within this area I feel it would be more productive to split the analysis into two generalized areas, the public and the private, although it must not be forgotten, as was made clear in the previous chapters, that there are many overlapping dimensions of these two spheres. If we start within the private domain, we can see that the situation within the familial context is one in which it is easier for young unemployed men to engage in forms of 'direct control' than it is for young unemployed women (p. 202). In these situations, most young men are able, by entering into what seem to be 'negotiated' relationships with their Mothers, to acquire to a relative degree money which they can use for their own requirements. Here the direct form of control which the lads are able to procure certainly changes their own material circumstances, but does not in any form

change the patriarchal formation which makes this 'control' possible. The outcome is one where male power is reproduced because the wider social formation helps to facilitate the control relationships between the lads and their Mothers.

Young women, on the other hand, in their pursuit of material resources within the familial context, tend in many ways to operate more within the compensatory control dimension. This is not to say that they will not enter into direct control relationships, they are just as likely to argue, cajole or wheedle as the lads are, but, due to the persistence of patriarchy, the outcomes are generally different, with the young women being forced to adopt other options in order to achieve their aims. One compensatory form is 'being sulky':

> 'The times Mum's said to me
> 'Put a smile on your face'.'.
>> Ann, 18: unemployed 18 months.

Here, I would contend, the process of 'moping about' is not one simply related to apathy and despair, but is a positive means adopted in the face of strong patriarchal constraints. This can then lead to:

> 'Mom used to feel sorry for me, and go
> out and buy me a cardigan or a top'.
>> Nicola, 19: unemployed 11 months.

What must be kept in mind here is the patriarchal formations within which these different control relationships are contextualized. It is within this context that it must be remembered that the outcomes of the processes of direct control relationships engaged in by both genders of youth and their Fathers are usually ones which end, from the youth's perspective, in a negative form, i.e. they get very little, if anything, of what they really want; but that direct control relationships for young men are far more beneficial for them

when engaged in with their Mothers. As they say:

'I have to pay Dad back'

but

'I scrounge off Mum'.

Having said this, there are of course certain times when the outcome of these direct control relationships entered into with their Fathers are in the favour of the young, but overall, this will tend to heighten the emotional atmosphere within the home, which can ultimately result in the young either leaving home permanently or adopting a 'nomadic existence' in order to achieve some further measures of control over their material conditions (p.193 - 194).

At times the dialectical relationships entered into produce what I have termed 'symbolic control' and 'ideological control'. In this form, the 'ideological' content becomes an important factor and stems from 'getting one over on the old man' to being a 'good boy' or 'good girl'. Within this latter ideological category, although material resources may accrue from adopting such control relationships, it in no way changes the overall familial social forms which contextualize these relationships; whereas 'getting one over on the old man' may produce changes in both these areas. The important point being made here is that in the overall pursuit of material resources within the familial context, young women, and working-class young women in particular, are only able to achieve any degree of control in dimensions relatively less powerful than those of young men. Where this changes to a more direct form, one way out for them may be leaving home, whereas for young men, this form is more flexible, and only really results in problems when directed at the Father, 'direct control' usually being the outcome of their relationships with their Mothers.

In discussing the links between the public and private realms, and their relationships to acquiring material resources, we can see that different relationships of control may be entered into within the realms of the 'Social' and 'Informal' economies (chapter 5). An interesting point here, and one mentioned on page 128,is that depending on whether you define them as 'informalities' or, in Pahl's terms, 'ways in which households get by', this can have major implications for which dialectical control dimensions you see that activity arising in. Taking the more orthodox line would result in a conceptualization which suggests that because an individual is denied access to the formal channels of acquiring money, resources etc. they may enter into, if the opportunity arises, other forms of relationships to 'compensate' for their failure, or lack of direct control in the formal labour market. From the other perspective, because prominence is not given to any one form of 'getting by', then the dialectical control relationships entered into will initially be located within the direct control dimension. Also, taking the individual's perspective does not necessarily make the matter any clearer because, as we have seen (p.130), some individuals give themselves, or have given to them, a degree of 'legitimation' for some of their activities, thereby defining, from their viewpoint, certain activities as 'normal' and justifiable, while other groups or individuals might describe them as deviant and illegal.

From one perspective then, involvement in the Social and Informal economies involves a form of 'compensatory control' which can change the individuals' material circumstances, but not the wider social formation. A point related to this idea is where I suggest that the process of short term 'reciprocity' is not only becoming the major

social interactional form among the young, but that this form is also framed by 'negotiated' and specified criteria of exchange. A form of abstraction of the contractual market relationships would therefore seem to be becoming the norm. The way in which I suggest that we could interpret this 'negotiated stance' is that it allows for a greater degree of control over the uncertain conditions which contextualize the individual's immediate existential relationships, rather than operating in an uncertain temporal framework where the criteria are based on long term reciprocity and hazy notions of responding in some way or other at some time in the future. One negative outcome of this form of control relationship is that it tends to produce a temporal framework which is conducive to narcissistic tendencies and individualism, rather than temporal conditions based on a form of meaningful and co-operative social interaction. Therefore, because of a lack of direct control over their conditions of material existence, this historical process of 'uncertainty' produces forms of compensating control relationships which become framed in abstract market criteria and contextualized within a temporal process of depersonalization.

Dialectical Time Relationships.

This process of depersonalization now turns the discussion to how unemployed youth engage in trying to structure the temporal frameworks which surround their daily existence. These temporal frameworks exist between the wider social formation and the immediate existence of the individual. Here the temporal frameworks are sub-divided into three forms, involving a daily, a fortnightly

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round and a long term perspective (p. 92). It is, therefore, within
these different temporal frameworks that different control dimensions
come into play. The most immediate framework consists of an amorphous
phenomena which envelops their social existence; here some unemployed
youth enter into a direct form of relationship with this immediate
social context, and try in many ways to give it a structure, which
is consciously broken down into stages to flesh out time. As one
young woman said:

> 'I don't do it all at once,
> I have a break now and again,
> it gives me something to do,
> makes time seem less endless'.
>   Elaine, 17: unemployed 6 months.

Therefore, this process of structuring time, especially for the
greater part of the day, becomes a constant battle, engaged in on a
daily basis, with the outcome being that although the immediate
material circumstances may change in favour of the individual
concerned, this in no way challenges the wider social formation,
which is based on precisely this quantitive paradigm (p. 89), one
in which the 'dominant conception of time is a bourgeois one of
absolutism, quantification and one in which social life is geared to
economic production and profit' (p. 90).

For some of the young unemployed, the outcome of this type
of 'control' relationship (segmented etc.) over their amorphous
temporal existence gives way to a time structure which is segmented
by factors embedded within the wider social formation. Here, time
structures are given a symbolic form, such as 'tea time', 'going for
a drink' or 'being with friends'.

Identity Relationships.

Traditionally, identity creation for the young has generally centred around the process of 'becoming an adult'. Here the notion of apprenticeships, work, courtship and marriage have played symbolic parts in the historical development of the young person's progress to adulthood. This process has traditionally rested upon their employability, their becoming wage labour and the power of their wage, (Willis, 1984). I have therefore tentatively suggested that, with large numbers of young people being forced to relinquish this historical transition into adult life, the process of identity creation takes on a number of different dimensions. At one level, the direct control relationships entered into produce spheres in which identity is facilitated by different formations of collectivism (p.114-124), while individualistic attempts manifest themselves within other forms of control dimensions (compensatory/subjective).

Within the direct control dimension of engaging with others, unemployed youths are able to create more 'realistic' identities, e.g.:

> 'I see myself as an <u>unemployed</u> draughtsman'.
>> John, 21: unemployed 3 years.

> '...me, I'm one of Maggie Thatcher's
> little artists - I'm drawing the dole!'.
>> Diane, 19: unemployed 2 years.

> 'I'm an unemployed musician'.
>> Michael, 18: unemployed 9 months.

than do those engaged in more individualistic strategies of other control dimensions, e.g.:

> 'Well, like, I don't think of myself as
> unemployed. I'm me, like other people'.
>> Maurice, 18: unemployed 18 months.

> 'I'm not a yobbo, not one of them
> that don't want to work'.
>> Brian, 18: unemployed 4 months.

These and other types of collectively created identities may, while changing the immediate social conditions of existence, have hardly any impact on the wider social formation, and over time may even produce contradictions and tensions within the immediate existence because of its interlocking with the rest of the local culture. Only by producing these collective areas on a larger scale can the unemployed youth hope to have any impact upon the social formation within which he/she is embedded.

The other major control dimension used in the process of identity creation by the young unemployed is located in the subjective/secondary ideological control framework. Here the dialectical control relationships are embedded in the consciousness mainly at the level of ideas, rather than at a praxis, i.e. symbolic/ideological level. By using day-dreams and fantasies, based on stereo-typifications unemployed youth are able to create 'normal' identities, which helps to legitimate their individualized existence:

> 'I fantasise about having a girl-friend, y'know'.
> Billy, 18: unemployed 1 year.

> 'I just want to be normal, you know, like everyone else'.
> Philip, 18: unemployed 1 year.

> 'That's all I fantasis about, having someone to cook for'.
> Eileen, 19: unemployed 6 months.

Affectual Relationships.

Dialectical control relationships embedded within this framework are located within the two major areas highlighted on page 180 . These consist of, i) who is at home during the major part of the day, and ii) pressures that arise due to the money situation within the home.

For the majority of the young unemployed, these dialectical control dimensions are located between them and the differential involvement of their parents/guardians. Here, the conflictual dual role played by the Mother, i.e. emotional support/policing agent for the Father, is the major immediate contextual framework entered into by the young on a daily basis (p. 188). Here the direct control dimension produces a relationship within which a significant proportion of the young unemployed lose out. In one form, the outcome is a situation where young unemployed people have to leave home, as that is the only way of negating the oppressive power of the Father (p. 195). In another form, constant arguments and the occasional physical fight produce an 'atmosphere' of emotion which becomes unbearable, and lessens the options which are open to the young unemployed:

> 'I can't do that at the moment,
> the atmosphere's not right'.
>   Tim, 19: unemployed 14 months.

Trying to control these relationships in order to produce a degree of equilibrium becomes a major preoccupation for many of the young unemployed. This arises from love and consideration for their parents on the one hand, and, on the other, the physical and 'felt' experiences of being dependent continuously upon others for their material well-being.

As I stated, tensions within this emotional framework are generally transmitted from the Father, diffused through the Mother and reflected back in a muted form by the young themselves. Here, compensatory forms of control become the order of the day, as a way of controlling this elusive 'atmosphere'. Many strategies are tried rather than constantly and directly challenging this situation; one way is to spend the 'odd night out' once or twice a week - to lower

the charged atmosphere within the home (p. 192).

A different type of control form manifests itself at the symbolic level; here, where both parents - or the major wage earner - are at home all day, the major patriarchal forms of power and authority grounded in the role of the 'breadwinner' become inappropriate as a way of legitimizing control relationships. This results in a more 'negotiated' stance being adopted (p. 186) within which different symbols become markers by which the family can structure what I have termed the 'silent level' of accomodation (p. 186). In positive ways, these negotiated symbols can pull families together:

> 'We all have our differencies .....
> ....but generally we all pull together'.
> Sally, 19: unemployed 1 year.

In its negative form, these 'silent symbols' mark what may or may not be done, so that any meaningful interaction may be suspended:

> 'I'm practically living in a flat here....
> .... we go our separate ways'.
> Michael, 18: unemployed 9 months.

Within these types of situations, direct forms of control become inappropriate as a means of controlling any aspect of this emotional dimension; what could be called 'a stand off' has produced an array of discrete negotiated control forms which help unemployed youth to enter into familial forms of control relationships with their significant others.

Within the next control dimensions - subjective/secondary ideological the process of 'internalization' or 'switching-off' occurs (p. 191) within the individual as a means of controlling the immense pressures experienced within the familial context. Being alone and isolated for the greater part of the day, unemployed youth are subjected to a

constant battle with their thoughts in order to control the 'state of their minds' (p.102). Here again, fantasies and day-dreams play a very important part, but in no way does this control outcome challenge the wider social formation which constitutes its reference point.

It is certainly possible to give many other examples of the control dimensions entered into by unemployed youth from my own ethnographic data, but what I have attempted to do here is to show by a few examples how the initial stage of my conception may be analysed, in order to highlight the first characteristic of my processual model..

Within my overall framework of 'control' the process itself must be implemented and analysed at many different levels. In order to understand the degree of power or powerlessness in someone's everyday life, no one simple application of the model will suffice. To draw out all the distinct nuances of the situation, the model must be dynamic enough to follow through a series of social interactions which surround any given event. (See diagram 7:3 overleaf).

As a way of elucidating this idea further, I would now like to refer to my previous discussion concerning the lad, Tony, who worked at the fair (p.143 to 156). In this situation Tony, unable to find any consistent employment, was forced, after months of searching for a job, to turn to the informal economy in order to find the resources for himself and his family, exacerbated by the temporary nature of his Father's work. Having at last found an informal job, his problems were still not over; poor wages and strict supervision meant that the degree of exploitation was intensified. Fiddling the gaffer became the only means of acquiring any degree of acceptable wage. The 'fiddles' themselves were symbolized at a group level, and strategies of individual

Major Dimension

Individual   Social Formation

Direct   Direct

Compensatory   Secondary

Symbolic
Control   Symbolic   Ideological   Ideological
Control

Subjective   Secondary Ideological
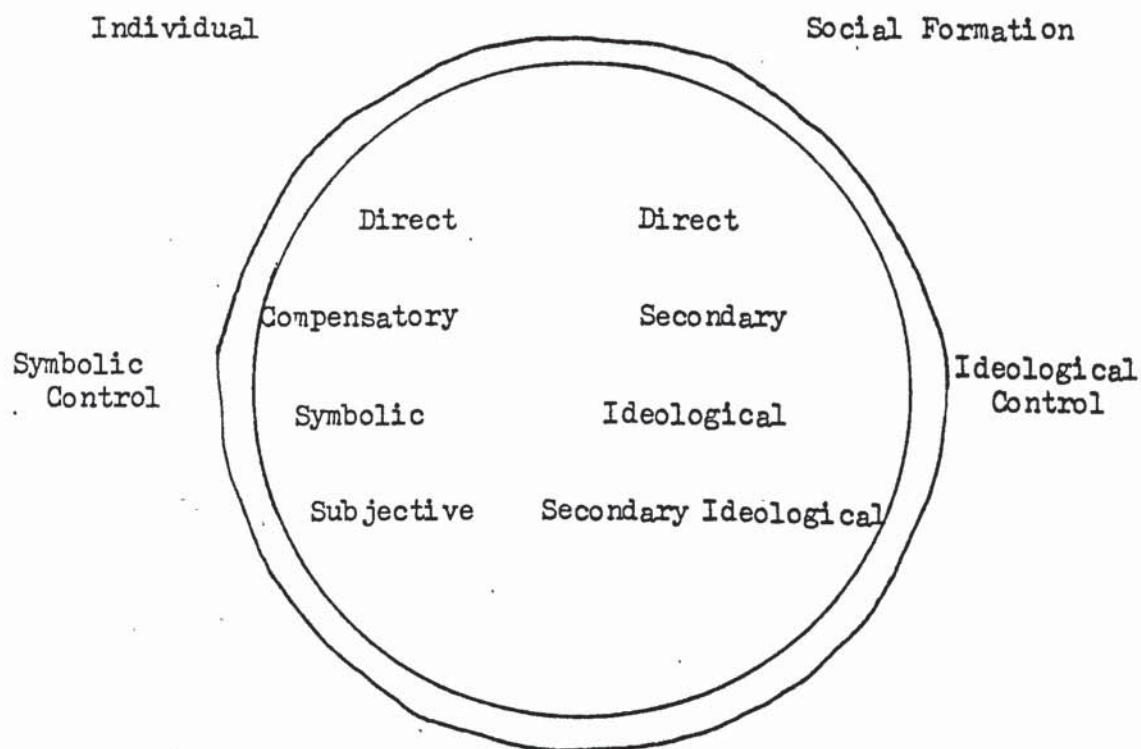
No matter which control dimension the individual is operating
within at that particular moment, the whole model is applied again
to that dimension. The model is applied from dimension to dimension
until the direct control dimension is attained, remembering that
there are also sub-dimensions within it.

'making' were strictly controlled and supervised by other members of the group.

In order to understand how my dimensions of control relate to the series of events mentioned above, each activity must be located within a processual framework in order to identify the entry and outcomes within each area of activity. From my case study it can be seen that:

i) Tony entered into a series of direct dialectical control relationships in the process of trying to find employment in order to control some form of material resources. Because he was not successful in this direct form, the outcome was that a compensatory form of control became the framework within which he tried again to acquire some material resources.

ii) Within this compensatory/secondary control dimension, Tony could still not influence his material conditions directly in terms of poor wages, long hours etc. so again the dialectical outcome materialized within another dimension of control. Because 'significant others' and overall group pressure framed the control relationship, 'symbolic' control became the order of the day, i.e. 'getting one over on the gaffer'.

iii) Situated within this dimension of control, symbolic/ideological, Tony was still subjected to the close supervision of his workmates in the process of 'making' and 'getting one over on Charlie'. In no way could he initiate any direct individualized attempt at acquiring these resources, and he soon found that only subjectively could he control in any meaningful way the contextual framework which surrounded these material resources.

iv) A direct form of control could now at last be instigated by Tony, but it must be remembered that this process was highly constrained due to being located within the subjective/secondary ideological dimension,

which, I must stress, must be seen as a sub-division in relation to the first dialectical control relationship.

Tony in this account could be considered, in an individualized sense, virtually powerless in controlling the conditions of his material existence. Now it may be argued that at first sight this case study seems highly deterministic, but it must be stressed that, contrary to this view, the 'outcomes' are a product of continual dialectical control relationships, which may, in any historical epoch, change the outcome in favour of the individual or group formation, due to differing resource allocation, i.e. wealth, power etc.

We can now see that the complexity of this situation is dramatically increased in terms of control relationships because of the need to take into account not just an event but a whole series of events. Because, as Tony moved from event to event, control dimension to control dimension, he was not totally powerless, because in each dialectical act, however small, there is an element of his individualized influence.

This control process can therefore be summarized as:

a) Moving through a series of dialectical control dimensions.

b) Within each control dimension the four control dimensions are still available for operation: i.e.

<div align="center">Historical Context</div>

Compensatory Control	Direct Compensatory Symbolic Subjective	Direct Secondary Ideological Secondary Ideological	Secondary Control

c) In terms of an individual's fundamental influence on an issue or situation, the method of analysis only comes to an end for each issue when an individual is able to operate successfully within the direct control dimension.

d) Although a direct form of control has finally been instigated, it

   is fundamentally locked within the subjective/secondary ideological

   dimension. In order to develop and control their social existence

further, unemployed youth need to progress through the different control

relationships by entering the direct form in each dimension.

This control process may be illustrated further, using the two case

studies (Diane - Michael) outlined in chapter four (p.119 - 124).

Here Diane, like Tony, entered into a form of direct control relation-

ships with the wider social formation, which having become mediated

through the immediate control relationships, resulted in Diane - again

like Tony - having to locate further forms of activity within the

compensatory dimension, i.e. the Social Economy.

By locating the vast majority of her activity within the framework

of a group of other young women, Diane was able to negotiate the wider

pressures of unemployment with a relative degree of success. These

negotiations though, being located within the structure of the group,

produced control relationships (symbolic) which became oppressive to

Diane's individuality, expressing the power of the group through symbols

such as clothes, make-up, records etc.

This symbolic control dimension did however give Diane, through

its collective experience:

> 'A relatively stable bed-rock from which
> to control, negotiate and give understandable
> form to the problems and tensions which
> dominated her life in the long hours and
> days in which she was away from the group'
>
> (p.121)

The form of direct control relationships experienced here, although

challenging and modifying the immediate contextual framework, in no way

drastically challenged the wider social formation; in some ways it

reinforced the patriarchal forms and legitimation within the home, by

Diane at one time leaving home and then having to come back on her
Father's terms:

> 'They said, 'If you're good, you can come home''.
> Diane, 19; unemployed 2 years.

Having said this, the situation within the home was never the same
again. The collective experience was always there in symbolic form in
order for Diane to facilitate a form of direct control relationship,
which in her case actually gave her a relative degree of influence
over her familial situation.

Michael, on the other hand, was able to experience a positive
outcome, in terms of direct control relationships, sooner than either
Diane or Tony. In terms of material resources Michael again, like the
others, lost out in any of the forms within the initial direct control
dimension, and was therefore forced to acquire resources within some
compensatory form. Here, within the familial context, Michael was able,
because of the abundance of resources, to create for himself a high
degree of material resources in order to facilitate his everyday social
wants and interactions. Buying clothes for himself, records, drinks and
finding the money for discos etc. proved a very easy thing to do. How
he disposed of his money and resources was also up to him (p.122).

_ Two further points may be mentioned here; i) I would like to
suggest that we may be able to conceptualize these different dialectical
control processes which frame the individual's actions as shown in the
diagrams on the following page:

7:4

1. Enter direct control relationships

2. Compensatory control

3. Symbolic control

4. Subjective

Direct
Form(b)

(Tony)

7:5

1. Direct

2. Compensatory

3. Symbolic

Direct
Form (b)

(Diane)

7:6

```
+---------------------------------+
| 1. Direct                       |
|   +---------------------------+ |
|   | 2. Compensatory           | |
|   |   +-------------------+   | |
|   |   |   Direct          |   | |
|   |   |   Form (b)        |   | |
|   |   |                   |   | |
|   |   +-------------------+   | |
|   |                           | |
|   +---------------------------+ |
|                                 |
+---------------------------------+
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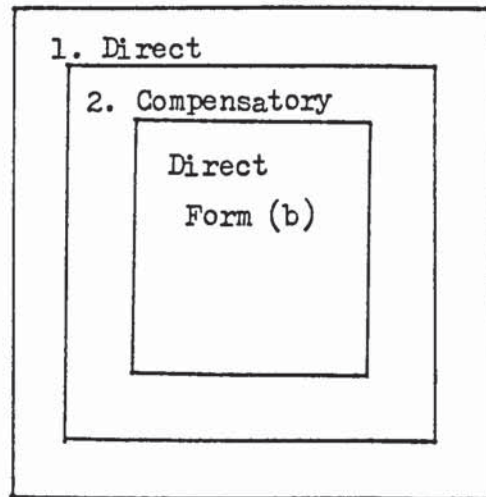
(Michael)

Remembering that 1.2.3. etc. are control dimensions, and that the direct form (b) is a specific control form <u>within</u> that last control dimension.

ii) By using this method, it should therefore be possible to plot the degree and types of control which individuals have over their own social existence within a number of areas.

We should therefore be able to show, by this method of operation, such things as:

    a) How much social control an unemployed youth has over his/her social existence.

    b) What control dimensions become paramount, and in what areas.

    c) Control by age, gender, ethnicity and social class.

For a hypothetical example of this, see diagram on next page:

Material Resources.	Affectual Resources.	Temporal Frameworks.	Identity Creation.	Labour Market.	Domestic Labour.	Informal Economy.	Social Economy.	Material Resources relating to Father.	Material Resources relating to Mother.	Affectual Resources relating to Father.	Affectual Resources relating to Mother.	
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	(1)	1	1	Direct
2	2	(2)	2	2	(2)	2	2	2	2	2	(2)	Compensatory
(3)	3	3	3	3	3	(3)	(3)	(3)	3	(3)	3	Symbolic
4	(4)	4	(4)	(4)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	Subjective.

I feel strongly that this form of methodology would enable us to move away from making generalized and abstract statements such as: 'Unemployed youths are powerless', and on to more concrete statements which show in which areas they are powerless and in what form and degree they have any control over their lives at all.

Chapter Eight

IS TOMORROW REALLY ANOTHER DAY ?

'I have come to the end of my work here,
and I am aware that ending may be
resisted for the wrong reasons. Yet
there remains the uneasy feeling that
something more needs saying. I sense
that something has been omitted or
glossed and that if I fail to clarify
it the preceding work will be not only
incomplete but dishonest'.

Gouldner, 1970. p.481

This quote from Gouldner certainly reflected the way I felt when starting this conclusion. I found simply sitting down and beginning to write extremely difficult. How do you conclude, not just three and a half years work, but three and a half years of your life? I'd tried a few stabs at half a page, made lists of numerous findings, even placed them in some sort of perceived hierarchical order of importance, but no, it 'felt' all wrong. It seemed to 'objectify' the essence I'd tried so hard to negate, the dialectical process of research and lived experiences. A social process in which not one day had gone by in the last few years during which I had not, in some form or other, given the 'study' some thought. No day in which I had not watched news bulletins, read newspapers or books or discussed some aspect with friends, relations or colleagues in order to keep myself 'aware'. I became prone to actually waking up during the night thinking about it - I'd even taken to keeping a pen and paper near my bed. Many's the night when, bleary-eyed, I've scribbled a few thoughts, ones which, by morning, would have gone again, leaving me going quietly mad all the next day trying to remember them. The lists of these types of instances are too endless to mention; holidays, weekends, nights - you name it, the social process of research has been absorbing and constant. How then, do I conclude? How do I convey in a meaningful way the 'interlinking phenomena' between the social conditions of youth unemployment and myself? In some cases, there will be overlaps in condition, in others distinct differences. Hopefully, by illuminating these conflicting phenomena, a more worthwhile conclusion can be given, one which refuses to objectify or reify a social process which is fundamentally dialectic in nature.

As the previous chapters have illustrated, the social condition of youth unemployment is a multi-faceted phenomenon. The differing experiences undergone by the youths in question lays bare the fatuity of thinking and talking about 'the unemployed' per se, as though they were one social category born out of one social condition. The aim of this thesis has therefore been to 'map' the differing phenomena, and through the development of the concept of 'control' provide an organizing device which will help to facilitate our understanding of the nature of, and the social conditions surrounding, youth unemployment.

Initially, this process began by 'sampling' the literature then available on the subject (p. 23), so that I might 'get a feel' for the area and also highlight neglected areas from within which I might pursue further research. In the process of doing this, a number of structural features and neglected areas started to emerge and to manifest themselves (p. 24). Some of these areas could be attributed to youth studies in general, while others were more specifically linked to the question of youth unemployment. Overall, these included such phenomena as:

1) An overwhelming concern with the 'public' at the expense of the 'private'.

2) The apparent neglect of gender in the insistence on the importance of males.

3) The ethnic dimension - i.e. the importance of white males.

4) Sexual practices.

5) Emphasis on the 'unique' as opposed to the 'normal'.

6) What may be termed the 'urbanism' of these studies.

7) Informal/Social economy.

8) Coping strategies.

9) Non-registration.

10) The implications of unemployment for the creation of identity.

Having located these structural features and areas of neglect within the literature, my next stage became one of trying to find a 'link pin' in order to connect these discrete ideas and areas together; even if I could not connect all of them, as many of them as possible. I felt that this was important because it allowed me to provide a 'map' of many of the main conditions surrounding the nature of youth unemployment (p. 50). This did not necessarily give prominence to one social condition over another, but allowed me to understand the complexity of the phenomena under investigation.

When my initial 'link pin' was found (p. 29), I was able to incorporate it within a research proposal which became the basis for my initial fieldwork (p. 30 - 43). This 'link pin':

> '----seemed to be emerging, in that although generally
> in youth/unemployment studies a 'public' focus had
> been adopted, this focus had concentrated upon work,
> but not work in its entirety, strictly in terms of
> its formal employment relationships. This neglect,
> even in the public sphere of social and informal
> work could, I thought, if analysed, allow for a
> 'link' with the private world of social and
> domestic labour, thereby not only keeping the
> analysis materially based, but also avoiding a
> preoccupation with waged labour and those who
> specialize in it'.
>   (p. 29)

At last then, armed with a conception of 'work in its entirety' or 'labour as a generic category' (p. 29) which could form the basis of my analysis, and a range of 'sensitizing concepts' (p.42)

to help to focus my analysis, I was ready to embark on my field-
work, filled with optimism.

Slowly, over a number of weeks, this optimism waned as I became
aware that not only was my concept of 'labour' not rigorous enough
to tease out many of the subtle nuances of a given situation, but
that it did not account for areas of social relationships which
were fundamentally grounded on power and coercion. It was now that
I was forced to review this situation, due to the inadequacies of
my earlier theorization. More and more, my fieldwork brought me
back to the intersections between production and consumption (p. 61),
as a way of finding a base from which to develop some form of
theorization. It was therefore, from this base that I developed
my own concept of control, which related to power in praxis.

Within this analytical framework, I identified four
dialectical control dimensions:

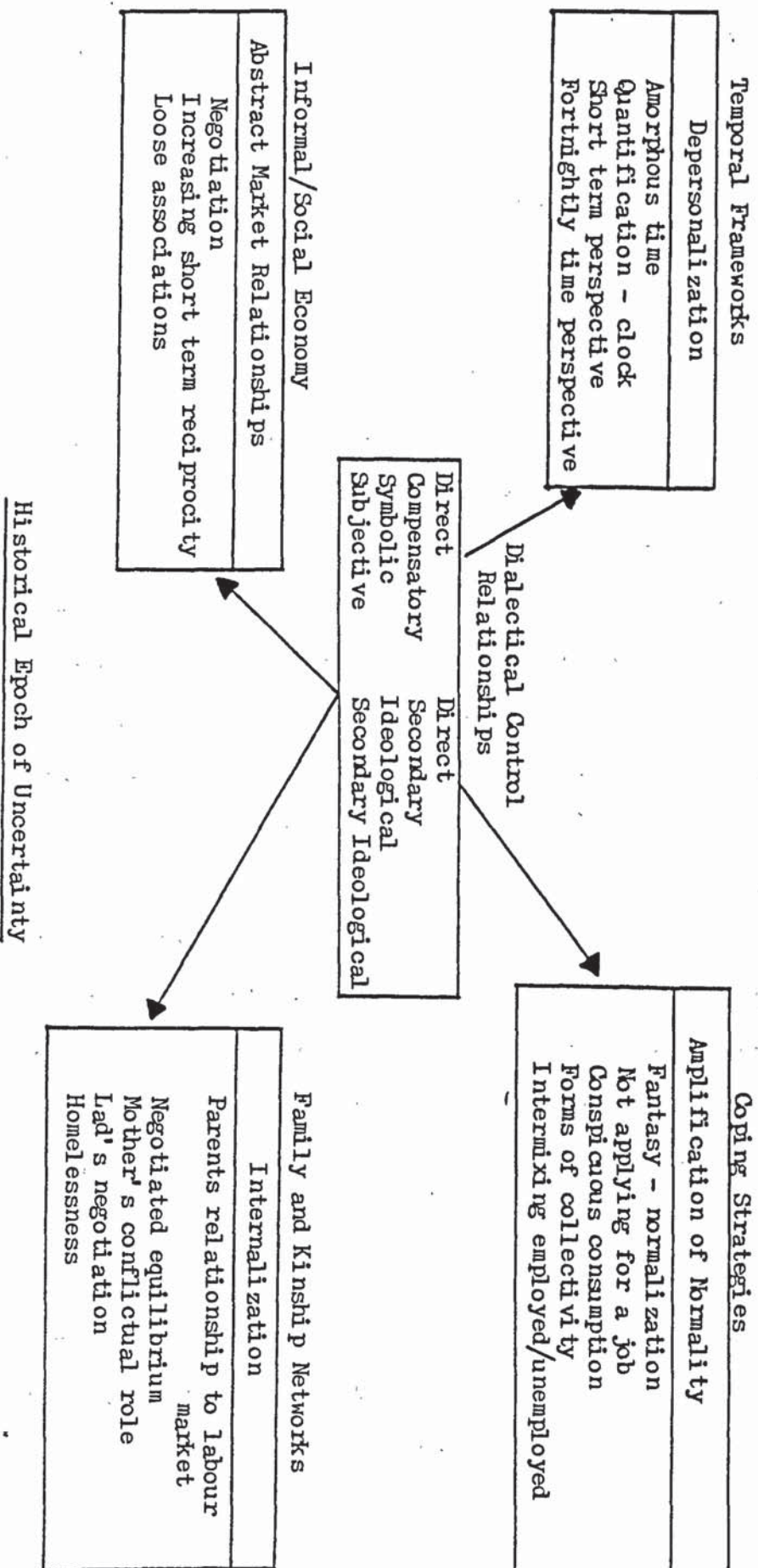| Everyday Individualistic Control Experiences	Increasing Centralization of Resources and Power.
↘	↙
Individual	Social Formation
Direct control	Direct control
Compensatory control	Secondary control
Symbolic control	Ideological control
Subjective control	Secondary Ideological control

These dimensions can only be understood historically, and
must not be seen in any form of abstraction. They are products of,
on the one hand, the increasing centralization of resources and
power and on the other hand, individuals attempts to influence
their situation. Therefore, control outcomes must be seen as a
product of the different dialectical relationships and not as

products manifested in either the individual or the social formation. A further important development in this conception is that the dialectical control relationships must be analysed over a series of actions, not just on one conception (p. 237). In this way, I was able to move away from abstract statements such as 'unemployed youth are powerless', and towards a conception of power that is dynamic, historical and observable in different forms and degrees.

The outcome of this refocusing was that slowly, certain 'themes' started to manifest themselves. My 'map' of the social conditions of youth unemployment was now beginning to take shape. This 'map' was grounded within my overall methodological approach, with its guiding principles of reflexivity and an awareness of myself as part of the research process, which also focuses on the historical and the social, with a sensitivity to gender relations.

The 'map' itself does not portray all the social conditions surrounding youth unemployment, but it does give us a picture of some of the major areas within the public and private spheres. These major areas within the study have been analysed around a major organizing theme - i.e. dialectical control relationships (see diagram 8:1). These dialectical control relationships have then been applied in terms of certain criteria or sub-themes, e.g. temporal frameworks, coping strategies, informal/social economy and family and kinship networks.

Within each sub-theme, an over-riding social process has been identified, such as depersonalization, amplification of normality, abstract market relationships and internalization; these reflect the manifestation of a series of social phenomena. By way of an example, it can be seen from diagram   that the social phenomena

8:1 The Social Conditions of Youth Unemployment.

Temporal Frameworks

Depersonalization

Amorphous time
Quantification – clock
Short term perspective
Fortnightly time perspective

Informal/Social Economy

Abstract Market Relationships

Negotiation
Increasing short term reciprocity
Loose associations

Dialectical Control
Relationships

Direct	Direct
Compensatory	Secondary
Symbolic	Ideological
Subjective	Secondary Ideological

Historical Epoch of Uncertainty

Coping Strategies

Amplification of Normality

Fantasy – normalization
Not applying for a job
Conspicuous consumption
Forms of collectivity
Intermixing employed/unemployed

Family and Kinship Networks

Internalization

Parents relationship to labour
market
Negotiated equilibrium
Mother's conflictual role
Lad's negotiation
Homelessness

related to 'depersonalization' are amorphous time, quantification etc.

As I have indicated previously, the data which goes to make up these themes, sub-themes, social processes etc. is, in practice, inextricably interwoven, and has only been separated in order to facilitate identification and analysis. Therefore, in order to reflect this 'interweaving', I have deliberately tried throughout the remainder of this chapter to portray many of these cross-cutting linkages and relationships between themes, sub-themes etc.

Internalization and Depersonalization.

.One of the major social conditions experienced by the young unemployed of both genders is the experience of isolation (p. 46). This social condition characterizes a substantial part of their daily round and provides an over-arching framework within which other processes develop. It is here that the processes of internalization (p. 192) and the 'amplification of normality' (p. 103) develop through the social creation of fantasy instigated whilst attending to 'the state of your mind'. Controlling this is elevated to a prime concern in order to survive into the next day.

What is important for the analysis here is that for the young unemployed, these 'concerns' produce a temporal framework with its emphasis on short term control. Getting through the next hour, let alone the next day, takes precedence over most other concerns. Short term perspectives become the norm, trapping the young in a 'here and now' situation where future and past contract into a never-ending present. Being unable to project themselves into the future or locate themselves in the past , the young unemployed become located in a process of 'depersonalization' (p. 99).

A relevant point here, and one which creates a linkage between one aspect of their social condition and my own experiences is how much time you spend, when you are doing research, in social isolation when you are not part of a team. This social experience, starting on the first day, as mentioned in pages 15-20 , lasted, in differing forms, right up to the end of my research. Even when having a drink with a mixed group of employed/unemployed youths, you are still not <u>really</u> part of their group; you know you're not, and they know you're not. Long hours spent in your own study or office on your own, reading, writing or listening to your research tapes, tends to produce an overall feeling of 'being alone'.

Your <u>own</u> ability to 'attend to the state of your mind' then becomes just as important as that of those you are researching into. Perhaps this experience of social isolation manifests itself in the high rate of late or non-completion for PhD's etc. This is not to bemoan the life of a research student vis a vis the unemployed, but to highlight where certain aspects of the social conditions relate, and how this may influence appreciation, perception or empathy and the impact of this on subsequent 'findings'. Who will not perceive the relevance of someone who, after spending hours alone in a study then goes to interview someone whose social conditions also contribute to their spending long hours in isolation and who comments on this forcibly, producing long tracks on tape which then lead once more to hours of isolation when listening to them. For the social researcher, this

certainly does not produce the process of 'depersonalization' with its consequent stiffling effects, but it does produce a fundamental relevance which should not be denied or overlooked, especially in a study based upon the process of reflexivity.

For the youths concerned within these periods of isolation, the intenseness of the situation is compounded by their lack of any real control over their material conditions. Although structured by their parents' class positions in terms of material provision, a significant variable is their parents' current relationship to the labour market (p.181). Either a high wage, or two wages, coming into the house will have important implications for the overall resource allocation available to the young unemployed. This relationship is often compounded on a gender level, where young men are able to 'negotiate' for a higher level of material resources than are young women (p.202). By 'negotiating' each domestic task, and being able to 'sponge' or cajole from their Mothers, young men through the structural framework of Patriarchy, are able to acquire more resources to facilitate their 'public' world activities.

This structural framework of Patriarchy results in the Mother having a conflictual dual role in relation to the children; that of comfort/support and of policing agent for the Father (p.188). This conflictual role can and does produce heightened tension, which counteracts the general norm towards 'negotiated equilibrium' (p.205), and further entrenches the youths within their own rooms, and the subsequent process of 'internalization'. Firmly dependent within the family in terms of material resources, this process of 'internalization' can then lead to the social condition

of being 'homeless while still living at home' (p.191). This can then progress through a form of nomadic existence (p. 192), and the playing of the 'unwanted guest' (p. 194) to the actual experience of leaving home, (p. 195).

Observing these painful interactions, and homes where abject poverty pervades everything, tends to confirm in one the preconception held at the beginning of the study as to the unjust nature of it all. Purporting to maintain 'objectivity' in these conditions would be to abstract and reify what in practice is meaningful, if not a daunting process. Having to observe someone bleeding and in pain (p. 189), shivering from the cold in a bleak house (p.198), or observing the catastrophic effects on whole families and on individuals of the 'spectre of unemployment' produced in me a growing anger and frustration which not only influenced my research but also invaded what I had termed my personal account (p. 15). In practice, there is no way to separate the two - or is there? How, in practice, do you keep separate your reading of the local unemployed man who threw himself off the town's multi-storey car par, and the effects on his family; interviewing the lad who, from sheer frustration, jumped through his bedroom window (p. 101) and the death of your own unemployed Father? (p. 19). How do you keep your perception of just one of these three incidents from affecting your perception of the other two? I believe that you cannot, and it is only by making these issues apparent that any form of research can be meaningfully under- taken. This will certainly be heresy to the purists, or to those intent on maintaining a 'detached' scientific stance, but that is not, to me, what Sociology is, or should be, about. As I stated earlier, to do so:

'Is to riefy and perpetuate 'forms'
of knowledge, and ultimately social
formations, which are manifestly
unequal, and fundamentally grounded
on power and coercion'.
(p. 10)

Amplification of normality.

One of the major processes by which the young unemployed try
to cope with the 'uncertainties' of daily life is to adopt a range
of coping strategies such as conspicuous consumption, waiting for
'banker' jobs, fantasies, having a laugh,etc. (p.109). These and
other coping forms provide the basis for what I have termed the
'amplification of normality'. Here, through the appropriation
of cultural scripts, unemployed youths of both sexes 'police'
themselves, in what becomes a 'Catch 22' situation of coping with
unemployment, (p. 107).

Again, what is relevant is that these coping strategies are based
on no more than a fortnightly round, from dole giro to dole giro, and
in most cases are instigated within a daily perspective. The constant
lack of resources precludes any meaningful alternative being instigated
on a personal level, as an individual. Only by co-operating in any form
of collective can any meaningful options be explored. Unfortunately
though, because these collectives are surrounded by the wider local
community situation and structures, their resistance to pressure is
significantly diminished (p. 118).

We now have the basis where, because unemployed youth are denied
access to the wider social structure and processes which frame their
lives, their only course of action becomes one which is instigated
at an everyday level. This is then compounded by the general
fragmentation of their social experience and makes any form of control
discrete and short-lived. What I am arguing here is that, as more

and more societal decisions become centralized, and so further
removed from the control of the general public, so then the
intenseness of control over so-called small scale, everyday
decisions will become more intense. Influencing your immediate
social space becomes elevated to a prime position, and takes more
and more precedence over longer term goals, which your social
experience has shown to be totally 'uncertain'. It must be remembered
that this 'epoch of uncertainty' (p. 216) is not being brought about
by total haphazard disintegration, or the 'death throes of
capitalism', but is essentially created through, on one hand,
international reallocation of capital, and on the other, deindustrial-
ization. This is not to suggest a conspiracy theory amongst
individual capitalists, rather the outcomes of historical processes
of valorization. The outcome is that some regions and industries
grow while others decline, with the gap in between the rich and the
poor getting wider. For those in areas of decline, whole industries
and communities may become devastated. The paradox being that tho
resulting mass unemployment is generally experienced as an
individual phenomenon, and coping with it becomes individualized.
Anything which then gives greater individual influence becomes
incorporated in to everyday life.

Abstract Market Relationships.

An example of this can be seen in the growing trend towards
negotiated short term reciprocity within the social economy (p. 175).
This, I would argue, must not be seen as a total capitulation
or incorporation of the dominant values of capitalism by the
individuals concerned, although some influence must naturally
be due to these pressures, but must be interpreted within the

earlier mentioned framework of individuals striving for greater
influence over their everyday transactions. By entering into
forms of abstract contractual market relationships, unemployed
youths are able to negotiate a level of resources over which they
feel they have some control and power (p.175).

Reflexivity: the praxis of research.

Also from within a sociology of knowledge perspective,
this conception of control must be seen within its historical
perspective, and must not be interpreted as being useful or
relevant across time and space, without any modifications at all.
I stress this point, because its development as an analytical
'tool' 'emerged' out of a series of events, such as my own
previous research experience and findings, current findings and
experience, my own social condition as a lecturer and the wider
historical process. All these areas are inextricably linked,
and therefore historically situate the research and its overall
findings and models.

By way of example; I illustrated in the previous chapter
that we are presently situated within a historical epoch of
'uncertainty' (p. 216), which has been gaining momentum since
the early 70's and which is, at the present moment, characterized
by increasing pressures to control in any form this 'precarious
life'. For the average worker, this is given social expression
in the 'fear' experienced at the thought of 'losing their job'.
For the unemployed, this social expression of 'fear' is
compounded, possibly resulting in forms of ultimate self-
destruction. Alternatively, without adequate material or

effective resources their only hope is to make some small

impact on their immediate, small-scale, everyday conditions.

This current phenomenon of 'uncertainty' is then, experienced

at every level of society. My own ironical situation is that

while researching into the social phenomena of unemployment,

the 'spectre' of unemployment has constantly been with me.

Even if all that I have written about preconceptions is

suspended, my situation is that, a year ago, I had only got

four months of my ESRC grant left. What was I going to do?

What should I do? I couldn't just wait for the grant to

expire, I needed a job. I am one member of a family of four,

I have a wife, Sue, and two children, Chris and Elizabeth. We

have a monthly mortgage, bills for food, heating, clothes etc.

and, like everyone else, I needed the money. Because some

debts had built up as we had lived on student grants for so

long (nine years), getting a job therefore became imperative.

Having now started again the process of those whom I had

recently been interviewing (applying for jobs), their words

came home to me more and more, their relevance stark!

Fortunately, I found a job, but, like many in this 'epoch

of uncertainty' it was only temporary, for twelve months, a

short term contract - but it was a job! The 'power' of that

wage, if not totally banishing the 'uncertainty', at least

kept it at arm's length, even if my contract did say that

it could be terminated at a weeks notice. Ironically, the

job itself was working with the adult unemployed, providing

educational courses inside college and on an outreach basis.

The constant contact with the unemployed during this time certainly helped to 'keep alive' my own findings, even if working at night, supposedly part-time, did prove a strain after a long day at work.

Now, a year on, I'm still in the same situation. As I write this I have four months of my new contract to run, and the 'spectre' of unemployment has, inevitably, raised its worrying and uncertain head; again, I need a job. The process of scouring the papers, applications - if I'm lucky, the odd interview - the highs and lows of letters through the door has started again. Now, it is imperative to understand that I am not writing this to bemoan my situation, but to show, once again, how inextricably linked are the overall processes embedded within the praxis of social research.

In addition to the social processes, I have also mentioned a number of structural factors, such as gender, social location and parents' relationships to the local labour market, which also play a very important part within my overall 'map' of the social conditions surrounding the lives of the young unemployed. It is, therefore by way of illustration that I would now like to create a number of 'ideal types', distinguished in terms of these aspects of structure, which may help to further illustrate the 'social map' in question. It is also very important to stress that these 'abstractions' should in no way be interpreted as being based on an individualized pathology of the young unemployed, but should be understood as ultimately grounded in the wider social processes in which they are located.

For Wayne, being on his own is a major factor surrounding
his daily existence. With both parents in full time employment,
he can go for a large part of the day without seeing or speaking
to anyone. The start of his day, however, is in marked contrast
to this 'internalized' existence. He is usually woken by the
other members of the household preparing for work and school.
The house, at this stage, is 'alive' with activity; people using
the bathroom, making breakfast, shouting instructions - very often
in a set pattern, though with an occasional mornings panic
because of being 'late'. His Mum usually 'pops in' to his
bedroom with a few instructions, placing greater emphasis on
the tasks he has to do for his Father than on her own needs.

During this activity, Wayne is usually turning from side
to side, his head underneath the covers to shut out the noise
and get some more sleep; having not come in until 2 in the
morning, he is in no hurry to get up. It was nothing exciting,
just sitting with a few of his mates, talking - he can't remember
'what about', all the conversations nowadays seem the same; if
nothing's happening, you run out of things to say, it's not
the conversation that keeps you there, just the company.

He's quickly brought back to the present situation by the
last shouts of his Mother as she passes the bottom of the stairs,
'Don't forget to do ...' - what did she say? He hears the
muffled voice of his Father, something about him being a 'lazy
little bastard', a few more noises, the front door slams, and
once more he's alone.

Alone with his thoughts, he instantly constructs his day,
a day with no purpose, a day like every other day. Unwashed, he

will go downstairs and switch on the box in the corner of the
room, and slump in a chair. The programme's not important, it's
a noise - a noise made by other human beings. He thinks of the
times he's found himself talking to the picture on the screen,
answering statements, asking questions. He's conscious that he
will watch anything, even programmes for 3 to 5 year olds.
'So what?' he says out loud, 'There's fuck-all else to do'.

As he slumps there, he knows the pattern only too well;
he'll get up and light a fag, flicking the match across the room,
intending to pick it up sometime; he'll stretch out on the settee,
feet up he'll lie back and gaze at the ceiling, just as he's
doing now. There will be the odd job for his Mum, but that will
wait - if everything's done at once, that 'amorphous time' will
hang even heavier.

In his mind, the day's stretching out - and it seems endless.
If he's lucky, a mate will come round - nothing will happen, but
at least it's company. In his thoughts, the day ebbs inevitably
to the 'inquisition', the teatime 'justification' of his day.
'Why didn't you do this?' 'Why didn't you do that?' 'What about
a job?'

As he lies there, the pressure's building up; the day hasn't
even started yet and he's annoyed, depressed, frustrated and
emotionally drained. The silence in the house becomes oppressive;
even the thought of seeing his mates tonight doesn't help, it's
the 'here and now' that matters. Getting through the next half
an hour, and in the process 'attending to the state of your
mind'. He lies there, lost in a buzz of mental confusion, he

can't think - what's happening? Unfortunately, there are not
many alternatives; as one lad said to me:

> 'One second I was lying on
> the bed, and I just got up
> and jumped through the bedroom
> window'.
>
> (p. 101)

Wendy, 18: unemployed 2 years.

In direct contrast to the last case study, Wendy is daily
subjected to the whims and dictates of her parents to a far
greater degree. Having both parents at home all day proved
extremely problematical; constant 'nagging' - in her terms - or
constant 'expressed concern' - in theirs - became the norm for
their daily interaction. Her parents monitored her every move,
deciding such things as how long she could remain on her own in
her bedroom before enforcing themselves onto her private space. '

Here again, the degree to which each type of coping
strategy becomes meaningful can depend upon who is at home
during the day, and for how long. For example, subjective fantasies
are more relevant in terms of 'coping' when you are not going to
be disturbed and can develop them into a fine 'form'. If your
Mother or Father, for whatever reason, keep invading your
private space, the degree to which your fantasies become
functional is drastically called into question.

Wendy's day usually began by helping her Mother with the
housework - no negotiation here, just an expectation that she
would help. As long as she performed this role, 'looking for
work' could be managed. There was no expectation that she
should consistently 'seek' employment; this lessened the emotional
aspects of letters of rejection, but the price was a degree of

insistence, sometimes bordering on the exploitative, of her
domestic role.

With both her parents at home, no friends came to visit. Also,
with no access to adequate material resources, there was no
facility for Wendy to go out during the day, especially as she
had to hand over the greater part of her dole money to her parents,
receiving 'pocket money' in return. Marooned in her own home, she
became ever more susceptible to her parents whims, especially those
of her Father. He had been out of work himself for nearly two and
a half years, and by now, many of his wife's friends and acquain-
tances had stopped 'dropping in', leaving the whole family
totally isolated, with only each other to talk to. This talk
inevitably turned to 'bickering', as each person failed to find
any meaningful aspects to their life in such oppressive circumstances.

Over a period of time, Wendy's ability to cope with 'the
state of her mind' became intensely problematic. On some days
she would 'cope', on others she wouldn't. On the days when she
didn't 'cope', her parents tried even harder to instil a degree
of 'Pull yourself together girl' into her. The more they tried,
the worse she became. In her structured periods of isolation in
her bedroom, these pressures manifested themselves with great
intensity, leaving Wendy with the inability to construct any
meaningful escape route out of the temporal framework and
cultural scripts at her disposal. Her unconscious route was to
eat; as one young woman remarked to me:

> 'I was nine stone; after eighteen
> months I was twelve stone'.
>   (p.101)

Patricia, 19: unemployed 2 years.

Patricia's daily experience of unemployment is significantly
different to that of either Wayne or Wendy. Being the only child
of a professional couple, both currently in employment, means that
the level of material resources available to her is considerable.
Also, her parents, having consciously decided not to insist on
Patricia giving them any of her dole money, contribute a generous
weekly allowance. This gives Patricia a degree of material
independence far higher than that of any young working class
woman. Living in a large house, her Mother also employs a 'daily
help', thus saving Patricia from even this form of exploitation.

For her, the day begins over breakfast with the other family
members, before being driven to college by her Father. Having
gained six O-levels at school, she had decided to continue her
studies by going to college under the '21 hour' rule, i.e. being
allowed to attend up to 21 hours of education or training a week
without it affecting her unemployment benefit. This 'compliance'
with the process of education helps Patricia both in the process
of maintaining 'equilibrium' within the home and in the process
of maintaining her identity, grounded on the cultural capital of
middle class scripts. This 'normality' gives her parents 'hope'
that their daughter is still on the meritocratic path, and also
supplies them with an 'acceptable' topic of conversation with
their friends, regarding their daughters' aspirations.

Usually, on days when she is not at college, Patricia has
a girlfriend to stay overnight, or she visits other friends homes.
Here, she is not playing the 'unwanted guest' because the ground
rules of her staying are completely different. She also does not

have to face the 'inquisition' each night from her parents, because she can be seen to be 'doing something'. Frequent shopping trips to the city of Birmingham, some twenty-five miles away, also help to structure Patricia's week.

However, although Patricia's life would seem like a 'bed of roses', especially when compared to Wendy's, she is subjected to a number of pressures. These pressures relate to her projected future, as Patricia is quite prepared to attend college in order to 'fill in' time, and also to prevent her parents from 'keeping on' at her about 'doing something', but she has no intention of progressing to university, which is the expectation that her parents have for her. Therefore, she knows that quite soon, her parents may start to use their 'favours' in a very restricted way, rather than the non-restricted terms used at present.

This would naturally have serious implications for Patricia's daily life, and the stultifying conditions of unemployment experienced by others may soon be part of her life. For the moment however, the ravages of unemployment do not touch her daily existence in any negative way, and indeed, in many instances Patricia is able to use the social condition to facilitate a more positive outlook. As one young woman said to me:

> 'At the moment I can go out four nights
> a week, I can smoke, buy a record, even
> put some away, because my Mum and Dad
> don't ask for anything'.
>
> (p.196)

<u>Jonathan, 16: unemployed 6 months.</u>

Jonathan lives with his parents in a 'select' area of town. However, his Father has recently been made redundant from his job as a Sales Executive, and is frantically applying for positions within many sales departments. With a large monthly mortgage and high running costs, the family is beginning to see dramatic changes in their life style. This means that applying for jobs, interviews, 'cutting corners' and 'no waste' has become the background of family life, within which Jonathan lives out his daily existence.

Each day, Jonathan's Father makes sure that his son is up at a 'reasonable' hour, and that he contributes to the domestic chores or looks for work. The atmosphere becomes very tense on many occasions, especially if Jonathan challenges his parents definition of the situation. This usually leads to Jonathan leaving the house early, and creating a series of lies for his Father about what he has been doing that day. Most of the time, when he goes out early, he makes straight for a cafe in the town centre, where he knows that he will see some 'mates'.

These mates, however, are not the ones that Jonathan 'palled around with' at school; they are mainly working class lads who, like him, find that they have to leave early in the morning to avoid their parents 'picking' on them. After a while in the cafe, they usually decide to go for a walk around the town, paying the inevitable visit to the Job Centre, and, in Jonathan's case, the Careers Office, always on the 'off chance' of finding a job, but mainly as a ploy for counteracting their parents' arguments when they get home.

In the town itself, with no money, there is nothing to do but merely wander aimlessly around, trying at times to 'have a laugh'. Someone touches Jonathan on the arm and shouts, 'You're on', he touches someone else and jumps away, running after the others down the street. They chase in and out of a couple of shops, around some benches in the square, laughing and shouting, much to the disapproval of the older shoppers, who mutter something about parents, or 'a box round the ears'. Eventually, the police stop and warn them, this crushes the spirit of the game and it changes to one of anger. They sulk back to the cafe, where Jonathan sits quietly in a corner, lost in his thoughts about a job, girls, life at home and where his next bit of money is going to come from.

The hours go by, and Jonathan is still sitting there; his 'mates' have left a long time ago, going 'nowhere in partic', just wandering around. He can't stay there much longer, especially with no money, and he can't face going home. So he goes for another walk around the town, and eventually makes his way home, his steps getting slower and slower as he nears his road. He stands for a few minutes on the corner, constructing a plausible story of his day. When the Job Centre, Careers Office, library, the odd firm are all knitted into an overall plan, he goes in to face his parents.

This time he is lucky, his parents are out. He makes a drink and goes straight to his room. Once again he is alone with his thoughts; thoughts which help to create his identity, an identity which denies his actual position as an unemployed teenager, and which emphasises the fact articulated by several of my sample, that:

> 'I just want to be normal - you
> know, like everyone else'.
> (p. 113)

Mick, 19: unemployed 3 years.

Mick has been unemployed for three years now, and has left home on a number of occasions because of the continual rows with his parents. His Father is in full time employment, working as a semi-skilled fitter in a local engineering firm; his Mother is at home all day, although she has a cleaning job in the early evenings. With four other school-aged children in the house, pressure for adequate material resources is always a problem, and Mick is therefore expected to contribute a high proportion of his dole money towards the family resources. This sometimes causes him problems, especially if he has to pay back his mates for money or favours which they have given to him.

With his Father out all day, his Mother is expected to make sure that he gets up at a 'reasonable time', helps around the house and generally, where possible, tries to find work. This usually leads to constant bickering between him and his Mother, with the threat of 'telling his Father' used as the ultimate weapon in order for his Mother to 'get her way'.

It is this constant pressure that has caused Mick to leave home a number of times; it will steadily build up over a few weeks, with Mick staying out for as long as he can each day before returning to the inevitable onslaught. He will then rush indoors and go straight upstairs to his bedroom, putting on a record in order to pretend to be 'doing something'. He will literally hide there until tea-time, coming out reluctantly only after being called three or four times, protesting loudly that he has not heard anyone call him. His Mother will be rushing around, getting ready to go out to her 'daily job'.

Trying to get tea ready, with young children 'underfoot', and
with no help from Mick's Father, who has arrived home from work
and is now slumped in front of the television, she again starts
to lose her temper. Displacing her frustration on to Mick, she
asks for some help; her voice is coloured by her frustration,
and sounds sharp. Mick responds in an aggressive manner and is
overheard by his Father, who springs to his wife's aid with the
normal:

      'Help your Mother you idle little bastard'

this causes Mick to become even more aggressive, and this time he
turns on his Father:

       'You can talk, you're doing nothing
        but watching the telly'

sarcastically, his Father replies:

       'Some of us have been at work all day'

           'Bollocks'

comes the reply; his Father shouts:

       'Don't you talk to me like that you....'

he has not time to finish - Mick, who has heard it all many
times before, is heading for the door.

In the early hours of the morning he creeps back in, he is
up and out again before his parents are awake. He walks into town
to get a drink, not having dared to make one at home because of the
noise waking his parents. He knows that it's best now to 'keep out
of the way'. Having walked around all morning, and having no more
money for another drink or any food, he makes his way home again.
Even when he arrives there he can't go straight in; it's his
Father's dinner hour, and he is at home. Not having been aware

of the time, he now finds himself stranded; it's too far to walk
back down into the town, but he's not going in until his Father
has gone. So, he has to resort to his normal behaviour, which is,
as one lad told me:

> 'Just before me Dad comes home at dinner time,
> I go to the top of the garden and sit behind
> the fence. Then when he's gone, I come in
> again'.

(p. 184)

David, 17: unemployed 1 year.

David and his younger brother live with their Mother in private rented
accommodation. They have lived there now for two years, since the
break-up of their parents marriage. Having to sell the family home
and most of their possessions in a nasty, long-drawn-out legal
wrangle, left many scars on his Mother and brother. David, on
the other hand, 'hid' most of his sorrows and frustration by
diverting it on to the role of 'man about the house'.

His Mother describes him as 'a good lad', because he takes on
voluntarily many household tasks, and does not complain about
having to contribute most of his dole money to help with household
expenses. She is not altogether happy about this, feeling that it is
unfair on him, but she simply cannot afford not to take his money,
as she relies mainly on benefit for her income, with only a small
part-time job to supplement this. Her view of this matter differs
widely from that of the parents of Wendy and Mick - she dislikes having
to take his money, and does not regard it as some form of 'right'.

David's day begins when his Mother wakes him and his brother
for breakfast, which is usually toast. His brother soon leaves
for school, and his Mother goes to her 'job' (cleaning the house
of someone who lives near them). David always washes up the

breakfast things, tidies the house and sometimes vacuums the living room; usually taking the whole morning to do this, spacing things out to give his time some form of structure.

He finds that he cannot go out because he has no money; his so-called 'mates' have dropped away and never call because there is nothing there to do. No video, no record player, no anything. The house is not even warm during the winter; because of their economic circumstances, their electricity supply is fitted with a slot meter, thus becoming dearer in real terms and making heat impossible without the 'ready cash' to feed the meter.

After the cup of tea which represents his 'dinner', David leaves the house and wanders in to the town centre. His afternoon consists of an aimless meander, a chance meeting and a chat with a 'mate' and - the highlight of his day - the deciding on and buying a pound of sausages from the 'cheap meat shop', before wandering home to help his Mother prepare their meal.

He rarely goes out in the evenings. Their circumstances conspire to ensure that his life is one of isolation, albeit a not unpleasant isolation, as the 'atmosphere' in his home is not 'fraught' with tensions about his unemployment. Within this isolation, he spends many hours simply slumped in front of the television, seemingly content to be with his Mother and brother.

However, the pressures are still there; David has succeeded to a great degree in deflecting them by the 'decision-making' and 'responsibility' involved in his role of 'man about the house', but this merely drives them further underground and makes them less apparent to the outside observer - it does not

remove them, and occasionally they break out in odd ways, as illustrated by the lad who told me:

> 'I'm really crazy. I do stupid things like. Not
> dangerous things like. I'll be walking down a street
> and suddenly burst into song - you know what I mean -
> or start wolf-whistling at old ladies. Really crazy
> things ...... I seem to do it when I'm on my own,
> not with my mates'.   (p.110)

Hopefully, by the use of these 'case studies' we can observe how the different social experiences of youth unemployment manifest themselves along gender, class and local labour market conditions. To move a stage further, from analysis to practical consideration of the 'problems' of youth unemployment, I would now like to turn my attention to highlighting a few policy proposals which may help to alleviate some of the disastrous and degrading experiences mentioned in the main body of the thesis.

Policy Proposals.

A major point being stressed in all these case studies and social processes is, as mentioned earlier, that of the degree to which unemployed youth have to enter into a number of dialectical control frameworks (p.239) before their own influence over the situation becomes observable. This then, produces a stress on small-scale, everyday activities, rather than on those issues which may radically alter their social situation. In order to achieve this transformation, unemployed youth will need to address itself to certain major structural features which circumscribe their activities. These include such things as boredom, isolation, lack of adequate material resources etc. all of which frame their activities and make positive action very tenuous indeed.

One possible way of overcoming these devastating conditions is to establish local educational and industrial co-operatives. Within the study itself (p. 114-124), it can be seen on numerous occasions that where a collective stance has been taken, however tenuous this may be, against the ravages of 'individualized' unemployment, the outcomes in terms of identity, self esteem and general well being are extremely beneficial to all the individuals concerned. I should stress at the outset that I do not 'perceive co-operatives' to be the magical solution to structural unemployment, but that as an interim measure they can provide the groundwork from which a more planned economy can emerge, rather than one which is increasingly left to the conflicting dictates of monopoly capitalism. In proposing such a scheme, I feel that a number of over-riding issues should be considered:

a) That it should be open to <u>all</u> youth, not just those who are unemployed.

b) That it should provide learning through a policy and process of community self-help.

c) That it should be 'active' in its policy formation, and not 'passive'.

d) That decisions should be arrived at by concensus, not simply by democratic means.

e) That it should be 'linked' to other community groups, both locally and nationally.

These and other considerations 'emerge' generally from the
data considered within the framework of the thesis, and are not
solely drawn from abstractions based on some a priori principles.
As a way of explanation, the emphasis in point a) is derived from
the fact that, both throughout the literature (Willis, 1985) and
also in Kidderminster itself, 'drop-in centres' and groups for the
unemployed find great difficulty in attracting members, and therefore,
talk on this subject centres around the 'apathy' of the unemployed.
From my own investigation, if unemployed youths were part of a
larger group including shift workers, college students, those
'knocking a day off' work or school and part-time workers (p.138)
then having to leave their mates to go to their own 'club' is, in
their terms 'not on'. Also, in the process of being 'normal' (p.132)
the last thing an unemployed youth wants is to appear 'abnormal',
and a 'drop-in centre', in the eyes of some, stigmatizes and
stereo-types them.

By allowing all youths to enter, not only will the unemployed
feel part of the wider community, but also many of the issues that
relate to the structural position of all youth - powerlessness,
low pay etc. - can be pursued with greater integration and, therefore,
greater hope of success.

This insistence on 'community' is, I feel, an important aspect
in trying to negate the 'individualized' experience of unemployment
so endemic in this social condition. As I stated in an earlier paper,
based on some of my initial findings:

> 'It is my contention that only by adopting a
> 'community-wide' definition of unemployment can
> any realistic path to its negation be found.
> Rather than just taking a narrow definition of
> unemployment which, as Williams (1976) has shown,
> has developed historically to mean 'Being out of

paid employment', we must have one which
embodies in its definition the fact that
unemployment is a process whereby every-
one in the community is subjected to
personal and inter-personal conditions
and relationships which are relatively
deprived, because one or more of its
members is deprived of paid employment'

(Walsgrove, 1984. p.16)

This insistence on 'focusing' on the community can also be
seen in the second of the objectives, that it should provide learning
through a process of a network of community 'self-help' groups. This
is not the philosophy of the nineteenth century laissez-faire self-
help, or the current quests of Thatcherism, but one where the
emphasis would be based on the 'informal skills' of community
members rather than on the 'formal' academic institutions which
have structured prerequisites of numbers, entry qualifications,
fees, times etc. In any community, many skills exist which could be
taught to others; this is not a one way process where students
'soak up' knowledge like sponges, only to - hopefully - 'pour it
out' when squeezed in an exam situation, but one in which 'knowledge'
is a two-way process, with the tutor acting as a facilitator rather
than an 'all knowing' subject. This is a knowledge which is 'lived',
born out of the collective experience of labour and everyday life,
and which has historically had roots in a local community. It is
here where b) and c) are linked together, 'in that this is not to
say that staff and formal academic institutions do not have a part
to play in the regeneration of society, but that for the unemployed
to achieve anything meaningful, they must be seen by others, and
experience for themselves the process of 'directly controlling'
their social situation.

This point of active participation in terms of changing
social conditions is another area where, currently, unemployed
'drop-in' centres have had very little success. By way of understanding,
I would like to develop this idea around a major phenomenon which
characterizes the life of the unemployed in general and the young
unemployed in particular - 'boredom'. Within minutes of starting
any discussion with anyone who is experiencing unemployment, the
topic of boredom raises its head. 'You get bored at home all day' is
the usual statement, reinforced by, 'I get bored when I've got
nothing to do'. It is these types of statements which, if the
Authorities do anything at all, they usually pick up on. In most
cases they pay lip-service to the real needs of the unemployed, and
simply allow them to enter free or at a reduced rate to some local
civic amenities such as swimming baths etc. Now, if you define
'boredom' this way, as resulting from 'having nothing to do', the
obvious thing is to give the unemployed 'something to do'; create
a 'drop-in centre', put some amusements in it, and wait for the
unemployed to turn up! This then becomes the normal response, and
when the unemployed fail to respond, the usual course is to label
them 'apathetic', with officials moaning 'What more can we do?'
Even for the few who <u>do</u> turn up, their overall social situation
does not alter significantly, for the vast majority the social
condition of structural unemployment will not be challenged by
playing 'pool' or table-tennis.

If, on the other hand, you adopt a different definition,
the outcome could be far more meaningful. This type of definition
arises also from the same discussions with the unemployed, and
is very much like the 'throwaway line' mentioned on pages 106 to 111 ,

where the unemployed end up by blaming themselves for their own social condition. This throwaway line generally comes at the end of their discussion on how bored they get, although this time the emphasis is placed on such statements as:

> 'Even if there was something to do,
> I've no money to do it'.

Here they once again become acutely aware of their lack of adequate resources, and how they are possibly forced into a life of petty crime or cultural illegality (p.162 - 164).

If we now construct a working definition from such statements, the definition arrived at is one where boredom:

> Can be defined as resulting from the process where individuals are <u>forced</u> into situations where their operations are extremely limited.

The emphasis is now on individuals 'being forced into situations', which should radically change our response to the situation. No longer do 'we' merely 'find them something to do', but provide 'them' with the framework into which they become 'conscious' of their situation and how they can best alleviate these pressures . This concentration on 'being forced' into situations therefore changes the definition of unemployment from being merely an economic and social problem to one of a political nature. Action then becomes one of political action and consequences. This means that they will now actively engage in procedures which 'challenge' not only their immediate social situation, but also the wider social formation. This process of 'challenge' becomes even more important in the light of the Conservative Government's current attacks on young people in terms of wages, lodgings, employment protective legislation etc. (The Guardian, 26.6.86), and also in terms of

M.S.C. programmes which perpetuate the 'individualistic' experience of unemployment through their insistence on social skills, job applications, interview techniques etc. (Hodgkiss, 1986).

In the co-operative centres which I have proposed, 'really useful knowledge' would be thrown back on the agenda for debate and discussion, with the emphasis away from the current technocratic instrumentalism and towards the nineteenth century advocacy that 'really useful knowledge' was political knowledge, social science and the questions of poverty and exploitation' (Hodgkiss, 1986, p.19). Here, theory and practice would combine in young people becoming conscious of their place in history and how they can shape their future. As Frith hypothesises, 'Is it in the 1980's that youth will become, finally, a political category?' (Frith, 1985. p.367).

In terms of organization it is extremely important that a hierarchy should not develop, and that the structure of the group of young women analysed in pages 119-122 should play an important part, with the language and practice of patriarchy extremely circumscribed (p.119). Decisions arrived at by concensus rather than democracy would enable minority views to be incorporated into procedures and practice, rather than suppressed by the majority. It is also extremely important that a network of co-operative centres is established locally, possibly grounded initially in the interchange of youth throughout the town (p. 47). This 'interchange' may be more symptomatic of network patterns of youth in a small industrial town, where different housing estates become the focus of congregation and where the town centre is unable to provide, in Willis' terms, places of 'conviviality'

such as those located in large cities while expounding symbols of
latent consumerism which youths monopolize and reinterpret (Willis,
1984).

The major themes contained in these policy proposals are initiated
to counter-attack the daunting social effects highlighted in the main
body of the thesis. By unemployed youths combining with those in
employment and education they will, hopefully, be able to enter into
a more direct form of control relationship than is presently the
case in practice. At the present moment though, inadequate resources
and social isolation combine to present a more pessimistic view of the
future for many young people. Located in a seemingly never-ending
present, their social expression questions whether, for them,

.   Tomorrow is _really_ another day.

In common-sense language, the answer must certainly be 'yes'.
Not only that, but many natural and cultural symbols, such as
clocks, watches, seasons, calendars etc. could be marshalled to
'substantiate' this common-sense claim. But what about the actual
social experience of these different temporal situations; do they
differ radically enough to substantiate such a general belief, or
are there social processes developing which, for a growing number
of individuals, tend to negate this general idea? The general
argument within this thesis has been that these social pressures
do exist, and not only do they exist, but they are becoming more
and more pervasive, especially for the unemployed, as more and
more social phenomena become incorporated into its general
historical movement. Through the interlocking processes of isolation,
internalization, the amplification of normality, abstract market

relationships and depersonalization, the intensity of the 'here and now' is becoming fundamental to the 'lived experience' of the unemployed, especially the young unemployed. This social experience is further compounded by any meaningful and realistic appropriation of material resources, which may challenge this 'trend', with the consequent effects of apathy, boredom and despair. As Cohen (1986) suggests:

> 'There is a strong correlation between
> the meaning of 'the dole' and their
> sense of time ......The immediate
> present seems to stretch endlessly
> into the future, which is always and
> already the same as the past'.
>
> (p.70)

Within this epoch of uncertainty then, those with the 'power of the wage' can enter into relationships with a relative degree of optimism; for those like myself this 'power' is embedded in the perception and experience that, 'Tomorrow is another day'. Unfortunately for the young unemployed, especially the young working-class unemployed, <u>tomorrow</u> will be the same as <u>yesterday</u> and <u>today</u>.

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