

PEER NETWORKS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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Summary

This thesis examines the social relationships of 12/13 year old school pupils. The thesis's intentions are three fold:-

- i To answer four basic questions about school pupils and their social relationships; a) How do pupils of this age range organise their social lives at school? b) In the network of these peers' social relationships are there distinctive sub-cultures? c) How do these peer networks form? and d) How do the peer networks interact with school performance, future careers and life chances of these pupils?
- ii In attempting to answer these questions a theoretical framework has been adopted which takes account of both interaction and structure.
- iii Methodological procedures have been employed which have allowed the in-depth, intensive study of one class group of pupils to be set in relation to the entire cohort of pupils.

The peer network is certainly the dominant form of social organisation in the school lives of these pupils. The girls form clearly defined networks rather than pairs while the boys' peer networks are large, undifferentiated and bounded by the class group.

The peer networks do exhibit distinctive, and in many ways different subcultural patterns. The dominant, and it often appeared the only, concern of the boys was football. The girls' peer networks had some features in common while other features, particularly attitudes and orientation to school and commitment to elements of teenage culture, differentiated the girls' peer networks.

Organisational features of the school and the social structural features of the pupil's family and background in addition to age and gender are the factors which most affect the formation of peer networks. The peer network was, particularly for girls, the arena where school and social pressures were discussed and strategies developed to cope with these pressures, and consequently of considerable importance in terms of orientation and future career at school and life chances more generally.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In some ways it could be said that this research began sixteen years ago when as a beginning teacher I very soon became aware that the pupils that I was teaching had a considerable amount of influence over each other. The network of relationships that they shared with each other was of considerable importance to them and in many ways the 'world' that they inhabited was separated from me their teacher. This interest, and indeed fascination, with the social relationships and subcultural world of school pupils has continued and developed and this study represents the culmination of the many years of interest.

The previous research conducted in the area presents findings which are far from conclusive and tend to be rather confusing in many aspects. While some areas of school pupils social relationships, for example those of the final year anti school groups of boys, have received considerable research attention other areas have received only scant attention. The most noticeable of these is that of school girls who are the subject of a very few studies. Perhaps because of this poverty of studies on girls the dangerous practice of generalizing from the studies conducted on boys to cover the social relationships of all pupils can be found in many books on education. The bulk of research that has been conducted in this area has been centred in single sex grammar or secondary modern schools and usually the emphasis has been on the pupils who are about to complete their statutory education. There also tends to have been an emphasis on

the social relationships and culture of the anti school groups of pupils with in a large number of cases the most extreme groups being selected out for most attention. One suspects that this may well be because they prove the most colourful to write about.

There is a clear need for research which at least starts to 'fill in' some of these groups. In an attempt to meet these demands this research has been conducted on boys and girls who are in a co-educational middle school, Hilltop, which is part of a comprehensive system. The research has been conducted on an entire cohort, and, in detail, on a cross section of this cohort rather than on particular selected groups of pupils, in their third and fourth years, ages twelve and thirteen, at middle school. The social world of these pupils has been explored in detail.

The research asks four basic and fundamental questions of the social relationships of this cohort of pupils.

- a) How do pupils of this age range organize their social lives at school? The accepted orthodoxy for many years had been that school pupils formed peer groups. This orthodoxy has recently been challenged by some interactionists who claim that school pupils do not form stable peer groups and that the concept provides little in aiding our understanding of school and classroom processes. There is the additional question of whether or not girls organize their social relationships in a similar manner to boys.

- b) In the network of these peers' social relationships are there distinctive subcultures? To answer this second question satisfactorily there needs to be an extensive investigation of the social relationships of both boys and girls. This investigation needs to look at the cross section of pupils and not just concentrate on groups of a particular orientation.
- c) How do these peer networks form? This question concentrates mainly on the sociological factors that influence peer network formation. There are of course many psychological factors which affect interpersonal attraction and friendship choice. As many factors as might possibly affect peer network formation are identified in the attempt to establish patterns of association.
- d) What impact do the peer networks have on the school performance, future careers and life chances of these pupils? Having established the existence, the nature and culture and the formation of peer networks the logical final question is do they make any difference to these pupils. While it may be possible to identify effects on immediate school performance it will be of course more difficult to assess the possible long term effects of the peer networks.

These four substantive, empirical questions have definite theoretical implications. Indeed the first question, which has arisen largely from the attacks of researchers working within the Symbolic Interactionist and Phenomenological frameworks on the findings of earlier researchers working within a more structural/

functionist framework, may simply be different theoretical interpretations of similar phenomena.

A major concern of this research has been to attempt to draw upon and integrate two basically different theoretical perspectives. On the one hand there has been the concern to provide adequate description and analysis at the micro level of interaction but not to consider this as being complete in itself. It is seen as crucial that these micro levels of analysis are located within their wide social structural framework. So in addition to addressing the four substantive questions this research is also an attempt to combine macro and micro levels of analysis which tend to emphasize interaction and structure respectively. Each on its own can offer an analysis adequate only within a limited perspective.

The substantive questions addressed and the theoretical perspectives adopted do determine methodology to a large degree. However, methodology does have some autonomy. There is still a considerable degree of choice in the methodologies adopted. Two concerns were notable. There was the need to conduct an in depth study into a manageable sized group of pupils in order to explore in detail their culture and social world. However, this intensive study must be located within the population as a whole, in this case the cohort of pupils. This cohort in turn needed to be located within the school and the school a) within the education systems and b) within the community it served. These two concerns meant that a variety of methodologies were employed from participant observation to the collection of fairly traditional psychometric variables and interviews with community members.

So this research is also about methodologies and the presentation of evidence collected in vastly different ways.

The report of this research is divided into eight further chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of the previous work in the field of pupils and their social relationships. It outlines the five major studies which have had a significant impact in this field and that have influenced this research. The chapter also examines the research which has addressed the four questions that are the focus of this study in the attempt to assess the research conducted thus far.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted in this research. There is a discussion of the interactionist and structuralist perspectives, the need to link them and examine attempts to do this. Theories of culture and the maintenance and reproduction of culture are examined. The methodological and data collection considerations and techniques are outlined and because of the vital need for reflexivity in research of this kind the biography of the researcher and his relationships with the teachers and pupils is discussed. Research isn't conducted in a vacuum and thus the material bases of the research are outlined.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed account of the features of the cohort of pupils who are the subjects of this study, their academic abilities, attendance, family backgrounds and attitudes to school. The school which this cohort attend, Hilltop County Middle School, its organization, approach to teaching and teaching staff, is examined. There is a brief history of the school and of the

development and ideology of middle schools. The community which Hilltop serves is described, particularly, physical characteristics, the employment patterns, parental attitudes to school and outsiders views of the community are solicited.

Chapter 5 addresses the first of the four research questions and attempts to determine as clearly as possible the organizational nature of these pupils' peer networks. Sociometric maps of each of the four class groups for both boys and girls are described and there is a closer look at the peer networks in one of these class groups - 4F. The boys in 4F form one large class network, while the girls form four separate networks variously named the 'P.E.' girls, 'Nice' girls, 'Quiet' girls and 'Science lab' girls. There is also an examination of the stability and change of the peer networks over the period of the research.

Chapter 6 looks at the culture of the peer networks. Here the results of the intensive participant observation and interviewing are reported. There is a close examination of the sub-cultural forms of both the girls' and boys' peer networks and a detailed investigation of the nature of the relationships between the boys and girls.

Chapter 7 tackles the difficult task of trying to account for the formation of pupils' peer networks. It attempts to isolate the most important factors which affect the formation of peer networks. A complex computer programme has been devised to aid this task. Details of the factors affecting boys' and girls' groups are analysed and there

is an examination of the peer networks of the 4F girls.

Chapter 8 attempts to answer the fourth question on whether or not the peer network makes any difference to the school performance, future careers and life chances of the pupils. Perceptions of the impact of peers are sought from the pupils themselves, their parents and teachers. The tangible affects on the pupils' futures at school are assessed and there is attention to the way in which the peer networks serve, particularly for girls, as an arena where wider social structural pressures and influences are coped with.

The conclusion summarises the main findings and discusses some of the implications particularly for the pupils concerned. Possible areas of fruitful further research are outlined.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

- 2.1. Outline
- 2.2. Introduction
- 2.3. Some Significant Studies
 - .i Hargreaves
 - .ii Lacey
 - .iii Willis
 - .iv Hollingshead
 - .v Coleman
- 2.4. What is a Peer Group?
 - .i Size
 - .ii Boy/girl differences
 - .iii Interaction sets
- 2.5. Peer Group Culture
 - .i Origins and Connections with wider cultures
 - .ii Peer group cultural elements. What peer groups are like.
 - .iii The absence of girls from pupil subculture literature.
- 2.6. The Formation of Peer Groups
- 2.7. Peer Group Effects
 - .i Influence over attitudes to and performance at school.
 - .ii Susceptibility to peer influence.
- 2.8. Summary and Implications

2.1. Outline

This chapter reviews the previous research that has been conducted in the area of peer networks, social relationships and school pupil culture. There is an introductory examination of the work in social relationships among school pupils followed by an analysis of five selected pieces of research which have most influenced this study. Then follows reviews of the research which has addressed the following areas: 1) What are peer groups? Do they in fact exist as part of the social lives of school pupils? 2) What are peer groups like? Do they have their own culture? 3) How do peer groups form? and finally 4) What effect does the peer group have on a pupil's orientation to and performance at school and will this affect his or her career and life chances?

2.2. Introduction

In recent years there has been considerable interest on the part of sociologists, social psychologists and educationists in within-school processes and particularly social relationships within schools. However there has been a concentration on teacher-pupil relationships while pupil-pupil and teacher-teacher relationships have received attention in only a minority of studies. Pupil-pupil relationships and peer networks are a major component of a child's experience of schooling. In a recent study, Lomax (1978) concludes that irrespective of 'adjustment' to school, peers are still the most important feature of a child's school experience.

Parents and teachers continually acknowledge the importance and influence that a child's peers have in their orientation to and interpretation of school experience. A full understanding of these within school processes and their links with wider social/structural forces is required and for this fuller understanding pupils perspectives and definitions must be included in research efforts.

This increasing interest is by no means universal and there are those who claim that within-school processes make little or no difference and that research in this area is pointless. This position is probably best summarized by Jenks (1973) who claims after his mammoth research effort on educational inequality that

"the character of a school output depends largely on a single input, namely the character of its entering children. Everything else - the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers - is either secondary or completely irrelevant" (p256).

The recent work of Rutter et al (1979) however provides strong research evidence in support of the claim that what goes on in schools does make a difference.

Those studies concerned with social relationships within schools carried out to date have tended to focus on boys, (Lacey (1970), Hargreaves (1967), Willis (1977), Reynolds (1976)) or in a very few cases on girls (Lambart (1976), Furlong (1976)) in single sex institutions usually either Secondary Modern or Grammar Schools. The notable exceptions to this are those studies carried out in the U.S.A. (Hollingshead (1949), Coleman (1961), Cusick (1973)). In this country even when co-educational establishments are studied it is usually the boys who are focussed upon (e.g. Nash 1973) and rarely is attention paid to the interaction and

relationship between boys and girls. Ball (1977) whose 'bunch' includes both males and females, makes little or no attempt to analyse the position occupied by the girls in the 'bunch' nor the interaction between boys and girls.

So in the U.K. at least there has been little attention paid to the crucial relationships and dynamics between boys and girls in our schools. These interactions, friendship networks and relationships are an integral part of the social relationships and school experience of any co-educational school or classroom .

Another common characteristic of these studies tends to be the focus on the upper age range - boys and girls who are about to either leave or reach the statutory minimum leaving age. This is in many ways understandable as it is at this stage that the full effects of the school and the educational system can be observed and assessed, the pupils have received the full complement of state provided education. However there are indications particularly in the work of Willis (1977) and also in the work of Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) that many of the features and outcomes that are observed and so avidly described at the end of a school career have their direct antecedents much earlier on in the school. Willis's 'lads' identify quite clearly the 2nd year (age 12/13 years) as the crucial point when the 'lads' sort themselves out from the 'ear oles'. Both Hargreaves (1967) and, more systematically, Lacey (1970) document these processes throughout the secondary school, nevertheless their main focus is on the outcomes - the 15 year olds. The work on the American high school students (14-18

years) once again tends to focus on the upper end of the age range. These researchers report that by this age the network of peer relationships is relatively stable. Similarly, in England, Hargreaves (1967) found that the social relationships are dominated by the streaming and setting arrangement in the school and found no major change in cliques during the final academic year. The process of formation of the cliques which requires detailed analysis of the peer networks and social relationships among younger boys and girls is therefore in need of study.

Typically, the majority of the studies of peer groups/social relations and school culture present a very polarized picture with some groups accepting the definitions offered by the school (the pro school, conformist, 'ear oles') and other groups rejecting these definitions (the anti-school, non-conformist, delinquent, 'lads'). By presenting this polarized picture there may be potential for distortion because of the tendency to concentrate or even celebrate the most extreme of the anti school groups. The lads, and delinquents, are only one part of the total picture, only one section of any cohort of school children albeit perhaps disproportionately powerful and, one suspects, far more exciting and dramatic to write about. If one is concerned to present a more complete picture and thorough analysis, then the work of researchers like Willis (1977) must be complemented by studies which attempt to present a cross section or at least focus on other parts of the pupil group. So while the work of Willis (1975, 1976, 1977) provides us with a fascinating account of the lives of 12 non-conformist pupils and to a much more limited degree 6 conformist pupils there remains

80-90 boys in the same cohort unaccounted for and about whom generalizations can not be made as the case studies presented are those of the extreme. And while we may have considerable knowledge of extreme anti school groups, our knowledge of these groups in relation to the rest of their peers is negligible, our knowledge of pro-school* groups is rather limited, our knowledge of "all those in the middle" is virtually non existent, and by characterizing school pupils in this polarized fashion considerable distortion must inevitably take place.**

Much of the literature then presents us with a picture of social relationships among school pupils as being arranged and divided into very definite, concrete groups with, furthermore, these groups exhibiting either pro or anti school activities. A typical example of the way the work of Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) has become represented in the literature as portraying school pupils as being exaggeratedly polarized is found in a recent book:

"There are in fact two polar categories of pupils role in the curriculum, both of them familiar to all teachers"
Eggleston (1977 p 103)

The author goes on to describe the good pupil and claims that this is associated with those staying on after the minimum leaving age and the negative pupil role associated with those leaving at the statutory minimum leaving age. In discussing specifically the work

* The current work of Hammersley, M. & Turner, G.(1979) does concentrate on the pro school conformist pupil.

** This is not to deny that one purpose of concentrating on the extreme is to illuminate the 'normal'.

of Hargreaves (1967) he states

"The even sharper polarization that takes place during the experience of the secondary school curriculum after the formative experiences of the primary curriculum has been diagnosed by Hargreaves (1967)(p 107).

Eggleston (1977) carries this dicotomous polarization to teacher classification of pupils and when discussing the work of Sharp and Green (1975) he argues:

"Here we see the way in which teachers' perspectives allow them to identify and categorize the various good pupil roles to certain children who are labelled as 'really able', a 'bright one' and similar categories. But we may also see the way in which the same perspectives identify the pupils to whom these good roles cannot be attributed. Such children are identified as problems; they are abnormal, odd or peculiar, with labels such as 'just a plodder' and 'really thick'" (p104)

These are examples of how much of the education literature does seem to have taken on the stance of categorizing pupils as either good or bad, pro or anti school which I would argue is a considerable distortion of the situation in most schools.

Much of the work of Coleman (1961), Hollingshead (1949), Willis (1977), Ball (1977), Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) leaves one with the impression that perhaps these researchers are working on the assumption that all school pupils are members of a stable peer group. While this may well be true in some cases it is certainly a point that requires further investigation as, if it is the case, it may only be so in the older groups studied by these authors.

Polarized models seem to be a common feature of much of the work in this area, not only are school pupils presented as belonging to peer groups polarized in their acceptance/rejection of school

values but others (e.g. Sugarman, 1967 and Grinder, 1969) see a polarization between commitment to teenage culture and official school culture and Coleman (1961) sees a polarization between youth values and adult values. So one is left with the impression that school pupils are either pro-school, boring conformist, 'ear oles', who have little commitment to 'youth culture' or teenage fashion, or anti school, delinquent, 'lads' with a high commitment to teenage fashion and 'youth culture' with membership of one group excluding membership of the other and membership of one group being associated with poor performance at school and with the other good academic record. It seems almost completely forgotten that much of the work has been based on the concentration on the extremes and so the above may only be true for a very small minority of pupils and that the situation for a complete cohort may be quite different. Thus it appears that Hargreaves' caveat is invariably overlooked. He reminds us at the end of his book (p 180)

"It is now time to put our feet back on the ground; speculation is a seductive and dangerous path. Our distinction between the academic and delinquent subcultures is a considerable over simplification of the facts. Although the extremes can be clearly distinguished, there remains a large proportion of boys who, whilst tending to one of the poles, cannot be easily contained in either." (my emphasis).

2.3. Some Significant Studies

A brief description follows of five studies which have been important in the field generally and have been specifically influential in this piece of research. These studies which span three decades have been conducted by Hargreaves (1967),

Lacey (1970) and Willis (1977) in England and Hollingshead (1949) and Coleman (1961) in the U.S.A.

2.3.i. Hargreaves - Social Relations in a Secondary School

Hargreaves (1967) in his pioneering study of a boys secondary modern School with a working class catchment area focusses primarily on the final year (4th year, age 15) and finds that the social relationships are dominated and bound by the school's streaming and setting arrangements. Thus, sociometric friendship choices tended to be stream specific and that there were no major changes in the clique formations during the academic year. He found that the cliques in the top streams had very different norms from those in the bottom stream and that the boys were fully aware of the differences between the cliques. Hargreaves uses a number of measures to gauge a pupil's orientation; attitudes to school, attendance and teacher estimations of behaviour. The main focus is on the delinquent group which is compared with the rest of the cohort. Hargreaves identified considerable group pressure within the delinquent group and argues that there is some correlation between group norms and parental values - although Hargreaves does point out that the study is limited to the analysis of the dynamic processes at work within the school. Attempts are made to correlate background factors and group membership - social class, family size, number of bedrooms although no clear pattern emerges. However, Hargreaves posits a picture of two subcultures with a very definite gap between them in friendship group choices. While he does acknowledge a

continuum this is in many ways lost by the presentation of the two subcultures model. Hargreaves compares the responses of boys in the final year of school with those of the 2nd (12/13) year boys and these indicate similar trends but are nowhere as significant or as well developed and do not appear to be related.

"We may conclude that there is no evidence of normative or subculture differentiation between streams in the 2nd year" (p179).

2.3.ii. Lacey - Hightown Grammar

Lacey (1970) makes more of an attempt to trace the pattern of social relations throughout the school, i.e. from age 11+ to 14/15 where pupils either leave or go on to the 6th form. The school studied is a boys grammar school. Lacey sees a degree of autonomy in the system of social relations in the classroom but seems more convinced, than does Hargreaves, of the influence of external factors. Like Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) presents a picture of polarization but sees the anti school groups as being very much an escape or an alternative for those who are not succeeding academically. (p 58) This raises very interesting questions as to the relationship between school and membership of an anti school group as the implication from Lacey's work is that membership of an anti school group is confined to those failing to achieve academically. If, taking Lacey's line, membership of an anti school group only occurs after the experience of academic failure then this precludes the peer group from any autonomy or initial influence and denies any creative initiative, except in the way they express their anti school stance, in the relationship between peer groups and the orientation of their members to school

and to their academic performance. Lacey claims it is only after membership is established that the peer group plays an important role:

"The boy who takes refuge in such a group because his work is poor finds that the group commits him to a behaviour pattern which means that his work will stay poor and in fact gets progressively worse" (p58)

This would seem to be most unlikely in all cases. It is more likely to be a dynamic two way process rather than one being the result of the other. Lacey leaves us with a model of all school pupils initially equally and positively orientated towards school with anti school groups forming only after the experience of academic failure. He identifies in common with Willis (1977) and Hargreaves (1967) that this sorting out process takes place from the second year onwards with anti school groups beginning to look towards activities outside of school. If this is in fact the case then it may well be peculiar to a grammar school situation as the study certainly found positive relationships between academic performance and behaviour -

"no boy with a 'bad' behaviour grade scored in the 'good' performance range". (p 86)

Once again sociometric friendship choices are highly correlated with organizational constraints like streaming. Friends are chosen and peer groups formed from within the population that the organization makes available. Lacey sees the school as being the focal point of these group formations, very much a within school exercise, but perhaps with a grammar school population life does revolve around the school. Lacey points out that pupils with home backgrounds which encourage and instruct in academic

competition are more likely to succeed than the others and so increasingly it is more likely to be the middle class child who is succeeding and exhibiting pro-school attitudes with the working class child performing poorly and developing anti school attitudes. Having posited a two opposing subcultures model Lacey points out that this does not mean that every pupil can be neatly classified into one or the other of the groups and gives a few examples of individuals (isolates) who are not part of either. These do however appear to be exceptions. There seems little room in this model for mixed groups (perhaps a result of streaming) or 'middle of the road' groups. Membership of one group or the other does not mean that behaviour is strictly conformist or non conformist in every detail. Almost in passing Lacey identifies a feature, which unfortunately he does not expand, that is crucial i.e. that pupils need to operate both sets of norms particularly as he claims boys who exhibit extremes are very likely to be unpopular. The peculiar situation of the Grammar School does however prevent extreme anti groups forming as extreme cases either 'leave' or are 'transferred'. This would suggest that to adhere rigidly to a polarized model could be dangerous as the situation is likely to be more fluid and less clear cut than a model such as this allows. Lacey identifies a clear tendency for the working class pupils to 'percolate down through the streaming system' and he sees working class families as lacking the psycho-socio-cultural resources to help their children get the best out of school. A point similar to the 'cultural capital' notion presented more recently by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and

by Kockeis (1970) in relation to the clash between working class culture and the school. Even though parents may be orientated towards and be very keen for educational attainment they are for the most part not part of an educated sub culture and their psycho-socio cultural resources are soon exhausted.

2.3.iii. Willis - Learning to Labour

Willis' (1977) study is focused largely on the final year (age 15/16) of a boys secondary modern school in a working class catchment area. At the outset Willis claims to be making a comparative study between pro and anti school groups but then focuses almost exclusively on a group of 12 anti school 'lads'. He provides us with an excellent description of the elements of anti school culture and of the degree of correspondence between the 'lads' culture and working class shop floor culture. There is the opposition to authority and authority values, a commitment to drinking and smoking and considerable redefinition of 'school' with 'yer mates' being the best thing about school. Peers are far more important than teachers and having a 'laff' with mates helps to cope with school. Fighting and physical, rough play is common and a lad must never refuse a scrap. 'Real' work only takes place outside of school and school is seen as something of an 'enforced holiday'. Sexist and racist attitudes are very strong, with girls afforded no particular identity except in terms of sexual attractiveness. Boys appear to have the initiative in all sexual relations with the girls as passive sex objects. Willis makes no attempt to account for how and why these particular twelve boys form the most extreme anti school

group. Admittedly this is not his concern or focus - where the group 'comes from' is not seen as crucial, what is crucial is that elements of the culture, working class shop floor culture and the social relations are being reproduced. One may well ask why do the other eighty plus pupils in the cohort not become 'lads', particularly as the catchment area is relatively homogeneous and there are many others with almost identical backgrounds. As Willis himself says there are some 'non conformist' parents who are almost embarrassed by their sons conformism and 'conformist' parents whose kids 'go wrong'. Willis points out that parents are only one of the many possible bearers of working class culture and that there is a relative independence between parents and these children - a warning against mechanistic structuralist analysis. Lacey is grappling with a similar issue when he says:

"there is a degree of autonomy in the system of social relations in the classroom which can transcend external factors and even differences in intelligence. External factors such as social class and intelligence have to be fed through the internal system of relations within the classroom" (p 56)

Willis speculates that in the transition from school to work it is precisely those in the middle (those not focused upon in the study) who will find the most difficulty. The transition of the very top (pro) and the very bottom (anti) will be relatively smooth. It will be those in the middle, those unable to obtain the jobs that the very pro school pupils obtain but to which they themselves aspire and not with the developed 'lads' culture to enable them to survive in a boring, monotonous shop floor job, who will find this transition most difficult. It is the lads,

who regard mental work as being unmasculine and the conformists as 'cissies' 'poofs' or 'wankers' but who are very much trapped by the group who will experience a relatively smooth transition.

2.3.iv. Hollingshead - Elmtown's Youth

In the U.S.A. pioneering work was done by Hollingshead (1949) who in studying a mid western high school (age 14-18) found very clear structural/functional connections between the social structural location of a family and social formations - peer group networks and dating patterns within the school. The two most significant factors affecting group formation were found to be social class and age with pupils exhibiting very similar attitudes to those of their parents. As one of the teachers observed:

"kids run in bunches just like their parents. This town is full of cliques and you can't expect the kids to be different from their parents." (p 204)

Hollingshead found that not only is clique formation very closely associated with position in the class structure but so are grades, enrolment in the various school courses and organized clubs, attendance at sporting fixtures, dances, parties, the cinema, dating and so on. Hollingshead divides the community which is said to have a very tight social structure into five social classes. A strong anti school sub culture is not detected within the school almost certainly because those disaffected with school leave 64% of Class V pupils and 15% of Class IV pupils left before 16 (the supposed minimum legal leaving age) and no Class V pupils graduated from high school. Apparently a simple 'withdrawal'

process rather than the development of a within school, anti school subculture. Even so Hollingshead found a strong 'blind, pathetic faith' (p177) in 'education' among the Class IV and V families. Hollingshead identifies considerable clique pressure and control particularly in areas such as smoking and drinking, the choice of dates and whether or not to stay on at school. He found evidence that parents did try to regulate friendship choices, usually however without much success.

2.3.v. Coleman - The Adolescent Society

Coleman's (1961) classic study, in contrast, saw schools as being very separate from the rest of society - a mini society cut off from the rest of society and with most of the important interaction within the society where only a few threads connect with the 'outside society'. Coleman sees the adolescent 'dumped' into the society of his peers. He surveyed ten high schools (14-18 years) including Elmtown the focus of Hollingshead's study. Coleman suggests that the youth have a very different culture and seems to imply that there is a uniform student culture in any one school and that differences between groups is simply a matter of differential status in terms of the norms and values of this uniform, generally adhered to culture. In the survey Coleman found a very small proportion admitting anti or delinquent behaviour, though he himself casts doubts on the data collection exercise when he says

"respondents hesitation must have had some effect" (p 16).

The study does identify one small group of deviant girls but

Coleman claims this group has no status among the adolescents as a whole. The study is very much concerned with the relative status of cliques particularly with the 'leading crowds'. There is no suggestion of an alternative subculture among the clique furthest away from the leading crowd. Coleman found that the elements of the adolescent high school subculture imposed a relatively strong deterrent to academic achievement. By taking the 'leading crowd' as the most clearly defined expression of the adolescent culture he found a lack of emphasis on intellectualism with good grades less important than athletics (particularly for boys). The culture is very much male dominated with cars being very important - if he has no car "he is still a child" (p 26). Athletics, sporting prowess, is the single most important means to leading crowd membership and Coleman describes the leading crowd as being socially successful, having 'good' personalities, clothes, dates, money and family background. Girls have a largely non-instrumental role in the culture with success coming through her 'prettiness' and by being dated by leading crowd boys -

"girls role is to sit there and look pretty waiting for the athletic star to come and fetch her." (p42)

It is extremely difficult for a girl to become a 'star' - a girl is very much dependent on boys for her 'stardom'. Girls tended to be conforming to school norms, values and expectations which meant that they faced a double constraint - to do well but not be brilliant.

Coleman (1961) contests Hollingshead's findings (p85) maintaining that background is not so important. The crucial question is

what does he mean by 'so' as clearly throughout the book he is indicating the importance and influence of family background. He found that elites are more likely to have college educated parents than non elites and are more likely to plan to go to college. Similarly despite the fact that Coleman claims that the adolescent, high school society, was very different and separate from the wider society he still finds considerable links with the 'outside culture'. For example, he found that leading crowds tend to be more drawn from the dominant population group. In working class areas working class kids tend to be members of the leading crowd. Similarly, in working class schools he found greater role differentiation with boys being more masculine and aggressive and girls more feminine and passive.

2.4. What is a peer group?

What is taken to constitute a peer group varies considerably in much of the literature. There is debate as to whether peer groups exist as entities and are any use as a concept. Much of the research on peer groups is based on the American micro sociological and social psychological literature (Hbmans (1961), Sherif & Sherif (1964), Schmuck (1975)) where there seems to be agreement that peer groups or cliques do exist and are a permanent and conspicuous feature of the social relations in schools. Hollingshead (1949) says

"you'll find the same kids together day after day.... This persistent relationship between a few boys or a few girls which carries over from one activity to another throughout the day, and day after day, is the most obvious thing about the behaviour pattern of the high school pupils." (p405-5) (my emphasis).

Attempts to define precisely what constitutes a peer group are more difficult to find. Morrison and McIntyre (1973) provide us with a typical description of school peer groups.

"Whether or not a class has a formal social organization it has an informal social structure which, with pupils over the age of about seven, and when the class has been together for some time tends to be relatively stable. Subgroups of various sizes are formed either integrated within a cohesive class group, or indifferent or hostile to other subgroups.....Membership of such informal groups is voluntary, and that members continue to belong to them is due to a shared acceptance of, and preference for, certain ways of behaving." (p 134)

Here Morrison and McIntyre present us with the picture of a relatively stable, discrete set of peer groups with certain relationships to each other and stable codes of behaviour.

So fixed and concrete do these peer groups appear to be that by the end of a pupil's school career he will be 'trapped by the group' (Willis, 1977 p 168) and have become an integral part of his peer group. While Hargreaves' (1967) research revealed a considerable amount of conflict and instability in the delinquent group as well as cooperative and integrating activities, most of this conflict and instability was confined to within the bounds of the peer group and he found little change in cliques during the final academic year (p 6). Hollingshead (1949) who saw peer groups as the most obvious feature of high school behaviour patterns also comments on the stability of peer groups. Siman (1977) however argues that not all school pupils belong to clearly defined friendship groups. While Furlong (1976) and Delamont (1976) question the usefulness of peer groups as a concept for understanding what goes on in the classroom (see 2.4.iii. for further discussion).

As if to indicate some of the confusion there is some little discussion over exact meanings of the words with peer group, friendship group, clique having approximately the same meanings and gang and mob tending to be reserved for the less socially acceptable groups. Hollingshead (1949) claims that a clique

"becomes a gang when conflict relations develop to the point when undeclared war exists between itself and society or other cliques." (p 206)

There is also a considerable amount of discussion in the literature of peer influence which does not seem to be associated with any definite notion of what is a peer group. The work of Schmuck (1971) is a good example of this where there is considerable discussion on the extent and nature of the peer influence without explanation of what actually constitutes a peer group. To some extent it can be presumed perhaps that those peers who are most likely to have most influence are those who are the members of an individual's peer group. This may be true with the older age groups but it becomes increasingly dubious with younger pupils to equate or even worse to confuse the more general peer influence notion with that of peer groups.

2.4.i. Size

The size of peer groups receives a considerable amount of attention particularly in those studies which depend upon identifying peer groups by sociometric techniques rather than identifying them by observation or some combinations of both approaches. Bradley (1977 : 2) following Coleman (1964) has

operationalized the following definition

"a subset of group members whose average attraction to one another is greater than the average attraction to other members of the larger target populations".

Coleman (1961) initially identified a core group of individuals usually four or five and then added to this group any individual who was in a mutually positive relationship with at least two of the existing members (p 183). Siman (1977) used two criteria to define his peer groups: a) that the groups were composed of at least three people and b) that there was agreement by at least two individual members as to the exact composition of the groups. Using these criteria Siman found groups ranging in size from 3 to 13 with a mean of 4.2. The sample, which was taken from pupils aged 12 to 18 years, showed no differences in average size of groups for males and females. Bradley (1977), starting with a core of 3, identified cliques ranging in size from three to sixteen. Hollingshead (1949) decided that "a clique is an informal group composed of a minimum of two to about twenty persons." (p 80) but the usual size for boys was between two and nine and for girls that usual size was from two to twelve with a model size of five for both sexes. (He also notes that cliques in rural areas were smaller with a model size of three). Damico (1975) found the majority of both males and females (14/15 years old) belonged to cliques composed of three to eight members, with an average size of five.

The size of Willis' (1977) group of 'lads' was twelve while Ball's (1977) 'bunch' was eighteen. Willis (1977) whose work

is based solely on participant observation techniques reports* that the 'ear oles' tended to group in twos or threes.

Both Lacey (1970) and Hargreaves (1967) who use sociometric as well as participant observation techniques, urge caution in the use of sociometry. Hargreaves points out that his sociometric questions were designed to produce lists of actual rather than preferred friends, while Lacey warns of the danger of regarding the sociogram or sociomatrix as necessarily the representation of some 'real' structure. (Those using sociometric techniques only have little alternative but to do this).

2.4.ii. Boy/Girl Differences

Those studies that do deal with both boys and girls and that don't treat the peer group formations as being the same for both sexes tend to identify different characteristics in boys groups and girls groups. As an example Blyth (1960) in reviewing the literature on peer groups states

"girls groups tend at all ages to be smaller and more intimate than boys groups." (p 139)

First, and most obviously, it would appear that peer group formation among school pupils tends to be along sex lines. One of the few exceptions to this is the work of Ball (1977) who studied an anti school group of 14 boys and 4 girls. However the position of the girls in the group is unclear. Coleman (1961) found the structure of girls peer groups to be much more elaborate and complex than those of boys and found interesting

* Personal communication, March 1978.

differences in the peer group formation of girls where the social class composition of schools varied. In schools serving a largely working class catchment area, working class girls tended to form big groups and middle class girls tended to group in twos or threes. The reverse was true in predominately middle class area schools. Blyth (1960) in examining social relationships among primary school boys and girls states

".....at the age of 7, the detailed pattern of social relationships will tend to be rather shapeless and unstable, as they are among infants, though there is some evidence of the beginnings of something more structured. The two sexes are also noticeably beginning to concentrate their choices within their own ranks. One year later when they are between 8 and 9, this tendency has already become marked and thereafter continues to intensify.....Thus the most usual situation is that at the end of the junior school years a marked focal group of boys and a less marked group of girls, holds the centre of the social stage, while minorities, especially the girls occupy the periphery." (p 138-139)

McRobbie and Garber (1976) tend to agree with Jules Henry who, describing the American teenage experience points out that:

"As they grow towards adolescence, girls do not need groups, as a matter of fact for many of the things they do more than two would be an obstacle. Boys flock: girls seldom get together in groups above four whereas for boys a group of 4 is almost useless. Boys are dependent on masculine solidarity within a relatively large group. In boys groups the emphasis is on masculine unity; in girls cliques the purpose is to shut out other girls." (p 121, 122)

Groups tend to exhibit sets of norms and values (Sherif & Sherif (1964), Coleman (1961), Hollingshead (1949), Hargreaves (1967)). Group members will conform to or deviate from the norms of the group and there will be pressure from the group to conform to these norms. High status members are more

likely than others to conform to the norms of the group but also paradoxically are more able to deviate and have less need to conform (Homans (1961), Sherif & Sherif (1964)). Much of the American literature is concerned with the relative status between groups, Coleman (1961) and within groups, Homans (1961) and Sherif & Sherif (1964). The work of Willis (1977) whose group of lads saw each other as important for helping one to have fun at school and had very clear rules and codes of behaviour particularly in regard to definitions of school and work, indicate clearly the existence and strength of group norms and values.

2.4.iii. Interaction sets

There has recently been a challenge, led by some interactionists, to the notion of peer groups and to their usefulness in the study and understanding of educational processes particularly that of classroom interaction. Furlong (1976) criticises the approach of both Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) because of their assumption that informal peer groups are the basis of pupils' social relations. Furlong (1976) claims that the approach has three major weaknesses - that

"interaction does not just 'happen' in friendship groups but is 'constructed' by 'individuals'" (p 161)

and so pupil interaction will not necessarily include friends all the time. Furlong uses the term interaction set, in describing these fluid groupings, to mean those that share a common definition of a situation. He points out that these

common definitions may be communicated non verbally by smiles, nods, looks, etc., as well as verbally. Furlong's second criticism is that the norms and values of groups of friends are not necessarily consistent.

"It would be obvious even to the most casual observer of classroom behaviour that there is no consistent culture for a group of friends"(p 161).

Thirdly, he claims that the model posited by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) based largely on American small group social psychology, suggests that there is pressure on members of a group to conform to the group norms and values. In refuting this Furlong (1976) argues that

"the culture is presented as external reality, and social behaviour is shown not so much as an interaction between two or more individuals, but as one person responding to some reified group. The implication is that the individual has little choice in his actions as he is controlled by something outside him - the group" (p161).

In summary Furlong claims that

"consistent groups do not exist in reality and observation has also shown that there is no consistent culture for a group of pupils" (163).

It should be pointed out that the observation referred to here is of one low stream 4th year class of 16 girls (13 of whom are West Indian) and the examples/evidence presented concern one of these girls who is said to be 'typical' and yet on Furlong's (1976) own admission is involved in extreme behaviour, e.g. pushing over a teacher. Delamont (1976) calls for a less static concept than 'clique' when studying classroom

interaction. She claims that the Hargreaves and Lacey categories of 'goodies' and 'badlies' are too simplistic and reveal little about classroom behaviour. Following Furlong (1976) Delamont points out that even the most 'delinquent' pupils are well behaved and conformist in some circumstances and that even the 'model' conformist may 'get into trouble'. This is a point similar to that made by Willis (1977) and Lacey (1970) but it is certainly not seen in the case of Willis' 'lads' group as being in any ways typical of their general behaviour.

With younger children (11 years old) Davies (1978), whose focus is on friendship among children, reports a very fluid situation with continual making and breaking of friendships. Opie & Opie (1959) report similarly on the instability of children's friendships.

"Perhaps because of the gregariousness of school life they make and break friends with a rapidity disconcerting to adult spectators" (p 324).

Davies does point out that this making and breaking of friends is very definitely rule governed. As Davies says (p 3)

"It is important to have someone to play with, yes, but he must play properly, and abide by the rules."

Seagoe (1933) conducting research almost 50 years ago with 9-13 year old children identified 115 best friend pairs but

"When the same question was repeated one month later only 29 of the original 115 pairs again chose each other." (p 33)

We are left with the question as to whether or not a peer group can be said to exist as a social entity and whether the concept of peer groups is useful in aiding an understanding of school and classroom behaviour. Furlong and Delamont, and to some extent Davies, would argue that at least in the context of the classroom there are no definite groupings. This may well be the case in some classrooms and or with some age groups. It also may well apply when a researcher focuses solely on the classroom although one has observed many classrooms where very definite peer groupings are obvious. The point that a certain degree of fluidity is present is taken and must be included in a model of pupils social relationships as is the point that groups or, more particularly, individuals within groups are not always consistent in their behaviour and don't consistently adhere to group norms. Nor is it invalid to state that interaction takes place between individuals of different peer group networks. However, peer group networks do exist in reality for some pupils. There are groups of pupils who interact more with each other than with other pupils in their class or year group and who exhibit relatively consistent norms, values and patterns of behaviour particularly in relation to their orientation towards school and other pupils.

2.5. Peer group culture

2.5.i. Origins and Connections with wider cultures

Three terms appear repeatedly in the literature in relation to culture - sub culture, contra culture and counter culture.

These terms are often used interchangeably and present potential for confusion. For our purposes here the differences outlined by Salter (1974) will be followed

"a sub culture....rejects far less of the major culture than does a counter culture and is therefore compatible with and acceptable to the dominant culture, whereas a contra culture is not. A contra culture....resists the major culture more than does a sub culture, but does not actively oppose and seek to change it as does a counter culture" (p 455-456).

With cultural formations among school pupils the majority will be sub cultural groupings with perhaps some of the extremes, e.g. Willis' lads, being categorized as contra cultural groups (although they can only be seen in this light in relation to the cultural values represented by the school). However while contra-cultural groups such as this oppose and reject the dominant school culture there is no attempt to seek change and so cannot be regarded (in terms of the definitions proposed here) as counter cultural movements.

Cohen (1955), whose work has been the basis of much research and theorizing particularly in the area of 'deviant' subcultures argues that failures in a social system might adapt to their failure by adopting an oppositional sub culture and conforming to the norms of that sub culture. The very definite implication in this work is that failure in terms of the norms of the dominant culture is a prerequisite for involvement in oppositional sub culture. Empirical attempts like those of Sugarman (1967) to test this proposition have tended to employ behaviour as an indicator of

involvement in a sub culture thereby eliminating the possibility that sub culture involvement causes certain types of behaviour (Phillips, 1974).

In reviewing the literature on a peer group culture, youth culture or teenage culture, one notices the considerable differences between the picture presented by researchers in the U.S.A. and that presented in this country. The issues are made increasingly difficult by the apparent lack of agreement among researchers particularly in the U.S.A. It is worth noting also that a considerable literature on youth culture exists in connection with student unrest - almost exclusively at University/College level (Katz 1974, Larkin (1974), Adler (1974), Keniston (1971), Law (1974), Schaffer (1973)). Clark and Trow (1966) present a typology (in College rather than high school) which identifies four sub cultural types: a) Collegiate, b) Vocational, c) Academic and d) non-conformist in an attempt to identify differences in orientation among American College students.

Bain and Anderson (1974) from an historical perspective argue that

"it seems highly probable that to a greater extent than formerly adolescents in the United States are influenced by other adolescents" (p 429).

Coleman (1961) very much sees youth culture as being separate from that of the wider society, although Berger (1963(a), (1963b) comments that Coleman's Youth culture with its emphasis on

'sociability, athleticism, glamour and status' seems to be a close reflection of many adult American values;

"the values and interests of adolescents revealed by Coleman's data seem to be derived from and shared by the great majority of their parents" (Berger, 1963(a): 396).

Etzioni (1978) argues that there is too great a stress being placed on the differences between age groups (youth v adults) at the expense of the considerable similarities. He comments also that classifications such as youth imply far too much homogeneity when in fact

"there is little homogeneity within each sub group of the population" (p 21).

Jensen (1970) points out that the strong claims as to the oppositional nature of youth culture made by Coleman are made in fact without comparative data on the adult world which would be necessary to substantiate these claims. Eve (1975) attempts to ascertain empirically if such a gap exists between the culture of teachers and their pupils and concludes that

"this study has provided evidence that although students do maintain a statistically distinct value system, this system is primarily conventional in its orientation and differs only to a relatively small degree from the value system of the adult world." (p 165)

He found that

"the absolute level of approval is clearly higher among students on issues concerning cheating, mischief intended to disrupt the orderly routine of the school, physical confrontation partying and drinking...only slight differences.....in approval concerning the buying and selling of drugs and the importance of automobiles...no difference between students and teachers based on importance of athletics."

Moreover, Coleman presents a picture of a uniform culture among the high school youth with no alternative culture. This is perhaps a product of his emphasis on the leading crowd with their apparent power in setting the norms of the youth culture. One is left with the impression that all American high schools consist of those who are 'in' the leading crowd and those who would like to be in the leading crowd which is very different from the position in Britain where high school populations have tended to be characterized as polarized into pro and anti school subcultures. Coleman's position follows that taken by Parsons (1964) who argues that a youth culture existed with norms and values in conflict with those of adult society. Parsons characterized youth culture as irresponsible with emphasis on having a good time and socializing with the opposite sex and a certain anti-authority stance. Parsons (1964 p 147-153) also identifies norms in the adolescent/youth sub culture which play down intellectual interests and academic performance and place excessive emphasis on athletics and sporting prowess.

La Belle (1974) similarly to Jensen (1970) argues that researchers such as Coleman and Gordon have

"not verified empirically the existence of a separate youth culture" (p 79).

He argues that while it is

"assumed that a youth sub culture encompasses both distinct and interrelated social units"

these must not be viewed in isolation and not only in terms of their respective component parts

"but in their relationship to each other as well as to the technological, ideological and institutional aspects of the wider culture and society" (p 79).

La Belle also claims that over the past 20-30 years the youth of American society have turned from adults

"to their own kind as they form sociocultural systems with which they identify and which they wish to be identified" (p 99).

Finally, La Belle argues that those youth groups are a major source of innovation and change in society.

Coleman strongly disagrees with the assertions of Hollingshead (1949) that background is the most important factor and that adequate understanding of the high school social network can only be gained by a knowledge of the community social system. Hollingshead claims that the high school pupils are very much aware of the social/structure/class system of the community. Hollingshead is also different from Coleman in that he does not treat the culture of the high school pupils as being uniform. On the contrary he lists considerable differences (p 193, 198 and 200) in the interests and activities of the various cliques and sees these differences as being very much social class related.

In England, Sugarman (1967), an American whose research was supervised at Princeton University, presents us with a polarized model of pro-school attitudes and good performance on one hand and anti school attitudes and poor performance linked directly with "commitment to youth culture/teenage role" on the

other. Sugarman argued that the young are

"exposed to the temptation of a youth culture that encourages at the least a considerable diversion of time and energy from the educational pursuits" (p 151).

He claims from his research that there are distinct values and norms among youth which conflict with that of adults and school (p 152).

Schools require commitment to a pupil role (Calvert, 1975).

Eggleston (1977) describes the ingredients of 'good' pupil role:

".....paying attention to the teacher, working hard, being committed to achieving the rewards offered by the teacher for successful conformity, no copying or showing of work to other pupils other than in specifically authorized situations, the ability to give the right answer or at least to feel suitably dismayed when for whatever reason he is unable to do so. In demeanour the good pupil is interested, enthusiastic, responsive, polite, respectful and desirous of pleasing the teacher" (p 102).

Sugarman sees commitment to the pupil role as being significant in two respects - it entails a willingness to delay gratification and preparedness to accept subordinate status. Accordingly success at school is achieved by adopting the pupil role in preference to the teenage role. Sugarman's results produced high correlations between teenage commitment and anti school attitudes, high teenage commitment was linked with low scores on future orientation, high teenage commitment was associated with underachievement and high teenage commitment was associated

with poor conduct ratings. Research by Grinder (1969) in the U.S.A.* largely supports this position. Although Grinder does argue that some element of youth culture, particularly dating, is participated in by the successful as well as the less successful student. Askov et al (1975) found a correlation between sub cultural interests and social responsibility. Sugarman also sees commitment to youth culture as a very much class related phenomenon when he says

"Youth culture....is in this sense the culture of the non-mobile working class, the downwardly mobile and those who cherish hopes of mobility along channels where the criteria of school do not apply" (p 160).

While Hargreaves, Lacey and Willis pursue a 'two subcultures' theme they differ from Sugarman in that they do not link quite so tightly the anti school orientation to that of youth/teenage culture. Hargreaves identifies very different cultural patterns between the top half and the bottom half of the 15 year old group specifically these differences are focussed on the different orientations to school. Lacey presents pro and anti school subgroup cultures but adds to his analysis the notion that the lives of the boys in his study are compartmentalized into areas which require different role appropriate behaviour. He says:

"The picture that emerges from the data of a developing discreteness of roles and a disfunction between the world of the school and the adolescent peer group" (p 121).

Both Willis and Hargreaves (both of whose research was conducted in Secondary Modern Schools) as well as presenting a picture of pro and anti school sub groups vividly describe the activities of

* Because of the considerable cultural differences between the U.S.A. and England it is important not to ignore the difficulties in comparing school culture in the two countries.

the group at the most extreme end of the anti school groups. These groups - Willis' 'lads' and Hargreaves delinquent group - represent the extreme in the rejection of school norms and values and for them there is no ideal clear distinction between life inside school and life outside school. The development of the lads culture

"start from the school and steadily moves out to the street and the neighbourhood drawing with it a larger and larger content of working class value attitudes and practices." (p 72)

Much earlier Webb (1962) in describing a Secondary modern school sees the behaviour of the boys being definitely linked to social class cultural factors. He says

"To grow up like this (i.e. the way the school wants them to - "neat, orderly, polite and servile" (p 266) a lad has to be really cut off from the pull of the social class and gang..." (p 267)

In this way Webb, like Willis, argues that the lads by being spontaneous, irrepressible and rule breaking are preparing for the world of work where because of its monotony

"sanity is only possible by being, when not working, irrepressible, spontaneous and rule breaking - qualities which harmoniously Black School helps to develop." (p 267)

He argues that it is not school that turns these lads into delinquents

"but only that it helps to make them, because, by providing the gang with a very tangible enemy (the drill-sergeant teacher and his standards) it helps the gang to define itself." (p 266)

Foster (1974) in a study of school provision for lower class blacks in the United States posits clear connections between the culture of the pupils in school and elements of the neighbourhood class culture. He argues that the school will never be successful because it is playing according to a different set of rules.

He claims

"The rules actually running the schools are the informal rules set by the students which evolve from lower class urban black male street corner behaviour and life style" (p 179).

Hargreaves differs quite radically from both Willis and Lacey in that he found little connection between social class and sub cultural formation. Hargreaves found that the sub cultural polarization was closely related to the streaming procedures within the school and he states quite clearly that at Lumley school streaming does not reflect selection by social classes (p 14). Hargreaves (1967, p 166-168), following Cohen's (1955) typology of social class behaviour, does of course identify many of the elements of the culture of the pro school groups in being middle class and the inversion or rejection of those values as being elements in the culture of the anti school groups. However Hargreaves found very little positive correlation between the composition of the various school streams and social class origins. This is an important conceptual point. One must distinguish between the cultural forms of a particular group and their possible social class origins and the social class origins of the members of a group. It is the latter here that is being addressed by Hargreaves (the former is of course the primary concern of Willis). He does suggest that the lower streams and the delinquent group are more likely to come from larger families but that the 'home status table' (ownership, hot water, inside toilet, bathroom, washing machine, refrigerator, car) provided no clear patterns. However in selecting out the delinquent group which he does say are very different from the rest, he does note

that some of the delinquent group norms are supported by some parents (organized crime, smoking, drinking, vandalism) (p 132).

Willis, who acknowledges the 'pioneering work' of Hargreaves, takes these early attempts of Hargreaves and offers us a much more sophisticated analysis of the phenomena that Hargreaves is grappling with in this analysis of the delinquent groups. Willis identifies considerable similarities between the 'lads' counter school culture and working class shop floor culture -

"counter school culture has many profound similarities with the culture its members are mostly destined for shop floor culture" (p 52)

The lads are acquiring the orientation necessary for employment as manual shop floor labourers, i.e. 'learning to labour'. Willis, however, does not present an inflexible, mechanistic, structuralist argument and is more concerned with the reproduction of cultural forms and social relations and readily acknowledges that some non conformist parents are somewhat embarrassed by their conformist sons and vice versa, and that there must be a degree of independence between parents and kids and that parents are only one set of bearers of culture. It is the reproduction of cultured forms and social relations rather than the individual bearers or the origins of individual bearers that concerns Willis.

Lacey, in a Grammar school, finds a clash between the dominant peer group culture which is orientated towards school and what he terms neighbourhood culture especially in the case of the pupils from working class neighbourhoods. This conflict, he argues, can lead to an ambivalence in attitudes to school for working class pupils. It is this ambivalence which predisposes working class boys to the anti group culture. (p 143).

It can be argued that the status of teenage/youth culture has changed since Sugarman conducted his research in the mid 1960's when he argues that involvement with youth culture was accompanied by anti school attitudes and the rejection of the intellectual and school orientated norms and values. Since then the nature/status of youth culture has probably changed and it is no longer necessarily viewed as so anti-establishment. Hence it can be argued (Delamont 1976, Murdock and Phelps, 1973) that the relationship between youth culture and teenage commitment to school is much more complicated than the relationship presented by authors in the 1960's. So one would want to treat as problematic any correspondence between youth culture and attitudes to school.

Ball (1977) in his study is quite clear when he says

"From 2nd year onwards involvement in 'adolescent' activities becomes important for almost all of the pupils both pro and anti school. All pupils are beginning to participate in forms of collective teenage culture." (p 4). However, he adds "but only some, usually among the anti school pupils, make use of the culture as an alternative to set against the values sponsored by the school" (p 4).

The relationship between teenage commitment and school is probably much more complex than that outlined by Ball and one questions whether the values sponsored by the school are as homogeneous as is implied here.

Birkstead (1976) while not presenting a polarized model - the group of 6 boys studied by him varied considerably in the levels of attainment depending, Birkstead argues, on their particular employment ambitions - identifies the familiar cultural traits described by the host of other researchers who have concentrated on anti school groups. He described the 'life' of his group as

".....a relaxed and informal gathering, playing cards, listening to music, having a smoke, chatting, laughing and talking". (p 68)

However, differently from other research findings the behaviour in class would vary and depend on the individuals employment ambitions and the relevance of the particular subject to these ambitions.

Bradley (1977), consistent with the findings of King and Easthope (1973) found that peer group cliques exhibited similar levels of school achievement and sees peer groups forming along a much more pro-anti continuum with the concomitant effects of educational success.

Quine (1974) argues that

"The two cultures theme of the interactionist studies may be an over polarization of the facts." (p 10)

He found no clear differentiation between intra school sub groups

in terms of commitment to anti or pro school attitudes. This finding not only challenges the polarization model but challenges the notion that peer groups form and share common attitudes and orientation towards school. He goes on to say (p 13) that he found great difficulty in obtaining the stimulating controversial anti school quotes that are so often reported. The pupils from the two schools (both working class comprehensives) in the study seemed to accept the school system and he was surprised that on the whole the pupils in the lower sets were positively favourable to schools. (He comments on how different this is from the results of Hargreaves and to a less extent Lacey and other interactionist and statistical surveys in Britain (p13)). Quine argues that this supports the findings of Werthman (1963) who claims that

"during middle adolescence.....there seems to be no relationship between academic performance and "trouble". (p 39)

Quine argues then for a picture that is perhaps not black against white but a gradual and impenetrable spectrum of merging colours (p 23). Woods (1976), admittedly in a school in a more rural setting, found

"two groups in the school, one oriented officially, the other unofficially". (p 182)

He goes on to say that this latter group were not as distinctively anti school as the groups described by Hargreaves and Lacey.

2.5.ii. Peer Group Cultural Elements : What peer groups are like

Coleman (Chapter 11) describes the American High School adolescent culture in the late 1950's and early 1960's, as being somewhat different for boys and girls; with boys being more active than

girls, and with school activities except sport being more the province of girls than boys. Activities, such as arranging the year book, cheer leading, and clubs are more the domain of the girls, while sport remains very much the major concern of the boys. Boys spend more time watching T.V. and less time doing homework than do girls. Their more common interests are in pop music, records, evenings out and evenings at home. Coleman concludes that boys tend to be more varied in their interests. Cars are important in the adolescent culture. At 16 a boy can obtain his driver's licence and a high percentage own or have use of cars. Coleman comments that a car is seen as being essential for dating and as a symbol of maturity. Athletics is seen as more important in the adolescent value system than academic achievement (a conclusion also reached by Tannenbaum).

These findings have been supported more recently by Eitzen (1975) who in replicating some aspects of Coleman's study found that

".....athletics remain very important in the status system of teenage males. If anything, the present data indicate a slightly greater enthusiasm for sports than Coleman found." (p270)

Researchers subsequent to Coleman have disputed his view of the adolescent society where commitment to either athletic or academic values means a loss to the other and argues (Spady 1970, 1971) Rehberg and Schafer, 1968) that the two subcultures are limited and that athletics positively affects educational attainment with the peer group mediating the effects of athletics on educational aspirations. Similarly Otto and Alwin (1977) found

"support for the hypothesis that athletics has a positive effect on educational aspirations and attainment". (p 110)

Snyder and Spreitzer (1977) found a positive relationship between participation in sport and academic orientation in their sample of Ohio high school girls (p 53).

Coleman found that for girls leadership in activities, popularity, attractiveness and popularity with boys for dates is seen as being more important than brilliance as a student ('brilliant' girls tend to fare badly in the dating stakes). To be part of the leading crowd, which according to Coleman is aspired to by all, girls need to have a good personality, good looks, date boys have a good reputation, parents with money and coming from the right neighbourhood are also important to some degree.

"The leading crowd seems to be defined primarily in terms of social success; their personality, clothes, desirability, dates, and in communities where social success is tied closely to family background - their money and family". (p 39)

For boys the necessary attributes are athletic ability, a sense of humour, money, cars, good personality and a boy must not go out with girls of 'dubious' reputation. Tannenbaum (1962) makes the point that it isn't academic achievement itself which is devalued but the expenditure of too much effort to achieve which is.

Hollingshead lists many similar activities but unlike Coleman identifies very definite class cleavages in the activities and attitudes of the various adolescent group. For example in working class groups male adequacy to hold a 'man's' job is

as an important element and pocket money is earned by taking part-time employment - even the nature of this part-time employment varies according to social class location with class one and two pupils 'looking down on' those who need to take a part-time job to earn their pocket money. Hollingshead provides us with considerable numbers of examples, such as cinema attendance patterns and which cafes and drug stores are frequented, of the class cultural differences in the activities of high school cliques. As has been discussed earlier, differently to Coleman, Hollingshead sees interests and activities varying greatly according to the social class of the group involved.

Several researchers have noted that importance of non standard language in youth cultures. Schwartz and Merton (1967) see youth culture as consisting of

"these adolescent norms, standards and values which are discussed in language particularly intelligible to members of this age group". (p 457)

Nelsen and Rosenbaum (1972) following Lewis (1963) suggest that the slang of the adolescent youth culture serves

"to identify youth as culturally distinct; to transmit values and norms; to express approval; hostility and other attitudes; and reinforce the selective perceptions of the social environment." (p 273)

In this country Sugarman (1967) saw youth culture, which was in conflict with that of adults and school (p 153), or commitment to the teenage role as being indicated by: the pop scene, smoking, and going out with girls.

"Commitment to the role of teenager was defined in terms of behavioural indicators with pupils reporting their

own habits. Their concept of 'making the teenscene' seemed to correspond quite well with spontaneous hedonism... Under this rubric pupils reported whether they considered themselves regular listeners to pop music radio stations, wearers of teenage fashions, keen dancers or frequenters of coffee bars. Two further items of youth culture were.....smoking and going out with girls."

As Sugarman had earlier explained

"This is the role of a 'teenager' which is, roughly, an inversion of the official 'pupil' role". (p 154)

There are numerous descriptions of the culture of pro and anti school groups (Hargreaves, Lacey, Ball, Willis, Quine, Birkstead, Hollingshead, Woods, Reynolds etc.). The pro school sub culture is characterized by features such as: liking school, working hard with school work, getting on well with teachers, against 'mucking about', punctuality for lessons, regular attendance, neat tidy dress, wearing of school uniform, no copying, always doing the set homework, answering questions in class. While the anti school sub culture is characterized by the researchers by such features as: having fun, think school is a waste of time, avoid academic work whenever possible, don't like boys who answer a lot of questions, high status is accorded to 'clowns', copying allowed especially with homework and where possible in tests, high status accorded to good fighters, less emphasis on cleanliness, more emphasis on alternative dress, don't like wearing ties, long hair, messing about as an alternative to work, boys who are acceptable to teachers unacceptable, absenteeism, truanting, smoking in the playground, late for lessons, opposition to authority, part-time work. Most authors also report that the boys were fully aware of the differences between the cliques and also in the differential treatment of the various groups by teachers.

The delinquent groups which Hargreaves describes and the lads described by Willis represent the extreme expression of this anti school sub culture. They represent what the teachers would describe as 'worst' groups in the cohort of pupils studied. In these groups we find the manifestation of the extremes of the anti school subculture and as both Willis and Hargreaves comment while the group may have started within school as they have developed they have embraced elements of culture (working class in the case of the Willis lads) and there becomes no clear distinction between life in school and life out of school. Fighting becomes increasingly important as does involvement in organized crime, drinking, vandalism, hooliganism and a complete rejection and inversion of school norms and values. Their opposition to authority and rejection of the conformist becomes a 'style' a 'way' where the celebration of the masculinity of manual labour, sexual superiority and sexism, racism (Willis) as well as fighting becomes the norms of the group. School has become a waste of time, a forced holiday, its only usefulness is in meeting mates for a laff. Mental labour is regarded as effeminate and there is a rejection of the idea of qualifications. They feel they know better and its only the 'ear oles' that need qualifications because they

".....do not have the imagination or wit to do things any other way" (Willis p 95).

2.5.iii. The absence of girls from pupil subculture literature

It is glaringly obvious that the previous few pages have been devoted to descriptions of the elements of male school culture. However, as mentioned earlier, it is exceedingly difficult to

document as comprehensively similar accounts for girls. McRobbie and Garber (1976) attempt to explore some of the reasons for the absence of girls from the literature on peer group subculture which they feel is striking and demands explanation. Very little is written about girls or the role of girls in subcultural grouping and when they are referred to it is usually in ways that

"uncritically reinforce the stereotypical image of women" (p 209).

Is it that girls are not present in youth subculture or is their omission simply a product of the dominance of male researchers? McRobbie and Garber cite Willis, whose portrayal of girls is that of giggling sex objects, and ask the following questions:

"Are they typical responses to a male researcher, influenced by the fact that he is a man, by his personal appearance, attractiveness, etc? Or are the responses influenced by the fact that he is identified by the girls as 'with the boys' studying them and in some way siding with them in their evaluation of the girls? Or are these responses characteristic of the way girls customarily negotiate the spaces provided for them in a male dominated and defined culture? (p 210).

In general McRobbie and Garber feel that boys are much more likely to take up sub cultural options than girls. So

"If sub cultural options are not readily available to girls, what are the different but complementary ways in which girls organize their cultural life? And are these in their own terms, subcultural in form? (Girls sub cultures may have become invisible because the very term 'sub cultures' has acquired such strong masculine overtones)" (p 211).

The different moral standards set for boys and girls particularly by their parents may act as a contributory factor in preventing the involvement of girls in sub cultural options. Despite the claim that there is now a new equality between the sexes and there are no longer 'double standards' which may in fact be an

expression of the way things ought to be rather than the way things are,

".....perspectives traditionally associated with sexual subcultures are still influencing males and females differently". (Berg, 1975: 543-547).

It is almost certainly a mistake to try and locate girls either by indicating a presence or absence of girls in the male sub cultures. Further research needs to be conducted into the ways in which girls interact with each other to see if girls possess a distinctive sub culture of their own. It may well be that girls youth culture is similar, in form if not in activities, to that of boys. In a later work McRobbie (1978) explores some of the contradictions and unresolved conflicts which girls culture, situated as it is in a male dominated society and as female inheritors of a culture of femininity, had to deal with and accommodate. The results of the research leads McRobbie to claim

"The repertoire of responses was typified by an ultimate if not wholesale endorsement of the traditional female role and of femininity, simply because to the girls these seemed to be perfectly 'natural'" (p 97).

The girls extended the natural biological capacities of a woman to include her social location in the household and so

"although aspects of the female role were constantly being questioned, such criticism precluded the possibility of a more radical restructuring of the female role because ultimately, it was the woman who had the children." (p 98)

Two factors 'saved' the girls from these 'unalterable' facts of life - their best friend relationships which they saw as

lasting after marriage and

"their immersion in the ideology of romance" (p 98).

These two factors were dominant in the cultural life of the girls. The majority of the girls earned pocket money by doing household chores and their life was very much within the confines of the estate - home - school - youth club.

Lambart's 'sisterhood' provides us with perhaps the best example of a girls' peer group. The group saw themselves very much as a group and were seen by the staff as being a deviant group. They were not however academically weak and in fact were 'keen' on school and were in the top groups for the various subjects. The norms of the group prevented them from being too keen, all had "a sense of fun bordering on mischief" and seized any opportunity to disregard the rules. The sisterhood always ate their lunches together, met after school and often helped each other with housework. All got 'good' 'O' level passes in the end. Lambart claims that the sisterhood is of interest in that it shows

"how factors determined both within and outside the school interacted through its formal and informal structures.." (p 152)

King (1973) while not specifically addressing the question of girls' peer networks found that second year girls (age 12-13) were more 'involved' in school and school activities than boys but by the fifth year this difference disappears in all types of school (secondary modern, grammar, comprehensive). Bellaby (1974) found that 'hostility to school' occurred as frequently among girls as

among boys and that girls more often than boys reported having stayed out of a lesson (53% opposed to 39% (p 172)).

Sampson and Watkins (1976) found girls to hold more favourable attitudes to school than boys and also that older children (both boys and girls) hold less favourable attitudes to school than younger children.

Davies (1978) in her exploration of rules of friendship among 11 year old Australians finds her subjects adamant that there are no different rules for friendship between boys and girls. She goes on to list (p 3) some of the rules mentioned most frequently by the children. However Fox (1977) with a similar sample revealed distinct differences between boys and girls. For boys a friend is someone who : does things for you, doesn't pick on you, helps you with work, plays with you, defends you, tells the teacher what he thinks, where as for girls a friend : plays nice, doesn't tease, is nice to be with and have fun with, lives nearby, plays with you, is good at school, plays properly, and takes turns and doesn't leave you on your own. (p 3). Fox suggests also that rule following is more crucial to the girls and so

"a girl is acceptable if she can read the culture of the group and fit in" (p 3).

On the other hand boys

"do not so readily throw each other out: they have their fights but they stick together." (p 3)

This follows somewhat the work presented by Opie and Opie (1959) who claim that boys are realists and the most important character-

istic in a friend is that he should like playing the same games as they do. Girls on the other hand are more concerned with lending things, sharing sweets and are very conscious of their friends appearance (p 323).

While one is able to gain from the literature a picture of anti school peer groups culture (which may in some ways be biased towards the extreme) the picture one gets of the pro school sub culture is less clear (and considerably less frequent) while, if there is a continuum those of the middle are non existent. Additionally there are doubts as to whether or not all peer groups form and develop, similar, cohesive orientations towards school. The position of girls, particularly in the mixed comprehensive system in this country, and the grouping pattern and social relations remains largely unexplored as does the relationships and interaction patterns between boys and girls in coeducational establishments.

2.6. The Formation of Peer Groups

Of those authors who have attempted in any way to explain and account for the emergence of peer groups or friendship association the most commonly argued determinant is that of family background - the Socio-economic status of the child's parents (usually 'measured' by the occupation of the father) - with many children from like backgrounds getting together to form groups. Many researchers argue in favour of this as being the major factor as to why individual

school pupils come together to form social groupings. Hollingshead (1949) argues that the clique formation is very closely related to the families position in the community social structure. Warner (1942 p 26) states

"The clique operates as an instrument of the social structure which excludes persons born to the lower social levels from participating with those born to higher social status. At the same time the clique functions to include members of the higher class with others of their kind. In other words, the clique system ordinarily helps reward those who are higher in class and punish those who are at lower social levels."

Similarly, Neugarten (1946) claims that children selected as friends those from their own socio-economic status level and that there is a high degree of relationship between a family's social position and the friendship status of the child. Sugarman (1967) states that

"In this study teenage commitment, achievement and conduct were all found to be related to a common prior factor, namely the intellectual quality of the pupils home background." (p 158)

In a study on orientation to and disaffection with a California high school, Stinchcombe (1964) predicted successfully that those pupils experiencing status frustration are most likely to be hostile to school and that this is most likely to be found among middle class boys who find themselves in a low non-academic stream. He argues that middle class boys are more ambitious than working class boys and those who see their paths blocked are more likely to rebel and be found in anti school sub-cultural groups. Barker-Lunn (1970) in her extensive study found that children chose friends from similar social class while Nash (1973)



showed that clique formation was significantly associated with social class.

Similarly, Lambart (1976) in her study of a girls' grammar school found socio economic status and the previous junior school attended to be the two most important factors in peer group formation but adds

".....it was demonstrated that both were shared factors among various groups and pairs in all three forms but neither factors fully explained the informal structure of any form" (p 153)

Lambart is here indicating a degree of autonomy in the process by which peer groups form. Attempts to chart these processes can at best only reveal tendencies - to attempt to find water-tight causal relationships is foolish and to find them is a gross distortion. Most authors see socio economic status as one of the many factors which combine and interact to render a description or explanation of peer group formation an extremely difficult task and attempt at which is likely to present an over simplified picture. *

While many authors may not place as much emphasis on socio economic status as some of the above, only a few have reported results similar to that of Oppenheim (1955) who in his study of London grammar school boys found that socio economic status did not affect sociometric choice. Ford (1969) conducting research in a streamed comprehensive school found that social class was a relatively insignificant factor in peer group formation but suggests that the social class one aspires to may be more important. Blyth (1958) found that in a class of ten year old boys clique formation was not based on social class. Spencer (1972) using dicotomous middle class/working class categories found

*Care needs to be taken in moving between S.E.S., Social Class and Class. These terms are often interchanged and sometimes confused. S.E.S. tends to be drawn from the American literature based on a Weberian framework and often derived from census data, Social Class may be the same but is usually more amorphous while, for example, Willis uses class in a classed Marxist

no correlations between social class and sub cultural formation among a group of 14-15 year olds in their final compulsory year at school. King and Easthope (1973) using a similar dicotomous classification found that social class did not appear to be an important criterion for friendship choice.

Lacey (1970) found that peer group formation was highly correlated with stream placement - this became particularly evident after streaming in the second year which was the organizational pattern of this grammar school - which he argues was largely conditioned but not completely determined by external factors such as social class, parental education and parental attitudes towards education. Because the vast majority of friendship groups are within class/form group boundaries and because stream placement tended to be closely associated with social class factors the organization of the school is seen as playing a constraining role.

It is important to note though that the school organization doesn't determine friends but tends to limit the groups/population from which friends are chosen, a point noted by Segoe as early as 1933. From this organizational group the tendency is for a boy (in this case) to choose friends whom he likes and respects and whom he sees as being similar to him. In other words

"those with a similar response to the dominant social pressures tend to coalesce, that is, choose each other as friends." (Lacey p 95)

O'Reilly and Illenberg (1971) also argue from their research that

different organizational patterns within the classroom will affect sociometric choice and peer group formation.

Hargreaves (1967), although placing more emphasis on the organizational constraints and being primarily concerned with subcultural polarization not just peer group formation, sees sociometric choice as being very much stream specific with other factors such as home backgrounds, teacher allocation and teacher attitudes being crucial in the subcultural development and differentiation. Hargreaves (1967) sees this process as being a function of four mutually reinforcing variables. Firstly the home

"which predisposes the child to an acceptance or rejection of school values". (p 175)

Secondly the organization of the school, particularly the system of transfers between streams which leads to convergence of boys with similar orientations in the same stream, and the differential allocation of teachers to these streams. Thirdly the

"pressure towards conformity to the informal norms of the stream increase the pressures towards uniformity of values...." (p 175)

and finally

"the tendency of teachers to favour and reward high stream boys at the expense of their peers in the low streams" (176).

In addition, Nash (1973), in reviewing the literature argues

"that it is the system and process of streaming which is responsible for the formation of friendship cliques differentiated by their strongly favourable or unfavourable attitude towards school".

Further, Gordon (1963), argues that adolescent social systems are at least in part derived from the schools organizational context.

And finally, and maybe obviously King and Easthope (1973), state that

"pupils tend to choose friends from those whom they come into contact with most frequently in school." (p 21)

Coleman, who was primarily concerned with the formation and status of the leading crowd, found that most cliques were wholly within one grade (85% of choices confined to the grade) and Hollingshead reports

"corrected coefficient of contingency of 0.86 for the boys and 0.90 for the girls when the clique relations of each sex were correlated with class in school. These co-efficients indicate that clique ties are limited in a large part to a boys' or girls' class in school....." (p 210-211).

However, Lambart (1976) notes that among her sample of girls there was considerable inter-form grouping and cliques were not specifically based on one class group (although they remained within the year group). The girls themselves claimed that this developed when they were put into different sets. Condry and Siman (1974) and Siman (1977) also report inter-class groupings within the same year group.

By implication at least, although this is not stated specifically by King and Easthope (1973), age is an important determinant in peer groups formation and this seems to be common in all studies. Several studies list: geographical and residential location and so frequency and ease of contact (Hollingshead (1949), Lambart (1976), Smith (1944), Segoe (1933), Blyth (1961) Ebbesen et al (1976)); previous school attended (Lacey (1970), Lambart (1976), Nash (1973);

ability and or level of attainment (Lambart (1976), Bonney (1944), King and Easthope (1973), Baker-Lunn (1970), Nash (1973), Blyth (1958), Bradley (1977), Segoe (1933), Barbe (1954). Willig (1963) found that girls in unstreamed classes tended to choose friends with a similar I.Q. but that this tendency was less true for boys. Deitrich (1964) reports a tendency for children in both streamed and mixed ability organizational forms to choose friends with similar 'intelligence'. However, Damico (1975) found that students do not form cliques on the basis of ability. The differences between individuals within cliques for both males and females varied considerably.

"The range of difference within individual cliques varied between 3 and 65 percentile points with a mean difference of 36.8" (p 97-98).

However, when Damico looked at achievement - grade point average - she found

"that group membership is a better predictor of grade point average at the .01 level for the total class of students (loners excluded)" (p 98).

Werthman (1963) lists physical power and in much of the American literature athletic prowess for boys and beauty and popularity for girls (Coleman (1961), Tannenbaum (1968)) are important attributes for membership of the leading crowd and presumably the last of these attributes are important in the formation of 'non leading crowd' groups although, because of the almost exclusive focus on status and the leading crowd, this is never explained by Coleman. Blyth (1958) also lists religious denomination; and Damico (1975), Schofield and Sagar (1977), Singleton and Asher (1977) identify

race as an important determinant.

Sex appears to be a crucial determinant in peer group formation.

Mixed sex groups appear to be rare and cross sex choices few.

Seagoe (1933) reports:

"It is significant that in all 115 pairs there were no choices between members of the opposite sex."

Using both sociometric and observational data collection techniques in a study of 9 year old children in a multi racial school, Singleton and Asher (1977) found both race and sex to be significant determinants of sociometric choice in both the play and work spheres. Nash (1973) found very definite sex cleavage -

"almost invariably boys choose boys and girls choose girls" - in his study conducted among 12-13 year old boys and girls. Blyth (1960) states in reviewing the sociometric/peer group research:

"The intensity of the sex cleavage is always high and in pre-adolescence sometimes this sex cleavage is complete."

Schofield and Sagar (1977) in a multi-racial middle school saw sex as being the most important criteria for peer group formation. They also claim from their research that girls showed more 'racial aggregation' than boys. Similarly Damico (1975) and King and Easthope (1973) report definite sex cleavage. Some caution, however, is required as, particularly in this country with the lack of research in coeducational establishments and in boy/girl interactions in those schools, the apparent cleavage between boys and girls may simply be as a result of the focus on single sex institutions. The recent study by Ball (1977) focussed on a mixed group. More work is required in this area.

There is also a component which is identified in various ways by many authors as attitude or orientation toward school, an interest and involvement in certain types of institutions and a preference for certain types of behaviour. In discussing the formation of groups Lambart's 'sisterhood' identified involvement in special activities and common attitudes to school as being important - not so much pro or anti school but more an approach or how they coped with it. Lambart (1976) also notes that often girls who are victimized by either other pupils or teachers form groups. This may be the special characteristic that brings this group together. Similarly, Sugarman's (1967) research indicated that a level of commitment to 'youth culture' marks an individual eligible for some groups or cliques and ineligible for others. Bellaby (1974) in attempting to account for the distribution of deviance among 13-14 year olds in three comprehensives argues that the commonly proposed themes of culture clash - working class kids in a middle class school - and/or status frustration - the failure to successfully compete for the few rewards offered by the school which became manifest in the streaming and setting procedures of the school - are insufficient to explain the emergence of deviance in schools. He claims further that orientation to schooling (as well as the disciplinary regime in the school) is an important intervening factor in the connection between social class, stream and attitudes and conduct at school. This orientation to school is aided by a labelling process with both home and school active in defining the label. He says, however,

"that class is correlated with orientation to schooling;
there are more leavers among working class than middle

class children, and more ambitious students who are middle class than working class. Yet workers' children who are ambitious behave and seemingly feel much as do other ambitious students and the same applies to middle class children who are not ambitious. Thus an account of hostility to teachers must be given in different terms from 'status frustration' or 'culture clash' (p 176-178).

Nash (1973) found the age at which a pupil wanted to leave school as the most useful indication of attitude and orientation to school and found a high correlation between clique formation and preferred school leaving age. Differentiation and polarization occurs from the second year onwards as in a streamed Grammar school boys begin to make friends with others who share similar attitudes to school (Lacey 1970).

Hargreaves (1976) following Cohen (1955) and Becker (1963) argues that deviant school groups 'create' their own culture as a response to their common problems, in his words:

"members with the same problems come together and make exploratory gestures; that is probing and tentative moves towards a solution to their problems. By a process of mutual exploration leading to joint acceptance, the group creates a deviant subculture as a solution to their problems" (Hargreaves p 206).

Cohen (1955) argues that the

"crucial condition for the emergence of new cultural forms is the existence in effective interaction with one another, of a number of actors with similar problems of adjustment." (Hargreaves p 206)

While Becker (1963) takes a similar line when he states

"From a sense of common fate, from having to face the same problems, grows a deviant subculture; a set of perspectives and understandings about what the world is like and how to deal with it, and a set of routine activities based on those perspectives" (Hargreaves p 206)

That pupils who are experiencing 'problems' in school may come together is not in dispute but the above three authors fail to recognize the social/structural forces and cultural elements existing and readily available to these 'actors'. The notion that they do or can 'create' their own culture is misleading. 'Actors' are not completely free to define their own reality or create their own culture and as Willis (1977) has so admirably shown the cultural elements drawn upon by these 'deviants' to help solve their 'problems' are readily available in existing class cultural forms.

The classic concept of alienation* has been used by Seeman (1959), among others to account for the disaffected school pupils who because of their alienation from school norms and values look to each other to form friendship groups and find support in other subcultural values. Blumenkrentz and Tapp (1973) taking this concept have attempted to develop a measure for classroom alienation that they hope

"will be the basis for a reorientation of educational systems towards socially meaningful objectives" (p109).

Birkstead (1976), however, identifies a mixture of attitudes to school and of different levels of school attainment in the group of 6 fifteen year old lads studied by him. However, the boys did not see school as a major organizing principle in their lives but rather they

"evaluated the usefulness of school to them in terms of their occupational plans for the future and they aim at passing the appropriate exams accordingly" (p 73).

*This of course changes the original purpose and meaning of alienation.

Among the pupils studied by Willis the development of the 'lads' group was seen, by the lads at least, as a very much chance occurrence. They just 'sort of knew' who the 'lads' type were and their accounts relate very much chance meetings and factors for why they came together. Their accounts maintain that up until the 2nd year of the secondary school everyone was an 'ear 'ole' and it was only during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years that some of the pupils broke from this pattern. One is left with the impression that up till this period there were no groupings and that the situation was very fluid and it was only after this time that groupings of any consequence emerged.

The factors affecting the formation of peer groups are complex and varied. There is no easy formula by which the emergence of peer groups can be understood rather it is a complex interaction of many factors many of which are mutually reinforcing. There is also a complex set of factors dealing with interpersonal attraction and personality characteristics which would need to be added to provide an even fuller and more complicated picture. As can be seen from the vast number of studies noted in this section researchers have searched extensively for the factors affecting peer group formation and have amassed a very long list. This illustrates the complex nature of peer group formation and highlights the difficulty of research in this area.

2.7. Peer Network Effects

2.7.i. Influence over attitudes to and attainment at school

Researchers have devoted considerable time and effort to the study of peer group influence and ascribe considerable importance to the power of the peer group as determiners of attitudes and behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1967, Festinger et al 1967). Nunn (1971), who links peer groups effects with academic attainment, conducted his research on the assumption that

"one of the most plausible explanations of the peer group effect seems to be in terms of the rewards - punishment powers of the peer group which are exercised on peer group members in accordance with members conformity to peer norms and values".

It is important however to realize at the outset that

"attitudes and behaviour also 'determine' the composition of small groups. The true variables have a dialectic relationship". (Lacey 1970, p 96)

Schmuck (1971) who has concentrated on peer groups among school children has no doubt about the immense power and influence of the peer group

"especially during adolescence peer groups demand conformity from a youngster as the price for acceptance. From middle childhood through adolescence as the youngsters dependence on and effectiveness in the peer group increases peers' power to exact conformity is concomitantly enhanced. Also, of course, conformity tendencies are enhanced as a peer groups standards are internalized, because of loyalty feelings and fears of rejection. By this process norms of the peer group become attitudes of the individual..... Individual students within their peer group behave predictably, largely because of their adherence to shared expectations of what is appropriate in the peer group. Norms are compelling stabilizers because individuals in the peer group monitor one another's behaviour and fear being rejected. It is this strength of sharedness that makes adolescent peer groups so resistant to changes....." (p 520-521).

Keeves (1972:196-7) in a study of peer influence on attitudes and achievement in Maths and Science suggests that peer influence can have both positive and negative effects. He finds

"....activities with peers and friends either might or might not be detrimental to attitudes towards schooling and the subject of mathematics and science."

For some students the activities within the peer groups appeared to strengthen their attitudes towards education, but for others peer group pastimes appeared to give rise to unfavourable attitudes to schooling.

Goffman (1971) highlights the uniform style of behaviour of peer groups - in this case anti school when he says

".....of all the techniques used by gang members to communicate rejection of authority, by far the most suitable and annoying to teachers is demeanour..... The essential ingredients.....are a walking pace that is a little too slow for the occasion, a straight back, shoulders slightly stooped, hands in pockets, and eyes that carefully avert any party to the interaction. There are also clothing aides which enhance the effect such as boot or shoe taps and a hat if the science takes place indoors. It is the teacher who must make the first move. Teachers do not miss it but they have great difficulty in finding anything to attack."

Rosser and Harre (1976) provide us with examples of how peers very definitely regulate behaviour. A pupil describes the situation faced by him in classes where there is general disruption and 'dossing'.

"You can't really work, so you've got the choice. You either stand up and walk out and go to a different class, or just join in. If you walk out of the class you get called all the names under the sun, 'cissy' and 'pouff' and all that crap, so you just join in..."(p 176)

The nature of these peer group processes have been the subject of theorizing (Heider (1958), Newcomb (1966), Secord and Blackman (1964), Homans (1961), Thibaut and Kelley (1959)). Attempts to measure peer group influences have been made by Schmuck (1971), Alexander and Campbell (1964), Coleman (1961), Rossi (1966), McDill and Rigsby (1973), Rigsby (1970) and there have also been attempts to separate out peer group influence from what is usually called 'value climate' (McDill and Rigsby (1973), Coleman et al 1966) and other social and structural influences (Alexander and Campbell (1964) McDill and Rigsby (1973)).

Heider's (1958) work was concerned with the development of 'balance' theory, the main elements of which can be summarized as follows. Firstly, where two or more persons form a group a state of balance and equilibrium exists when both or all have positive liking for each other. Secondly, individuals of similar backgrounds and interest will tend to be attracted to each other. And thirdly, according to balance theory a group's balance or equilibrium is the described state so when imbalance occurs there is a tendency to re-establish the balanced state (Marlow and Gergen (1969)). Following the lines of this theory one would predict that the greater the mutual liking and attachment among two or more group members, the more likely they are to share and develop common attitudes, behaviours, aspirations and that the greater the similarity in background

interest and behaviour among two or more individuals the greater the likelihood of them being attracted to each other (McDill and Rigsby (1973). Newcombe (1953, 1961) extends the work of Heider, particularly in relation to peer group influences in educational settings. Newcombe (1961) in a state of friendship formation among new college students found that students whose attitudes were similar tended to become friends and that in general friendship choices changed more than attitudes. This research highlights the fundamental problem in the assessment of measurement of peer influences.

"People choose their friends on the basis of compatible values, etc., as well as being influenced in those values and behaviour by their friends." (McDill and Rigsby, 1973: 93) (my emphasis).

In summary then: friends are selected on the basis of similarity of interests, attitudes and behaviour which no doubt reinforces and supports these values, when one of the group members diverges the group is likely to exert pressure on that member to bring about a change. Cohen (1977), however, argues that much of the previous research has shown systematically how groups become homogeneous. From the literature he identifies three potential sources of homogeneity: (1) Pressures towards conformity, e.g. Festinger et al (1967), Asch (1960); (2) Selective group elimination where deviates leave the group - either voluntarily or because they are rejected, e.g. Homans (1961), and (3) what Cohen terms homophilic selection -

"the tendency to overchoose as clique mates others who are similar to one's self."

However, from his research Cohen concluded that homophilic selection accounts for little and group elimination contributes nothing to peer group conformity. He concluded that peer influence on aspirations has been considerably overestimated in the literature and research.

In a study of peer influence among American high school seniors, Alexander and Campbell (1964) predicted that a student's college plans will be similar to those of his peer group and secondly that the more definite a student is in his desire to attend college the more likely he is to associate with others and with similar plans. A similar explanation is offered by McDill and Rigsby (1973). The confirmation of these predictions and that by holding constant other variables such as socio economic status led Campbell and Alexander to conclude that the peer group was the crucial mediator and transmitter of wider social and environmental 'climates'. They go even further in emphasizing the influence of the peer group when they conclude from their research

"Thus we have no indication that an important structural effect exists independently of interpersonal influence."

The research of others, McDill and Rigsby (1973), Kemper (1968), however, certainly does identify other important influences within the school and list examples such as teachers.

When the focus of peer influence on school performance is narrowed to specific school subjects (e.g. Cashdan (1971) suggests that peer group sub cultures can influence creativity) rather than left at a more general level, then the influence of the peer group becomes less obvious. Tibbetts (1975) in comparing teacher, peer and home

environment on children's reading interests argues that the home environment is a 'decisive influence' (p 1026) in a child's reading development. McDill, Meyers and Rigsby (1967), in studying maths performance found 'ability'* as the most strongly related variable to maths attainment. However, when these researchers used an 'average of friends' maths achievement they found it

"more strongly related to ego's achievement than friends' average ability or friends' average scholastic values." (McDill and Rigsby, p 107).

In other words level of achievement of peers was found to be more significantly related to an individual's performance than were the dubious measures of ability. In a somewhat similar vein King (1973) states that

"no simple relationship was in fact found between ability and involvement." (in school).

Keeves (1972) in a study of Australian 12 year old boys and girls achievement scores in maths and science found that the influence of the peer group on the attitude and achievement was relatively small but that

"the data collected in this investigation indicated that they were of some consequence." (p 197)

Research by Sumner and Warburton (1972) showed that children with high scores on intelligence tests have none the less left school as soon as they were old enough since this was the norm of the friendship group. Hollingshead discusses how some pupils leave school early because social interaction with their peers, who have already left school, is cut off from them in school. Bradley (1977)

*The concept of 'ability' does however need to be rendered far more problematic than it is in the bulk of American research.

cites research by Cartwright and Robertson (1971) who

"found that for spontaneously formed friendship cliques, there were norms and values relating to achievement that differed between cliques, and that achievement levels of members differed accordingly, independently of pre-existing individual differences in intelligence". Bradley (pl)

The literature where it distinguishes between boys and girls, is unclear as to whether peer influences operate in the same manner and have the same impact on both males and females. Kandel and Lesser (1969) report the college plans of girls being more similar to those of their mothers and best friends than is the case for boys. However, Douvan and Adelson (1966, p 201-202) state

"Our data confirm the expectation that the peer group, as such, looms larger in the boys' experience. This is true despite the girls greater degree of social development. Throughout the interview girls respond far more frequently in terms of interpersonal relations - they are more eager for popularity, they stress good social relations as a motive in vocational choice, they more often desire social experience in clubs and other activities - and we might expect this stress on the interpersonal to obscure the differences in peer attachment. yet it does not. Boys do express a stronger tie to the peer groups; this give peer standards particular authority, are more often swayed by peer demands, and use peer opinion more directly in their power negotiations with adults."

McDill and Rigsby report that peer effect on achievement are almost identical for boys and girls whereas its influence on college plans is substantially greater for boys than for girls (p 113).

2.7.ii. Susceptibility to Peer Influence

There has been an interest and an attempt to try and identify what one might term susceptibility to peer influence in an attempt to

answer the question, are some youngsters more susceptible than others to the influence of their peers? (White and Lippitt (1960) Rosen (1955), Nowicki and Strickland (1973) Iscoe and Garden (1960), Luton and Graham (1959), Schmuck (1971)). Asch (1940) found that females conformed to majority pressures to a greater degree than did males while Berenda (1950) found that children tended to become less conforming to peer pressure as they increased in age. Gifford and Colston (1975) in conducting research on peer conformity among high school students 14-18 found that

"secondary school students are affected significantly by group pressure emanating from the peer group...." (p 371).

They however found no differences in conforming according to age and sex.

Some researchers see family styles as being an important factor in a pupil's susceptibility to peer influence. Children from an 'entrepreneurial family' are less likely to be influenced by peers than those from 'bureaucratic' families (Miller and Swanson, 1958). Children from a 'democratic-equalitarian' family are not likely to be influenced by peers unless the peer had 'extraordinary characteristics and strength, dominance and charisma. (White and Lippitt (1960) Inconsistencies between parents are another way in which the family fosters susceptibility to peer influence (Schmuck (1971, p 506), Rosen (1955)).

Schmuck (1971) also identifies sex differences in susceptibility

"Girls, especially during adolescence learn to become more passive, conforming, agreeable, and receptive to personal change than boys... Research on conformity, indicates that personality characteristics differentiate males, but not females, into various degrees of susceptibility to peer influence". (Schmuck p 507).

Schmuck (1971) goes on to list low self esteem, field dependency, other directedness and richness of fantasy as being the main personality characteristics of boys susceptible to peer influence. On the internal-external control measure Nowicki and Strickland (1973) found this to be related, not to social desirability or intelligence test scores but to be related to achievement. As a recent sample of this type of research Donald (1973) found that anxious subjects who are accepted by their peer group had higher levels of academic attainment than those who were not.

The extremely complex nature of personality characteristics and their interaction in the peer group are however beyond the focus of this particular piece of research. The psychological characteristics of the subjects of this research is an area which can be hardly more than touched upon.

There is considerable discussion (and sometimes research) on the relative influence of parents, teachers and peers. The research although inconclusive and often contradictory does tend to indicate that parents may exert influence in some areas and peers in others (teachers rarely in any) Remmers and Radler (1957), Lacey (1970) This may in one sense be an artificial distinction, family structures and expectations, peer groups and social/structural forces such as class cultural influences and occupational opportunities and expectations are undoubtedly interconnected and interrelated. Coleman (1961), even though the high school adolescent is

"cut off from the rest of society, forced inward towards his own age group, made to carry his own social life with others his own age. With his followers he comes to construct a small society, one that has most of its important interaction within itself, and maintain only a few threads of correction into the outside adult society".(p3)

still argues (p5) that there is an 'even split' in influence between parents and peers.

Kandel and Lesser (1969, 70) argue

"that although parents and school friends influence these educational plans of adolescents, parents are more influential than friends". (p 270)

They go on to argue that these patterns of influence converge in the school.

The peer group is seen as exerting a powerful influence in specific areas such as how a teenager spends his leisure time (Coleman, Sugarman) and to exert considerable control over who and who not to date (Hollingshead). The peer group seem to have more influence than parents over the choice of friends and in many schools related areas such as level of acceptable academic attainment (Coleman (1961), Sumner and Warburton (1972)), in staying on or dropping out of school (Hollingshead (1947), McDill and Coleman (1965), Sumner and Warburton (1972)) and of job choice Willis (1977). Hollingshead found the locking in effect of peer group pressure particularly strong in the 'dropping out' of school among the lower class groups. Siman (1977) suggests that the clique appears to act as a filter for parent norms, a point made also by Kandel et al (1968) and that while peer influences operate in a direct manner - in matters such as dress and social behaviour

"it also functions in an indirect way by affecting individual reactions to the behaviour and standards of other significant persons in the adolescent environment" e.g. teachers (p 273).

Warner (1942) sees the peer group as being all powerful.

"It is a brave youngster who will go against the dictates of his or her clique. Even the family controls are frequently less powerful...adolescents..., when confronted by conflicts between their families and cliques, responded positively to clique controls and repudiated the demand of their families."

Hargreaves detected considerable pressure among delinquent group members to conform. This is particularly so when the norms of the group become more attractive than those of the teacher and the school (p 134). These pressures to conformity with the norms of the peer groups become increasingly powerful after the end of the second year when the organizational force of the streaming procedures in this school means a locking in process for the two polarized sub cultures. To break out of this an individual needs to become deviant from the dominant norms of the peer group (p 170) and so he is increasingly exposed to the norms and values of his own subculture and becomes increasingly isolated from the norms and values of the other.

Almost invariably it seems peer groups tend to be regarded as something negative, forces that act against the norms and values that schools are endeavouring to encourage, and consequently against the 'best interest' of the individual. There is some evidence that in the school situation cohesive friendly groups work harder (Shaw and Shaw 1962, Lott and Lott 1961) but the evidence is far from convincing.

Grinder (1967) found that solitariness as opposed to peer group involvement, tended to be associated with lower levels of proficiency at school. Dion (1973) and Seashore (1954) have found that group cohesiveness does increase the influence of the peer group over

individual members. However, this cohesiveness may lead to either an increase or decrease in attainment by its members and according to Bradley (1977)

"Groups high in cohesiveness were actually shown to be more able to exert influence in a negative direction. Thus any evidence of the superior task performance of friends may depend on the values of participants and their attitudes towards the task and its context". (p 1)

Siman (1977) reports that 'negative' anti social behaviours tend to be associated with the peer group and with peer influence (p 272). Parsons (1964) focuses on the 'function' of rebellion in the adolescent peer groups. Bronfenbrenner (1967, 1970) conceives of the adolescent peer group as being almost entirely an anti social phenomena (perhaps a little less so in the U.S.S.R.) and attributes the cause of this anti social nature to the lack of adult supervision of peer group activities. England (1960) claims that the large rise in juvenile delinquency since the war in the U.S.A. is in some part at least attributable to the existence of youth culture.

However it is important to note and not to underestimate the important supportive role of the peer group (Hollingshead, 1949, Schmuck, 1971). The peer group can be a powerful emotional influence, a source of self confidence, a provider of support, belonging and security, and the centre of considerable learning particularly during adolescence which Parsons and Shils (1951) and Eisenstadt (1960) characterize as a period of transition and uncertainty brought about by the role changes required in present society while Spady (1970, '71) reports that status in the peer group

actually has a positive affect on educational attainment.

2.8. Summary and Implications

This extensive review of the literature reveals many factors which have implications for this research. The area is extremely complex and attempts to devise models or suggest simple causal relationships have generally been found inadequate.

A majority of studies, particularly in this country have tended to concentrate on the upper age ranges of schools while clearly identifying that many of the features that are being described have their origins much earlier on in the school. Research with this younger age range (12/13 years) is needed to highlight some of the processes. Much of the research has been conducted with boys and surprisingly often generalizations have been made from this research to apply to all pupils despite the fact that gender is generally recognised as an important organizing principle for group formation and identity. Research into the social relationships, peer networks and school culture of girls is a pressing task.

The polarized sub cultures model used by Hargreaves and Lacey to describe school boy peer group networks is useful only as a starting point. Increasingly researchers have become aware that the situation in schools is much more complex than this model suggests. In many ways it is unfortunate that researchers have tended to concentrate upon the most extreme (usually anti) of the school groups and this has perpetuated the polarized subcultures model. In reality some sort of continuum is more appropriate with of course the huge bulk of school pupils

somewhere between the extremes. Research is needed which looks at pupils on all points of the continuum.

Several interactionists have challenged the usefulness of peer groups as a concept and this has led to changes in models of peer networks to allow for much more flexibility and to the abandonment of notions of peer groups as rigid entities. There is so little research on the way girls conduct their social relationships that these models may need to be modified further to accommodate findings for girls.

One of the most interesting, and potentially useful for teachers and those concerned with education, aspects of research in this field is the culture of the peer networks. Insights into the social world of the child which are so often not available to the teacher or parent. There are of course considerable methodological and ethical problems for the researcher in attempting to penetrate this world. The connection these pupil sub cultures have with wider cultures is only rarely explored, the work of Hollingshead and Willis being notable exceptions. The absence of girls from the pupil sub culture literature is most marked.

How peer groups form has been of considerable interest to many researchers. These researchers have produced a long list of factors which they claim affect peer group formation. It would appear that there is no straightforward formula and it may well be counter-productive to keep on searching for one. However, particularly if

one needs or wants to be able to predict and understand what is likely to happen to a cohort or a class of pupils as they progress through school the factors most important in peer group formation need to be identified and maybe some more adequate model developed.

The impact that a peer network has on a pupil's orientation to school appears to be difficult to assess precisely. However, the impact of the peer network on more general orientation and as a transmitter of wider cultural values may be of considerable significance in terms of school career and life chances.

CHAPTER THREE

Theory and Method

- 3.1. Outline
- 3.2. Introduction
- 3.3. Theory and the Sociology of Education
 - i. Interaction and Structure
 - ii. Interactionist Perspectives
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 - v. Recent attempts at Linking Macro and Micro
 - vi. Potential of Theories of Cultural Reproduction
- 3.4. Methodological Approaches
 - i. Material Context Relating to the Research
 - ii. Biography of Researcher
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 - iv. Relations with Pupils and Teachers
- 3.5. Summary and Implications

3.1. OUTLINE

This chapter outlines and discusses the theoretical and methodological concerns of this research. There is a discussion of the need to link micro and macro levels of analysis. Details are given of the methodology which combines in depth, intensive participant observation with psychometric techniques.

3.2. Introduction

Doing sociological or educational research is not easy. Conducting research in the sociology of education at this present time with competing paradigms vying for ascendancy is particularly difficult. The competing claims of structuralist and interactionist analysis can be overwhelming and so it is essential that the practice of flexibility and reflexivity is adopted and maintained as one way of dealing with these competing claims. This grants both perspectives relevance and does not attempt to assimilate one to the other.

In undertaking a piece of research in the sociology of education one is faced with the strategy of either having a very clear, worked out theoretical framework within which data is collected or else being prepared to modify and develop theoretical perspectives as the research proceeds (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Traditionally the first method has been preferred. However this can lead to an overly long time being spent on theory which leaves little time for actually testing empirically these theoretical hypotheses. Additionally, I would argue, having one's theoretical framework 'too worked out' in advance leads to the considerable danger, when it comes to data collection, of only collecting data which will support the theoretical position that has been taken up. Popper's prescription for falsifying experiments is often advocated but may be more rarely practised.

Adopting the second alternative also has dangers in that if and as theoretical positions become more clearly worked out or change during the progress of the research it may well be that the wrong empirical

questions have been asked and much of the data collected is useless. This certainly seems to be the case in the work of Sharp and Green (1975) who started out and collected data with a Symbolic Interactionist framework and then attempted much of their analysis using a structural Marxist framework (D. Hargreaves, 1978). The difficulties faced by Sharp and Green (1975) may well have been avoided if from the start of their research they had allowed themselves more flexibility in the theoretical stance they adopted or alternatively maintained either scheme throughout.

In this research there has been a conscious and deliberate adoption of the second alternative and provided that one is aware of the dangers it offers a potentially fruitful approach to conducting educational research. One can be flexible and prepared to let theory, method and data 'run along' together with each informing the other and allowing each to refine and develop the other (Meyenn and Miller 1979). A research project can be a growing, developing process and to rigidly adhere to a narrow theoretical framework can seriously distort the enterprise.

Throughout the research there has been a continuous attempt to connect the micro level interactions with institutional and wider social structural factors. This involves an attempt to combine and take account of various theoretical positions. Some of the work that is being undertaken in the field of cultural reproduction has been useful in attempting to forge and understand these links between interaction and structure.

In many ways the methodological approach used in the research attempts to bring together approaches that traditionally have been seen as opposing and even conflicting. The endeavour has been to conduct an in depth study on a small group of pupils. But not just leave it at this, rather locate this small in depth study in relation to the full cohort of pupils, the school, the family and the community. This ambition has necessitated the employment of a wide range of methodologies ranging from intensive periods of participant observation and in depth interviewing with the small group to the large scale collection of more traditional psychometric variables.

Being engaged in, what is in some ways, a delicate 'balancing act' in the area of both theory and method has made it both essential and inevitable that there has been a considerable degree of reflexivity. An awareness and constant reassessment of me as a researcher, my relationships with both pupils, parents and staff and the material context of the research has been an ongoing feature of the research process and in this case has presented opportunities rarely open to the single researcher at this level.

3.3.i. Interaction and Structure

The Sociology of Education has been described as undergoing a 'paradigmatic crisis' (Sharp and Green, 1975). Proponents of so-called 'new paradigms' (Young, M.F.D., 1971; Gorbutt, 1972; Sharp and Green, 1975) based their claims for the beginning of a 'scientific revolution' on the model set out by Kuhn (1962). A

feature of much of this research and theorizing in the sociology of education has been the desire to completely reject the alternative or previous theoretical paradigms (Davies, 1971). However, in Kuhnian terms, a supposed distinctive feature of 'scientific revolutions' is that they build on, reinterpret and incorporate previous work. On this criteria many of the proponents of new 'paradigms' are unjustified in laying any claim to 'scientific revolution'.

If not experiencing a 'crisis' then it could certainly be argued that the sociology of education is experiencing a period of rapid change in theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches and substantive interests. This 'crisis' is, of course, not limited to the area of sociology of education but has been characteristic of the field of sociology in general from the late sixties, e.g. Gouldner's (1971) 'Coming Crisis of Western Sociology'.

The twin attacks on conventional sociology 1) Phenomenology with variants in Ethnomethodology, Symbolic Interactionism, Deviancy and Labelling theory and 2) from varieties of Marxism from Critical Theory and Althusserian structuralism, have not simply posited different theories or methodologies within the conventional academic field of sociology within which, already, varieties of functionalism, action theory and empiricism had contended, but went further in presenting radically alternative conceptions of the world and how to investigate it, which challenged the legitimacy of sociological conventions and,

indeed, of the dominant traditions of the associated disciplines of Psychology and Economics.

In the area of sociology of education, maybe these disputes were not as fierce as in some other areas, e.g. Deviancy. Nevertheless, the currency of the term 'sociologist' has come into question. Researchers would describe themselves as Marxists or Ethnomethodologists rather than sociologists of Marxist or Ethno persuasion.

The structural functionalist approaches to the questions of inequality of the 1950's and 1960's that characterized the work of Floud and Halsey (1958), Merton (1968) and Parsons which tended to treat schools and particularly classrooms as 'black boxes' and tended to rely almost exclusively on quantitative research methodology, gave way to, or at least was challenged by, the 'new sociology' of education heralded by the arrival of M.F.D. Young's book 'Knowledge and Control' in 1971. The 'new sociology' of education concentrated on a much more micro level of analysis and saw the classroom as the focus for much of its empirical work. The theoretical antecedents of the 'new sociology' of education are to be found in the works of the symbolic interactionists, phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists, particularly the work of Mead (1934) and Schutz (1962) and that of Berger and Luckmann (1967). Various forms of Participant Observation are favoured as appropriate research methods.

The 'new' sociology of education with institutional bases in the *London* Institute of Education and the Open University attained a fashionable

legitimacy rather than a profound paradigm shift. Work by well-established, more conventional sociologists of education, e.g. Banks and Halsey, continued, and Bernstein's work, influential maybe as much in its impact on those he taught as through his published work, defied, and continues to defy easy characterization. Further, the field of sociology of education itself in terms of number of participants and work being produced has been steadily expanding.

The 'new' sociology of education had very little time to establish itself before it, too, was under attack (e.g. Sharp and Green, 1975) and there is a detectable swing, even by some of the earlier proponents of the 'new sociology of education' (e.g. Esland, M.F.D. Young), to various Marxist positions.

A disturbing feature of the many recent changes in the theoretical perspectives in the sociology of education was the relatively little research evidence available to support, or even to test, these theoretical claims. The claims very often remain at the level of rhetoric. The number of times one saw Keddie's (1971) article in Knowledge and Control quoted as a piece of research supporting the perspectives of the 'new sociology of education' indicated the difficulty many authors have in trying to find examples of research in this 'new' paradigm. It certainly appeared that there was a need for many more researchers in education to see their task as, and to engage in, 'normal science' (Kuhn, 1962). It may be that the work of Nash (1973), Delamont (1976), and Furlong

(1976) which is generally interactionist in approach, solidly based on classroom studies, but which does not engage with structural factors or analysis, is starting to provide a body of empirical work within this particular 'paradigm'.

One factor underlying these shifts in 'paradigm' is the need to engage with the issue that some workers in the sociology of education are confronting and that is the attempt to link and integrate macro and micro levels of analysis, to integrate the interactionist and structuralist levels of analysis. If one recognizes this as a basic underlying dilemma facing the sociology of education one can see the 'new sociology of education' as a reaction to the lack of micro level analysis, i.e. in schools and classrooms, and the subsequent shift to a more structuralist Marxist level of analysis as a reaction to the rejection by the 'new sociology of education' of the importance of structural constraints. Seen in this light, the 'paradigmatic' shifts are attempts to resolve or at least confront this dilemma, and this may also suggest that the discontinuities between paradigms are nowhere near as dramatic as some of the proponents may like to claim (Karabel and Halsey, 1977).

There have certainly been calls for attempts to link interaction and structure, macro and micro levels of analysis, and various interactionist and structuralist perspectives (Delamont, 1976; Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Hargreaves, 1978; M.F.D. Young, 1971(b) to name but a few. Hargreaves (1978 p 26) argues that

"good quality ethnography is always a potential source of correction to macro theories, which frequently oversimplify, underestimate or ignore the complexity of the detailed operation of the relevant factors in actual social settings."

He cites Willis' (1977) work as an example of how this may be done.

Similarly, M.F.D. Young (1971 p 24) claims that

"it is or it should be the task of the sociology of education to relate principles of selection and organization that underlay curricula to their institutional and interactional setting in schools and classrooms to the wider social structure."

It should be possible to synthesize different levels of analysis but there are all too few attempts; the work of Sharp and Green (1975) and Willis (1977) provide two notable exceptions. The degree of success achieved by them in making this synthesis is a matter for debate and discussion. However, it is probably significant that, as Willis himself concedes, his book is divided into halves representing the difficulty of integrating ethnography and theory. This feature of his book does, I feel, highlight one of the major concerns of this research - i.e. the relationship between theory, method and data and the level at which data can be used not only to test or illustrate theories, but to generate and inform theory. This difficulty of accommodating, indeed coping, with the two-way process and relationship between theory and data when one is engaged in empirical work is, perhaps, why it is easier to 'signpost' and say that it should be possible for connection to be made rather than actually make the attempt.

The difficulties in providing a synthesis or an integration or, more realistically, linkages between structuralist and interactionist

levels of analysis may indeed vary depending on the level of abstraction. At the abstract philosophical and epistemological level it is perhaps easier, or rather easier to see how arguments can be put forward denying the possibility of any integration between interactionist and structuralist levels of analysis. But as one engages or as one 'comes down' to 'real life' research in schools and classrooms and spends time with 'real life' pupils and focusses on substantive issues it becomes more difficult to hold extreme positions. One is constantly aware that at this level both perspectives operate. Material constraints, class cultural features are present as is individual and group interaction and negotiation.

In their attempt to establish the superiority of the theoretical perspective that is seen as relevant to this 'new' paradigm, proponents when discussing the inadequacies of previous or other paradigms, in the presentation of these other paradigms often distort. Indeed, it often seems to be the case that, for example, those arguing for a structuralist perspective represent what can only be described as a caricature of interactionist perspectives. Hargreaves (1978 p 8) makes this point when discussing the work of Sharp and Green (1975). He argues that

"it is my case that Sharp and Green present an entirely inadequate version of S.I./phenomenology and on that ground alone their attempted synthesis fails."

3.3.ii. Interactionist Perspectives

For my purposes here it is important that the brief exposition of some of the features of the interactionist perspective (collectively, Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology) are not distortions. It can be argued that 'in the end' the difference between interactionist and structuralist perspectives is that the interactionist sees the individual and his ability to negotiate as the ultimate level while the structuralist sees the social structural forces as the ultimate determiner. This does not mean that interactionists are not concerned with power or institutional and structural constraints (although it is conceded that some may well not be).

The interactionist perspective does not simply remain at the descriptive level, a point made by some of its opponents, but is vitally concerned with theories. It is concerned with actors and their subjective interpretation of their world. These subjective meanings provide a basis for understanding the social world. This, then, allows the actor to participate in his own conceptual construction of the world. He has control over his own fate. It is opposed to a mechanistic, deterministic interpretation of human behaviour. Man is seen as creative and so rejects forms of determinism, whether they be cultural, social or biological. Institutional structures are seen to result from the 'creative interpretation' of social actors and are in a continual fluid state and are open to constant change and transformation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Others (Filmer et al, 1972) argue for a dereification of social structure and so society is seen in terms of individual negotiation and

transaction. Cicourel (1974) seems to equate the 'sense of social structure' with social structure itself. This translates into a concern with the 'definition of situations' and the 'social construction of reality'. In research terms, this leads to a concentration and concern with the process of negotiation over meaning and face to face relationships.

In terms of research in education, this perspective has led to a focus on classrooms, particularly teacher/pupil and pupil/pupil relationships. Could it have focused on top decision makers? However, as Karabel and Halsey (1977 p 58) point out,

"stress on the fact that relations in educational institutions are humanly constructed products is a welcome antidote to the deterministic and reifying tendencies of some of the 'old' sociology of education. But emphasis on 'man the creator' often fails to take adequate account of the social constraints on human actors in everyday life."

Research in schools and in classrooms would certainly seem to indicate that there is a considerable degree of freedom for negotiation between pupils and also, but to a lesser extent, between teachers and pupils. The question of just how much room there is for negotiations, and whose 'definitions of situations' will prevail is a question of power and is closely tied to the material conditions of man which ultimately limit the range of possibilities and the amount of freedom individuals or groups have to negotiate. Examples are usually given of negotiations between teachers and pupils wherein the institutional power held by the teachers means that their definitions will prevail. In the case, for example, of the 4F girls who are the focus of part of this research, this as a general proposition does, probably hold. However some of

the groups of girls were certainly able to 'negotiate' and to impose their definitions in some situations. This 'power', though was not held equally by all groups of girls nor, indeed, by all individuals. For example, the 'P.E.' girls and 'science lab' girls certainly seemed to have more power to negotiate over school rules than did the 'quiet' or 'nice' girls. Similar differences were evident between pupils in their social relationships with each other. Some groups and some individuals faced far greater constraints than did others. Neither is it true that teachers are completely free to negotiate. They are also subject to institutional and social structural constraints.

While there may be certain elements of truth in the argument that meanings are negotiated in almost all encounters

"it also diverts attention away from the tendency of interaction to occur in repetitive patterns". (see Meyenn (1979)).

"Teachers and children do not come together in an historical vacuum; the weight of precedent conditions the outcome of 'negotiation' over meaning at every turn" (Karabel and Halsey 1977 p 58).

Man as a social actor must be seen as located in the social structure. These structural and material constraints will affect and set limits upon the degree of freedom and the range of alternatives open to human actors.

Interactionist perspectives have contributed greatly to the dereification of the mechanistic and deterministic models of society proposed by structural functionalist and structural Marxist theories. However,

even though determinism is not an appropriate principle to guide analysis, social structural forces do affect the individual and limit the range of choices open to any individual. The special contribution of interactionist perspectives, especially in the study of education and educational institutions must not be lost by its failure to place itself in a wider framework as structure as well as 'symbol' is a feature of interaction.

An interactionist perspective, particularly in its more radical forms, must pay close attention to the interaction between researcher and researched. An important element in any research conducted by the researcher actually engaged in field work in educational institutions is the interaction and the relationship between the researcher and the subjects of the research.

Friedrichs (1970 p 290-291) in a formulation similar to Gouldner's argues that

"there are two paradigmatic levels in research in the social sciences, and that the paradigm characteristic of the conventionally scientific level emphasised by observers such as Kuhn are actually subordinate to a more primary level. This more fundamental level of social science paradigms includes the researcher, his activity, and his self-image as part of the subject matter of the discipline". (Karabel and Halsey, 1977 p 29-30).

There must be a reflexive awareness, more than this, an explanation of the relationship. Crucial though it may be, it is very often ignored as being part of the research process and very rarely does an awareness of this relationship appear in reports of educational research.

3.3.iii. Structuralist Perspectives

For the purpose of this brief discussion, structuralist perspectives can be grouped into two types - functionalist and Marxist. These two structuralist perspectives, while often exhibiting surprising similarities, are basically and fundamentally different. The functionalist approach emphasizes consensus and equilibrium as being the main feature of societal structure while the Marxist approach emphasizes the importance of conflict, power and ideology which are seen to relate to differential individual and class relationships to the means of production. Both perspectives do, though, develop an over arching conceptual framework in their attempts to account for and describe society. Functionalist analysis has been under considerable attack largely because it tended to ignore ideology and conflict and particularly in relation to the study of education it neglected the content of educational processes (e.g. M.F.D. Young, 1971).

"Yet during the period of its greatest influence functionalism undoubtedly advanced the sociological study of education by emphasizing connections between education and other major institutions such as the economy and the polity" (Karabel and Halsey, 1977 p 11).

Talcott Parsons dominated structural functionalism in the 1950's and 60's. Merton's (1968) book 'Social Theory and Social Structure' provides us with a clear description of the structural functionalist position. Individuals were seen as being socialized into performing appropriate roles which, in turn, facilitated the smooth functioning of society. As Hammersley and Turner (1979) have pointed out, some of Merton's conceptual schemes have a flexibility which may be of

use in explaining even classroom behaviour other than in terms of crude polarities. Floud and Halsey in this country worked largely within a functionalist analysis, modified by Weberian, Fabian and political arithmetic traditions, with their dominant concerns being the relation of social class and educational opportunity.

The relationship between the education system, other social institutions and society, is a dominant concern of both functionalists and Marxists. However, where functionalists have put forward a description and some explanations of these relationships, Marxists have not only described but also attempted more adequate explanations of why these relationships exist are reproduced and change. Differences also occur between the two perspectives when addressing the question of individual opportunity within the school system. Many functionalists would see the education system as offering opportunities for individual mobility and maintaining social consensus whereas many Marxist theorists would see the education system as crucially maintaining and perpetuating structured class inequalities while only incidentally offering individual social mobility. Karabel and Halsey (1977), commenting on the concern of both Marxists, e.g. Bowles and Gintis (1976), and functionalists, e.g. Parsons, with the relationship between education and society maintain that

"in many ways, the intricate and harmonious relations obtaining between education and other social institutions in Bowles and Gintis' work recall some of the more elegant functionalist formulations. A major difference between the two theories is, however, that while the Marxist and the functionalist may agree on the 'functions' performed by the

education system (e.g. Bowles and Gintis favourably cite Parsons), the functionalist tends to see them as serving the general interests of society as a whole, whereas the Marxist views them as serving the particular interests of the capitalist class" (Karabel and Halsey, 1977 p 40).

Structural Marxism, then, offers a societal level of analysis within which the education system, schools and the teachers and pupils in them, can be placed. This provides knowledge and analysis of the societal structures in which institutions and individuals are situated and which limit the freedom any individual has to act. Further, it can be argued that particular structural, societal and material constraints not only limit alternatives but restrict the knowledge of alternatives and may, in fact, produce certain kinds of consciousness. Great care must be taken, however, by the researcher to avoid the situation of being in a position of claiming that he is able to see and define the 'objective reality' which, because of the particular structural constraints, is not 'seen' by the subjects of the research. Even the researcher is not free from ideology.

"From the Marxist perspective there can be little doubt about the social character of educational research - it is as Althusser (1971) would say an element of an ideological battle, which is, in turn, part of the larger class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. For the Marxist, then, research is a form of praxis" (Karabel and Halsey, 1977 p 37).

For many, e.g. Althusser (1970, 1971), Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), the educational system is seen as a major force in the reproduction of class inequalities. The education system of a capitalist society acts as an agent in the perpetuation and reproduction of class differences. While this position may have considerable elements

of truth, to suggest too neat a correspondence between the education system and other social institutions can ultimately lead to a mechanistic determinism with virtually no autonomy for the education system or individuals within it and renders what goes on inside schools and classrooms as, in the last instance, irrelevant. It also implies that there is little potential for educational change except in correspondence with societal change. So, if one is to accept this mutual 'perfect fit' of some of the structuralists then one is faced with a cycle of ceaseless reproduction. It may well be that some Marxist* as well as functionalist approaches see too tight a fit between the education and economic systems.

3.3.iv. A Union of Perspectives

It is proposed here that neither an interactionist nor a structuralist analysis is adequate on its own for fully and adequately describing and accounting for what goes on in schools. Interactions and encounters that take place between the pupils who are the focus of this study can only be fully understood by employing both interactionist and structural levels of analysis. It is important in the attempt to understand these pupils' peer networks and social relationships, and their significance, that account is taken not only of the negotiation and interaction but of the material circumstances and the societal location and

*In the discussion of Marxism the term structuralist has been used in a loose sense to indicate approaches which in common with functionalism emphasize the importance of economic and political structures in determining class and individual action as opposed to interactionist perspectives which emphasize the individual subject negotiating his or her world.

Within Marxism of course the term structuralist does have a more precise and limited connotation, largely connected to the work of Althusser (1971) and his school of which his English adherents Hindess and Hirst present an extreme form (c.f. Johnson 1979). This is contrasted with culturalism a tradition which has been developed in Britain by Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson. Their work has concentrated on the analysis of culture, consciousness and forms of communal action (Johnson 1979 p 57-58).

constraints. There is a need, in an attempt to reach a full understanding.

"to supplement our analyses of subjective meanings with some conception of the actual structure within which the individual is embedded." (Gellner 1962)

It must be stressed that the social processes of the school and classroom, while they may not mechanically reproduce the wider social processes, are certainly not completely autonomous from them. So there is a need to develop

"some conceptualization of the situation that individuals find themselves in, in terms of the structure of opportunities the situations make available to them and the kinds of constraints they impose." (Sharp and Green 1975 p 22)

That attempts to link macro and micro, structuralist and interactionist levels of analysis should be made is gaining wide acceptance and is seen by a number of writers as being the most pressing task for the sociology of education. Banks suggests that

"the next step in the sociology of education should take the form of building bridges rather than constructing opposing paradigms" (Banks 1978 p 44).

A. Hargreaves (1978) outlines his belief that

"'structural' questions and 'interactionist' questions should no longer be dealt with as separate 'issues', each to be covered in their respective fields" (Hargreaves, A. 1978 p 73).

To these two names can be added others such as Hargreaves, D. (1978), Karabel and Halsey (1977) and Delamont (1976, 1978).

3.3.v. Recent Attempts at Linking Macro and Micro

The work of Bernstein, Sharp and Green and Willis provide us with examples of attempts to integrate macro and micro levels of analysis

(The research findings of Sharp and Green (1975) and Willis (1977) have been discussed in the previous chapter).

Bernstein's early emphasis on linguistic codes which was most fully formulated in his article 'Social Class and Linguistic Development : A Theory of Social Learning (1961) can and has been criticized for its implications in terms of cultural deprivation but it must also be seen as an attempt to link the micro level of analysis of language variants to the macro concerns of equality of opportunity and the 'wastage' of the working class untapped 'pool of ability'.

His later work on cultural transmission and change is less easy to define, perhaps because it is more clearly an attempt to integrate structural and interactional analyses. Bernstein considers three major areas of educational enquiry at the micro level - curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation - in terms of educational knowledge. He develops the concepts of classification and framing in order to be able to link this level with a societal level and to be able to understand the principles of power and control. Classification above all refers to 'the degree of boundary maintenance between contents' and framing refers to 'the degree of control that pupils and teachers have over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship.' (Bernstein, 1975). The next stage in the linking procedure is to use the concepts of collection and integrated code, which he uses first to investigate the relationships between social

class and progressive infant school pedagogies (1975). Most recently he explores the continuities and discontinuities between various school pedagogies and the world of work. At the theoretical level Bernstein here confronts the crude Marxist theories of correspondence between social relations of production and social relations within the classroom.

Sharp and Green (1975) in their book "Education and Social Control" which is a study of a progressive informal infants school, make an important early attempt at integrating the structural and interactional levels of analysis. It is important in the attempt to understand and evaluate this research to be aware of its historical context. When the research was initiated in 1970 the popularity of the symbolic interactionist/phenomenological viewpoint was at its height in the sociology of education. While the research was in progress, however, this perspective decreased in prominence to be replaced by various versions of structural Marxism. These changes in wider sociology of education are reflected, and to some extent caused by the changes in theoretical framework seen in "Educational and Social Control". Most of the questions asked and observations made were structured by the initial theoretical framework of S.I., but as the work progressed and the results were analysed the authors became progressively more sympathetic towards a more macro framework. Sharp and Green were faced with the problem of trying to integrate the micro theory of S.I. with the macro theory of structural Marxism. In order to cope with this problem they build a 'straw man' image of S.I./phenomenology,

where the actor is 'free' and the theory is seen as unable to deal with differences in power (Hargreaves, 1978). They assert that it is not really sociology at all but social psychology and that it is merely descriptive rather than explanatory. By ignoring the theoretical assumptions of S.I., Sharp and Green are able to define the problem of linking macro and micro in terms of linking micro data which is seen for the most part as 'pure description' to a macro structural Marxist theory. Yet the micro data which they attempt to use was collected within only one of numerous micro theoretical perspectives.

Perhaps the most important attempt to link macro and micro is Willis' "Learning to Labour" (1977). This study based, for the most part, on a detailed longitudinal ethnography of twelve non-academic working-class boys, 'the lads', follows the group from the middle of the fourth form at their Secondary Modern School, through their fifth, RoSLA year, and into the first six months of their working lives, mostly in semi and unskilled jobs in local factories. Although Willis does not make it explicit, the ethnography clearly relies on the theoretical framework developed by symbolic interactionists and phenomenologists. For his main aim in this part is to attempt to understand and describe the world from the lads' point of view. He explores the elements of their culture; their norms, values, attitudes, use of time and so on, showing the inner logic of their behaviour and illustrating this by their use of highly developed cultural skills such as 'having a laff'.

He demonstrates clearly some of the links between the culture that he finds within the group and the culture of the shop-floor jobs which they will eventually enter. He develops the important concept of 'partial penetration' to indicate the incomplete and somewhat confused ideas that the lads have about the real determining conditions of the working class. He uses this concept to relate the culture that he finds to the regulative State Institutions. That is attempting to link the objective base with subjective feelings and cultural processes.

The degree of success that he achieves is, of course, a matter for debate and discussion, but it is significant that, as Willis himself concedes, the division of the book into halves represents the difficulties of integrating the ethnography with the analysis. A major difficulty here lies in Willis' use of ethnography.

The first half of the book can be seen as an excellent account of the lads' culture - the focus is on the actors and the subjective meanings that they attach to interactions and the world. But it is a very specific ethnography. A wider ethnography would attempt to understand the world from more viewpoints than just that of the lads. The teachers' viewpoints and those of the other pupils, for example, are hardly dealt with at all. Further, an extended concept of ethnography could attempt to include more objective measures of their world in terms of 'ability', school achievement,

family, class position and so on. This would involve going beyond P.O. to the use of what are conventionally regarded as more positivistic approaches. If Willis is interested in linking micro data with macro theory, which is what he appears to wish to do, then he is making his task more difficult by restricting his micro data to only that which can be obtained within an S.I. framework. Primarily though Willis's work is about the analysis and reproduction of culture and cultural forms rather than a study of twelve working class 'lads'.

3.3.vi. Potential of Theories of Cultural Reproduction

The area of cultural reproduction appears to be a potential source for providing the links between the micro and macro levels of analysis.

The work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) in their book "Reproduction", while retaining an emphasis on a class analysis and the importance of economic and political structures, allows a sophisticated treatment of the action of the education system itself, not only in selecting, but in legitimating these existing class structures, precisely where it appears least to do so, i.e. when it appears autonomous.

This makes it possible to theorize the effects of even an unselective middle school, catering for a largely working class population, in terms of its position within a structure and process which relates not only to the higher stages of education, selection examinations and eventually induction into work, but also to the working class

families from which its pupils very largely come. Moreover, although Bourdieu and Passeron's empirical work in "Reproduction" is largely concerned with university students their dynamic analysis emphasizing passage through time is crucial in emphasizing what is important in our study - the fact that these peer groups appear for a period of time and are a product of a particular form of school organization as well as the pressures and dynamics of the family background and the interests and capabilities of the pupils, and, that they will change, indeed have changed, when the pupils pass to another school. Yet there are fundamental continuities dominantly structured by the class and gender membership of the pupils. Also they feed into and are part of a system structured by exams which certificate for jobs.

It is no easy task attempting to relate and 'connect up' the social processes of what goes on in school with home and wider class and societal factors. Historically, the separation of home from work is a creation of industrial economic and social organization. Home and work have become separate spheres and although women have been involved in paid labour outside the home, their dominant role has come to be associated with the home, while for man it has been associated with work.

Schools can be seen, at least in part, as designed to attempt to modify the culture of the home to meet the requirements of capital. However, it is important not to characterize the relationship as a mere function of capital. Schooling has two faces, one looks towards the world of work and social production, the other to the

family and the care of infants. The school is between the institutions of work and of the family. This is particularly clear in middle schools. More generally, schooling can be seen as being based on the authority of the parent. The school acts in loco parentis. One can see the compulsion to attend school and the authority of the teacher as an extension or substitute for the parents' control over the child. Schools take over many previously familial duties and have been seen as not only relieving the family of burdens but also of offering to the child real benefits and opportunities which the family in itself could not provide.

Schools can be seen as institutions which are half home, half factory or office. On the home side, schools are institutions for the care and nurture of children and for the development of their aptitudes strongly organized in terms of age and rank relations, and in many ways 'female' institutions, which particularly in primary and some middle schools, may be the site of child-centred humanist ideologies of education. On the work side, in secondary, higher and further education particularly, schools are understood primarily as a preparation for work or more indirectly for processes of examination or certification which have their utility finally in terms of work. They may also simply function as containing or controlling institutions. Certainly they may be perceived as such by their inmates. This leads us to look at the way children live in these institutions; how do they relate to the official culture of the school, how do they respond and develop their own culture and social relationships in this context.

One can argue that it is within schools, whether in conformity or dissent from the school culture, that children appear to decide their orientation towards different types of work, to marriage and child care, but the mechanisms and determinations of home and peer group in forming these attitudes remain to be examined. And this is not to be so naive as to assume that intentions result necessarily in desired outcomes. The exigencies of employment and the relations between the sexes impose their own harsh logics.

Willis' (1977) contribution is to emphasize the way in which pupils can develop their own culture within limits which itself presents them with their own partially created limits and possibilities.

Willis argues

"It cannot be assumed that cultural forms are determined in some way as an automatic reflex by macro determinations such as class location, region and educational background (one should add gender). Certainly these variables are important and cannot be overlooked but how do they impinge on behaviour, speech and attitude? We need to understand how structures become sources of meaning and determinants of behaviour in the cultural milieu at its own level. Just because there are what we can call structural and economic determinants it does not mean that people will unproblematically obey them.....In order to have a satisfying explanation we need to see what the symbolic power of structural determination is within the mediating realm of the human and cultural. It is from the resources of this level that decisions are made which lead to uncovered outcomes which have the function of maintaining the structure of society and status quo..... We can say that macro determinants need to pass through the cultural milieu to reproduce themselves at all." (Willis, 1977 p 171)

Thus,

an attempt at a synthesis of macro and micro levels of analysis can be made. Research in the sociology of education which concentrates on the level of interaction and ignores the structural or which

concentrates on the structural and ignores interaction can only provide us with partial explanations. The work of Bourdieu, Willis and Bernstein provide examples of how a synthesis might be attempted.*

3.4. Methodological Approaches

3.4.i. Material Context and Circumstances of the Research

The research was conducted while I was part of a research team which was engaged in more general and wider issues concerned with middle schools (Ginsburg et al, 1977, 1978). This did have the effect of 'forcing' me to look at and conduct research into a much wider set of issues - teachers (Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller, 1977, 1978, 1979), organization (Meyenn and Tickle 1978), relationships with feeder first and receiving High Schools (Ginsburg and Meyenn, 1980). In retrospect this broader focus undoubtedly aided my understanding and made me better able to locate the pupils and their social relationships which were the focus of the PhD research.

The research had been negotiated by the Head of Department with, initially, the Chief Education Officer and then the Heads of the Middle Schools in the county. So I was very much part of a team from the University and this was much more public (e.g. reports have to be annually prepared for the County Officers and Heads and this report is debated) than may often be the case of an individual pursuing his research interests.

*There are of course other theoretical approaches, which maybe offer potential for linking the individual to society, such as Weberian action theory, or an emphasis on the development of middle range theories such as organizational theory, or middle range concerns e.g. the community, or the formulation of middle range concepts like family or social group.

Inevitably, being part of a research team meant that I was subject to the intellectual influences of the other members of the research team. There was a considerable amount of interaction between members of the research team (this is perhaps unusual from what one reads about the tensions in other research teams) - there were interminable discussions and arguments, comparing of field notes and the joint writing of papers and preparation of reports.

The ability to spend almost full time on the research was a considerable advantage. It meant that my schedule could be changed to fit in with any special event during the week or in the evenings or at weekends. It also meant that there was time to write up field notes and to be able to continually re-read them.

The research was greatly facilitated by the material support services. This included the typing of field notes and the transcribing of some interviews. The use of the Departmental caravan (mobile research unit) was a very considerable asset and, in retrospect, crucial to the quality of interview data that was collected with pupils and also staff. The caravan gave me a 'bit of my own space' and area that was recognizably my territory. This proved ideal for interviewing the pupils as they knew that they could not be overheard or interrupted in the same way as they might have been if interviewing had been conducted in a spare classroom or the library when it wasn't being used. This 'safe' area where kids could come and talk to me meant that they were, I feel, much more relaxed than they otherwise might have been. Associated with the caravan was expert technical services and support.

This meant that conversations and interviews could be recorded with the aid of sophisticated video and audio equipment. The pupils were, of course, fully aware that this was taking place but the caravan had been so devised that all that was immediately visible to them was a microphone. Interviews of a much more informal nature were, of course, being conducted continuously in the classroom, playground etc., but for these I had to rely on my memory and what I was able to jot down in a note book which I carried with me at all times.

Of far greater importance is the material context and circumstances of the actual pupils who are the focus of this study. Details of the pupils, the school and the community are explored in the following chapter.

3.4.ii. Biography of Researcher

Particularly where a researcher is involved in long term field work his presence becomes an important part of that situation and becomes part of and an element in, the interaction. Any form of participant observation is of a very personal nature and the personality of the researcher becomes an important element. It is therefore crucial to take account of the researcher - his personal characteristics, background, previous experience and relationships with others in the situation.

The actual individual engaged in the research is of crucial importance and is a much overlooked factor. Whyte discusses this in 'Street Corner Society' as does Lacey

in "Hightown Grammar" but one finds very little, if anything, about the researcher in the work of, say, Willis - what effect does the fact that Paul Willis is a tough looking, leather jacketed six footer have on the research, the close relationship he created with the lads' in "Learning to Labour" or the motor bike boys in "Profane Culture", and the limits this might impose on his relationships with other groups?

The present researcher is a male Australian 5'11" tall and slightly overweight, interested and involved in sport, particularly swimming, tennis and football, who has lived in England for five years.

The Australianness, no doubt, meant that to some extent certain cultural understandings were missing and that there may have been a strangeness in initial encounters. However, there were also very definite advantages, I was to some extent a bit of a curiosity (this though very soon seemed to wear off) but it was certainly a starting point for many conversations; "What's it like over there?" or "You must be mad to want to live here" or "Do you know my uncle - he emigrated to Australia - don't know where though".

Perhaps more important than this was that it enabled me to ask, what would have been for an Englishman, rather 'daft' or obvious questions with relative impunity and so explanations of the seemingly obvious or taken for granted were forthcoming. In some ways, as well, I viewed the predominantly working class housing estate as something of a 'foreign' society. I had lived and worked in Melanesia for 5½ years, and taught in a small rural farming community in Australia for 3 years and had taken a Masters degree

course in Social Anthropology and Education - hence my background may be described as somewhat anthropological in orientation.

3.4.iii. Methodology and Data Collection

To a large extent methodology and data collection techniques are determined by the theoretical and substantive issues of the study. However important theoretical and substantive issues are they do not completely determine methodology. Equally important are the methodological concerns - how best can one 'get at' and collect data which can be used to address the theoretical and substantive issues. The nature of theoretical and substantive issues addressed in the research called for a variety of methodological approaches and indeed additional methodologies were employed while the research was in progress as the need arose.

The main method of investigation was that of Participant Observation. The choice of this methodology was influenced not only by the nature of the research problem under investigation but by assumptions held about human behaviour. This practice is now understood to be the rule among most social science researchers (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). These assumptions about human behaviour involve two hypotheses recently outlined by Wilson (1977 p 253)

- a) Human behaviour is complexly influenced by the context in which it occurs. Any research plan which takes the actors out of the naturalistic setting may negate these forces and hence obscure its own understanding.
- b) Human behaviour often has more meaning than its observable "facts". A researcher seeking to understand behaviour must find ways to learn the manifest and latent meanings for the participants, and must also understand the behaviour from the objective outside perspective."

Although the first hypothesis is generally acceptable to most educational researchers, the two taken together lead to a fundamental questioning of the positivistic 'natural science'* approach to educational research and to adopting a primarily qualitative approach. This does not mean a rejection of the use of quantitative techniques indeed these techniques are seen as invaluable when used in conjunction with qualitative methods. This then differs from many qualitative researchers particularly those subscribing to phenomenological or symbolic interactionist paradigms. Although one is very interested in the meaning attached to events and behaviour by the people under study, one is also concerned to link such meanings, events and behaviour to the structure of institutional, local and societal level forces.

Access to the school was negotiated in general, between the county and the Aston department because the county were keen for research to be conducted in their middle schools. Heads of middle schools in the county were asked if they were willing to have research conducted in their school. The Head of Hilltop volunteered and I went personally to see him and explain what I wanted to do.

*It is important to note that it is misleading to claim, as do many experimental psychometric, and survey research oriented educational researchers, that their methods are borrowed from the natural sciences, because as Butters (1976) p 254) states:

"there is raging controversy over the status of the presuppositions, metaphors and methods which inform the logic-of-enquiry of natural scientists." (See also Hindess, 1973 pp 51-53 and Lescourt, 1975).

The one class group which became the focus of the in depth study was chosen partly by a process of elimination. I eliminated the year coordinator's class because I felt it might be different and another class because there was a very uneven balance between the sexes. That left two classes which appeared to offer equal prospects and so I decided on 4F by the toss of a coin.

An in depth study was made on one class group of 31 pupils, 16 girls and 15 boys while they were in their third and fourth years of a middle school. The decision was taken to focus on one entire class group, rather than on a particular group of boys or girls as others have done, e.g. Willis (1977), Ball (1977), because it was felt that this would give a more complete picture of the social relationships of pupils of this age range. It also avoids the danger of being tempted to concentrate on the most extreme, which, as has been argued earlier, has led to some distortion of the picture presented of school pupils' social relationships. Additionally of importance was the methodological concern to locate the data collected by the intensive study of the peer networks and relationships of one of the class groups within the context of the whole cohort of pupils and this cohort in turn within the wider social structure. By adopting this approach it was hoped to overcome the weakness in the work of Willis, Ball, Furlong, etc., where one is left asking the question: But what about the other 90-100 pupils in the cohort?

To this end a considerable amount of data was collected on all the pupils in the cohort. Sociometric questions were administered at three points, six months apart, during the course of the research. Five questions were asked covering actual as well as desired friendship association.

1. Who do you usually play with after school?
2. Who would you most like to be friends with at school?
3. Who would you least like to be friends with at school?
4. Who do you usually play with in the playground?, and
5. Who do you usually work with in class?

The questions were administered by myself in school and were explained fully to remove as many ambiguities and doubts in the pupils' minds as possible (see Appendix A for a full account). Sociograms and sociomatrices have been drawn up to identify patterns and networks and to detect changes over time.

Attitude to school questionnaires were also administered at the same three points in time. Two of the Barker-Lunn (1970) attitudes to school scales were used (see Appendix B Section 17 for discussion of these attitude scales). Additionally using the same attitude questions the pupils were asked to answer these questions in the manner that they thought their group of best friends would answer.

Considerable information was collected on the whole cohort from the school records as this was seen as an essential in order that the class group who were the focus of the intensive study could be seen in relation to the entire cohort and that the cohort could be seen in relation to social structural factors.

- Richmond word recognition reading ages as at the time of entry into the middle school and in the third and fourth years of the middle school
- school based grades (A - E) for both attainment and effort in all the school subjects
- teacher assessment of the cooperativeness of parents and of the child, of the behaviour and integration of the child
- parental attendance at school interviews
- S E S details, mothers and fathers occupation, whether home was owned or rented, number of siblings
- school attendance records

Data was also assembled on the tests that were administered by the high school as part of the transfer process

- Non-verbal I.Q. scores
- Richmond English comprehension scores
- Richmond Maths scores
- High School internal test scores for English and Maths

(The complete descriptive list of data collected appears in Appendix B).

Over the two year period an average of three days per week was spent as a participant observer in the school. The degree of participation and observation varied considerably from almost

complete participation in some areas, e.g. the playground, Friday disco, to almost complete observation, e.g. in some formal lessons. The participant observation was carried out in all areas of school life; in the many and varied lessons, in the gym, at assembly, in the playground, at the Friday disco, in the staff room, in the dining hall, before and after school, on school outings and on sporting occasions.

Detailed field notes were kept and written up each evening. At all times I carried a note book with me and it very soon became accepted that I would be always jotting notes down in the book. The only area where I felt that wasn't accepted was in the staff room and so I refrained from making notes while I was in the staffroom and kept any note taking till I was out of the staffroom or else alone in the staffroom.

While I participated with and observed all the pupils of the cohort I did concentrate, wherever it was practicable, my participation and observation on the one class group - 4F.

All the pupils in this class group were interviewed using a flexible semi structured interview schedule (see Appendix C). Some were interviewed more than once if there were particular incidents or areas that required following through, and most were interviewed in groups. The bulk of these more formal interviews were conducted in a mobile research caravan although of course my interaction in the school was in many ways one long interview, accounts of which

are recorded in the field notes.

The staff who taught this cohort of children were interviewed (once again using an open-ended informal interview schedule) individually and as a group. (See Appendix D). These interviews focused on the teachers perceptions of the childrens social relationships and peer networks as well as their general approaches to teaching and attitudes to specific issues such as, in the case of girls, the wearing of make-up and uniform.

Parents of the pupils in 4F were approached to see if they would agree to be interviewed. 70% agreed and were interviewed in their homes on a wide range of areas including their attitudes towards and knowledge of their child's friends, general attitudes to education, to work and to living on the estate (See Appendix E).

Another set of interviews were conducted with people outside the middle school but who were involved or working with children on this estate. Interviews were conducted with the head and some teachers from the 'feeder' first school and similar interviews were conducted with the head, first year coordinator and assistant and various subject specialists at the high school to which these pupils would transfer. Interviews were also conducted with local social workers and the Education Welfare Officer who served the estate.

The methodological approaches employed attempted as adequately as possible to meet the substantive research questions as well

as the theoretical concerns. This has led to a wide range of methodological approaches: participant observation and in depth interviewing which is employed in the attempt to understand the meanings of the social lives of these boys and girls; sociometric techniques which map the network of social relationships of these pupils; the collection of psychometric, attitude, ability and attainment measures in order that an attempt can be made to relate these to social networks and so that pupils in the intensive study can be seen in relation to the total cohort; interviewing of teachers and other 'professionals' employed in the area was conducted in order to locate the school within the catchment area it served; and socio economic status data has been collected and parents of pupils interviewed in order to locate this cohort of pupils in wider social-structural terms.

Methodology was not static. There were constant revisions as the research progressed. For example it was only after the research had been going for twelve months that it became obvious that to understand more fully the consequences and implications of these pupils' social relationships interviews would need to be conducted with parents so that pupils' backgrounds could be more fully understood. My presence in the school for such an extended period of time meant that I was constantly re-evaluating my relationship with and approach to the pupils and teachers.

3.4.iv. Relations with Pupils and Teachers

Having been a teacher for eight years, and head teacher for a further three and a half years, helped greatly in establishing credibility, rapport and confidence with the staff. Detailed accounts of what my research involved were given to the staff at staff meetings and also to the School Governors at a Governors' meeting. This did not necessarily mean that all the staff fully understood or were particularly interested in, what I was about but because I had been a teacher and a head meant that they were prepared to give me the benefit of doubts that they held. My teaching background also created problems for me in negotiating a 'researcher role' for myself. I was expected by many of the staff to react like a teacher - the most common area where this was a 'problem' was with the disciplining of pupils. On one occasion, I was at the back of the playground with a group of girls who, with several boys, were playing 'cock fights' where one carries another on her back and then, at a given signal, all mount up and 'charge'. The last pair left standing are the winners. On this particular occasion, the bell went and there was a call for another round. By the time this finished it was three or four minutes since the bell had rung. The boys and girls had just started to walk down to the lines when the duty teacher came over the hill and started to roar at them but stopped when she saw me. She said nothing but by the look of almost bewilderment on her face she was asking herself 'if he was up here with them why didn't he send them down to the lines?'. On this and many other occasions, I found it difficult to suppress the 'schoolteacher in me' but it was crucial for my relationship with the pupils that I didn't take a role as

disciplinarian.

Establishing credibility with and the confidence of the pupils presented different problems. What was I or what could I be in relation to the pupils? There was no way I could go into the school as a 12-13 year old pupil as did Llewellyn^{*} with an older age range. Researcher was a meaningless term for them. The pupils themselves obviously found it difficult to categorize me or to understand why anyone would really want to find out what it was like to be a pupil in a middle school. At the beginning of the research period, I was constantly asked if I was a teacher and when I replied no it was assumed that I must be a student teacher. Whenever asked, I used to explain that I had been a teacher but was now conducting some research. Even though these questions died down, an incident after I had been in the school some eighteen months made me realize that the pupils were still unable to categorize me. A group of pupils were to go to the theatre in the afternoon. At lunch time, I was wandering round the playground when a girl opened the window of the science lab and called me over. She asked "Hey! Are you allowed out of bounds?" I smiled and asked why and she explained that she and her friends would like me to go down to the shops and get them some sweets to take with them to the theatre. Even after eighteen months the ambiguity of my position in the school was such that they weren't sure if I was allowed to go outside the school boundaries.

For most of the pupils, even though they weren't sure of my role, I seemed very quickly to be accepted. I could walk in and out of

*Llewellyn is a PhD student at the University of Leicester.

classrooms or around the playground without seeming to interrupt or change what was going on. Several pupils were very interested in what I was doing and often spent considerable time talking and asking about what I was doing. One lad in particular kept up a very close interest in the research. On one occasion I had sat up the back of the room while the class were doing a French test and watched this particular lad 'cheating' in the test. He was aware that I knew what was going on and this was an indication to me that my presence was not changing the normal pattern of behaviour. In the playground after the lesson the lad came up and said to me "its just as well for us that you can keep your mouth shut."

As I increasingly gained the confidence of both teachers and pupils and, in the case of the pupils, became privy to more and more confidential data which was, of course, essential to the success of my research, I became more and more uneasy. In one way I was just 'ripping off' the pupils and teachers in order to get my data. This increasing confidence on the part of the staff meant that, in many ways, I became an unofficial school counsellor. Many hours of my time were spent listening to teachers talk about problems with husbands, wives, children and health. I felt increasingly protective towards the pupils and their data, and that my primary responsibility and accountability was to them as they were the most vulnerable. What was in it for them? Is the hope that the research will lead to a greater understanding of pupils in school enough to justify the enterprise?

I constantly avoided attempts to get me into a teacher role and yet, whenever possible tried to help out. In retrospect, I am sure that when I was negotiating access to the school the head saw me as an extra half a teacher that he could certainly make use of on the timetable. I spent half a day a week helping out with swimming and lifesaving lessons which were held at the local pool; accompanied teachers and pupils as an 'extra pair of hands' on numerous school visits - one made memorable by the fact that I was almost left behind and was saved by one of the lads calling out to a teacher from the back of the bus "Hey, Miss, we've left the Aussie behind", as the coach was pulling out of the car park, and another by the fact that one of the lads in my 'care' was 'beaten up' by a gang of 'yobbos' in London's Regent's Park - and helped out at various school activities, e.g. sports days and parents' evenings. This certainly helped in relationships with staff, as I was seen to be pulling my weight but probably more importantly helped me to feel that I was of some 'use' around the place and that my being in the school wasn't just a one-way arrangement with all the benefits on my side.

Finally, in the relationship between researcher and researched that warrants some discussion is the gender and sexuality of the researcher vis-a-vis subjects. Very little cross gender research appears to be undertaken and there is even less discussion on this issue. So, as a male researcher, I was collecting data and became very closely involved with male and female teachers, boys and girls, fathers and mothers. This whole area of gender, sexuality and data collection needs exploration. It could certainly be true that the data that I, as a male, collected from both boys and girls only

gets at part of the picture and that a woman working with both girls and with boys would collect a different quality of data.

Initially, I was somewhat dubious about collecting data concerning girls but, because of the theoretical and methodological stances adopted in the research, to omit half of the population would have been inconsistent with these stances. It was important that the research focused on the whole cohort, not just half of it. In some senses, perhaps, in the end my relationship with the girls was better than it was with the boys. Certainly, the girls seemed very relaxed in my company. The girls toilets were the only area where there was physical separation. This, though, could, particularly with girls of older age groups, be a serious problem as the 'rest room' is often a safe refuge for teenage girls in a male-dominated world. Kris Mason, a colleague, after reading the data presented in the paper on girls' peer networks (Meyenn 1978), commented that there was no discussion by the girls of the problem of menstruation. This is certainly the case and this was one area and there will have been others that the girls left off the agenda.

There were other more practical difficulties. I was careful, whenever possible, to divide my time evenly between the boys and girls. It was important not to identify too closely with one group or the other. There was some difficulty in keeping clear of conflicts between boys and girls. These were a constant feature of the relationships between boys and girls. Particularly in interviews or discussions where the boys talked about the girls or vice versa, I was often told "don't you tell a word of this to the boys/girls".

3.5. Summary and Implications

There has been considerable discussion on the need to and the possibilities of linking micro and macro levels of analysis. It has been argued that any research in the sociology of education which only addresses one level will inevitably be limited. Man, or in this specific case school pupils, as social actors can be seen as embedded in the social structure. My attempt has been to employ and relate structural and interactionist levels of analysis.

This theoretical perspective, combined with the nature of the substantive issues of the research plus independent methodological considerations have definite implications for the methodological approaches adopted. Attempts must be made to 'get at' actors meanings and understandings of their social world. This points to a methodology which involves the researcher with a small group of individuals at an intense, in depth level. However, added to this must be an attempt to understand, explain and account for this behaviour from an 'objective' outside perspective. This leads to a considerable extension of the ethnography (in comparison with say Willis who relies almost solely on the accounts given by the lads) with more objective measures of ability, achievement, attitudes, family composition, class position and so on. This also leads to a

need to locate those pupils under intensive study in relation to the whole cohort of pupils, the school and the community. Finally because of the tendency among other researchers to select the most interesting groups as the focus for their studies and the subsequent distortion that often results, one class group have been chosen. This in some ways arbitrary decision means that a cross section of pupils become the focus of study.

Adopting such methodological and theoretical positions requires a considerable degree of flexibility and as the research is seen as an ongoing developing process with theory, method and data continually informing each other a high level of reflexivity needs to be maintained. This involves an awareness of the researcher in the field and his relationships with pupils, parents and teachers as well as the material context of his research.

Essentially of course, if one is to attempt to account for social structural factors as well as interaction, an exploration of the material context of the pupils, their families, the school and the community is needed.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Pupils, The School and The Community

- 4.1. Outline
- 4.2. Introduction
- 4.3. Features of the Cohort of Pupils
 - i. Reading ages
 - ii. Non Verbal I.Q.
 - iii. Attendance
 - iv. Family Backgrounds
 - v. Attitudes to School
- 4.4. The School
 - i. History and Ideology of Middle Schools
 - ii. School Organization and Approach to Teaching
 - iii. Teaching Staff
- 4.5. The Community - School Catchment Area
 - i. The Estates
 - ii. Employment
 - iii. Parental Attitudes to School
 - iv. Outsiders Views of the Estates
- 4.6. Summary and Implications

OUTLINE

This chapter looks at some of the characteristics of the cohort of pupils who are the focus of this study. This cohort is then located within the school with discussions on the type of school, the way it is organized and the staff who teach at the school. Finally there is an examination of the community within which the school is situated.

4.2. Introduction

An essential feature of the approach adopted in this study has been the desire to locate the in depth study in relation to the whole cohort of pupils. Also there is the need to place the pupils' social interaction in terms of the wider social structure of the school and the community. This chapter details some of the characteristics of the cohort of pupils. These characteristics, identified in Chapter 3 as important in characterizing the nature of the cohort are: reading ages; non verbal intelligence quotient; nationally standardized tests of English and Mathematics; school attendance; the family circumstances in terms of size, composition, and nature of employment of parents; and pupils attitudes to school. These selected aspects of the pupils seemed at the initial stages of the research to be relevant to the research questions relating to pupil social networks.

The next section locates this cohort of pupils in their school. There is an account of some of the movements that led up to the establishment of middle schools and a brief account of the 'early days' at Hilltop. The atmosphere and organization within which the pupils work have an important influence on the way they arrange their social lives and so there is an analysis of the organization and approach to teaching as well as a look at the composition of the teaching staff.

The school serves three new town estates. There is a description of the nature of the housing and facilities on these estates, the nature of the employment of the people who live on these estates and their attitudes

towards education and the school. There are also accounts of how other people, who work on the estates, see the estates and what they underline as being their important features and characteristics.

4.3. Features of the Cohort of Pupils

The pupils who are the focus of this research are one cohort of four mixed ability classes. The cohort at any one point in time consisted of approximately 120 children. As the cohort was studied over a period of two school years some children left the sample and some were added to it during the course of the research. However, 113 of the children in the cohort remained constant and of these 64 were boys and 49 were girls.

During the period of the research these pupils were in the final two years (3rd and 4th years, aged twelve and thirteen) of a middle school. Because of the considerable time spent with the pupils; in school lessons, in the corridors and playgrounds, before and after school, in their homes, on various school outings such as sporting events, visits to the theatre and places of historical interest; the researcher was able to 'get to know' many of the pupils as individuals and in groups.

As mentioned above there were more boys in the cohort than girls. Many of the characteristics of the group as a whole prove interesting. Details of tests used and other procedures by which information was collected are given in Appendix B.

4.3.i. Reading ages

The mean reading age of the cohort (as measured by the school administered Schonell Word Recognition test) at the end of the third year (Wave I) was 11 years 1 month (S.D. = 1 year 4 months range = 5 years 4 months) which is somewhat below the mean chronological age of 12 years 3 months. At the end of the first term in the fourth year (6 months later)(Wave 2) the mean reading age is 11 years 3 months (S.D. = 1 year 4 months range = 5 years 7 months) while the mean chronological age is 12 years 9 months. This relatively poor increase may be as a result of what the teachers see as the pupils 'slipping back' over the long summer holidays. At the end of the fourth year (6 months later) (Wave 3) the reading age is 11 years 6 months (S.D. = 1 year 2 months, range = 4 years) while the chronological age is 13 years 3 months.

These figures may present a somewhat distorted picture as the Schonell Word Recognition test has an upper limit of 12 years 6 months and so a figure which expresses the percentage of pupils in the cohort with a reading age equal to and above their chronological age is perhaps more use. At the end of the third year the figure is 22%, i.e. 78% of pupils have a reading age below their chronological age. At the end of the first term in the fourth year the figure is again 22% and at the end of the fourth year the figure has risen to 29%.

ii. Non Verbal I.Q.

The results of an N.F.E.R. non verbal I.Q. test, administered at the

end of the fourth year as part of the transfer procedures from middle school to high school, showed the mean I.Q. of the cohort to be 103.45 (S.D. 10.69, range 80-128) which is above average. The standardized Richmond Comprehension results administered at the same time have a mean of 99.89 (S.D. = 11.54 range 70-130) which is only marginally below average while the Richmond maths scores, also administered as part of the transfer process have a mean of 100.45 (S.D. = 11.25, range 76-130) which is marginally above average.

While one is extremely cautious about placing too much store in figures such as these, particularly the Schonell Word Recognition tests which are somewhat superficial were not standardized in their administration and have the problem of the limitation of the upper range, they are social facts in that all of them have been collected by the staff of both the high school and the middle school and are used by them in the classification of pupils and their placement in ability sets and streams.

It would appear also from these figures that in terms of ability and performance that, except for perhaps reading skills, this cohort is similar to any randomly selected national cohort of the same size.

In other ways though this cohort may not be typical. Some features of this cohort of pupils are discussed below.

iii. Attendance

Pupils seemed to attend regularly and only in the case of a very few pupils did the staff (and the Education Welfare Officer) feel that they were staying away from school for other than 'genuine' reasons. Discovered cases of 'truancy' were few. The mean absences for the whole of the third year was 17 half days (S.D. 12.8, range 0-55.5) and for the fourth year the mean was 15.5 half days (S.D. 12.1, range 0-50). So there was certainly no increase in absence during the fourth year. While the use of absence from school as an indicator of disaffection with school is questionable, as is just what constitutes an 'absence' (Shaw 1978) and can only be of any use when viewed in conjunction with other factors, there appears to be no evidence from this source of increasing disaffection with school.

iv. Family Backgrounds

The catchment area and background features of pupils in this cohort are described in detail in a following section and some of the more prominent features are discussed here. The teachers particularly, saw these more prominent features as having an important effect on the student body and as having real consequences for the pupils' performance in and orientation to school.

Whenever discussing the characteristics of the pupils at Hilltop the fact that a high proportion of the children were from 'broken' homes was always raised as crucial and this was seen to have a

very serious effect on the stability of the pupils in the school situation. One of the fourth year teachers comments:

" One thing for sure, there is a large number of one parent families for one reason or another and a variety of backgrounds, a great variety of backgrounds, and the children, I think, compared to others I know tend to have taken on more responsibility at home than other children and this affects their relationships towards adults and their general attitude of being responsible and of communicating with adults about things.....

My class is an exception this year in that they do seem to have two parents, well most of them, well two thirds of them, which is unusual. Last year I only had two in the class who had the original mother and father still with them."

The position for this cohort of pupils at the end of the study is as follows: 77% of the pupils live at home with their natural mother and father, 6% (7 cases) live with step father and natural mother, 1% (1 case) lives with natural father and step mother, 10% (11 cases) live with mother only, 4% (4 cases) live with father only, 2% (2 cases) live with two new parents and 1% (1 case) lives with one new parent. If as national figures indicate Whitfield (1978), D.H.S.S. (1974) one in every three-and-a-half children is affected by divorce, then this cohort of pupils has a lower incidence of divorce and separation than the national figures.*

The stress that teachers and other workers in the area place on this feature of the school population may probably be as a result

*This may be somewhat misleading as figures quoted are for children up to the age of 16 or 18 and as these children are only 12/13 one would expect the figure to be lower.

of the disproportionate amount of time that is spent by them with children experiencing upsets at home or it may be that this feature is exaggerated and generalized more than is actually the case. This factor did seem to have significant consequences in the formation of some peer groups.

Another, often recounted, characteristic of this group of children was the high proportion of their mothers who were in paid employment. The Head of the school claimed that this area had the highest proportion of working mothers in the country. 67% of the mothers were in some form of paid employment. It is very difficult to classify meaningfully the occupation of women, married women particularly, for numerous reasons, not the least of which is the fact that often married women 'take what work they can get' in order to fit in with domestic demands, children and husbands' employment, plus the associated difficulties of classifying housewife. However, by classifying mothers' occupation according to the Hall-Jones (1950) Occupational prestige scale (it must be emphasized that this scale was designed primarily for male occupations but no satisfactory scale exists for women) one can obtain some idea of the types of work done by the mothers of the pupils in this cohort.

Table 1

Mothers' Occupations

Class 1	Professionally Qualified & High Administrative	0%	Freq. 0
Class 2	Managerial and Executive	0%	" 0
Class 3	Inspectional, Supervisory & other Non-Manual (Higher Grade)	2.7%	" 2
Class 4	Inspectional, Supervisory & other Non-Manual (Lower Grade)	6.7%	" 5
Class 5(a)	Routine Non-Manual	10.7%	" 8
Class 5(b)	Skilled Manual	8%	" 6
Class 6	Semi-Skilled Manual	24.3%	" 19
Class 7	Routine Manual	48%	" 36

None had jobs in the Hall-Jones classes 1 and 2,
 9.4% " " 3 and 4,
 18.7% " " 5a and 5b, and
 73.3% " " 6 and 7.

So out of these 67% of mothers of children who went out to work over 73% are in semi skilled manual and unskilled manual occupations.

The occupations of the fathers of the pupils in the cohort show more of a spread and are classified as follows according to the Hall-Jones index.

Table 2

Fathers' Occupations

Class 1	Professionally Qualified and High Administrative	1%	Freq. 1
Class 2	Managerial and Executive	1%	" 1
Class 3	Inspectional, Supervisory & other Non-Manual (Higher Grade)	4%	" 4
Class 4	Inspectional, Supervisory & other Non-Manual (Lower Grade)	12%	" 11
Class 5(a)	Routine Non-Manual	6%	" 5
Class 5(b)	Skilled Manual	32%	" 28
Class 6	Semi Skilled Manual	22%	" 19
Class 7	Routine Manual	14%	" 12

It can be easily seen from the above table that the large bulk of the pupils in the cohort are from backgrounds which are working class in terms of the nature of their fathers occupation. Most of the fathers and many of the mothers are directly engaged in the productive process rather than service industries.*

* The following are examples of fathers' occupations: credit manager, bricklayer, roof felter, small retain businessman, steel fixer, barman, plumber, bus driver, sales representative, factory foreman, machine setter, rivet setter, press operator, long distance lorry driver, service engineer, furnace loader, maintenance officer, production controller, welder.

The large majority of the pupils in the sample have brothers and sisters, indeed only four are only children. The mean number of children in these families is 3.49 (S.D. 1.98, range 1-13) and the mean number of children that are still living at home is 3.12 (S.D. 1.50, range 1-9). Both these figures are somewhat higher than national averages.

4.3.v. Attitudes to School

The attitudes and orientation towards school of this cohort is of course of vital importance, not only in their relationships with their teachers but, in terms of their careers at school and their ultimate future and life chances. Attitudes, and attitudes in education are notoriously difficult to measure with confidence and accuracy and so more than one avenue was used to explore attitudes. All pupils completed traditional paper and pencil attitude questionnaires and there was considerable time spent in discussing with pupils, both formally in interviews and informally during the course of their school day, their attitudes to the many facets of school life. In addition to these procedures considerable cross checking was made possible by the many hours of observation, both in and out of school, of these pupils.

The pupils on the whole enjoyed school and were positive rather than negative in their orientation to it. However, there was a considerable range in the children's interpretation of schooling and in the way they defined school and it was obvious at this

age of 12-13 that considerable numbers of pupils were defining school in ways other than those of the official school definitions.

Two of the Barker-Lunn (1970) 'Attitudes of Pupils' scales were used to systematically tap the attitudes of the pupils towards school. The first scale (Scale F) was the 'attitude to school' scale and

"was concerned with general rather than specific aspects of school. It included statements such as 'school is fun', 'I would leave school tomorrow if I could'" (Barker-Lunn 1970, p 115) See Appendix B for complete scale).

The other scale used (Scale H) was the 'conforming versus non-conforming' scale and covered a range of possible types of pupil behaviour. For example

"I like people who get me into mischief', 'when teacher goes out of the room I play about'." (See Appendix B for complete scale).

The Barker-Lunn (1970) scales were designed for use with 11+ year olds so it seemed reasonable to conclude that they would be suitable for pupils aged 12-13. The scales had been extensively trialled and used on a sample of over 2,000 pupils. For the two particular scales selected for use here Barker-Lunn reports co-efficients of reproducibility of 0.95 for both scale F and H and alpha co-efficients of 0.89 for scale F and 0.90 for scale H.

These attitude questionnaires were administered to the cohort at the end of the 3rd year (Wave 1), six months later in December in the 4th year (Wave 2), and six months later again at the end of the 4th year (Wave 3). The overall results are as follows

Table 3 Attitudes to School

	<u>Wave 1</u>			<u>Wave 2</u>			<u>Wave 3</u>		
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range</u>
Scale F	19.381	6.12	6-30	21.35	4.75	6-30	20.894	4.61	9-30
Scale H	17.867	3.64	7-25	17.743	4.01	5-25	18.283	2.96	11-25

From the tables one can see that the general attitudes to school have become more positive from the third to the fourth year. While there has been some decline between December in the fourth year and June/July at the end of the fourth year the overall average score is still higher than it was at the end of the third year. Scale H, the conforming versus non-conforming pupil scale, remains relatively consistent. With Scale F the lowest score possible is 6 - indicating the most anti school attitudes while the highest score possible is 30 indicating the most pro school attitudes. The middle score which indicates no strong feelings either way is 18.5 so at all three time points the combined average attitudes are more pro school.

While these attitude scales do reflect the general 'attitudinal state' of the cohort they must be treated with some caution for two basic reasons.

Average scores can be very deceptive and cover a wide degree of variation. As can be seen from Table 3 the standard deviations of the average scores are large, indicating a considerable spread in individual scores with very pro school scores being counteracted somewhat by very anti school scores and vice-versa.

Pupils with a very different orientation/definition of school may respond to attitude questions in a similar manner. For example in response to the statement 'school is fun' a child who has

taken on the academic values of the school and sees the virtue in working hard and doing well with school work is no more likely to respond positively than the child who sees school as an opportunity to 'meet your mates' and have a laugh.

These attitude scales can provide no more than a general picture. More detailed, in depth investigation is required before any adequate assessment or evaluation of attitudes can be made.

In addition to being asked to report their own attitudes all pupils were asked to respond to the questionnaire in the manner that they felt that their group of best friends would answer (see Appendix B). In this, in some ways very simple manner, an attempt was made to assess pupils' perceptions of the attitudes of the closest friends/associates - their peer network. The results are as follows

Table 4 Friends Attitudes to School

	Wave 1			Wave 2			Wave 3		
	Mean	S.D.	Range	Mean	S.D.	Range	Mean	S.D.	Range
Scale K	16.398	6.29	6-30	18.195	5.65	6-30	17.956	5.147	6-30
Scale L	15.319	4.15	5-25	15.991	4.11	5-25	16.699	3.67	5-25

For both scales and at all three time points the pupils judge the attitudes of their friends to be considerably more anti school than are their own. Once again there are wide individual variations but the trend generally is for pupils to see their friends as liking school less than they do. This may well be due to the tendency, particularly for children of this age, to adopt in public, among

their friends, more extreme attitudes than they actually hold and these more anti school expressions are interpreted by friends as being those actually held by an individual. This would perhaps suggest that the peer norms have the effect of reducing to a certain extent the public expression of pro school orientation. From a research point of view it also acts as a warning against accepting at face value the anti school expressions of pupils. Many of these expressions may be designed to conform with the perceived peer norms but of course the public expression of these views carries its own dynamics.

A table which combines both Tables 3 and 4 may be helpful in identifying this trend.

Table 5 Own and Friends Attitudes to School

	<u>Wave 1</u>	<u>Wave 2</u>	<u>Wave 3</u>
(own) Scale F	19.381	21.35	20.894
(friends) Scale K	16.398	18.195	17.956
(own) Scale H	17.867	17.743	18.283
(friends) Scale L	15.319	15.991	16.699

Note: Scale F and Scale K contain exactly the same attitude statements and the pupils are asked to complete F as they themselves feel and K as they think their group of best friends would answer. Similarly for Scale H and Scale L. Higher scores designate broadly a more pro school attitude.

Having located and discussed what seemed to be relevant characteristics of these pupils an examination of the history and characteristics of the institution, i.e. the school which they attend, is necessary.

4.4. The School

Hilltop is a purpose built county middle school which caters for children aged 9-13 and opened in 1970/71. It is part of a three tier system of educational provision. Children come to Hilltop from two first schools which cater for ages 5-9 and when they have completed four years at Hilltop they go on with the pupils from a neighbouring middle school to a high school where they stay until they are 16 or 18. So the pupils who are the focus of this study are in their third and fourth years at middle school and at the end of the study were contemplating the prospect of transferring to the high school. An important feature of Hilltop is that it is a middle school and middle schools have their own specific history and character.

4.4.i. History and Ideology of Middle Schools

Middle Schools are a comparatively recent educational phenomenon. In the county where Hilltop is situated, and which was one of the first to introduce a three tier system, middle schools are in their eleventh year of existence. The history of the debates which took place prior to the establishment of middle schools is

complex and complicated by the fact that as is so often the case the debates about setting up middle schools were entangled with debates about other wider educational issues particularly the call by the Secretary of State for Education and Science for Local Authorities to submit their plans for comprehensive reorganization and the plans to raise the school leaving age. (see Edwards 1972, Blyth and Derricott 1977, Bryan and Hardcastle 1977).

Plans for changing the standard two tier pattern of educational provision stretch back to the 1950's when for example in 1957 Leicestershire proposed a three tier system with Junior High Schools catering for the 10-14 year age range and Worcestershire in 1958 proposed a three tier system with intermediate schools catering for the 9-13 age range. The first use of the term 'middle school' seems to have been by Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer of West Riding, in the early 1960's. The West Riding proposed 9-13 middle schools in 1963. However, Local Authorities were prevented by the 1944 Education Act from altering the age of transfer and so before any of these proposals could come into being change in the law was required. Boyle and Crosland (1971) claim that by 1963 the government was under considerable pressure to change this law and allow more flexibility in the age of transfer.

Then followed a considerable period of uncertainty, with the government and the D.E.S. obviously unsure about the merits of a three tier system involving middle schools. The 1964 Education Act

allowed L.E.A.'s to submit plans for reorganization with ages of transfer other than that stipulated in the 1944 act. This did not signify the immediate acceptance of the middle school idea. The D.E.S. were obviously far from convinced as Crosland, the then Secretary of State for Education, comments in the famous 10/65 circular:

'notwithstanding the prima facie attractiveness of middle schools he did not intend to give his statutory approval to more than a very small number of such proposals in the near future' (DES 1965 para 22).

Local Authorities were also experiencing the ambivalence of the D.E.S. and in for example Worcestershire, Marsh (1980) comments

"The Department proved to be hesitant and in May 1965 the County Education Officer reported that he did not believe that the sub committee would get even an informal indication from the Department within the near future. All that he had been able to obtain was an acknowledgment that Droitwich looked to be the type of area for which three tier organization might be possible."

However the tide was beginning to turn and in 1966 Crosland in the Commons stages

"our thinking has shifted in the light of experience since the day when we used the language in the Circular. We would now be more willing to consider possible 9-13 schemes" (Hansard 1966, p 494).

This acceptance became more obvious with the comment in Circular 13/66 whereby Local Authorities were able to alter the age of transfer if it could be

"justified by reference to some clear practical advantage in the context of reorganization on comprehensive lines or raising of the school leaving age or both" (DES 1966, para 4).

Bryan and Hardcastle (1977) maintain that it is undoubtedly significant that much of this 'change of heart' took place during the period when

Lady Plowden and her committee were having considerable discussions about the future of primary education.

The Plowden Report (1967) recommended Middle Schools covering the eight to twelve years of age range. This report and the ideology of 'progressivism' which surrounded many of their recommendations had considerable influence on the setting up of middle schools. However, there has been a tendency for almost everything that takes place in the name of middle schools to look to the Plowden Report for justification.

Plowden certainly gave 'the blessing' for the development of middle schools. The first commenced in the West Riding in 1968 and developed rapidly in many areas of England. Middle Schools first appeared as a separate category in the official Statistics of Education in 1969 and in 1970 the D.E.S. (1970a, 1970b) made two publications to assist in the establishing of middle schools. There has been a rapid growth in the numbers of middle schools but this trend appears to be slowing down at present.

A noticeable feature is the variety of types of school that gather under the umbrella of middle schools. Plowden recommended middle schools catering for the eight to twelve years age range as being the most suitable. Education Pamphlet 57 (1970) sets out 8-12 years, 9-13 years, 10-13 years, 10-14 years and even suggests the possibility of 5-12 years as suitable age ranges for middle schools. Differences also seem to occur depending on the previous training and experience

of the head appointed to establish a new middle school. Additionally the actual building and architecture of the middle school, i.e. purpose built or former secondary or primary accommodation would appear to have considerable effects in making middle schools different (see Wallace 1978 for a full discussion of the effects of architectural constraints on middle schools).

The reasons behind the rise and development of middle schools must not be seen as being independent of wider ideological and political movements particularly that of social democracy with its commitment to education as a means of social reform and the difficulties with this policy in a period of financial crisis and economic restrictions (Finn, Grant & Johnson, 1977) (A Hargreaves 1977). The beginnings of many middle schools were affected by the popularity of progressivism as an educational ideology. However, many arguments are used to justify the establishment of Middle Schools. Arguments tend to centre around the ages and stages of childrens development and with the increased knowledge of child development it was argued that the special characteristics of children in this age range could be best catered for in one institution. The special features of pupils of this age range were seen as being

"the range and relative unpredictability of individual abilities, the powerful effects of the expectations of parents, teachers and the childrens own contemporaries; the general trend for all save the exceptionally able or mature to learn most effectively from the concrete;....; and their tendency to congregate and work in groups" (D.E.S. 1970b:10).

The following is typical of reports from the many working parties that were set up in authorities about to embark upon middle schools

which used developmental and psychological arguments in support of the establishment of middle schools. These arguments they claim were based on

"deeper knowledge and understanding of the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children described by Piaget and given under currency by the Plowden and Gittens reports". (Worcester Education C'ttee 1970: 7)

While age of transfer and developmental arguments are indeed important they must not be viewed as the only or even the main reason for the establishment of middle schools. Bryan & Hardcastle (1977: 51) conclude that

"educational rhetoric plays only a small part in deciding whether to adopt middle schools or even what type of middle school" and that "reorganization to a three tier system including 8-12 middle schools was the cheapest way of meeting the requirement to provide for the raising of the school leaving age and is still the cheapest way of going comprehensive."

Similarly, but perhaps even more cynically, Edwards (1972 p 83-4) comments that middle schools can be seen

"as a useful expedient which would be an economical method of going comprehensive and which would also relieve considerably the pressures on secondary accommodation which would follow the projected raising of the school leaving age."

It is within this context and from these general developments that Hilltop was established as a purpose built middle school catering for the nine to thirteen age range.

4.4.ii. School Organization and Approach to Teaching

The head appointed to establish Hilltop had been involved for several years before in working parties which had been set up by the County to plan for the establishment of middle schools. He was a man of considerable enthusiasm and charisma and was very committed to the idea and potentialities of middle schools. The 'early' days of Hilltop are described by himself and many of the original staff as being 'hectic and unpredictable' but memorable, and looked upon with some nostalgia by many of the staff, because of

"the tremendous sense of purpose and commitment we all had. It was exciting in a new building and genuinely trying to do something new and better and worthwhile."
(Hilltop's first Head).

It should be remembered that at the time the school opened the housing estates were just being completed and in the first year there were children enrolled at Hilltop from over sixty different previous schools. The 'newness' of the community created considerable strain on the staff of the school. Many of the children were unsettled as were many of the parents and the head comments that he spent as much time that year as a community social worker and marriage guidance counsellor as he did as a head.

The present head of the school who took over as the research began had been a year coordinator and a deputy head in a middle school before being appointed head at Hilltop. He also was very committed to the philosophy of middle schools and was very keen

that middle schools should develop a character and identity of their own and not just be extended primary schools or junior high schools or indeed two years of each type. He was very keen to develop the transition model of middle schools where the best of primary school traditions were combined with the best of secondary school traditions.

This model for middle schools had been clearly set out by the D.E.S. (1970) in Pamphlet 57, which saw Middle Schools as providing a transitional period of education drawing upon the advantages of both primary and secondary organization and teaching methods which are deemed most appropriate for children of this age range.

"For the youngest children there is certainly much to be said for the flexibility towards which primary schools are moving. At this stage there are some undoubted advantages in the class teacher having the responsibility for most of the curriculum...." (D.E.S. 1970 p 15).

"As children become older, a greater measure of differentiation in the curriculum becomes suitable.... By the time the children near the end of the middle school, some will certainly be ready for a more elaborate framework round which to organize their knowledge...." (D.E.S. 1970 p 10).

Operating a transition model with the flexibility and variation implied has consequences for the organization of the school (see Meyenn & Tickle (1978) for a detailed discussion and some of the organizational implication of the transition model). The school was basically organized around year group teams with a team leader or year coordinator and so even when in the late years pupils were taught by more than one teacher the majority of these teachers were members of the year group team.

The school's philosophy of education was firmly within the humanist/'progressive' tradition. There was an emphasis on the 'development of the individual to his full potential educationally, socially and emotionally.' While this platitude is 'trotted out' by most teachers, the teachers at Hilltop did spend a considerable amount of time over their pupils' social and emotional well-being. The impact of the national debate over standards and basics (see Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller, 1979) was certainly having its effect and school staff were always quick to point out that the school emphasized 'the basics'.

There was a lot of group and topic work particularly in curricular areas such as Integrated Studies and Science and this was very popular with the pupils. By the fourth year, pupils were divided into five ability sets for Maths and English and two classes at a time were divided into three ability groups for French. Science classes were sometimes divided into two ability groups.

It was apparent from many of the teachers that middle schools were still felt to be something of an unknown quantity both by the rest of the education community and to a lesser extent by some parents. They were concerned that to the 'outside' they were still very new and were still being expected to prove themselves! This uncertainty, it would appear, is not without foundation as in discussion with the staffs of high schools there was much criticism, not of the teachers themselves but of the organizational form, mainly because

they felt that the middle schools had no public exams to work for or by which they could be judged (a feature that most middle school teachers felt to be a decided asset) and because they were 'deprived' for two years of pupils that they had to prepare for public examinations. (see: Ginsburg & Meyenn, 1980).

4.4.iii. Teaching Staff

The school was staffed by a head, deputy, senior mistress, four year group coordinators plus eighteen other teachers. Several teachers had special areas of responsibility, e.g. for Maths, Science, English, Library, P.E., Art/Design and one of the year coordinators also took responsibility for coordinating French throughout the school. The year coordinators had scale three posts while those teachers with special areas of responsibility had scale two posts. The following statistics on the composition of the staff are of interest.

Table 6 Teaching Experience of Staff

Proportion of staff with mostly secondary level experience	.32	(8 teachers)
Proportion of staff with mostly primary level experience	.08	(2 teachers)
Proportion of staff with only middle school experience	.60	(15 teachers)
Male/Female ratio	.79	(11 male, 14 female)

What is noticeable here is the number of teachers who have had their entire teaching experience in middle schools, the bulk of whom have

come straight from college to Hilltop. This factor coupled with the commitment and enthusiasm of the senior staff has meant that the middle school ideology has flourished at Hilltop. When the cohort of pupils were in the third year their class teachers were two women and two men. A woman was coordinator with a Scale 3 post and the other three had Scale 1 posts. In the fourth year there were again two women and two men and one of the women was coordinator. One of the other teachers had a Scale 2 post and the remaining two were on scale 1 posts. These year group teams operated very much as teams. Formal team meetings were held once a week as well as many informal meetings during breaks. Work was coordinated between the four classes particularly in Integrated Studies where the whole year usually concentrated on the same topic. As well as curricula and organizational matters time was often spent in team meetings discussing particular pupils who were causing a considerable amount of trouble or were in need of special help or sympathetic treatment.

Most of the teachers seemed to have very good relationships with the children and similarly most pupils seemed to have an easy relaxed relationship with their teachers. As has been outlined earlier, teachers adopted a somewhat informal/progressive approach with an emphasis on the basics. An example of their approach which is of direct relevance to this study is the seating arrangements in the classroom. In the fourth year two of the teachers allowed the pupils to sit with whom they pleased and arrange the desks as they liked. This meant that classroom consisted of various sized groups of pupils. Both these teachers allowed this on the stipulation

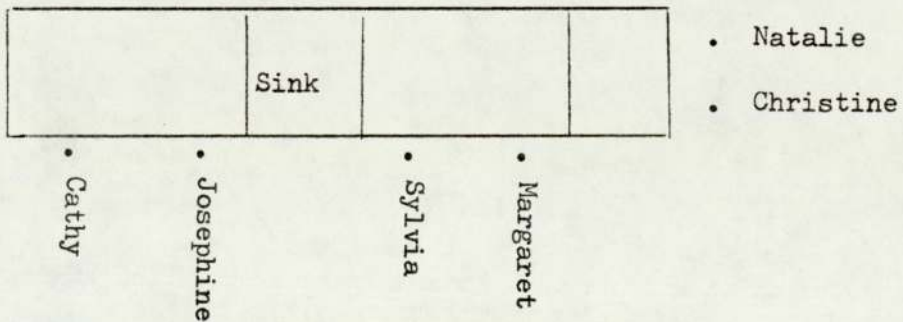
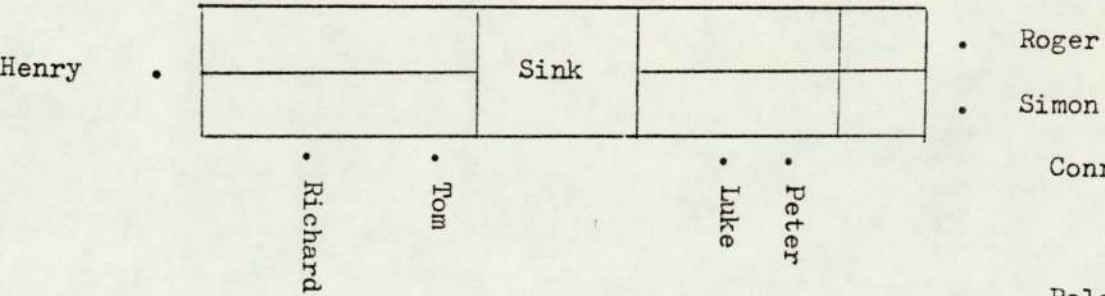
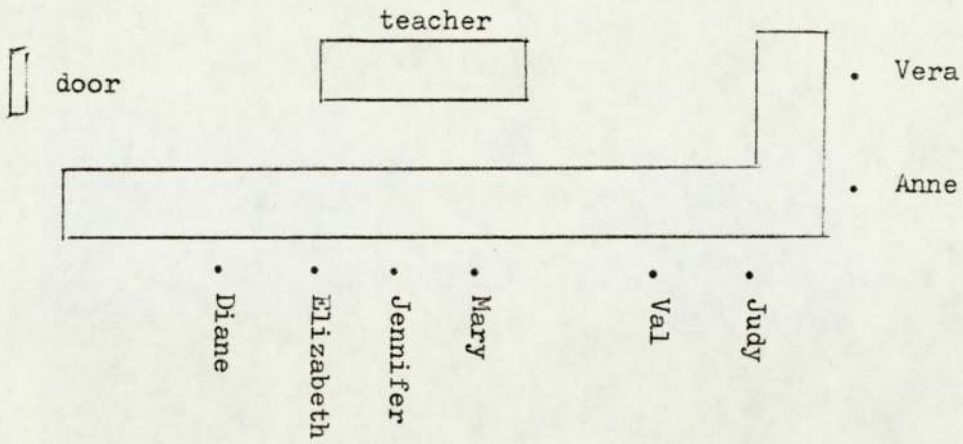
that if there was any 'trouble' from the groups then the offending group may be split up and have to sit elsewhere. This happened very occasionally and it always amused me just how quickly groups were able to get themselves back together again. Another teacher had a similar policy but restricted the size of groups to four. However, by the strategic placement of tables this number was sometimes extended. The fourth teacher had a similar system except that she kept known and proven troublemakers, those who needed a 'close eye' on them, near to her table and allowed the rest to organize themselves. The factor that the teachers were so flexible in their approach to classroom organization was of course amazingly facilitative to the observation of pupils' social relationships and peer networks. Throughout the year the arrangement of tables varied often. Tables were for two pupils but could be pushed together, and usually were, in a number of different ways. The different teachers allowed different patterns of furniture arrangement but none of the classes were arranged in the traditional manner of tables in rows. The following diagrams illustrate some of the patterns of arrangement.

...

Diagram A

4F in Science Lab : January 1978

Teacher : Mr. Jones

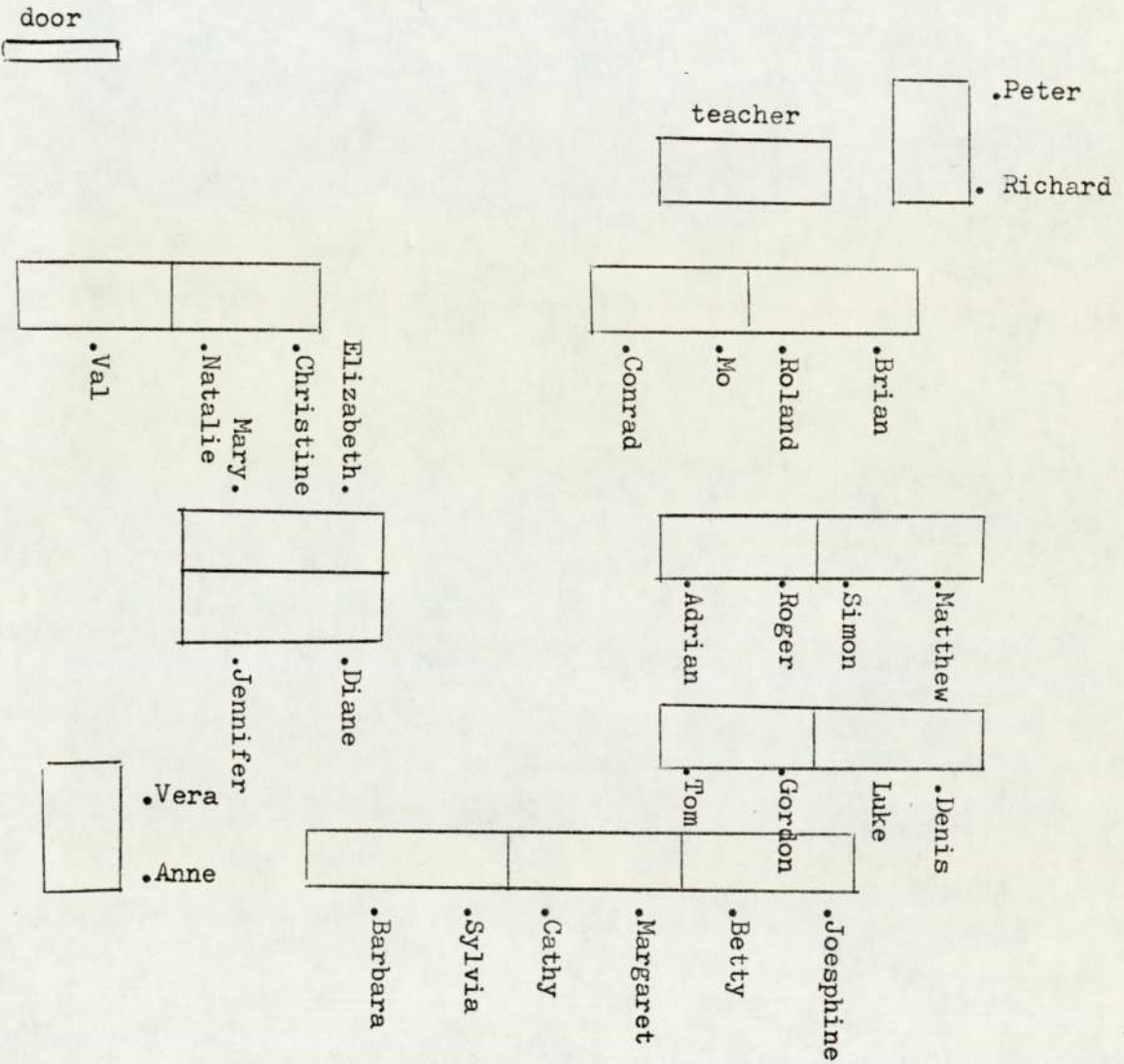


door

(from field notes)

Absent: Brian
 Matthew
 Betty

Teacher Mrs. Price



(from field notes)

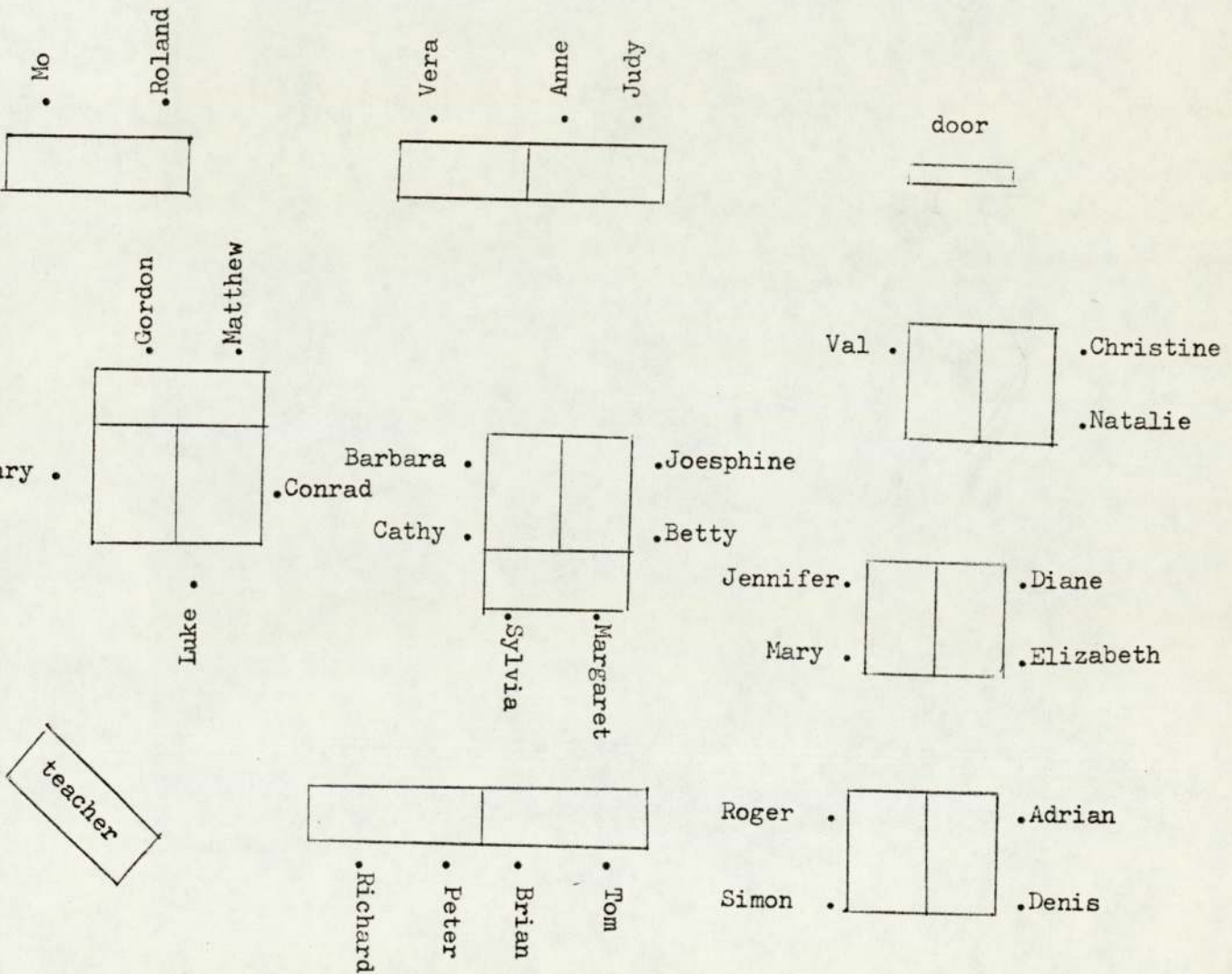
Absent: Henry

Judy

Diagram C

4F Registration : July 1978

Teacher : Mr. Fisher



4.5. The Community - School Catchment Area

4.5.i. The Estates

The estates are part of a town designated a new town in the late 1960's. The town itself is an old established small industrial town which experienced a period of rapid growth in the late 19th and early 20th century. The school drew the majority of its pupils from the surrounding three new town estates. The school was actually situated on a small rise between two of the estates. Except for a very few of the houses most of the housing had been built in the last 8-10 years. As with most 'new towns' the majority of the community had been rehoused as a result of a nearby inner city rehousing scheme. Although, because of the relative availability of employment, people had come from many different parts of the country there were a few 'old' inhabitants who resented somewhat the huge influx of 'foreigners' and saw them as being the cause of most of their 'troubles'.

The estates at one corner link with the new town centre and are situated in pleasant countryside of rolling hills, woods, orchards and fertile mixed arable and dairy farms and from any part of the estates there is easy access to fields and woodland a feature which some of the adults who had moved from the inner city were somewhat uncertain about: 'I like to have lots of people around me', but which was seen as an asset by most of the children.

Of the three estates, A and B were adjacent and on one side of the school, while C was on the other side of the school.

The estates were in very easy walking distance of each other. The teachers saw the pupils who came from estate C as being generally 'brighter' and better behaved, probably because, they argued, this estate was older and more established and because there was a greater percentage of owner occupied as opposed to rented housing, compared with the pupils from estates A and B which were newer 'still settling down' and had a high proportion of rented accommodation (a fact acknowledged as a mistake by the development corporation and not repeated in any of its subsequent estates). 33% of the pupils came from estate A, 36% from estate B, 25% from estate C while 6% (7 pupils) were from other areas - usually the children of families who had originally lived on one of the three estates but had bought a house on another estate but decided to have their child at Hilltop until he/she had completed their middle schooling.

The houses on the estate were rather 'packed in' but most had their own small patch of garden, most were terraces but some were semi detached and a few detached (usually the owner occupied houses). There was a range of housing available for rent from 2-bedroomed to houses with 5-6 bedrooms. Considerable effort had been made with landscaping and providing grassed areas and this tended to alleviate the density of the housing. The estates seemed by and large to be free of vandalism although there was some writing on walls and damage to the ornamental trees and shrubs.

Of the children in the cohort that were the focus of this research

81% were from families who rented their accommodation while the other 19% owned or were buying their own homes. All of the homes that were visited in the course of interviewing (the parents of 4F pupils) were very well cared for and as one would expect the actual quality of the furnishings varied considerably.

The estates were served by a community centre, library as well as a small but comprehensive shopping centre. There was a bus service into the nearby town where there were very good shopping facilities and there was also a bus or train service into the nearest city which tended to be used for special shopping expeditions. For the pupils in the sample there were fields and woods nearby, a very well equipped sports centre attached to the high school, which was used extensively discos were held in the community centre that served estates A and B and also in the centre which served estate C. Many of the pupils attended both of these centres. Many of the pupils did complain that the main disadvantage in living on A, B or C was that there was nothing to do. They argued that all that was provided were a few childrens' playgrounds which they had long grown out of. The girls particularly made this complaint especially those who laughed uproariously when I enquired about clubs such as 'girl guides'. Many of the girls 'hung about', went to each others houses, watched T.V., 'do nothing really.' The boys, by and large, played football and watched T.V. a regular form of entertainment for the girls was to 'go up town' on a Saturday and shop, have coffee and 'hang around' and a few

of the girls were beginning to make Saturday trips to the city to go ice skating or other similar activities.

4.5.ii. Employment

The main sources of employment were the many light engineering factories in the area, e.g. some old established industries like needle making and aluminium moulding and the manufacture of agricultural machinery. Some people on the estate worked in a car factory in the nearby big city. By most criteria the estates were very much working class with a very few middle class families. It was found, however, particularly in the in depth study on the one class group that there are tremendous variations in the attitudes aspirations and outlook of people who by most 'objective' criteria would be classified working class. There is, however, merit and an increase in understanding in looking at the employment of the mothers and fathers of this cohort of pupils. See table 2.

In thirteen cases (12% of total) there was no father upon which an occupational classification could be made and there were eight fathers (7%) who were unemployed at the end of the period of research. 24% of the fathers were in occupational class 5(a) or above, meaning that the vast bulk of fathers had jobs which fell into the bottom three categories, i.e. skilled manual, semi skilled manual and unskilled manual. The classification of occupation of mothers (see table 1) of pupils in the sample is difficult, for reasons outlined earlier, and is only included for descriptive purposes and should and cannot be viewed as an indication or

assessment of status or social class. 67% of mothers were in some form of paid employment.

Of the mothers that do go out to work 73.3% of them have jobs that are either unskilled or semi skilled manual. The predominant type of work for those living on these three estates is manual.

Considerable information was gathered from outsiders who worked in these estates - teachers both from Hilltop and other schools on the estate, social workers, and the local Education Welfare Officer, as well as information from people - parents and children on what it was like to live on the estate.

4.5.iii. Outsiders' views of the Estates

Only one of the teachers at Hilltop lived on an estate served by the school although others lived on nearby new town estates. A general consensus seemed to be that even though the estates were still suffering from 'problems' and upheavals they had settled down (particularly estates A and B) considerably over the past few years. The head of a first school on the estate comments:

"B.M. Do you see changes then in the nature of the estate?

Head: Yes. The whole of the estate is gradually, very very slowly improving because people seem more able to cope with their own problems and they seem less and less running to me to help them solve them which is a good thing. They also seem to be gradually taking a little more interest in the school. Let me give you one example: we have always had a problem with people dumping rubbish on this site, particularly behind the swimming pool. And for a few years I have written

out letters to parents and asked for their cooperation and nobody has done anything about it and the rubbish has still been there. In the last month we had no end of rubbish being dumped but I have had at least ten parents who have come to me and given the name and address of the person that has done it.....

There is more of a community spirit about things. There is a community Group that has opened which is a self care group organized by the parents to help people in trouble when you have got a child going into hospital they will go in and help and make a cup of tea for grandma. This sort of thing. It is very good - makes them more self-sufficient. They are gradually becoming aware of those around them."

This feature of the community is commented upon by most of the people working on the estate. It seems generally agreed that the estate is 'settling down' and becoming more of a community.

The teachers at all levels of schooling saw the children as coming from very definite working class backgrounds. (It must be stressed quite emphatically that not all teachers saw this as a 'problem' or 'handicap' and in fact some of the teachers, particularly at Hilltop, preferred and indeed deliberately chose to work with children with working class backgrounds because they found them more rewarding and also because they felt that they may be able to effect some degree of social change. When asked to describe the characteristics of the children and their backgrounds most of the teachers responded in a way similar to the one quoted below:

"BM Could you just tell me about the sort of kids you have here?

Teacher Its a very difficult question because there are so many different types..... You get the problem of the split home, a child perhaps living with the mother for a month and then with the father; and not knowing where their anchorage is which builds up insecurity and you get behaviour problems in school. You have got the fringe

of parents taking drugs, there is a small nucleus of drug addicts whose parents at some times when they are quite high are very difficult to cope with. And when they are going through a bad patch on drugs they will tend to neglect the children but basically they do love them and when they are out of this phase of it they improve and they are all right. You get a lot of battered women who come who have been beaten up by their husbands. A woman came after her husband had tried to poke her eyes out. Which I thought was revolting; her face was so black you could not put a pin between the bruises. You get the very nice family, very caring and very loving who will do anything for their children, they come to the school and they help voluntarily.....they will join the PTA. They work like slaves and if you ask them to do something they are only too willing. They are ready at any moment to help you..... You have the neglected child - who is sent when they have measles or chicken pox because mom has to go out to work and we had one this morning that had a nasty sty on his eye and in fact I am very surprised that he could even see out yet the mother had gone to work and sent him to school and he was obviously distressed and in too poor a state to be able to work.

BM Is this a major proportion of your children?

Teacher The majority of parents are sort of hard working, caring, they do a lot for their children, not very much of an intellectual background, and I should say of the labouring classes very willing but they don't participate, they would rather opt out than join in. The majority of them are very difficult to get into the school. Then you get the percentage who will do anything in the school and then you get I should think, a rough estimate, it is very difficult to say how many, but I should think about 20% that are really in need of extra care and attention and parents who are lacking intellectually they have, we have got mentally disturbed parents who need psychiatric treatment. Generally parents who can't budget - a great number can't cope on their money each week and it is just that they don't know how to plan and budget for things."

It is certainly true that staff spent a disproportionate amount of time with some pupils who were having 'problems at home'. Over one particular period of several weeks I observed two members of the fourth year team counselling a girl, whose parents had just separated, for many many hours. Heads also comment on the amount of

their time taken up counselling parents.

Whether or not teachers can bring about social change or changes in the class structure is of course a matter for considerable discussion and many of the teachers did in fact discuss this issue and expressed doubts about whether or not in the end they could make any difference. This should not however be interpreted as teachers accepting the status quo. The teachers, particularly those of the cohort of pupils who are in the focus for this study, were extremely committed, enthusiastic and inventive.

Impressions and opinions of a community from social workers and welfare officers are from a particular standpoint. Those spoken to, though, did confirm the impression held by the teachers that the community was becoming more settled. The social workers spoken to saw estate C as being well established and settled as one comments:

".....the children who do come from it I think are less disoriented probably because they have been there longer, parents have been there longer..."

and that when 'problems' do occur on this estate it is very conspicuous

"Its a more settled area so immediately you see a problem it stands out."

Social workers saw estates A and B as having many more problems even though, as noted earlier, there was a general consensus that these estates were settling down. They saw these two estates as having a high turnover of residents and a very high percentage of families with children of school age. (Estate C was described by one social worker as being a 'grandmother' estate by comparison).

"The only problem is from my own observations, I think A and B is a densely populated area, well childwise, child population, and also there is a very big turn round of residents... There are people who obviously get there and are soon anxious to get out quickly...."

In discussing the number of 'problem' cases that are dealt with on estates A and B another social worker points out that this should be kept in perspective when he says

".....we do get a lot of problem cases but against the whole background of the school population it isn't a lot but its too big a quantity to be coped with with the resources we've got."

He also comments on the amount of time schools spend dealing with these problems.

".....likewise I maintain that schools are spending far too much time in either trying to contain them or resolve them....."

The social workers seemed agreed that the two major causes of problems with school age children were the inability of some families to cope economically and marital stress. As one social worker comments

"I think that the ability not to cope is two fold, one obviously is economical, budgeting management. I don't think we would have many what I would term fundamentally deprived or poverty stricken families but....the present expectation of a better standard of living leaves them hopelessly inadequate as it were to manipulate the finances to the degree that they can even provide for some of the basics.....

I think the inadequacy is often due to the fact that of course there are matrimonial stresses and here again I don't know, I suppose 'Newtown' is much like 'Big City', we are getting an increasing break down of matrimonial relationships and you know its, I find perhaps being an older person, really frightening. Frightening from the point of view of the adult situation but far more so as the children are concerned."

The Education Welfare Officer in the area claimed that these factors often led to parents of some children being anti school. He comments:

"Parental attitude is something that in the lower social order I find at this point in time is something important because it seems a belligerence towards school and school authority. This may be the pattern of our times that we are agin authority but unfortunately when it is reflected in the children it makes the teacher's job more difficult..."

Social workers, but to a lesser extent the Education Welfare Officer interviewed felt that while most teachers 'did a good job' many of them were not as aware as they might be of the background and home circumstances of many of their children. As one says:

"I think, by and large, you know, I will say that the Heads and teachers are trying to do a damn good job of work but some teachers are lamentably unaware of the home circumstances and in some circumstances....react in a way that isn't as conducive towards helping those particular children."

The teachers at Hilltop were singled out by Social Workers and the Education Welfare Officer who had contact with other schools in the area as being more aware than most and certainly from my observations at the school the teachers were certainly aware of the background and home circumstances of some of the children. One social worker says of Hilltop that the involvement of the staff meant that they were able

"to cope with a lot of the problems they get, also they are willing to cope with them."

4.5.iv. Parental Attitudes to School

One indicator which may be useful when discussing parental attitudes towards school and education is whether or not they attend the school arranged annual parental interviews. When the cohort were in the third year at the middle school at least one parent of 83% of the pupils attended the school for discussion about their/his/her child's progress. In 42% of cases both parents attended, in 34% of cases mother only attended while in 8% of cases father only attended (in 17% of cases neither father nor mother attended). In the fourth year at least one parent of 73% of the pupils attended. In 34% of cases both parents attended, in 33% of cases mother only attended and in 7% of cases father only attended. These figures would tend to indicate that there was a relatively high involvement of parents with the school although there is of course a noticeable drop between the third and fourth years. The degree to which this does indicate involvement or commitment is uncertain and from the interviewing of parents it may well include many of these parents who are prepared to "let the school get on with it".

One teacher comments:

"BM What are the attitudes to school of the parents?

Teacher I think they want the children out and to have a job, and earn the money. And they will say to you, well I was never very good at school I don't expect so and so will be as long as they do as I done this is all I want and as long as they are happy well that's all I want.

BM This is typical of the big wedge in the middle that you described.

Teacher Yes. So there isn't a motivation there to improve standards. The only way we can do it is by motivating them in the school. Then of course when it comes to the high school if the parents are not behind them the tendency is that they just leave and are either unemployed or have some sort of manual job as their parents do. We are hoping that we are gradually going to improve them.

4.6. Summary and Implications

In terms of 'school abilities' the cohort of pupils are slightly above average in terms of I.Q. and mathematics, very slightly below in terms of comprehension and considerably below average with reading. Teachers see the cohort as being different because of the higher incidence of pupils from 'broken' homes. On a closer analysis of the statistics this does not seem to be the case and so the teachers' perceptions may be based on the situation as it was in the early days of the school or may be distorted because of the inordinately disproportionate amount of time spent with children who are having problems at home. 67% of mothers of pupils in this cohort go out into paid employment and this figure is certainly considerably higher than the national average. These mothers, as do the major proportion of fathers, work in manual occupations. Family size is larger than national averages.

The pupils as a whole express positive attitudes to school although there is a considerable variety of interpretations of the purposes of schooling. There are interesting insights into the pupils' perceptions of their peers' attitudes to school which they see as being significantly more anti school than what they actually are.

Middle Schools have been in existence in this country for only 10-12 years. They are justified on psychological and child developmental arguments as providing more suitable education for this age range. However, while this may well be true, they are and were an economically expedient way of going comprehensive and of

coping with the increased numbers caused by the raising of the school leaving age.

Middle Schools were born amidst the aura of Plowden's progressivism. Hilltop is a new purpose built middle school with a young enthusiastic staff committed to the ideology of middle schools. The Hilltop teachers were organized into year group teams and there was a lot of group work among the children. The pupils had considerable flexibility to choose who they sat with and how many of them sat together which made their social relationship and peer networks much more easy to observe. By the final year of this middle school, which was operating a transition model, i.e. over the four years the organization would gradually change from that which could be described as largely primary in orientation to that which could be described as largely secondary, the pupils were set for English, Maths and French, and sometimes for Science.

The new town estates which were the schools catchment area had also been newly built. These estates had a high proportion of rented accommodation which the Development Corporation saw as a mistake and they had in all subsequent estates ensured that there was a balance of rented and accommodation for private purchase. Most of the men and women who lived on these estates were in occupations that would be described as working class. The estates were regarded by outsiders who worked on them as gradually settling down and becoming more of a community but with still quite a lot

of social problems seen as associated with low income families. The majority of parents expressed interest in school with 83%-73% attending parent evenings, however, many parents seemed prepared to send their children to school and let the school get on with it.

It is within the context and constraints outlined in this chapter that these boys and girls conduct their social lives. In brief the school environment could be characterized as positive and progressive, serving a predominantly working class catchment area which was perceived as having some social problems but by no means characterized by extreme material deprivation.

CHAPTER 5

Peer Networks in School

- 5.1. Outline
- 5.2. Introduction
- 5.3. Peer Groups or Interaction Sets
- 5.4. Girls and Peer Networks
 - i. Do girls form groups?
 - ii. Sociometry of girls friendship choices.
 - iii. The 4F girls.
 - iv. The prospect of High School
- 5.5. Boys and Peer Networks
 - i. The Sociometry of Boys friendship choices.
 - ii. The 4F boys.
- 5.6. Stability of Peer Group Networks
 - i. The Boys
 - ii. The Girls
- 5.7. Summary and Implications

5.1. OUTLINE

This chapter addresses the question of whether or not school pupils form groups, and asks if groups are formed, how relevant are they to these pupils, and do they help understand and explain what goes on in schools and classrooms. Are there differences between boys and girls in the way they organize their social relationships? Finally the chapter examines the stability of peer networks and attempts to identify patterns in the changes that take place over the course of the research.

5.2. Introduction

There is considerable debate among researchers and workers in education generally as to whether or not, in the context of schools, pupils form stable groups and whether they are a significant feature of the school and classroom lives of pupils. The picture of school boy peer groups so vividly described by Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) has been challenged by Furlong (1976) and Delamont (1976) who have found the concept of peer group of little help in their studies of classrooms. Can these competing claims or contradictory descriptions be explained or even reconciled? As well as collecting empirical data to attempt to answer some of the questions, posed by these apparent contradictions, it is important to understand the context of the various pieces of research. An exploration of the theoretical, methodological as well as institutional contexts will often explain differences in research findings.

Very little research has been conducted into the way in which girls of this age range (or any other age range) organize their social lives. Do girls form peer networks or are pairs the more usual form of social organization? The absence of research on girls raises the question as to whether or not peer groups are purely a male phenomenon. Do girls organize their social and cultural lives differently and if so how? This chapter attempts to address and go some way towards resolving this rather basic and fundamental question by exploring these girls' social relationships using sociometric observational and interview techniques. The girls in one class are studied in depth in the belief that this will provide further

understandings of the way in which they organize their social lives.

There appears to be little doubt that boys do form peer groups at school. However, there is little research available on this age group and additionally there are indications that this age range is a time of 'sorting out' for boys where their social relationships undergo a period of important and significant change. Similar sociometric, observational and interview techniques are used to explore the boys' social relationships.

The stability of peer networks or patterns of social relationships is of considerable interest and importance. Do these networks remain the same or are there developments and changes, over the three separate administrations of the sociometric questions, in numbers of friends or associates or the amount of cross class group or cross sex choice. With the increase in setting procedures one would expect an increase in cross class group choices. Does this in fact occur? Does it occur equally for boys and girls?

Where there are changes in the patterns of social relationships of these children do they follow any particular pattern? Is it possible to detect any trends or developments in the changes taking place in these peer network formations?

5.3. Peer Groups and Interaction Sets

Furlong (1976) claims from his research that "consistent groups do not exist in reality and observation has also shown there is no

consistent culture for a group of pupils" (p 163).

This very strong claim which is very much directed against the work of Hargreaves, Lacey and others, needs to be examined carefully. (The question of consistent culture is taken up in the following chapter). It is important to remember the context in which the different pieces of research were conducted. The work of Hargreaves and Lacey, based at Manchester University, began in the early sixties and was very much influenced, as Furlong has commented, by the work of the American small group social psychology, however, perhaps more importantly, it was also influenced by what one might call anthropological functionalism. This anthropological influence had the research team field workers (Hargreaves, Lacey and Lambart) looking at schools in a way that an anthropologist might look at a small scale society. The field workers were seeking to describe their schools as a social system and so were looking for patterns and attempting to devise models which would help make sense of these social worlds. Furlong, who also conducted his research from Manchester, began ten years after Hargreaves and Lacey when Symbolic Interactionism and Phenomenology were very much 'in vogue' as important intellectual styles. This meant inevitably that Furlong concentrated on a much more micro level of analysis than Hargreaves and Lacey. He was more concerned with individual interactions and negotiation while Hargreaves and Lacey were more concerned with the social systems of the school. So in this sense it was likely that they 'found' different things and concentrated on different sorts of description.

There is another important factor and that is the type of school where the research was conducted. Hargreaves and Lacey conducted their studies in a secondary modern and grammar school, respectively, where the patterns of organization tended to be more stable, as far as the pupils are concerned, than those in a comprehensive school where Furlong conducted his research. Pupils in a grammar or secondary modern tended to be with the same group of pupils for most of the day, whereas in many comprehensive schools with the often more flexible setting and banding procedures pupils may not be with the same group for any of their subjects apart from registration. This means at least two things. In the comprehensive school, particularly if one is concentrating on classrooms, it will be very difficult to identify and describe the peer groups that may be much more obvious in a grammar or secondary modern. And secondly it may well be that these different school organizational forms produce different patterns of social relationships among the pupils.

As is often the case these two positions are presented as mutually exclusive opposites. This is undoubtedly counter-productive as both positions provide the researcher with very valuable conceptual tools and to counterpose them and opt for one or the other position will lead to a skewing of the description that one is hoping to make. Certainly from the experience of this research both positions are correct and yet on their own neither is adequate. These middle school pupils did form relatively consistent groups but at the same time in a classroom at any one time the fluidity of interaction that Furlong characterises as interaction sets was also a

feature. The use of the term peer 'networks' is perhaps more appropriate in describing these social formations as it doesn't imply the rigidity of the word 'group'. This research reveals important differences between the boys and girls and in one sense the girls are more like that described by Hargreaves and the boys like the description offered by Furlong.

5.4. Girls and Peer Networks

5.4.i. Do Girls form Groups

The bulk of the research on peer groups has been conducted with boys and there does seem to be some doubt as to whether or not peer group networks are a phenomenon in the social life of girls or whether the peer group is only a male phenomenon. This situation of uncertainty arises largely because of paucity of research in the area (A full discussion of this uncertainty appears in 2.5.iii). What research there is does tend to indicate that girls' social lives tend to be organized in pairs rather than the larger groups characteristic of so much of the writing on boys.

The attempt to resolve this question, at least for girls of this age range, was one of the basic issues addressed in this study. The question was approached using a range of techniques; by asking sociometric questions of the whole cohort of pupils; by observation, particularly of the class group who were subject to intensive study; by interviewing not only the girls themselves but also the boys teachers and parents for their perceptions of the way the girls organized their social life particularly at school.

5.4.ii. Sociometry of girls' friendship choices

The entire cohort were asked the following sociometric questions:

1. Who do you usually play with after school?
2. Who would you most like to be friends with at school?
3. Who would you least like to be friends with at school?
4. Who do you usually play with in the playground?
5. Who do you usually work with in class?

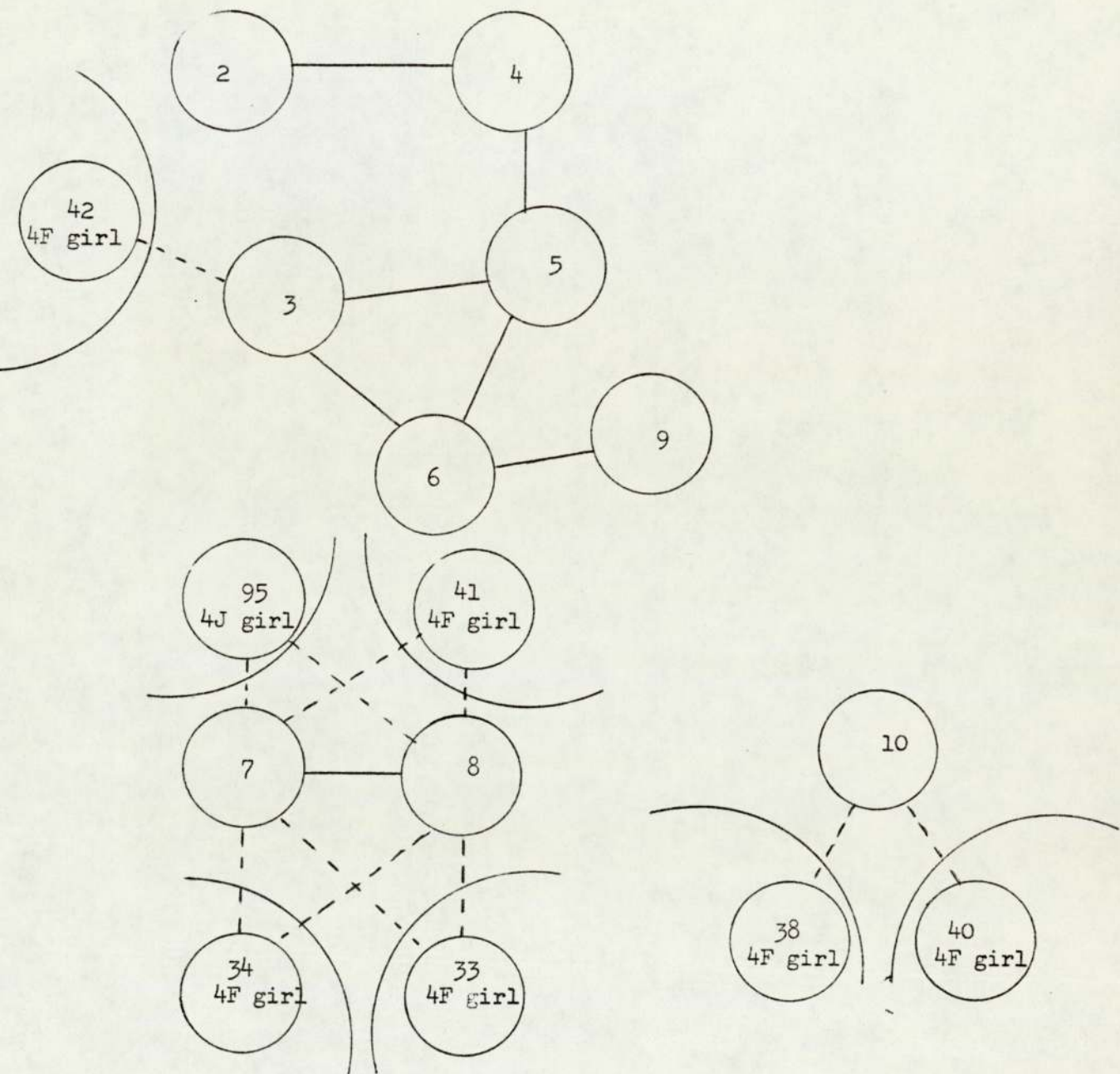
These questions fall into two categories. Questions 1, 4 and 5 attempt to identify sets of actual friends and regular associates while questions two and three focus upon preferences in the choice of friends. The questions were carefully presented by the researcher to one class at a time (see Appendix A for part of transcript of an actual presentation). Each question was explained fully and pupils were assured that their responses would not be disclosed to the other pupils or teachers. This administration was repeated three times - at the end of the third year, the middle of the fourth year and the end of the fourth year of these middle school pupils' careers. Pupils were not restricted in the number of choices they were allowed to make. While this is contrary to much of the 'advice' given (e.g. Evans 1962) for those undertaking sociometric enquiry it was felt that in this case the emphasis was on the actual and that pupils should be free to put one choice or fifteen choices if that was the number of friends they, for example, played with in the playground at lunch times. If, as is usual, choices had been restricted to three or even five then there would have been, particularly in the case of the boys, considerable distortion and some of

the important differences between boys' and girls' peer networks would have remained undetected.

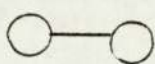
The following sociograms have been constructed by combining the data sets for questions 1, 4 and 5. This it is felt will give the most accurate picture of the peer networks and association patterns of the girls in this cohort. Only reciprocated choices have been plotted but these may have been choices made in response to any of the three questions. For our purposes here of illustrating the nature of girls' peer networks and relationships sociograms are presented for data collected in December of the fourth year (i.e. Wave 2) for the girls in each class group. In section 5.6 sociograms from all three waves will be presented and the stability of the patterns discussed.

Diagram 1

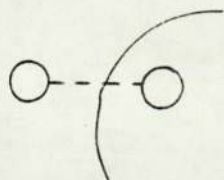
4S Girls (9 girls in the class)



KEY: (99) = Actual pupil in class



= reciprocated choice within class

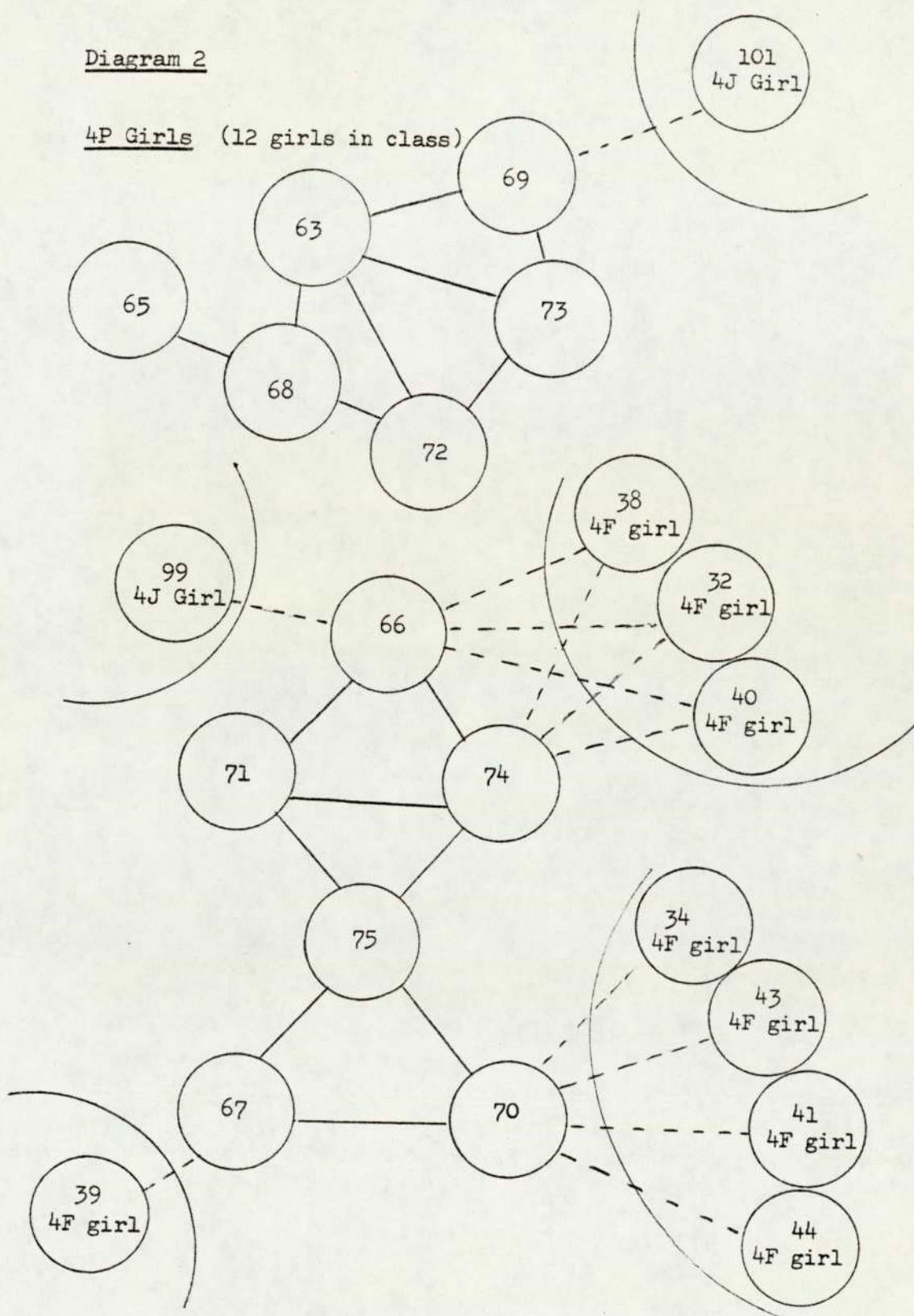


= reciprocated choice with girl/boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

Diagram 2

4P Girls (12 girls in class)



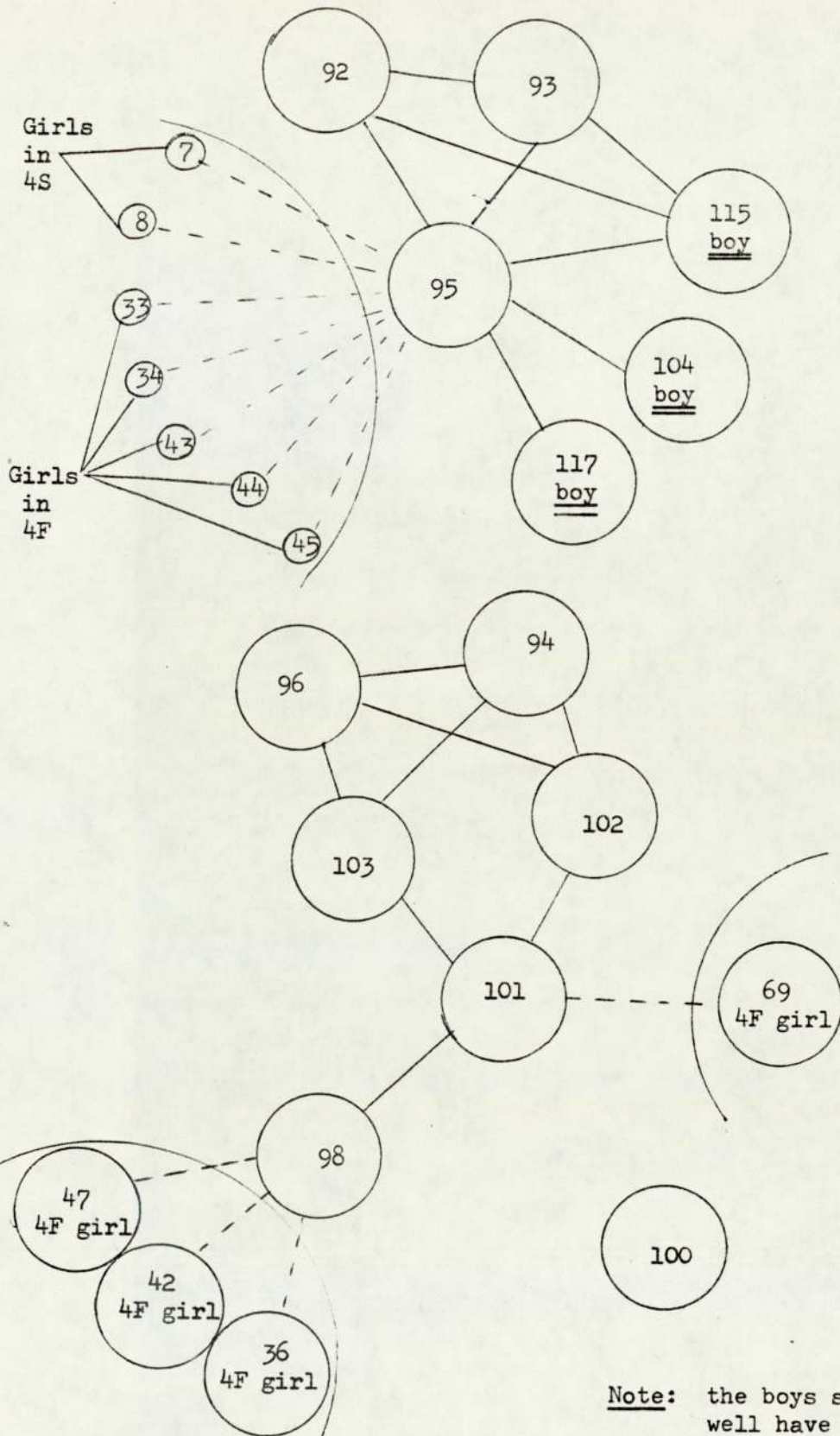
KEY:

99 = Actual pupil in class

○ — ○ = reciprocated choice within class

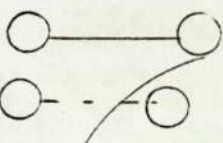
○ - - ○ = reciprocated choice with girl/boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5



Note: the boys shown above may well have made choices with other boys which are not shown here.

KEY: (99) = Actual pupil in class

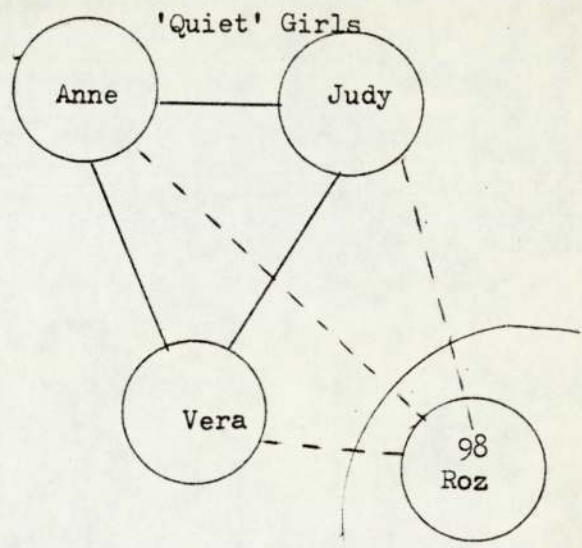
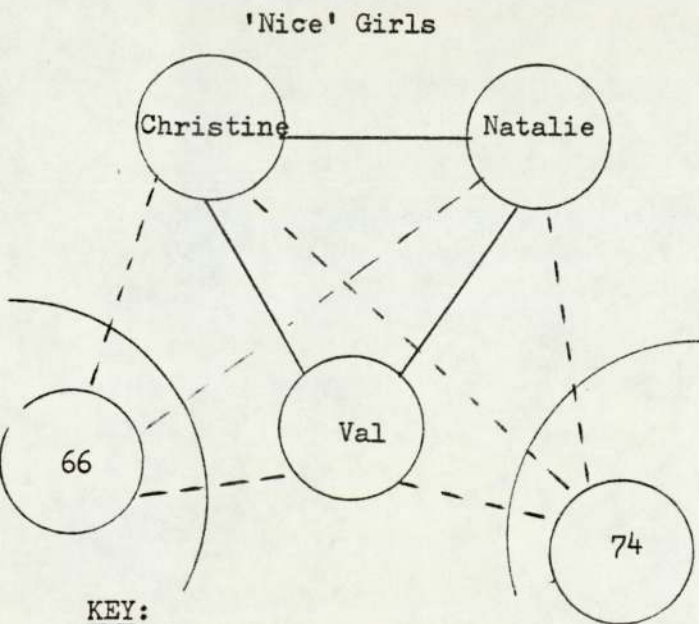
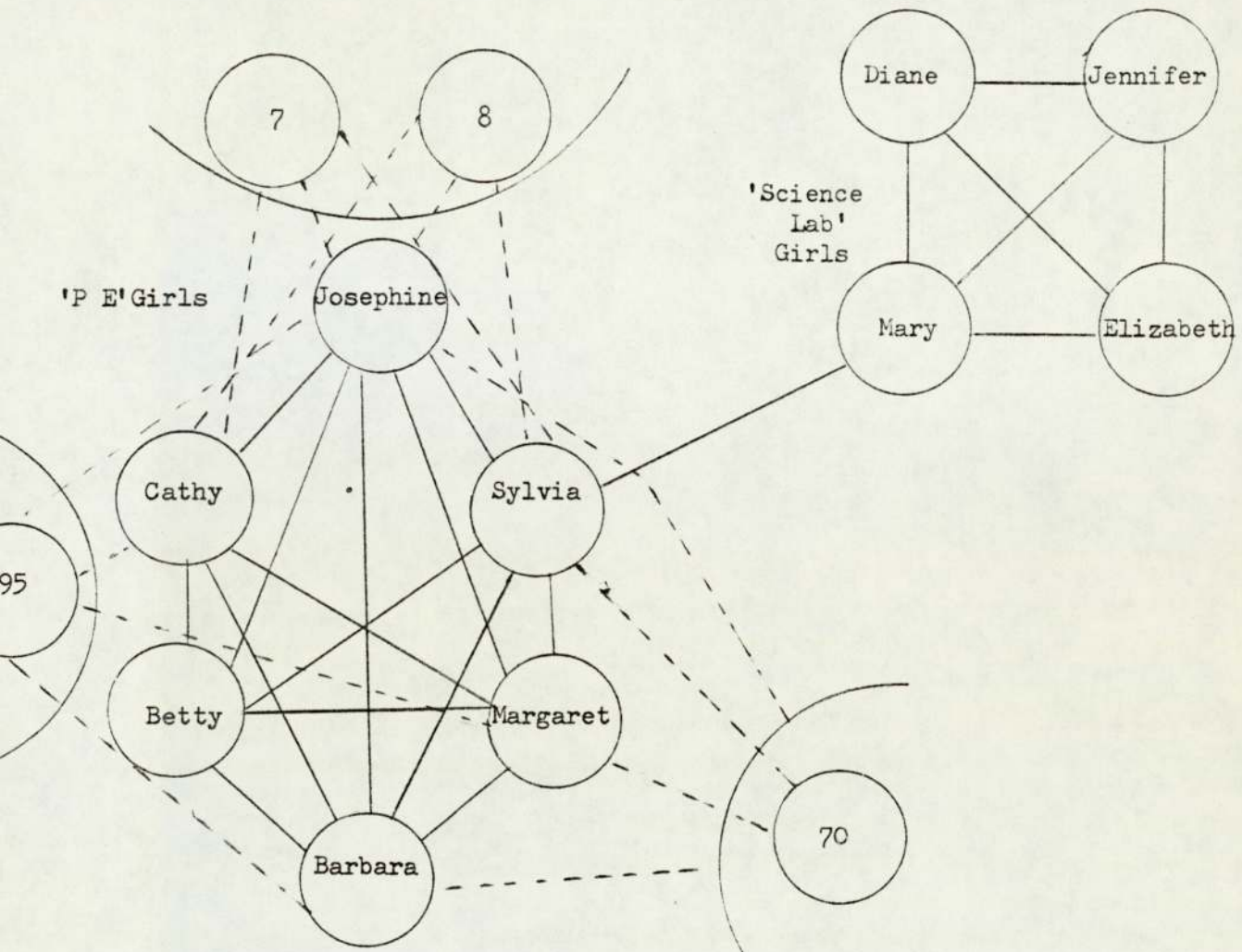


= reciprocated choice within class

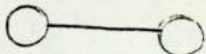
= reciprocated choice with girl/boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

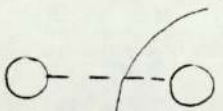
Diagram 4 4F Girls (16 girls in class)



KEY:



reciprocated choice between girls in 4F



reciprocated choice with girls in another class

One can see from the sociometric representations of these girls' friendship choices and patterns of association that all the girls in each class are part of a peer network except the one girl in 4J. It would appear also that these girls are part of peer networks and groups rather than being in pairs. Some of these networks would appear to be much tighter than others. A good example of a tight knit group is the science lab group in 4F (Diagram 4) while a good example of a group which does not appear to be tight is the top group in 4S (Diagram 1). Another obvious feature is the fact that in all of the four classes there are distinct and separate groupings within the class. In two of the classes (4P and 4J) there are two separate peer networks with no connections with each other, in one, 4S, there are three separate peer networks and in the fourth class, 4F, there are four different networks (4F also has the most girls). Reciprocated choices between boys and girls are not common and indeed only occur within one group of girls. There are, though, a considerable number of choices which span class group boundaries (33% of all choices made are between class groups).

A greater understanding of these sociograms can be obtained by looking in greater detail at the class 4F which was studied in depth.

5.4.iii. The 4F Girls

The sixteen, twelve and thirteen year old girls who are the focus of this study divided into four different networks (the 'Science lab'

girls, the 'P.E.' girls, the 'nice' girls and the 'quiet' girls)* and very definitely saw their groups as being a central and vital part of their school lives. There were no other girls outside of the four groups and all of the groups except the 'science lab' girls contained additional members outside of this class group. For all of the girls these groupings remained constant for school activities wherever possible, and for some this grouping extended to out of school social life. While it was possible to sit in the classroom and observe interaction sets which crossed the boundaries of these friendship groupings (and which sometimes included the boys) the big majority of the interaction would take place within the peer networks. For the teachers the 'P.E.' girls and 'science lab' girls were the most obvious and readily identifiable.

The sixteen girls in 4F, were all members, and saw themselves as members, of a peer network. This, however, did not apply in the same way to the boys in 4F nor may it be the case for girls in other situations. It may well be that some pupils do not see themselves as members of distinct peer groups or others may indeed desire affiliation with a particular group and yet not be a member of that group. It is also possible that individual pupils,

*The names of the groups are largely my own. The name P.E. was used by the P.E. mistress to describe this group of girls, the 'science lab' girls are so called because they were the science lab monitors and spent most of their time 'working' in the science lab. The words 'nice' and 'quiet' are words which were used by some teachers to describe these girls. It must be pointed out, however, that the girls themselves did not use these names to identify their own groups nor were these names used by others to describe them.

who may be members of a particular peer group, desire membership of another group but are prevented for various reasons from becoming members of that group. This reference group may have more influence on the particular pupil than that of the more immediate peer group. A possible example of this is that of Vera, a member of the 'quiet girls', who indicated to me that she would 'quite like' to be friends with the 'science lab' girls and when completing the sociometric questionnaire revealed a desire for friendship with three of the 'science lab' girls in addition to the girls in the 'quiet' group.

The importance of the peer group in the school lives of these girls should not obscure the importance of non group members, particularly 4F boys, and the girls in the other groups in influencing the patterns of interaction. This influence differed in strength between the groups. For example, the 'P.E.' girls were very much dominant in their relationships with the boys in 4F. If a 'P.E.' girl wanted to borrow a pen she would simply go up and take it from one of the boys and if the boy protested, he was ignored. Collectively in the playground if the 'P.E.' girls decided that they wanted to play with a ball they would go to the nearest boys' football game and take the ball. On the other hand, the 'quiet' girls were teased and harassed by the boys. Two of the girls particularly, Vera and Anne, were tormented constantly by the boys. As a consequence, the 'quiet' girls developed strategies to avoid the boys whenever possible.

For these girls it was groups rather than pairs that were the dominant form of social organization. These groups were very distinct, clearly defined and different and were accepted and acknowledged by the girls themselves, their teachers and were clearly obvious to myself as an observer.

The following, from an interview with two girls*, indicates clearly that the girls see themselves as part of a group and see the other girls as being members of groups that in some cases are very different from their own.

BM So tell me again then, why being in your group is important to you.

Bessie Its just knowing that you've got friends, being together. Its knowing that you're upper, you're head, you've got the authority and everybody grovels to you because you're the head girls.

Lorraine Its not just that. You need friends. They're all groups of little goody-goodies. There's groups just like us but they're goody-goodies, they'll do anything for the teacher. Like they're the library monitors for our class. They get all the jobs to do for Mr. Fisher, for all the teachers.

Bessie I mean goody-goodies. What springs to mind - Diane and Mary, Jennifer and Elizabeth, all this lot, you know. I mean, as soon as you say the word 'goody-goody', a picture appears.

For the girls their group of friends is vitally important and there are constant manoeuvres to make sure their group is together whenever possible.

Diane If we had to say somebody who was our best friend you wouldn't say one person. It would be all this lot.

*Bessie and Lorraine were from another class but were members of the 'P.E.' girls group.

Jennifer We always stick in a group.

BM What do the teachers think of your group?

Elizabeth We always...um...sort of...if we have to do a job it will be all of us to do the job.

Diane Like, if two of us are picked we go to the teacher and say "please let's do it together".

Jennifer I had to go to the post office to get 50p worth of stamps and I asked if Diane and them could go too.

It can be seen from Diane's comment that the group is so important to the girls that it is inconceivable to just have one best friend. Any attempts to break up the group by other girls are resisted. The greatest 'disaster' that can befall a group is for another girl, or group, to take one of 'their' girls away from them. This fear is the source of much argument and causes a considerable amount of internal friction within groups. Accusations that 'you are taking her off us' are common. The following group of girls explained to me how they dealt with a threat such as this the previous year.

BM Could there be anyone else in your group...?

Diane If they want to be in the group they've got to stop there and not try splitting us up. 'Cause sometimes... We did have...(No. 65 from 4P)..in our group once.

Jennifer Yes, we did once.

Diane And she tried splitting Jennifer away from us. So we said out she had to go.

Contrary to the findings of McRobbie and of Henry, girls in all of the four groups seem convinced that it is better to be in a group rather than to just have one friend.

Val We all three of us sit on the same table in class.

Natalie We just go in a group.

Val We're just friends.

Christine We're always in a group.

BM So its important to have friends.

All Yeah.

Val You're not supposed to just have just one friend. Its best to have more than one friend 'cause you get on better like that.

All Yeah.

Val 'Cause we're always arguing.

Natalie 'Cause if you break friends you've got someone.

Christine Yeah.

5.4.iv. The Prospect of High School

At the very end of the year when the prospect of going to the high school with its setting and streaming organization loomed large, many of the girls were somewhat concerned as to what might happen to their groups. Three of the four groups felt that they would still be friends and remain as a group but it might be much harder as they could be split up a lot more and mixed with pupils from the other feeder school.

BM Do you think you will stick together next year?

Josephine Well, there is a chance, yes.

BM What do you think, Cathy?

Cathy I don't know really. It depends what forms we get put in, we will probably be split up.

- BM Is that the most important thing? Do you think the form you are put in, after all you can still meet in the playground and that sort of thing.
- Cathy Yes but we would not be as close because we would not be working with each other.
- Margaret I hope we will all be in the same class. There is more classrooms and there is the other school kids as well.
- BM And you think that will break your group up, do you?
- Barbara Yes, because..... We might all be split up.
- BM And does that worry you that you might all be split up?
- Josephine No, not really. We will still be friends but we will not be as close as we are now because we will all be split up.
- BM Do you think you will still see each other? Do you think you will be a group or pairs?
- Margaret I think we will still be a group. Especially at breaks. We can still play a little bit and be with each other. Lorraine has left already. Lorraine lives at --- now. She left yesterday. Judy is going to --- and Betty is going to --- so there is not going to be many of us left. So we might still be together but there is not going to be as many of us.

The girls here feel that if their group is broken up then it will be as a result of the pressures placed on it by the organization in the new, bigger high school. If this did happen, then other groups would form to take its place.

One group, though, felt that the upheavals caused by the new organization would probably lead to a change in the way their social relations were organized. That the breaking up of the group would lead to girls 'going round' in pairs rather than in a group.

BM So you think your group of friends will start to break up next year?

Jennifer Oh, yes. We are already starting to break up.

BM Why do you think that is?

Jennifer Because we all get on each other's nerves! We have been together too long. But on the last day we will be sorry to see each other go. I will cry, anyway.

BM So you think your group might start to ...

Jennifer Yes. I don't think there will be another group, anyway... and I think people will pair off then.

BM Pairs rather than groups? Why is that?

Jennifer I just think three is a crowd and all this business. If you have a group and everybody's in a different group (school subject groupings) you never see them.

BM What do you think, Mary? Do you think there will be groups still at the (high school)?

Mary I think there might be the odd few groups but I think mainly one or two people together. I think the boys will go in groups. They are not in groups at the moment, except for a few.

BM You think it will be in pairs then. Why do you think that?

Mary I think it will be casual groups. Because you can't see each other when you are in groups. If you have just one mate you are going to stick with them most of the time, aren't you? You are not going to split off with them just to go in your normal group. To play at playtimes, you probably will want to stay with the friend you stay with all the time in the lessons.

Jennifer Unless you have got more than one friend in your group. And it is impossible to get back if you go off with another friend.

BM Why is it impossible?

Jennifer It just is.

Mary I don't think so.

BM Do you think you will form a group or will you just stick with a friend?

Jennifer I think I will have just one friend.

The comments of these girls, which were taken from an interview at the very end of the year, and which on the part of the girls are very much speculation and conjecture, do perhaps suggest that there may be a change in the natures of their social relationships when they move on to the high school. If, indeed, there was a movement from peer groups to pairs this would tie in with the research findings of McRobbie and Garber. This possibility can, at this stage, be only tentative and would need to be explored by further research.

My field notes are replete with observations of girls in groups in class, in the playground, coming to and going home from school, in the corridors, at the weekly lunch time disco, at sporting events and in the dining hall. These groups were consistently similar in their composition. In the staff room there was a lot of conversation among the teachers which indicated that they were aware of the various girls' groupings. Comments like 'you know Josephine's mob', 'the science lab mob', 'Betty and her lot' were very commonly made in conversation or when recounting incidents.

5.5. Boys and Peer Networks

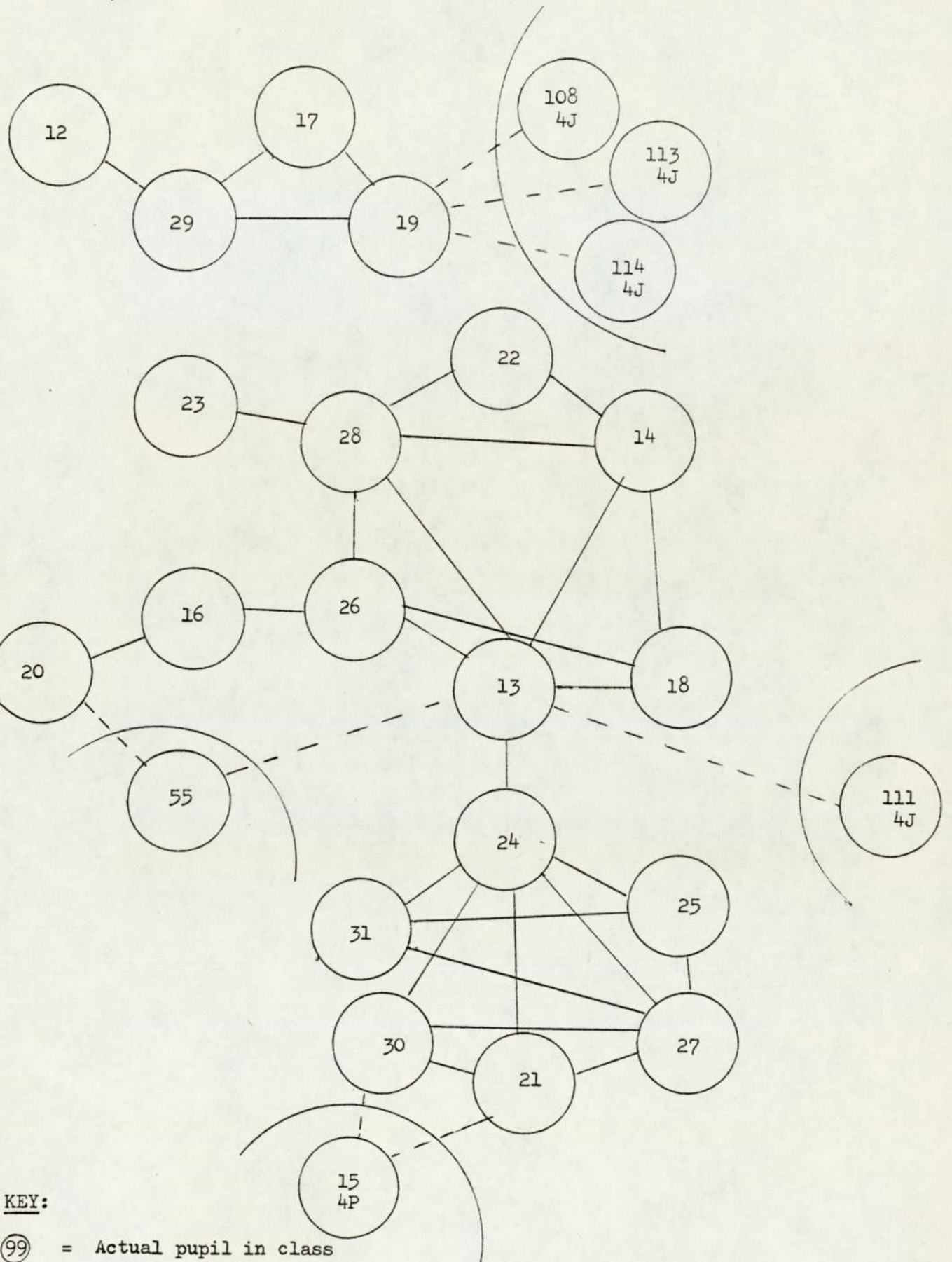
There seems little doubt in the literature, apart from the challenge of the interactionists, that boys are likely to form groups. The nature of these groups with this age range (i.e. 12-13 year olds) is however far from clear as most of the research has been conducted on usually older (e.g. Willis) or younger (e.g. Blyth) age groups. There appear to be indications that this age range is a crucial

period of transition in the way boys organize their social relationships.
(A fuller discussion appears in Chapter 2).

5.5.i. The Sociometry of Boys' Friendship Choices

The sociometric questions were administered to boys and girls at the same time and so the exact same procedures that have been outlined in section 5.4.ii. were followed. Similarly the sociometric diagrams presented here are ones drawn up from the responses to the questions in the December of the boys final (fourth) year at middle school.

Diagram 5 4S Boys (19 boys in the class)



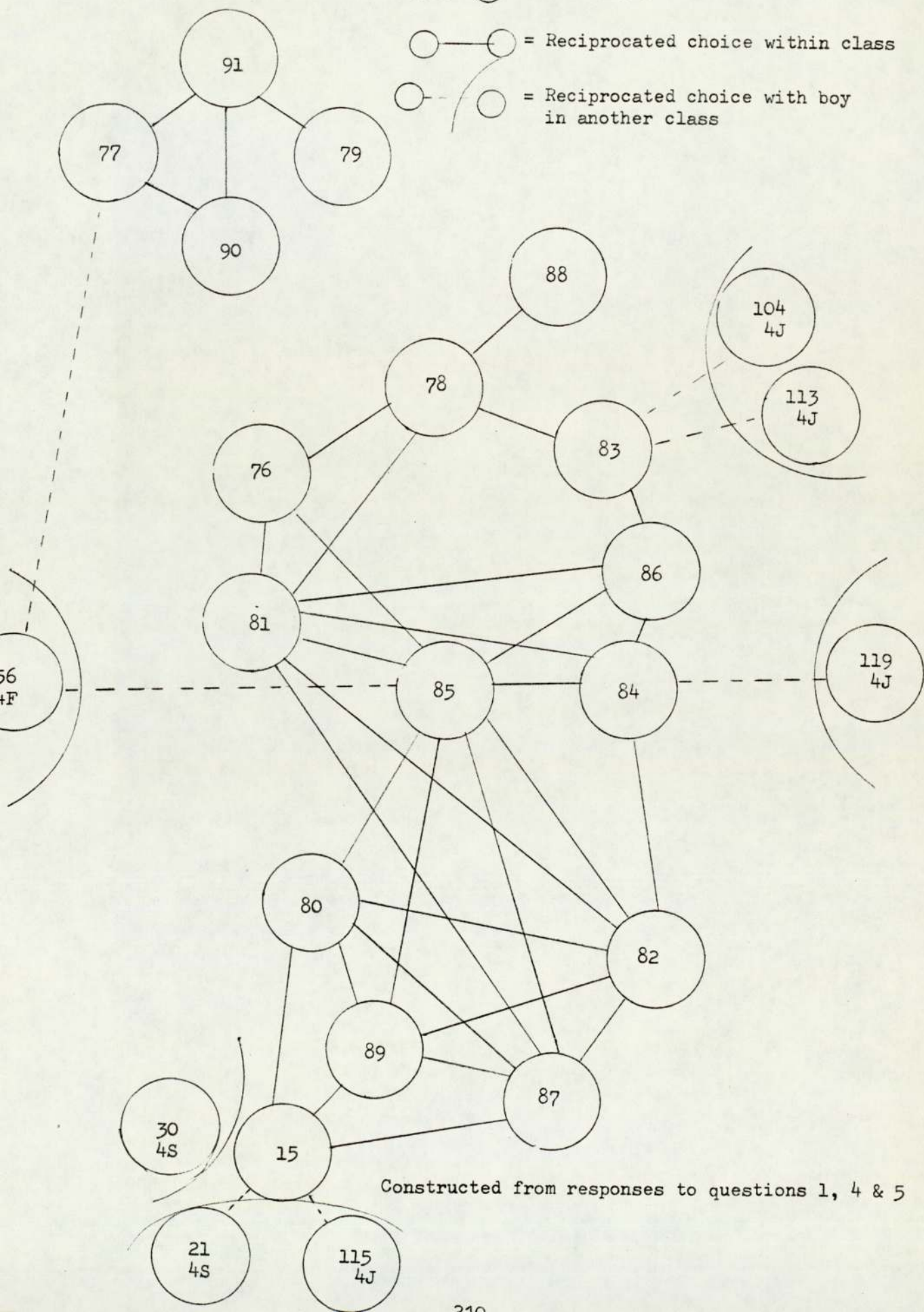
KEY:
 (99) = Actual pupil in class
 ○—○ = Reciprocated choice within class

○-○ = Reciprocated choice with boy in another class
 Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

Diagram 6 4P Boys (17 boys in the class)

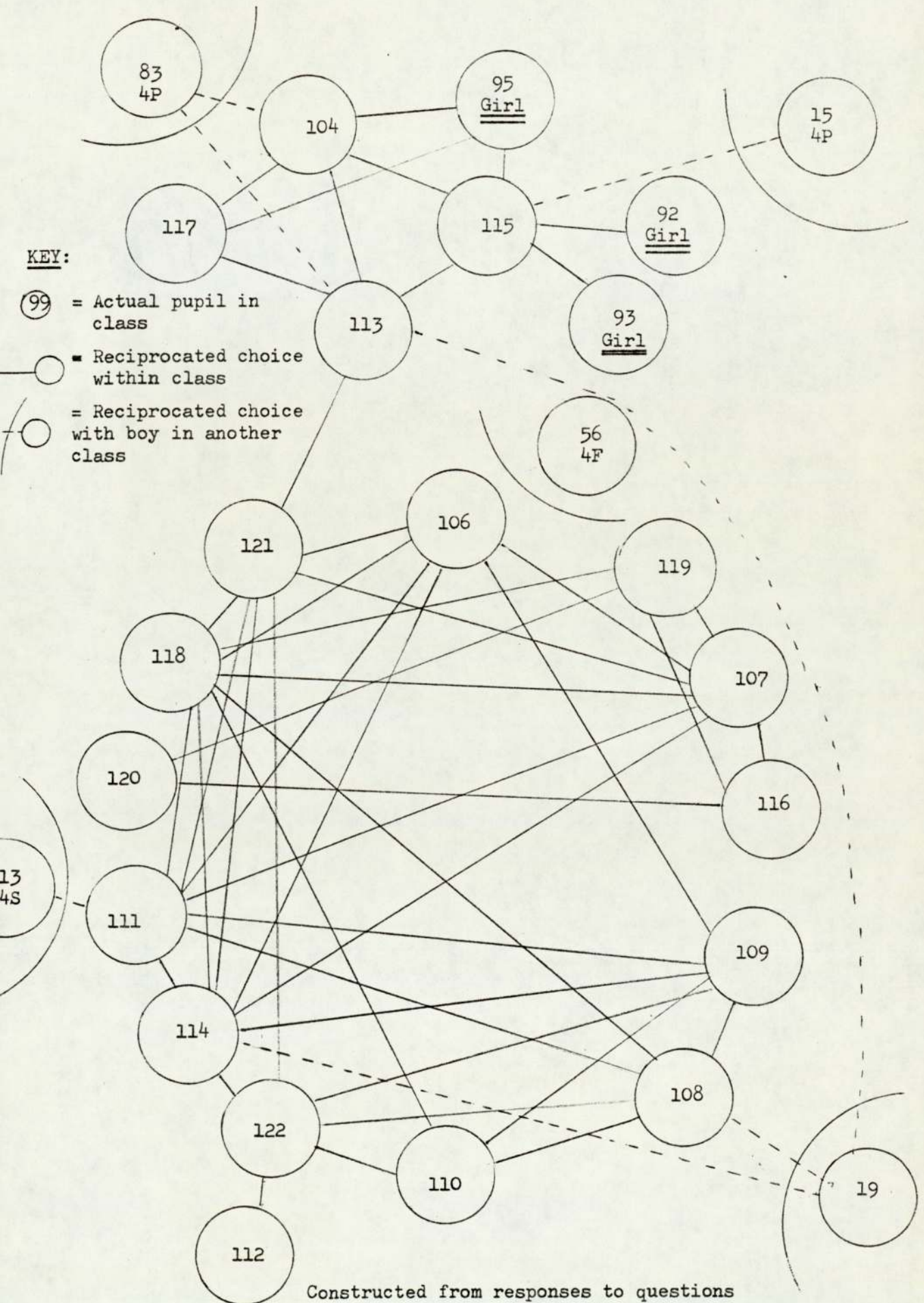
KEY: (99) = Actual pupil in class

○ — ○ = Reciprocated choice within class
 ○ - ○ = Reciprocated choice with boy in another class



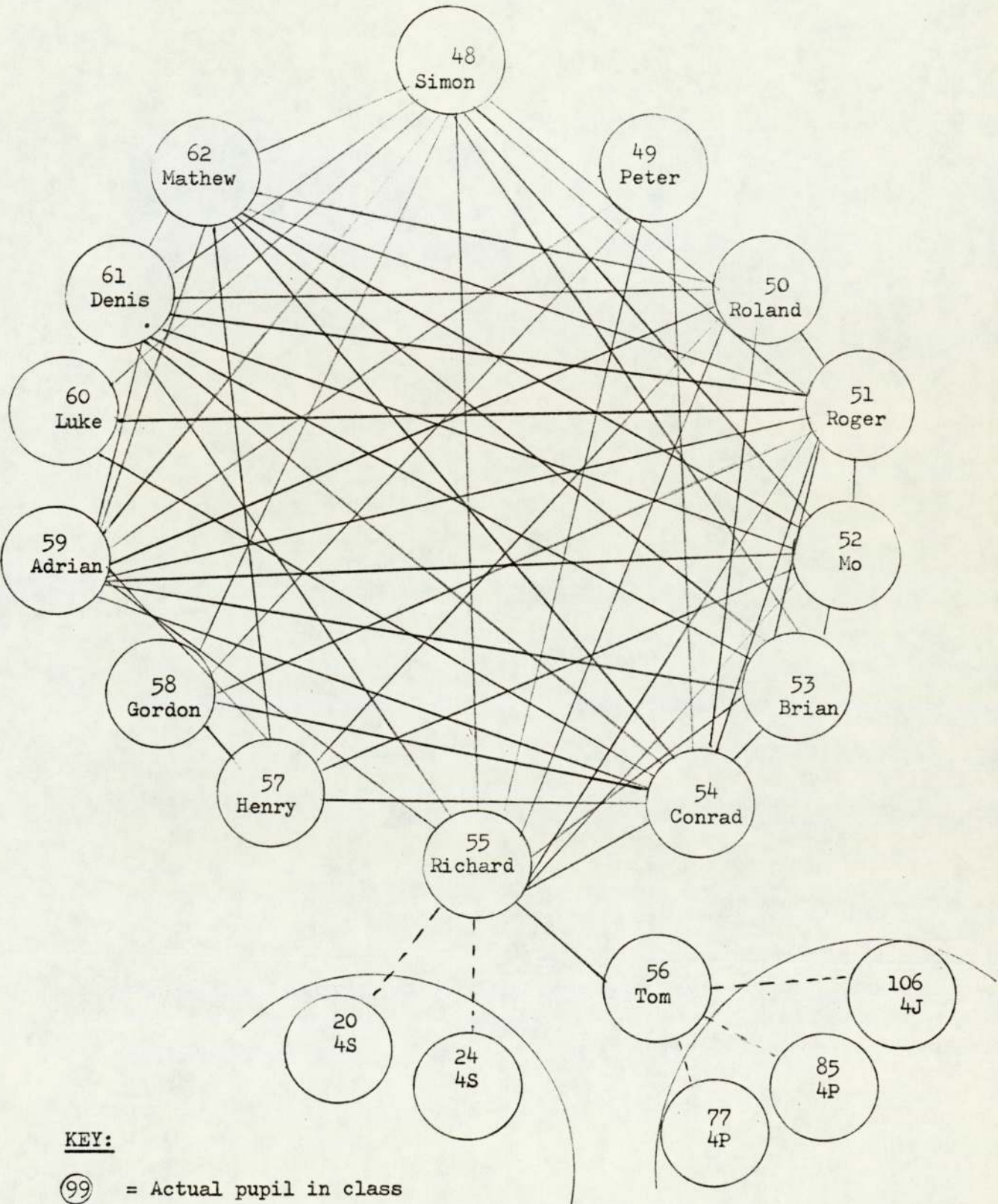
Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 & 5

Diagram 7 4J Boys (18 boys in class)



Constructed from responses to questions
1, 4 and 5

Diagram 8 4F Boys (15 boys in class)



KEY:

- ⑨⑨ = Actual pupil in class
- = Reciprocated choice within class
- = Reciprocated choice with boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

The sociograms - graphic representations of these boys' friendship choices and patterns of association - are in many ways quite different from those for the girls. The boys particularly in 4F and 4J and to a lesser extent in 4P appear to form one large class group with a small number, three or four boys, forming a separate or only loosely connected group. The 4S boys follow this pattern to a certain extent but the large group for most of the time divides into two groups. There are also varying degrees of 'tightness' in the large groups. This may well be a developmental feature of boys' social groupings, i.e. that there are large, predominantly undifferentiated groupings which during this age range begin to divide up into much more differentiated, discrete groupings. If this is the case then in reverse order these diagrams show a variation and progression from the large undifferentiated group of 4F boys through to the three more distinct groupings of the 4S boys. We will return to this possibility when we discuss the continuity and stability of groups.

It is interesting to note that the three small groups that are largely separate from the big groups in classes 4J, 4P and 4S do seem to have significant interests from those of the large group. For example the 4 boys in 4J (Nos. 104, 115, 117, 113) are the most mature physically and socially in that class and were very much into 'having a laff' and were interested in girls. The three boys in 4S (Nos. 17, 19 and 29) were not very athletic and found the concentration on athletic activities - football or tracking 'as a bit of a bore' they preferred to 'hang around' and chat and tell jokes.

In comparison with the girls the boys made far fewer choices across class group boundaries. (8.7% of all reciprocated choices for boys were made across class group boundaries compared with 33% for girls). The class group boundary appears to be a much greater barrier for boys than girls. Particularly if one takes into consideration the fact that the three boys (Nos. 15, 19, 56) who make most cross class group boundary choices are in fact boys who have been transferred from one class to another during the previous year and still retain contacts with the boys in that class.

5.5.ii. The 4F Boys

In many ways the 4F boys are themselves 'one big group' with the exception of Tom who had been transferred from another class and spent most of his available time with boys from this class and Peter who didn't join in the football games. The following is an interview with two boys, Luke and Adrian, discussing their friendship group.

BM Tell me then who your group of best friends are, Luke?

Luke You mean who's in our gang? Its nearly all the kids in our class except for Tom, Peter and Richard and that's it. Its nearly all the boys in our classroom in one gang.

BM Are there any that you're specially friendly with?

Luke Most of the time its me, Matthew, Adrian, Simon and Roger. Sometimes we go up to the top field and sometimes we meet Roland up the top field and we play football over there.

BM What about you Adrian?

Adrian All of them, I like all the boys in the class.

BM You like them all but which are in your gang?

Adrian Luke, Matthew, Denis, Roland, Mo, Conrad, Richard
 (pause)

Luke Just say all the boys except for Richard, Tom and Peter.

Adrian I like Richard, he usually plays there.....

Luke Not usually, he just comes when he feels like it.

It can be seen in this interview that it seems easier for the boys to define their group by saying who is definitely not in it. Another of the boys, Henry, defines his group by saying "Well its all the boys in our class except for the girls." On the other hand they do recognize and acknowledge that there are 'sub groups' within this larger grouping. These sub groups are nowhere near as tight as the girls peer groups described earlier (in no way did the girls in 4F see themselves as one big group) and there is a considerable amount of movement between them. When discussing further the groupings within the 'big group' several boys tried to explain these 'groupings within a group'.

BM Can you just tell me then who are the other groups
 in your class as you see them?

Roland Well they're all starting to bunch together apart
 from us three now ain't they?

Mo Yeah.

Conrad Well..... what do you mean in the class itself or socially,
 'cause its hard to tell, in the class you can tell easily
 but otherwise its a bit hard to tell.

BM Both I think.

Roland I'd say Simon and Roger.....for definitely.

Mo Yeah.

Conrad And Matthew and Denis and they join forces on and off....

Roland Gordon and Henry, they're friends in school time but when it comes to home they don't play with each other much.

BM Who else?

Conrad Richard and Peter and I think they do because.... in the class for design they get together, so they're friends in school and out of school.

BM Who else?

Conrad Tom, he's come into the class and I think he's probably got friends out of the class.....

Mo You see Adrian is on his own a bit now.

BM Is he?

Roland He's a good kid Adrian is.

Mo Yeah.

Roland Well he sort of drifts....he's the sort of kid that could join into our group I reckon.

BM And are you friendly with him now?

Conrad Yes except sometimes we have a joke.

Roland You know Irish jokes.

BM Does he get cross about Irish jokes?

Conrad It depends on what sort of mood he's in.

Roland He's a good kid.
.....

Roland They sort of mix round a bit really.

Conrad Well you're mixing really but you still got your own independent group....you know what I mean.

The fluid nature of the boys' groups becomes apparent as the boys, particularly Conrad and Roland, try to explain to me how their friendship groups and social relationships are organized. In the following extract

Roger attempts to explain the nature of the sub groups and their relationship to the larger group.

Roger We're all a big group but me, Matthew and Simon are a sort of sub group.....so we can talk freely as our sub group.

Matthew You're all part of a big group.....but then there are sort of smaller groups.

Roger You've got to make sub groups to suit your friends. Say one friend could live way up - or somewhere so you've got to make a sub group.

The two boys who are exceptions and are seen as somewhat outside the big corporate class group, Tom and Peter are described as follows:

Conrad We don't know Tom really, but still, nobody picks on him or anything really.

and when commenting on Peter, Denis and Simon say "We play football, everyone in the class plays football except Peter".

Even though they don't play football at breaks and lunchtime and are regarded as being somewhat outside the larger group they are still part of it and in the following Luke explains how Tom has 'proved' his loyalty and allegiance to the class group.

BM What sort of things do you share?

Luke Sweets, pens....
Like Tom, this is where he comes friendly because what he does is.... Robin (boy from another class) was picking on me and he just came up and he goes "what are you picking on my friend for". He knew he couldn't beat Robin but he started acting tough on him. Robin just went away then.

Peter's friend, Richard, proves somewhat difficult for the boys to

understand because of his intermittent commitment to the playground football matches. Sometimes he would play and Peter would stand and watch and at other times the pair would wander around the playground together. This sort of behaviour the rest of the boys found difficult to understand.

Luke He doesn't even play football with you either.

Matthew Richard he said he'll play with you...he plays with you at one play time and then he goes off with someone else.

Denis When we asks him if he wants to play football all he does is walk away and don't say nothing.

The importance of having friends was expressed by many of the boys, as it was by the girls, and for many the opportunity to meet and make friends was 'the best thing' about school.

BM So what's the best part of school then?

Matthew Friendships.

.... Yea

.... Yea

Simon Playtime!

Roger Hometime!

Denis Because school is like a meeting place really, you have to be playing, like when you play football.

5.6. Stability of Peer Group Networks

The differences, and whether any patterns can be detected, between the three administrations of the sociometric questions may provide us with some insights into the developments, changes or indeed degree of stability of the social relationships and peer networks of this age group of children.

The difference in 'size' of groups between boys and girls is marked. It must be remembered that all pupils were allowed to indicate as many friends/associates as accurately answered the question and that only reciprocated choices (across any of the three questions 1, 4 and 5) have been used in the construction of the sociograms. The following table shows the numbers of reciprocated choices made by boys and girls, in all four classes, for the three waves.

Table 7
Number of Sociometric choices -
All Pupils

	Average number of reciprocated choices per pupil	Range
Wave 1	4.5	0 - 11
Wave 2	4.7	0 - 12
Wave 3	5.0	0 - 10

Table 8
Number of Sociometric choices -
Girls only

	Average number of reciprocated choices per girl	Range
Wave 1	3.8	0 - 8
Wave 2	4.0	0 - 12
Wave 3	4.3	0 - 9

Table 9

Number of Sociometric choices -
Boys only

	Average Number of reciprocated choices per boy	Range
Wave 1	5.0	0 - 11
Wave 2	5.3	1 - 12
Wave 3	5.5	1 - 10

Consistently, for all three waves, the boys make more reciprocated choices than do the girls, which of course one may predict because of the, in general, larger size of the boys groups. For both boys and girls the number of reciprocated choices increases from the third through the fourth year of the middle school. This is probably an indication that the groups are becoming more stable and clearly defined with more constant and consistent patterns of interaction.

Two other factors need to be explored, that of cross class boundary and cross sex choice. Because of the increased setting in the fourth year with the pupils being increasingly 'mixed up' one would predict that there may be an increase in cross class boundary choices.

Table 10

Cross Class Boundary Choice

	% of Cross Class choices - All Pupils	% of Cross Class choices - Girls only	% of Cross Class choices - Boys only
Wave 1	7.7%	13.3%	4.3%
Wave 2	17.1%	33%	8.7%
Wave 3	24.7%	35.3%	18.3%

As is clearly shown in the figures there are considerable and consistent rises in the number of cross class boundary choices being made. This is particularly so between the third and the fourth year for the girls and between all waves for the boys. For the cohort as a whole by the end of the fourth year approximately one quarter of all reciprocated choices are made across class boundaries. For the girls only more than one third of all reciprocated choices are made across class boundaries while for the boys, who at the end of the third year only made one in twenty-five of their choices across class boundaries, by the end of the fourth year almost one in five of their choices cross these boundaries.

Cross sex choices are very few in number.

Table 11

Cross Sex Choice

% of Cross Sex
reciprocated choices

Wave 1	1.5%
Wave 2	1.8%
Wave 3	2.1%

There is a gradual but definite increase in the number of boys and girls who are actually 'brave' enough to put down on paper the name of a member of the opposite sex. It was certainly true that on the whole the sexes kept to themselves but there was a noticeable, if still small, increase in the amount of interaction between the sexes as the fourth year progressed.

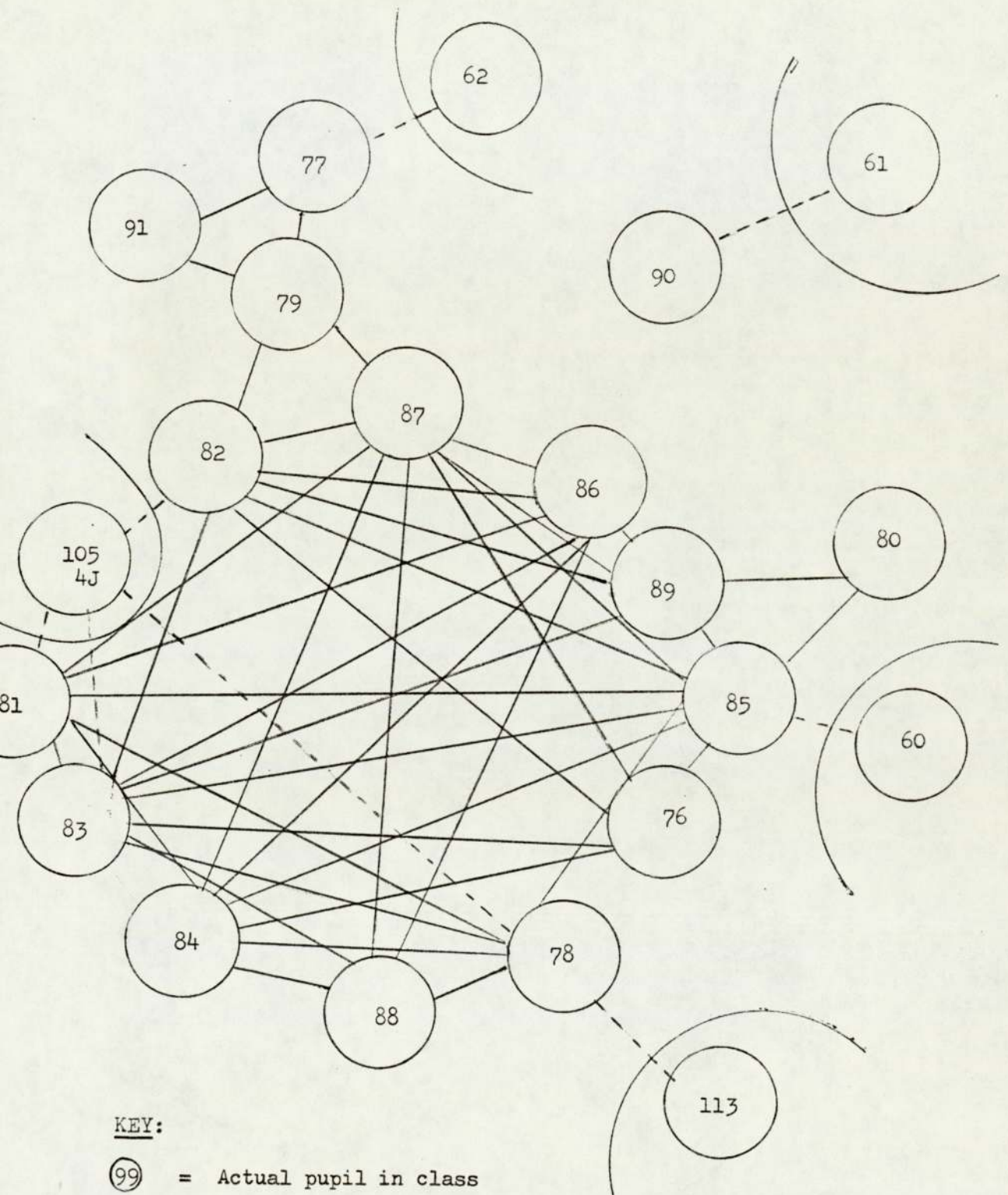
5.6.i. The Boys

The actual changes in the composition, membership and nature of peer networks has been discussed very briefly in the previous section in connection with boys. It was suggested that part of the development of peer networks is a change from diffuse larger 'groups', e.g. 4F boys, to more clearly defined, discrete groupings. To answer this question adequately would need a longitudinal study over a period of several years with the same group of pupils. However, the question can be at least partially addressed with the data available.

By looking at the sociograms drawn from the three waves of data it would appear that this suggestion, i.e. of the developmental progression of boys peer network, may indeed be the case. This development is certainly apparent with classes 4S and 4P, slightly less so with 4J, while with 4F there are definite signs that this is beginning to take place, e.g. the 'anti football' group are more clearly separated from the rest of the class, even if not as marked in the other three classes.

The following three sociograms of 4P will illustrate this trend.

Diagram 9 3P Boys Wave 1



KEY:

- ⊙ = Actual pupil in class
 - = Reciprocated choice within class
 - = Reciprocated choice with boy in another class
- Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

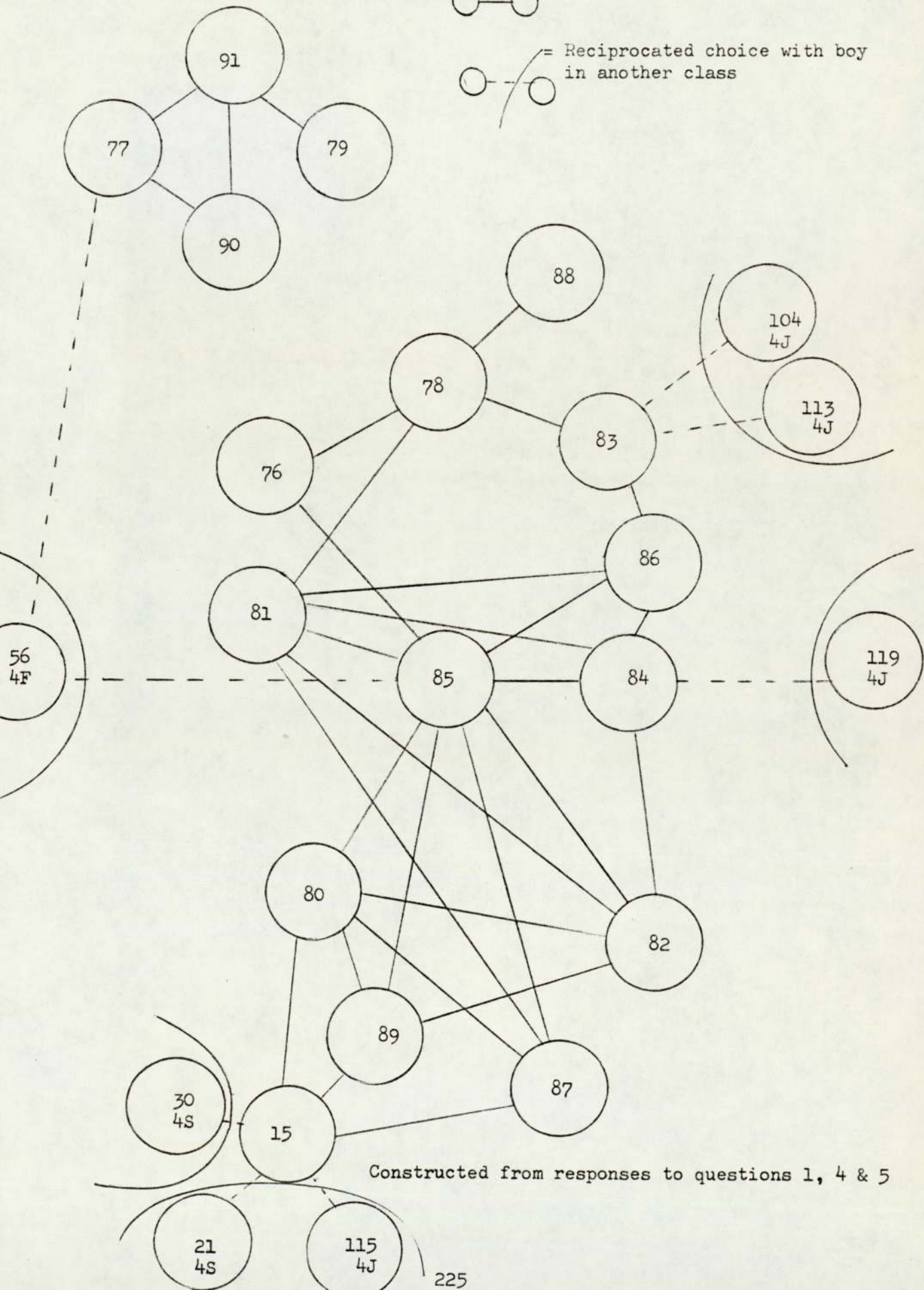
Here at the end of the third year we see the familiar pattern of the one big class group of boys with a small 'alternative' group. Six months later, after the summer holidays and one term of the fourth year, while still basically the same, i.e. one big and one small group, this class is definitely showing signs that more discrete groupings are forming as an alternative to the undifferentiated class group. (The sociogram drawn from the data at this stage is Diagram 6 but is repeated there to illustrate the developmental/progression).

...

KEY: (99) = Actual pupil in class

○—○ = Reciprocated choice within class

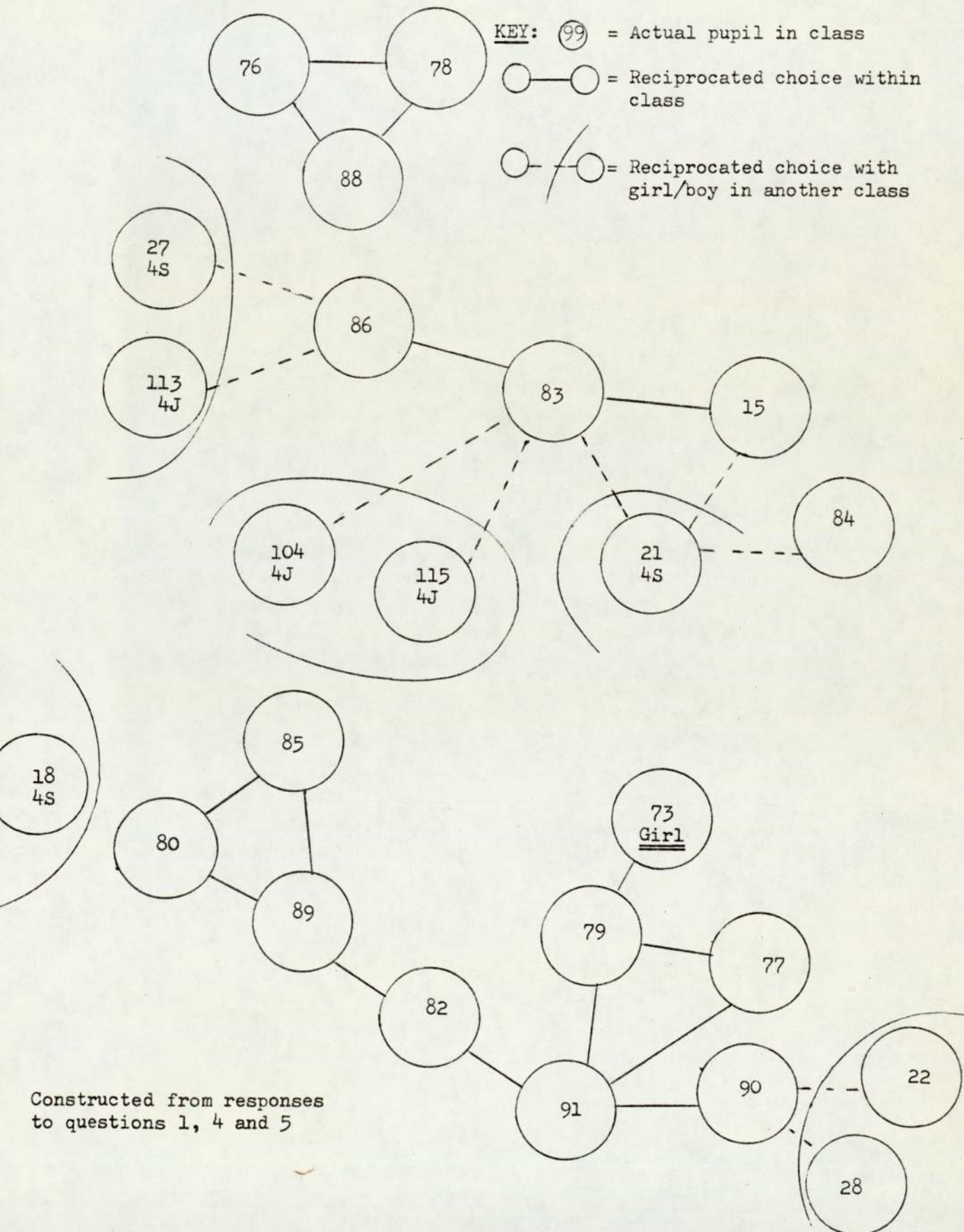
○-○ = Reciprocated choice with boy in another class



Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 & 5

Six months later at the end of the fourth year there has been further movement away from the big class group and there is obviously a lot more involvement in cross class groups.

Diagram 10 4P Boys Wave 3



Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

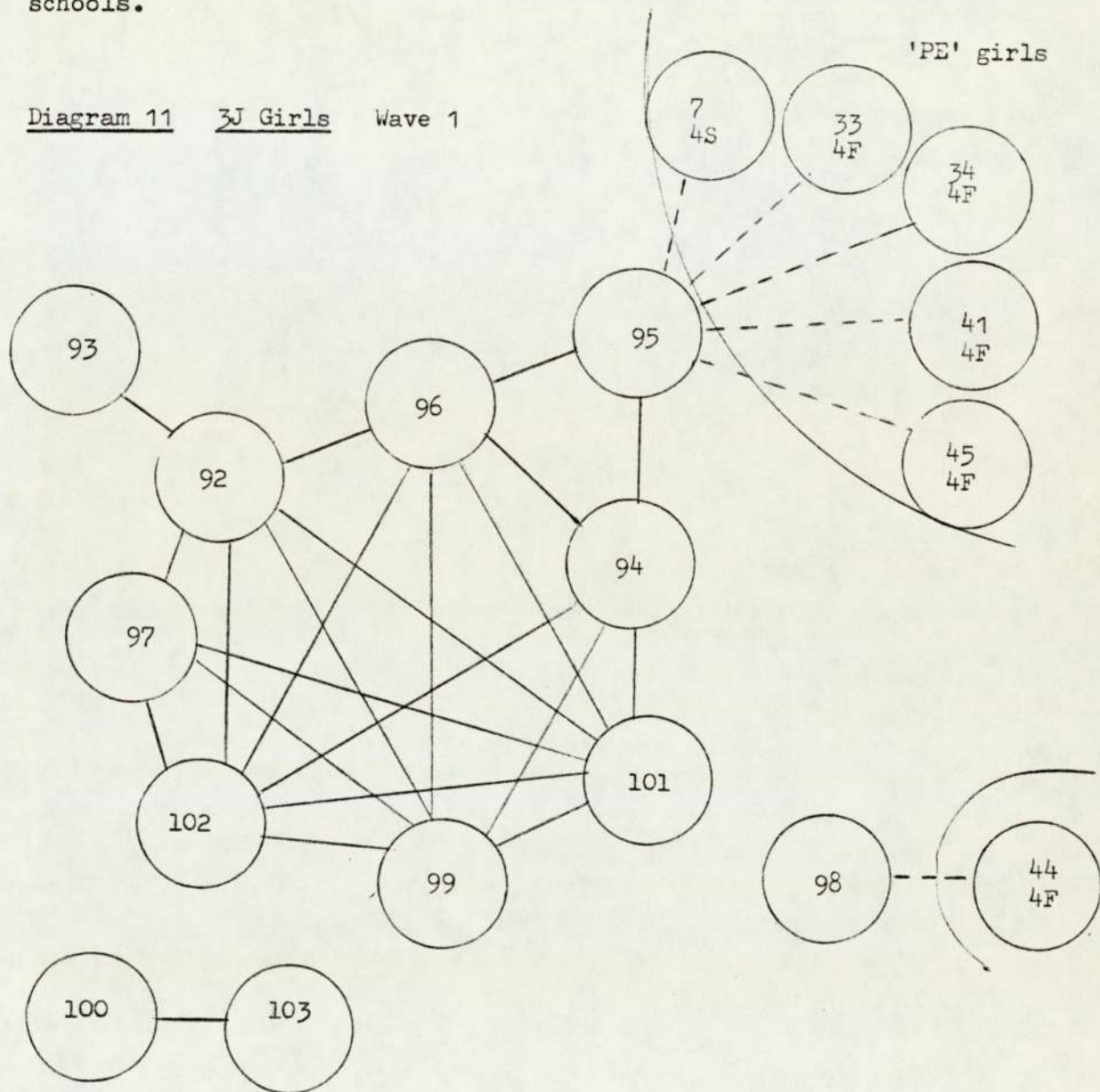
In these three sociograms we have diagrammatic representation of the 'sorting out' processes, referred to by many authors (e.g. Hargreaves, Willis), where during this age range there is a considerable change in the way the boys organize their social relationships. It is very noticeable that in many cases it is not just a case of groups gradually consolidating there is also a considerable amount of change in individual friendship and association patterns. Some of these changes are more dramatic than others with some boys having a different group of friends at the different points in time when the sociometric questions were administered. It is clear that during this period of transition, the 'sorting out' process, a different pattern of organization of the boys' social relationships is emerging. The rather undifferentiated large group is replaced, gradually by a series of more separated groups, many of which will cross class group boundaries.

5.6.ii. The Girls

As has been discussed earlier the girls from the beginning of the study have been in much more definite and discrete groupings. However, one of the class groups 3J/4J do show a somewhat similar pattern to that which is obvious in the case of the boys. This may suggest that girls also go through a similar developmental pattern in the way they organize their social relationships but by and large because of the earlier social and physical maturity of girls this development takes place at an earlier chronological age than it does for boys. This proposition is of course somewhat speculative and would need to be tested by further research.

The sociograms of girls in 3J/4J do exhibit a change from the large class group to a pattern of more separate groups and of groups which cross class group boundaries. The first sociogram is drawn from questions administered at the end of the girls third year at middle schools.

Diagram 11 3J Girls Wave 1



KEY:

⑨ = Actual Pupil in class

○—○ = Reciprocated choice within class

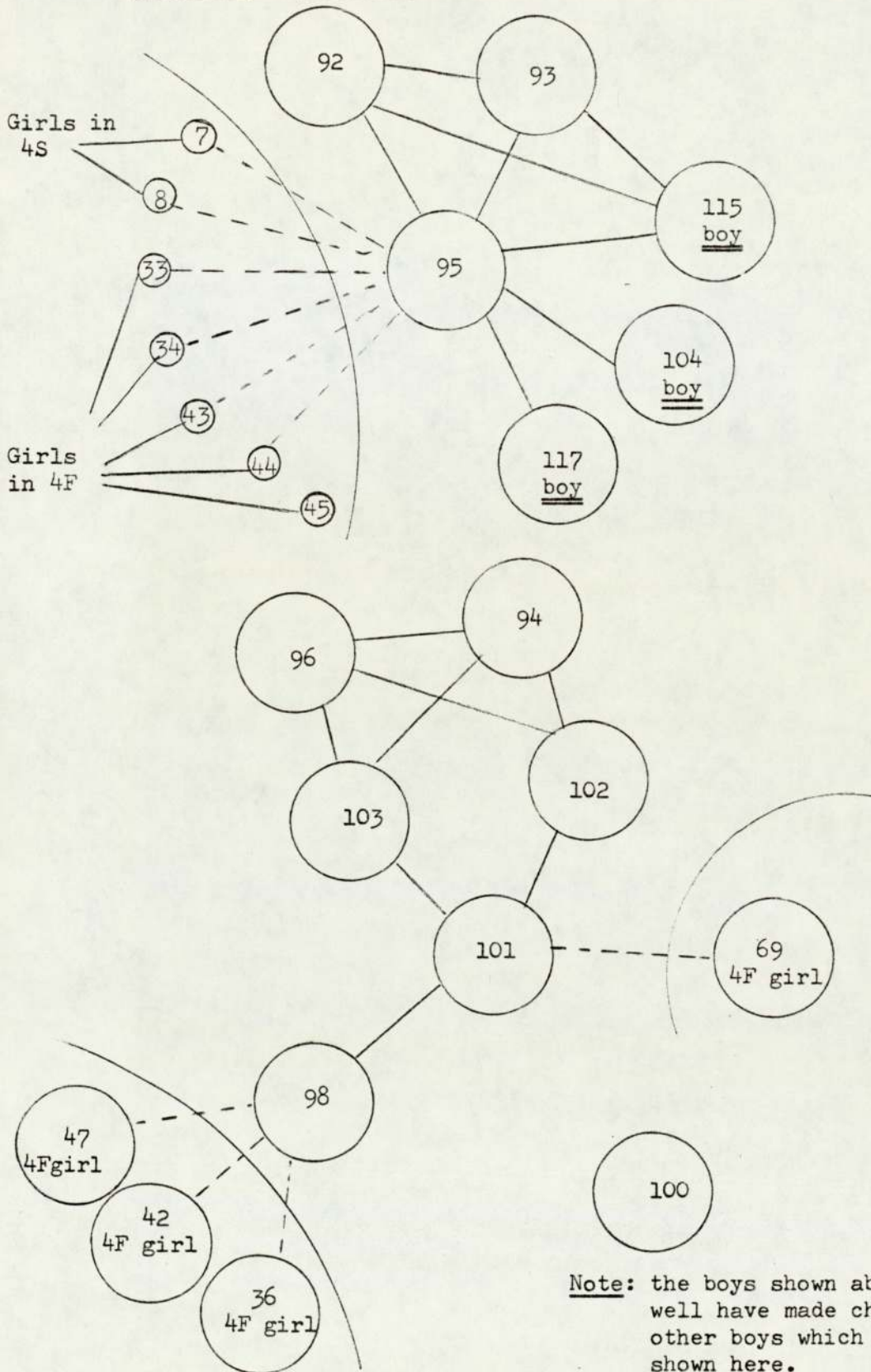
○- / ○ = Reciprocated choice with girl/boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

Diagram 3

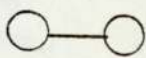
4J girls

Wave 2

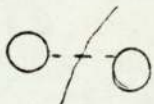


Note: the boys shown above may well have made choices with other boys which are not shown here.

KEY: (99) = Actual pupil in class



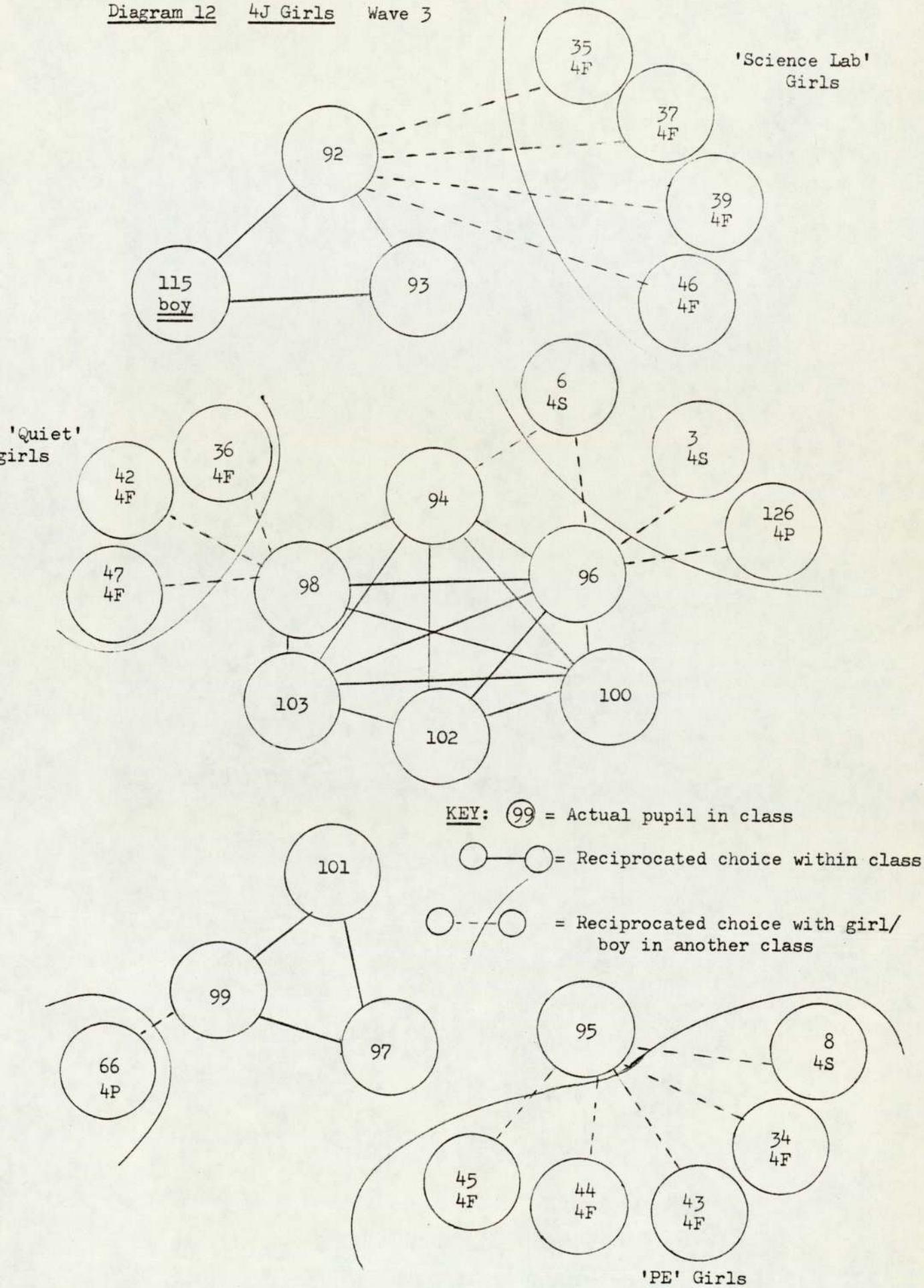
= Reciprocated choice within class



= Reciprocated choice with girl/boy in another class

Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

Diagram 12 4J Girls Wave 3



Constructed from responses to questions 1, 4 and 5

During the twelve months from the end of the third year till the end of the fourth year the 4J girls have changed from a pattern of one large class based group to a pattern of more separate discrete groups. This is a pattern similar to that for the boys. However, the other three classes of girls exhibit a pattern of separate groupings from the first time sociometric questions were administered. It may well be that the other three classes of girls have experienced these changes earlier. This question though must remain a question for further empirical testing.

5.7. Summary and Implications

The findings of research conducted by researchers such as Hargreaves and Lacey should not be seen as conflicting with that of interactionists such as Furlong and Delamont. These descriptions and explanations can only be seen as competing if one does not take account of the context in which the research was conducted. It should not be seen as surprising when research collected using different methodological techniques and from different theoretical positions arrive at different conclusions. Both increase our understanding of pupils in classrooms and schools. It is also important to remember that in the ten years between these two sets of studies the organizational nature of the schools has changed considerably. Models of explanation that seemed appropriate for secondary modern and grammar schools with their more rigid organizational patterns may well prove inadequate for the more fluid organizational arrangements found in a comprehensive school. It is suggested that the use of 'peer network' lessens the rigidity

often associated with 'peer groups'.

From this research conducted with pupils from a younger age group than those mentioned above it would certainly appear that some girls at least do form peer networks. Groups rather than pairs are the dominant form of social organization and the girls engage in constant manoeuvres to keep their group together. For girls of this age the peer network is a very important feature of their school lives and they are adamant, and this appears to be borne out by the sociometric analysis, that groups rather than pairs are the preferable form of social organization. Near the end of the fourth year when the girls began to speculate about what effect the new high school would have on their peer networks some of the girls felt that pair rather than group would become the dominant form of social relationship. This is of course largely speculative but is based on at least some passed on knowledge or mythology of 'the way things are up there'. If this is the case it would indicate a rather dramatic change in the form of girls' social relationships.

The typical pattern for boys is the big class group which is largely undifferentiated with perhaps a much smaller group often with a different set of interests from the dominant main group. This smaller group may be entirely separate from or very loosely connected to the main group. Boys' groups appear to be very much contained within the class group boundaries. Boys when discussing their peer networks use terms like "all the boys in the class except.....". They appear to be much less certain of groupings than the girls who are in no doubt

at all and are able to define exactly who is in each group as well as the membership of their own. The boys often had considerable difficulty describing their peer networks and this was when they resorted to the use of phrases such as 'all except....'. In many ways the boys found it easier to define the girls' peer networks. Some of the boys indicated that there were loose sub groupings within the big class group.

At all stages of the research boys made more reciprocated choices than girls. The number of reciprocated choices did increase for both boys and girls during the course of the research. The number of cross sex choices also increased but remained very small throughout the research. While this does confirm what observationally was certainly the case, i.e. there was little interaction between boys and girls, it should not be concluded from this that the boys and girls had no influence or effect on each other. In coeducational classes the presence of the opposite sex is always of significance and acts as a potential influential force in all situations in the classroom. Cross class group choices also increase, as one might predict, during the course of the research. The girls at all stages make far more cross class group choices than boys and girls peer networks often bridge class group boundaries while boys networks rarely do.

There is some evidence to suggest that peer networks particularly those of boys⁷ undergo developmental changes. The large undifferentiated class group may be a more immature form of social organization and that this changes to more discrete, separate groupings. There is

supporting evidence for this in the peer network patterns of the sociograms which have been drawn from the data collected at the three different points in time. The position, except for one class group, is less clear for girls. The girls were in discrete separate groupings from the beginning of the research. It may well be that girls pass through this stage at an earlier chronological age or alternatively that these developmental phases are peculiar to boys. These are of course empirical questions which need to be tested by further enquiry.

CHAPTER 6

The Culture of Peer Networks

6.1. Outline

6.2. Introduction

6.3. The Girls

- i. The 'P.E.' Girls
- ii. The 'Nice' Girls
- iii. The 'Quiet' Girls
- iv. The 'Science Lab' Girls
- v. Internal Fighting
- vi. Make-up and Jewellery
- vii. Perceptions of other Groups

6.4. The Boys

- i. Football, Football, Football

6.5. Relationships between the Boys and Girls of 4F

6.6. Summary and Implications

6.1. OUTLINE

This chapter explores the culture of the peer networks of the girls and boys in 4F. It examines their interests and activities, the way they view school and how they adapt to the demands made upon them by the school. An attempt is made to identify the differences and similarities between the four girls' groups and to assess the implications of the relationships between the boys and girls.

6.2. Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the structure of peer networks and how this structure was different for boys and girls of this age range. Do those different peer networks have different distinctive cultures? If so, what are these cultures like? This chapter explores the culture of these peer networks by means of a concentrated in depth study on one of the class groups, 4F. An attempt is made to identify and describe the culture and school social world of these boys and girls.

How the pupils themselves see and describe their experiences of school life is very often omitted from educational research and discussions of school and schooling more generally. It is, I would argue, of crucial importance to attempt to understand what school is like and how it is perceived and experienced from the point of view of those it is supposed to benefit. This concern and endeavour leads one to ask questions such as: What are the interests and activities of these groups of pupils? How do they collectively and individually regard school? Do they exhibit different approaches towards school? What aspects of school life are important or significant to them? Where do they see their priorities in school life?

The four groups of girls in 4F are examined in detail to see whether they are similar or different in their range of interests, concerns and activities at school. Can these groups of girls be said to represent different orientations to school? Did they all react in

The same way to school and the demands placed upon them by school or has each group developed its own strategies for coping with life at school? An attempt is made to identify cultural features that were common to all groups as well as to isolate characteristics that were distinctive to particular groups.

How these groups of girls relate to and 'get on' with each other is important in terms of the dynamics of classroom and wider school activities. Do they see themselves as different from other groups and if so in what ways? Are the girls able to offer any explanations of why there are differences between the groups and how they come about?

The boys in 4F whose social formation is very different, aren't organized in separate groups to the same extent as the girls. However similar questions to those addressed to the girls' groups can be posed. Does this big group of boys share any sort of group culture? What were the dominant interests, concerns and activities of these boys? What are group norms and expectations of behaviour and orientation and was there pressure exerted to adhere to these norms? How did the boys who were not a central part of the big class group relate to the majority of the boys in their class?

It is also of interest and importance as to whether or not this large group of boys could be seen as having a common orientation towards school and school work. The size and ad hoc nature of the group may mean that there is much more variation and freedom to

differ in at least some areas of school life than was the case within the different groups of girls or indeed there may be more variation generally.

Finally the chapter explores the relationships between the boys and girls groups in this mixed ability coeducational class. As was discussed in the previous chapter there was very little obvious interaction between the boys and girls. However, this does not necessarily mean that the opposite sex wasn't an important influence in the planning and execution of various activities or the reason for adopting certain strategies.

6.3. The Girls

The in depth study on the 4F class of pupils provides valuable insights into the social world of these 12-13 year old children particularly in the ways they cope with and regard school and academic attainment and effort. These insights are important in our understanding of processes operating within schools and classrooms.

The 4F girls divided into four definite groups:

The 'P.E.' girls:	Betty)	4F girls
	Josephine)	
	Barbara)	
	Sylvia)	
	Cathy)	
	Margaret)	
	Bessie)	4S girls
	Lorraine)	
	Penny	-	4J girl

The 'Nice' girls:	Natalie)	
	Val)	4F girls
	Christine)	
)		
The 'Quiet' girls:	Vera)	
	Anne)	4F girls
	Judy)	
)	
	Ros	-	4J girl
The 'Science Lab' girls	Jennifer)	
	Diane)	4F girls
	Mary)	
	Elizabeth)	
)		

Data was collected on the social relationships of both boys and girls by a variety of methods. There were long periods of observation and informal conversation with pupils in a variety of school settings. For one six week period in the second year of the research a mobile research caravan was used for group and some individual interviews. The research caravan meant that both audio and video recordings of the interviews were made.

There was some interaction between the four groups but this tended to be limited. One group in particular had very little contact at all with the others. Group boundaries were not rigid but remained relatively consistent throughout the final year of the middle school. There was considerable internal fighting, in the case of one group this was often physical, with the girls 'breaking friends' with surprising (to me, at least) frequency and usually within a very short time making friends again. This appeared to be an ongoing feature of each of the girls' groups.

While each of the four groups had features in common, they also exhibited distinct and different patterns of behaviour, attitudes and orientation to school (culture). Each of the groups readily saw itself as being different and distinct and were identified by the teachers as being different.

However, in attempting to describe and locate the groups the readily available models, based largely on boys, proved to be inadequate. Commonly, the majority of the studies of peer groups present a very polarized picture with some groups accepting the definitions offered by the school (the pro-school, conformist, 'ear 'oles') and other groups rejecting these definitions (the anti-school, non-conformist, delinquent, 'lads'). This may, to a large extent, be a methodological artefact as a result of using a polarized model of pupils orientation to school. (See Hammersley and Turner (1979) for a much fuller discussion of this issue). There seems to be, in some studies, a tendency to concentrate upon, even celebrate the most extreme of the anti-school groups. These groups are only one part of the total picture and if one is concerned to present more complete pictures and thorough analysis then the work of researchers like Willis (1977) must be complemented by studies which attempt to present a cross section, or at least focus on, other parts of the cross section.

For girls of this age range, an at least equally significant dimension to that of pro/anti orientation to school would seem to be the degree of commitment to, and involvement in, "teenage culture" elements of

which, for these girls, were the wearing of make-up and jewellery, 'modern' dress and boyfriends. This dimension seemed to be salient in distinguishing one group from another but certainly did not run parallel to anti-school attitudes and postures as were the findings of Sugarman (1967) with boys. So, for example, the girls most likely to be described as pro-school express similar attitudes to the girls most likely to be described as anti-school in their opposition to the school's policy over the wearing of make-up.

Each of the groups is taken in turn and data presented from interviews with the four groups of girls which illustrate similarities between the groups in areas such as: how their group of friends is an important factor in their school lives; the value of 'good friends' to get on with, play with, and have fun with; the importance of sharing and helping each other; and differences in areas such as: helping each other with homework; helping each other in tests; more general orientation to and behaviour in school; commitment to elements of teenage culture; and attitudes towards teachers.

Additional data is presented separately on the within group fighting and on one element of 'teenage culture', that of wearing make-up. Different groups' perceptions of each other are examined and there is an exploration of the ability of the groups to manoeuvre and avoid being subjected to some of the school rules.

6.3.i. The 'P.E.' Girls

The group was given this name by the P.E. Mistress as many of the girls in the group were good at, and interested in, P.E. and games

(see footnote p 200). This is the biggest of the groups with six of the girls coming from 4F and one girl from 4J. There were two other girls from 4S who were often, but not always, part of the group. Two of the girls were in top sets, the others were in middle sets (none were in the bottom sets). One girl had West Indian parents and another a West Indian father and an English mother. Both girls were born in this country. All the girls were physically more mature than the average fourth year girl and, as a group, they were lively and friendly. These were a very 'noisy' group and seemed to be somewhat conspicuous both in lessons and around the school generally. They were very conscious and concerned with their dress and 'experimented' with the school uniform. Dresses had to be of a 'fashionable' mid-calf length. I was particularly intrigued by the shoes worn by the girls. The type of shoes worn changed three times during the fourth year. In 1977/78 at the beginning of the year, they all wore black wedges and when I asked Josephine why they had to be black, she replied: "I wouldn't be seen dead in brown shoes, sir!" This changed during the year to pumps and in the summer term to flat, open sandals. A conversation with Margaret indicated that they realized the transitory nature of peer fashion when she said to me: "Me mum said to me this morning, 'If I'd told you to wear those Jesus creepers (sandals) six months ago, you'd have screamed your head off at me' (laughter)."

Field notes, June 1978.

The following are extracts from conversations with the girls which explore the characteristics of their group.

BM	What sort of person do you need to be in your group?
Betty	Not stuck up or anything.

Barbara Not snobby

Josephine Modern clothes in it - we've all got modern clothes.

BM What does that mean? I'm very ignorant. What does it mean....modern clothes?

Josephine Knee length and high shoes and things like that.

BM So, you have to wear these, what do you call them, wedges?

Josephine You don't have to wear them, but....

Sylvia All of us have got them.

.....

Betty Not quiet.

All No.

Josephine A good fighter. You've got to be a good fighter.

BM Who do you fight with?

(laughter)

Josephine Boys, most of the time. You've got to be able to fight your own battles. Not a cry baby or anything.

BM What else?

Sylvia Like to mess about and like to get into trouble.

(laughter)

BM You enjoy messing about - what does that mean? How do you mess around?

Josephine Talk in class an' do silly things - playing around.

Betty Listening to the radio.

(laughter)

BM What, when you should be in class?

Betty We are in class and we are listening to it. We were doing it in music today ---- took it off us. You're not supposed to bring radios to school, though.

Josephine There's nothing else to do, though

.....

Josephine You've got to be agreeable.

Betty And be good friends.

Josephine Don't tell lies and we share things...most of the time...
if we don't want to, we just run away and hide them.

.....

Josephine Can tell them a secret and they won't tell anyone.

Betty Say you told them a secret and they went and told
someone else, then we wouldn't be friends with them.
Or told lies to us.

.....

Josephine We all wear eye shadow but I don't wear nail varnish.
I'm not allowed to wear any make-up. I put it on
before I come to school, after me mum goes to work
and me dad goes to work at quarter past eight, so
I've loads of time to put it on. I'm not allowed
to wear these (beads) but I put them on after.

.....

Josephine Brush your hair in class. (Laughter) We're not allowed to
do that and we always do it - turn round and brush our hair.

BM What else?

Josephine Eat in class. If we've got biscuits we share them all
around, put them under the table and we have 'squabbles'.
We put one biscuit in the middle of the table and put
our hands under the table and say go!

Cathy We all go into dinner together. We're all together
all of the time.

.....

Josephine We share lunch, crisps and things and when it comes to
dinner time we always say "I'll have anything you don't
want". Everyone says that to the other person...they
give you anything they don't want at the dinner table.

.....

Josephine We play tricks on each other sometimes. Sylvia put
salt in my water. (laughter) I nearly killed her.
I drank it straight down and spat it all back up.

Cathy We play tricks all the time.

BM What about school work - you've not mentioned that?

... We help each other.

... Yeah, we help each other.

Barbara We help each other in tests - give each other the answers.

Josephine We throw a piece of paper.

Barbara Or whisper it.

Betty Put it on your hands and show them.

BM Do you think this is all right?

Betty As long as we help each other, its all right.

BM What about homework?

 (Laughter)

Josephine We never do that. Only Sylvia does it.

BM So only Sylvia does it. What about the rest of you, don't you get into trouble?

Josephine We do it at the last moment. Last week Sylvia was off ill and we hadn't done our science homework and she sent ---- (her little sister) with a big piece of paper with all the homework on it. It said here's a piece of paper in case you haven't done your homework, 'cause she knew we wouldn't have done it.

Betty Not always. Sometimes we do our own.

Josephine I do me homework when I'm really bored, like Sundays I get bored. Sometimes on Sundays - like this Sunday, I did it.

BM Do you like school?

Cathy Yeah, its O.K. Better than at home, its boring at home.

Betty Not much - I don't like the rules and the school uniform. you get too much homework.

Josephine Bossy teachers.

.....

From an interview with Sylvia's mother, it became clear that Sylvia was 'made' to do her homework by her parents. It is interesting to

note the way in which Sylvia uses this as a group resource, i.e. by making her homework available. Thus she remains an acceptable member of the group even though in this area, at least, she does not conform to the general norms of the group.

For this group of 'P.E.' girls, 'fashionable' dress, make-up and jewellery are important. There's an emphasis on having a good time and playing practical jokes and it is important to be able to 'look after' yourself. Continuous attempts are made to 'get around' the school rules and there is much cooperation in helping each other to cope with academic aspects of school life. There is a brief indication of the girls' dominance over the boys in the area of fighting and an interesting insight into the need for some girls, at least, to avoid parents in order to subscribe to peer group norms concerning the wearing of make-up.

6.3.ii. The Nice Girls

This group consisted of three girls with two girls from 4P often joining in the group. The girls were of mixed 'ability' with one girl, Christine, in top sets for most subjects while the other two, Val and Natalie, were in middle and lower sets. The girls were quiet and friendly and somewhat unobtrusive. In the classroom they did not seem to intrude, nor were they conspicuous, and would hardly be noticed around the school. The girls did not seem to be interested in fashion or make-up and were physically less mature than the 'P.E.' or 'science lab' girls. They always met up in the playground where the main activity was standing around in their group and talking.

BM What's important about being in your group?

Natalie We all help each other with homework.

Val/
Christine Yeah.

Val Say, like this morning, Natalie forgot her science homework and mine was a load of rubbish 'cause I'd been away. She copied mine and got the same. (Laughter) I got rubbish right through the page 'cause I'd been away.

.....

Christine That's another reason why we all go round together, 'cause we all have a good laugh.

Val I tell the jokes - they laugh.

BM What do you talk about in the playground?

Natalie Talk about Mr. Fisher.

Christine He's everybody's hero.

BM You like Mr. Fisher, do you?

Christine Yeah, he's all right.

Val He's got such a big adams apple and me and Natalie couldn't stop laughing today about his adams apple. When he was talking it was going up and down.

(Much laughter)

Natalie He's always saying 'hello, darling' and that.

BM Is he?

Natalie I asked him for my science book the other day and he goes "hello, darling, how are you?"

(Laughter)

Natalie Mrs. Price says that he reckons all the fourth year girls fancy him.

BM Do you three fancy him?

All No, not really. He's all right.

Val He's all right for a teacher!!

.....

Val You must not be big headed or show off and things like that - must not take people off you. Sharing is important. We share our crisps and that and we share our lunches.

BM Do you help each other with your work?

All Yeah.

BM In what ways?

Natalie Telling the answers and all this.

Christine Like....um....someone is saying 'oh, I can't see your work, let me have a look, get your arm off'. Or you tell them the answers before you write it down.

Val I don't. I say, 'Christine could you help me on this question, please, I'm stuck' or something like that.

The 'nice girls' are primarily concerned with making their school lives as easy and pleasant as possible. They cooperate with homework and in school lessons but do not seem to be concerned to break the school rules and are certainly being 'well behaved'. There is little interest, at this stage, at least, in the aspects of teenage feminine culture of dress and make-up. Their attitude to their class teacher is one of acceptance of him as an authority figure - to be talked about and laughed about but in no way is his authority challenged nor is he seen in any way as an equal. Academic school work is seen as something that has to be 'put up' with and of uncertain relevance for their future.

6.3.iii. The Quiet Girls

This is an extremely quiet group of girls who are physically less mature than the 'P.E.' or 'science lab' girls and are socially unsure and uncertain. If they were sought out they would be very friendly, but they would initiate contact only in very rare circumstances.

The three girls, Vera, Anne and Judy, were in 4F and they were often joined by Ros from 4J. The girls were in bottom sets for most subjects, except for Vera who was in a top set for English. These girls, like the 'nice girls' did not seem to be interested in make-up or fashion. They spent their time in the playground talking and playing their own games, always near to the school building where they were 'protected' by the teacher or playground staff from interference by other groups of girls or the boys. This is in marked contrast to the 'P.E.' girls who endeavoured to get as far away as possible from supervision. Mr. Fisher, their teacher, described the 'Quiet' girls in the following way:

"They're a very quiet group. They stick together and I think they're very happy now that they've found sort of mutual friends because they could all be loners very easily but they all seem happy working together and they stick together and seem to go round quite a lot together."

- BM What do you do together? How do you spend your time together?
- Vera We usually do things like playing tigg, tracking, or just messing about.
- BM What are the important things about being in this group?
- Ros We get more fun.
- BM Don't be shy! Tell me why you like being in this group.
- Judy It's just 'cause we're all friends.
- Vera We play about and pretend to be dunces - point to our head and go "derr"!
- BM You were doing that the other day, weren't you? So you pretend to be dunces?

.....

- BM What's this business, pretending that you're dumb?
- (Laughter)

Vera Well, we're like dunces, we don't know our times tables and those things.

Ros In maths yesterday, we didn't know what our times tables was and we went - "derr" sixteen.

BM I see, this is like an 'in' joke in your group, is it? Do others have this joke?

All No, its just us.

.....

BM What sort of person are you in your group?

Ros Thick.
(Laughter)

BM What does that mean?

Ros Sometimes we don't know our times tables.

BM You mean you're not clever at school?

Judy No, we're mostly in the bottom groups.

Ros We're all in the bottom groups except Vera.

HM Does it worry you?

All No.

Ros Sometimes they make fun of you, though.

BM Who?

Ros All the boys. We don't care, though, 'cause they're usually in the bottom groups as well!!
(Laughter)

BM So, that's the important thing about your group.

All Yes, yes!

BM What else?

Ros Got to be able to run fast, as well.

... Got to be kind, as well.

Judy Yes, got to be imaginative.

BM Imaginative for what?

Judy Playing games.

Vera Crafty for things like tracking and things.

BM What else?

Vera Well, we have fun together.

BM What else do you do in your group?

Judy You have to lend things to each other.

Ros Giving each other crisps and that. Its only us two who usually bring our lunch and we share it with these two. Sometimes she'll bring a bag of crisps.

BM What other things?

Vera We usually lend out our things, like rulers, pencils, pens.

BM Do you share with other people?

All Oh, no!

Vera No. Its just us four.

Ros Usually I bring an apple and give everybody a bite.

BM What about school work.

Vera Oh, in maths...um...

Ros She usually helps me.

Vera If she leaves an answer out, I fill it in and tick it.

BM So you have a little bit of - sort of cheating, is that right?

All Yes. (Much laughter)

Vera The first time...I didn't realise that she wanted me to fill them in and she only got seven out of twenty. Ever since, I do now.

Judy We all help each other. In other subjects as well. we all sit together.

Ros Sometimes we help each other's homework.

Vera Well, if Anne hasn't done her homework, then I let her copy mine or Judy's. And in science too, if they haven't quite finished, I let them copy...say, copy the labelling.

Judy Once Anne hadn't done her homework and she didn't know what to do and I told her what to put and she got more than me!

(Laughter)

.....

BM Does it worry you that you're 'thick'?

All No! No!

Anne No.

BM Would you like to be clever?

Vera Well, yes and no.

BM What do you mean by that, Vera?

Vera Well, yes, I'd like to be clever so as...but I wouldn't like to be too clever...because it wouldn't be very much fun together and it...er...we don't want to be too clever...er...well, you know what I mean. I can't really explain it in words.

Judy Sometimes, though, if you were clever and everything and you were in the top groups you'd always have homework and you can't play out.

Ros You have more fun when you're not clever.

For these girls, virtually their entire social life at school is conducted within the bounds of the peer group. They are certainly a very good example of the pervasiveness of the peer group in making the situation tolerable, even fun (Willis (1977); Cusick (1973)). They show no interest in teenage fashion, clothes or make-up and seem to have accepted and, indeed, made light of their placement in the bottom groups. The acceptance of their 'thickness', even to the extent of playing games about it, has led to a complete inversion of official school attitudes towards academic learning. For these girls, its more fun when you're not clever. Despite this inversion, these girls could hardly be described as anti-school or at least they don't fit the picture in the literature of anti-school groups.

They certainly provide each other with considerable practical and moral support in coping with the demands of school work.

6.3.iv. The Science Lab Girls

A group of four girls who looked after the science laboratory particularly the animals, and who were all in 4F. They were a confident outgoing group of physically and socially more mature girls and were seen by the staff as being popular and reliable. One girl, Diane, was in the top sets for all subjects and the other three, Mary, Jennifer and Elizabeth, were in a mixture of top and middle sets. They were seen by staff as being very academically orientated and pro-school. Like the 'P.E.' girls they were certainly fashion conscious and liked to wear make-up and jewellery. Most of their spare time was spent in the science lab as the officially designated science monitors. This involved the care and feeding of the laboratory animals. An interesting way in which they combined school duties with pleasure and their interest in animals and boys was the period when they were able to persuade several boys to dig worms for them in the lunch hour to provide food for the toads!! Normally, these boys were passionately involved in lunch time football games.

BM What do you do after school?

Jennifer We went to Diane's house and um...

(Laughter)

... See, Mary's boyfriend is Matthew and her boyfriend is Roger...

Jennifer They went to Diane's house. Me and Mary went over in Mary's mum's car. She took us over there and...um...

Diane We found that they were there.
Jennifer We found that they had followed us and they were there.
Diane In the half term holidays.
Jennifer We sat there, listening to records and that. When Diane's mum wasn't in. Us and the two boys.

Mary We played some games.

(Laughter)

Jennifer We had to chuck them out in the end.

Diane In case me mum came home.

Jennifer We played dares and that.

.....

BM What is the most important thing about being in your group?

Jennifer To help each other a lot.

Diane Yeah, to help each other.

Jennifer To stick up for each other.

Diane Like, when I was in hospital, all that lot brought me cards and everything.

BM What sort of person do you have to be in your group?

Jennifer Reliable.

Diane Sensible.

... Reliable. Like, if someone asks you to come to their house you've got to turn up.

Mary Like that. Like that. They don't do that, Josephine's gang don't. Like, last night, Margaret was supposed to go to Betty's house and she didn't go.

Elizabeth You've got to be able to take a joke and that.

All Yeah.

Jennifer Not snobby. Sometimes we get called that if we get good marks in our classes and that, and we all stick up for each other.

.....

Jennifer We all share each other's dinner.

BM You all share dinners. You always bring a packed lunch?

All Yeah.

Jennifer She (Mary) started bringing a packed lunch and so I started to bring a packed lunch and so did she (Elizabeth).

Diane So I was the odd one out, so I started to bring a packed lunch.

.....

Diane We all try to dress the same and that.

Jennifer I wore a green blouse yesterday, but I can't wear the same blouse twice. And she wore a green blouse the same as me.

Diane In the holidays, we phone each other up. I'll phone Mary up and say "what are you wearing?" and she'll say "a pleated skirt" and I'll put on my pleated skirt.

Jennifer She'll say "are you wearing eye shadow?" and I'll say "yes" so she'll put some on.

BM So you do everything the same?

Diane Well, with work, like, and our own topic, Mary and Elizabeth did trees together, but we did it on our own and shared a few ideas.

Jennifer Sometimes we have different answers and sometimes we won't tell each other.

Diane Especially in important tests, we won't help each other. Otherwise, if - when we're split up at the high school and we can't help each other and then if we had a test, you'd be in a low group like....So important tests we don't help each other. But tests like one to ten tests, spellings and that....science. Especially spelling. Jennifer helped me with that 'cause I'm no good at spelling.

.....

BM So you like school?

All Yeah.

BM So, what's important about school?

Mary/
Jennifer Its your friends.

Diane And learning.

6.3.v. Internal Fighting

One feature which was common, and very obvious to the observer, to all groups - irrespective of their orientation, set placement, or involvement in teenage culture - was the amount of fighting that went on within each of the groups. Breaking friends which occurred after an argument, which might be on one of a wide range of topics, and making friends again was a continuing feature of all the groups. The breaking of friendships lasted anywhere from five minutes to a few days. During the entire fourth year the four groups under discussion remained the same and so none of these 'squabbles' resulted in groups breaking up. The following is from a discussion with the 'nice girls'.

BM Do you spend most of your time in school together?

All Yeah.

Natalie Except when we break friends. (Laughter)

BM What makes you break friends?

Christine Just arguments 'cause we always argue about you're taking her off me so I'm not your friend.

Val Just silly little things.

Christine 'Cause we broke friends Monday night and we made friends yesterday (Wednesday) morning.

BM What did you break friends on Monday night about?

Christine Can't remember. Oh, yeah! It was about me and Natalie, we were arguing. She was saying that I was a big head and everything 'cause I got high marks.

(Laughter)

Only among the 'P.E.' girls did this fighting become physical.

The following from a group interview is part of a rather lengthy account of a well organized fight between two of the 'P.E.' girls 'supervised' by one of the girls' mother and father. One of the

protagonists was of partly West Indian origin but from all accounts and from my observation colour did not seem to be a significant factor in the dispute. It was striking that no racial insults were used.

Josephine While we were there, they went nasty against Margaret.

BM Why?

Josephine I don't know why. They just started calling her names and that sort of thing. They didn't want her around. And then I didn't think it was fair, so I started playing with Margaret, and me and Margaret went to her house and then we were all shouting from her window and calling each other names. Betty asked me out for a scrap but I did not want it then. So I told her I did not want to then, so she says, have it on Sunday at three o'clock. I told my mum about it, about the fight, and she says okay you can have it then...when I came back they were all waiting at the corner for me, following me around, so I said to my mum I am going to have that fight now. She says all right and my dad says well, I am coming and I said why? And he said because I want to come and watch to make sure it is a fair fight. So he came up and he was just standing there with his arms folded while me and Betty had the fight, but Penny was going to join in; she was swearing and everything. And she says, if you don't kill her, I will! So my dad said just you try! And then she ran off. So it was a fair fight. My mum was going to help me but my dad would not let her - she loses her temper ever so easy!!!.....

BM Who won in the end?

Josephine Me.

BM What happened? How did you fight?

Josephine Well, at the time I was sitting on top of her, smashing, well punching her head. She just said she gave in!! My mum shouted don't. She said keep at it until she cries. I couldn't, though. I just can't. I can't do things like that.

BM Are you friends now?

Josephine Yes. We made up friendly afterwards, about three days later.

The 'P.E.' girls recounted several incidents where internal disputes had resulted in physical combat. Extreme though this 'contest' appeared to be, friendships were restored within three days. In general, the 'P.E.' girls playing about in school and particularly in the playground were very physical in their contact with each other. Their play usually consisted of a considerable amount of 'rough and tumble' and, in this regard, were usually able to out 'rough and tumble' the boys.

The description of the fight incident also provides a fascinating insight into the role of the parents in peer group affairs. The parents played a very definite supervisory role in connection with the fight. There seemed to be no unease on the part of Betty that Josephine's parents were there to see that it was a fair fight, nor did any of the other members of the peer group who were there to watch think it strange or unacceptable. Similarly, there seemed no reluctance on the part of Josephine to consult with, and indeed have involved in a supervisory capacity, her parents. This is in distinct contrast with Josephine's avoidance of her parents over the issue of wearing make-up and jewellery to school. Both the physical fighting and the wearing of make-up and jewellery would certainly be seen by the school authorities as anti-school and it is interesting that in this case the peer group norm of fighting your own battles is supported by Josephine's parents while the peer group norm of wearing make-up to school is discouraged by them and Josephine has to wait till they have gone to work before she dons her make-up and jewellery to go to school.

6.3.vi. Make-up and Jewellery

Both the 'P.E.' girls and the 'science lab' girls expressed resentment about the school's policy concerning make-up and jewellery. In fact, most resentment was expressed by the 'science lab girls' rather than as one might have expected by the 'P.E.' girls. (Neither the 'quiet girls' or the 'nice girls' expressed interest, at this stage, in wearing make-up to school).

The following transcript illustrates the strength of feeling of the 'science lab girls' concerning make-up and jewellery.

- BM What about make-up and jewellery?
- Jennifer Well, surely about earrings it is up to us. After all, they don't have to rush to hospital in pain. If we're going to get our ears ripped its up to us. They say we have to wear studs and it is expensive for a pair of real silver studs. I am allergic to not-real gold. Sometimes I am, it depends on what sort of metal it is. Sometimes studs are expensive and my mum says she is not going to pay out that much money when I have got other earrings upstairs.
- BM So you think that is a bit unreasonable, do you?
- Diane Yes. And we are going to be allowed to wear make-up at the high school and considering we only got a week left.
- BM You think this is a bit unfair?
- Mary Yes. One thing that Mr. ---- hates is about when you wear rings. I wore a little metal ring one day which I had forgotten to take off. And he shouted out in front of the whole class, "will Mary get that ring off".
- Jennifer He went mad.
- Mary I took it off and went bright red, and I took it off but I put it back on again at lunch time.
- BM Is he the main one? What about the other teachers?

Jennifer Mrs. Price takes my earrings off a lot, but I don't mind because I said I would get a pair of studs. I did have a pair of studs but they are broken now. Uniform gets me mad as well. I think the uniform is stupid. What good does that do you? Some of the clothes that we have got at home, nice dresses, much better than this rotten school uniform. I hate it, I do; that is why I wear this.

BM You think that the business about uniform, especially jewellery and make-up is a bit hard?

All Yes.

BM What happens to you when you wear make-up?

Jennifer He just goes at you. He nearly poked my eyes out. And he just said take it off.

Mary In class we just came into the classroom and he pulled us all out, didn't he? I was leaning over the desk and he could not see me and he goes 'Betty, come here. Get that off.' 'Jennifer come here, get that off.' Then he turned round and saw Diane and he said 'Diane, come here, get that off.' Then he goes 'Where is she?' Then he saw me and told me to get that off. He made us all go and get it off and when we came back he chucked us out.

Jennifer What is wrong with wearing make-up anyway? It makes you look nicer anyway. I mean, you look baby faced if you don't wear it too much. I mean, you have to wear a little bit of rouge or something, sometimes.

On the other hand, the 'P.E.' girls seem to be somewhat more accepting of the school rules concerning the use of make-up and the wearing of jewellery. It must be added, however, that even though they were more accepting, it didn't appear to prevent them from wearing make-up to school. The views of some of the 'P.E.' girls are expressed in the following:

BM Do you get into trouble for wearing make-up?

Josephine Well, not at school, no. I have been told to get it off once or twice.

BM Who by?

Josephine Mr. --- (headmaster).

BM Tell me what happened.

Josephine Well, he comes up to you with a face like that. Squashes your eyes.

Cathy He is always doing that to Betty.

Barbara He always picks on her for that.

Josephine Mr. Fisher tells you sometimes and Miss Smith she tells Betty.

BM And does Miss Smith tell you to get your make-up off, as well? Does that bug you?

Josephine Not really. I mean, we are not supposed to wear it so we should expect to get told off for wearing it.

The reactions of these two groups are interesting in that one may have predicted that the 'P.E.' girls would have presented some sort of a challenge to the rule concerning the wearing of make-up and jewellery in school because of a) their generally consistent attempts to break school rules whenever possible and b) their strong commitment to teenage culture. In this light, Josephine's comment is somewhat surprising, and indeed may not be typical of the whole group, or it may be typical of the more general stance adopted by these girls where they see school rules as being fixed by those with more power and which are there to be broken when possible. If one is 'caught' breaking the rules, some sort of punishment or correction is expected after which a new attempt against this or some other rule is launched. In some ways, for these girls being 'caught' or being 'told off' is part of the daily cut and thrust, in the battle over school rules, and so is to be expected.

The same line of argument cannot, however, be applied to the 'science

lab' girls. As has been illustrated in earlier transcripts, these girls also have a strong commitment to teenage culture but, unlike the 'P.E.' girls, are very positive in their orientation to school and in their acceptance of school rules. Importantly, the teachers see these girls as being pro-school, mature and sensible. For these girls, commitment to and involvement in elements of teenage culture is very much a sign that they are 'growing up' and are becoming adults. In many respects, the staff of the school treat them in a 'grown up' manner and they are given considerable responsibility and so the refusal of the staff to sanction the wearing of make-up and jewellery, which to them is a very important sign of their growing up, is seen by the girls as being inconsistent and so is reacted against. So, for the 'science lab' girls their commitment to elements of teenage culture plus the, as they see it, inconsistent treatment metered out by staff results in this very strong reaction to staff attempts to prevent them from wearing make-up and jewellery.

6.3.vii. Perceptions of Other Groups

All of the girls were easily able to identify each other's groups and were able to describe the culture of the groups and the differences between them. In the following, the 'science lab girls' discuss the differences between them and the 'P.E.' girls.

- Diane Really, we don't get on that well with our class.
- Mary No, we don't.
- Diane 'Cause when we get good marks they (the 'P.E.' girls) all say teacher's pet and things like that.
- All Yeah.

Elizabeth They're jealous of us.

Jennifer We're not really all that cleverer than they. If they wanted to, they could do it.

All Yeah, Yeah.

Jennifer They'd rather play with bits of paper and throw staples at people.

Diane Yeah.

BM Its their attitudes to school?

Mary Yeah, that's it. They just mess about.

Elizabeth They'd rather hang around ice skate rinks and things like that.

Diane Well, they prefer to mess about at school and not to work and we don't.

Mary Like, when we sit quietly and just do our work and they're making a noise and that.

This transcript clearly illustrates that the 'science lab' girls see themselves as different from the 'P.E.' girls. They recognize that they are more positive towards the academic orientation of school and that this is resented in some ways by the 'P.E.' girls. Interestingly, the 'science lab' girls see this as being their own fault and that if they wanted to the 'P.E.' girls could be as 'clever' as them. It is because they prefer to mess about while the 'science lab' girls prefer to get on with their work.

Two of the 'P.E.' girls discuss their group and the differences between them and the 'science lab' girls.

BM Is your group the same sort of group as theirs (the 'science lab' girls) or are you different?

Betty No, I think we're different 'cause they don't go round together at night and their mums don't allow them out to go to discos or anything. Jennifer's all right, her mum lets her go to discos but the others don't go.

BM What ways, then, do you think your group's differnt to them?

Penny They're just different.

Betty Well, they're always in the science lab, they're never going out.

.....

Betty They're always trying to get round the teachers and everything. They're always teachers' pets, them four.

Penny We don't get on with the teachers. I think we probably get on with them sometimes.

Betty Yeah.

Penny Not all the time.

BM Why not?

Betty We're never doing no work. Most of them, they're always getting on with their work. We do sometimes, we have our working sessions but not all the time.

Penny We've got the best fighters, we're tougher than them.

Betty We don't have lots of scraps, but we like causing trouble.

.....

Betty They're snobby. They're just different - they just are.

Penny They like snobby boys. Really snobby. We don't we just like normal ones that are like us.

Once again, it is obvious that the 'P.E.' girls see themselves as different in many respects from the 'science lab' girls. The 'science lab' girls are teachers' pets and always do their work, whereas they are less interested in work and more interested in 'messing about and causing trouble'. Even the boys they like are different. Betty's comment that it is the parents of the 'science lab' girls that contribute to these basic differences indicates that for some groups, at least, the peer group is subject to parental influence.

6.4. The Boys

The 4F boys formed one large class based group with two boys, Peter and Richard, preferring to be somewhat separate and one, Tom, who had been transferred from another class preferring to spend his time with the boys from that class. Apart from Tom, the school social world of these boys revolved around this class group. They would explain to me that there was probably nothing wrong with the boys in other classes it was just that they didn't know them. Their teacher, Mr. Fisher, in discussing this aspect explained how once he had been organizing a lunch time basketball club for fourth year boys and that a couple of the boys from his class had come along for the first couple of times and then dropped out. When he asked them why they told him it was because they didn't 'know' any of the other boys.

6.4.i. Football, Football, Football

By far the dominant concern and preoccupation of the boys was football. This was what they enjoyed doing more than anything else. It was the dominant theme in their conversations and they spent every moment that they possibly could playing football.

For a short period (referred to earlier) three of the boys started spending their free time talking to the science lab girls. The other boys in the class found this absolutely incomprehensible and just could not understand how or why these boys preferred to spend their lunch hours with the girls rather than playing football. In a somewhat similar way the staff found it difficult to understand when after

having spent a considerable amount of time and energy organizing a Christmas party for the fourth year they discovered half way through the afternoon that some of the boys had slipped away from the party and were in the playground playing football.

In the following transcript the boys are discussing with me their school life.

- BM What sort of things do you do in school time, I mean from the time you leave home until school's finished in the afternoon?
- Luke We just carry on with the work we did the day before... just carry on.
- BM What about the breaks?
- Adrian Play football.
- Luke Play football.....If nobody brings the ball then we just play tracking around the school and that's it!
- BM And that's all you do. You don't do anything different?
- Adrian Mmmm.....cricket.
- BM What about you Adrian what sort of things do you do in school time?
- Adrian Work, that's all apart from football.

Later in the same interview the boys discuss the factors that cause disruptions in their group. Not surprisingly the illustrations they use and examples they give concern their football games.

- Luke Just going off on your own.
- Adrian Walking off.
- BM What do you mean by that?

Adrian Like Richard when we get called in for the lunch we usually play around for about five or ten minutes before we go in and he just grabs his stuff and gets straight in.

BM Why do you play on?

Luke Half the time there's a great big long queue - the teachers call us in and there's a great big long queue - so we just carry on.

Football time is far too precious to be wasted standing in a dinner queue. The following illustrates further just how important football is in the lives of these boys.

BM If I was a new lad come to this school.....what sort of person would I need to be to join in your group?

Simon You got to play football.

... Yea.

... Yea.

Matthew Good at sport and don't act big an' that.

Roger Not snobby....who says I'm too good to hang around with you or something like that.

In another interview where I was trying to question some of the boys about leadership and decision making about activities, the reply very clearly indicated that there was no decision to be made, about what to do, as it was always football.

BM , is one of you more important than another, the one that makes all the decisions?

Gordon No, we make decisions between each of us, all of us the gang.

BM Not one of you decides what you're going to do, or what you're going to play...

Gordon We always play football so there's no decision! (The implication being you daft researcher what a silly question)!

In the classroom a lot of the casual conversation that wasn't directed towards the class room task at hand was about football - the relative merits of the various football clubs they supported, discussions about the previous weekend's football matches and very often discussions and arguments about their own lunchtime and break-time football matches.

BM I'll ask you again, how do you behave in class?

Adrian Argue.

Luke Always....like when we've finished the game...like sometimes there's so many goals scored like today it was around 6-5.

Adrian Should be 5 each.

Luke We argue about the score. Roland always says it is something different and we start arguing. Its the way it is.

It became apparent in some of the interviews that ability at, interest in and 'devotion' to football was the main dimension by which peers were evaluated by many of the boys. In the following interview we obtain hints of how ability and commitment to the playground football matches is in many ways equated with the 'worth' of the individual and how any interruptions (e.g. one boy going home for his lunch) or anything less than total commitment is seen as a real problem and a reflection on the individual concerned.

BM What's important to you about being in a group?

Luke Because we're all friends and we rely on each other, that's the main thing. There's one person you can't rely on and that's Henry, most of the time he keeps walking off and that. He walks off and says "I'm not playing with you" and then about ten minutes later he comes back. Brian's just the same. If Gordon can't play then Henry won't play.

BM Why can't Gordon play?

Adrian He's rubbish.

Luke Half the time he gets in the way and half of the time he doesn't want to play, he goes home.

Adrian He goes home dinners that's the real problem.

BM He goes home so he can't join in.

Luke Half the time we have to keep changing the sides around for him.

Adrian Its not worth it.

Luke Today we didn't because he was here with sandwiches and Mo had gone home...he came back just as we had started the game...

The dominance of football meant on several occasions that it was difficult in interviews or discussions to ever talk about anything else even when one felt that success had been achieved in stimulating discussion on another topic football intervened. In the following example the switch from a discussion on helping each other with homework and in tests back to football leaves me completely bewildered.

Luke All the time we help each other...

BM And what about in tests and things do you help each other then?

Adrian Can't.

Luke We daren't. Matthew does, he tries to cheat and look at the other person's paper. Like if it was a great big test he'd go and sit next to Roger and...

Adrian Yeah, Yeah. Or sit by Conrad because Conrad would share his answers with him.

Luke There's one thing though that Henry always does and that's, he says he gets fouled by Conrad but Conrad wouldn't foul anybody and Henry says he does.

BM (absolutely lost) What's this? How does he foul you?

Luke Football!!!!!! Henry says he fouls him on purpose
but Conrad isn't like that....

As well as the interest and involvement in football and sport more generally the boys identified several other characteristics as features of their group or perhaps more particularly of the way in which their group behaved. Sharing was seen as important. The sharing of books, pencils, sweets and more important the sharing of homework and helping each other with the demands of school work.

BM What about in school do you help each other with
your school work?

... Homework!

... Yes!

... Maths!

Denis Me and Matthew there's only one group that we're
not in together, that's maths.

Matthew Give each other ideas about questions.

Denis In English me and Matthew are doing exactly the same thing.

BM What about you Simon?

Simon Yes we help each other all the time.

BM What about homework?

... Yes.

... Yes.

BM Do you help each other in tests?

All No!!

Roger You can't.

Denis That's cheating that is.

Matthew If you get caught you get nought.

Denis I don't cheat I work on my own.

Simon What about the time you got sent by yourself for copying me
in French?

BM And do you think it's wrong to copy in tests do you?

Simon Yes you cheat yourself.

BM But you help each other with homework and work in school?

... Yes.

... Yes.

Denis Its not worth it cheating in tests 'cause if someone says do this and you can't do it, well they say you did it easy enough in the test, so then you cheated.

Luke If you do the homework and everybody else forgets it, you've got to let them copy yours but it works both ways because if you forget your homework everybody else will let you copy theirs.

Adrian Yes.

Luke That's the one thing that the teachers never know.

Adrian No.

So helping each other in class and with homework especially when someone has forgotten to do it is an important part of belonging to the group but helping each other in tests was not seen as a function of the group.

Being able to take a joke was stressed as an important characteristic of group members and seen as an important feature of the group.

BM Tell me about this group. Tell me what this group of friends you play with is like.

Adrian They're good.

Luke There's one thing you'll never be able to do. In the group if they make a joke about you you've got to take the joke. If you don't they all call you a cissy or something like that.

Adrian An' you've got to stick up for your friends like.

.....

Denis You gotta be able to take a joke.

Simon Don't lose your temper.

Not only is it important that group members 'take a joke' but they must be loyal to and 'stick up for' their friends and this means that you should never 'drop your mates in it'. The boys recount to me an example of the way in which mates should be protected at all times especially from teachers.

Roger Say Simon and Peter were having a fight in class and (teacher) walked in and she said 'What's going on then?' and she asked what happened and we all said nothing.

Luke She goes to me 'What did happen Luke?' and I said nothing and she said Jennifer wouldn't bring me here for nothing.

Denis Jennifer she's the one though.

Adrian You can't drop your mate in it.

Boys who 'think they're a bit good' or 'like acting big' are either not seen as appropriate group members or else need to be 'cut down to size'. This category tends to be one that is applied most often to boys in other classes. 'Most of them are big heads'.

Academic ability, attitude to school or set placement did not seem to be important distinguishing dimensions of this class group of boys. It was of course a mixed ability class and boys were in different sets for maths and English. Some appeared to be more academically inclined but this did not seem to be of any major importance in terms of group formation. Football ruled!

BM Does your group usually do well at school?

Matthew No.

Denis Not really I suppose.

Roger I do quite well.

.....

BM Does it make any difference to you whether someone is clever at school or works hard at school?

... No.

... It doesn't matter at all.

BM That's not an important thing at all?

Denis It doesn't matter if its Science or French or maths...

Simon Because otherwise you always get someone coming round and saying that I'm better than you at this, and I'm better than you at that - its crap.

As mentioned earlier the main benefit of school for most of the boys is that it provides a meeting place for friends. The academic aspects of school are seen as something that has to be 'put up with' usually because it is felt that school is important in helping you get a good job. The following interview with three of the most academic boys in the class illustrated this point.

BM Well tell me how you like school?

Conrad You must go. We need a good education for when you leave school and get a good job.

BM That's not the question I asked. How do you like school?

Roland Its alright. I can't see anything wrong with it. You have your good days, you have your bad days, most of them are normal really.

BM What about you Mo?

Mo Same I reckon.

Conrad I wouldn't criticize it to a great length, saying you shouldn't go to school and things like that.

BM So you're not mad about school?

... Not really.

... No.

Conrad Its a thing you have to put up with. We tend to accept it anyway.

BM Why do you tend to accept it?

Conrad Well you have to don't you, and you need good education anyway if you want to get a good job.

Mo Yeah.

Apart from the dominance of the influence of sport and particularly football, there does not seem to be any great peer influence towards conformity to peer group norms and values. This is perhaps because of the size and constitution of the group - i.e. most of the boys in a randomly assigned mixed ability class group which encompasses a wide range of attitudes and abilities. When questioned specifically about this peer conformity/influence the boys tended to treat it as almost a 'non question' compared to the girls who were very much aware of and able to describe the way they influenced and were influenced by each other. The following are responses from several of the boys.

BM do you all try to do the same things as each other?

Luke No.

Adrian No, I don't think so.

BM Do you find that your friends influence you?

Matthew I don't think they've got an influence on me.

BM What about you Denis?

Denis No not really.

One may attempt to explain this by concluding that the boys did not influence each other to any great extent or alternatively by concluding that the boys did influence each other but were very much unaware of this. The actual position is probably somewhere between the two possibilities.

Differences didn't seem to matter within the boys group except in relation to football. Whether you did your homework or not, what clothes you wore, how conscientious you were in class seemed to matter little in terms of acceptance or rejection by the rest of the group. The overriding norm seemed to be that if you wanted to play football then you were 'in'.

The group of boys does not persist outside of school hours except for football matches. Not all of the boys join in these after school games as they seem to spend their out of school time with boys who live near them.

- BM What sort of things do you do then out of school with your group?
- Adrian Play football.
- BM In the evenings and weekends?
- Luke He doesn't play very often.
- BM So you just spend some time playing with them?
- Adrian Yes.
- BM Where do you play?
- Luke In the top field.
- BM When you don't play with this group who do you play with?
- Adrian My brother.
- BM What about weekends and evenings and that?
- Adrian I go out.
- BM Where do you go?
- Adrian Up town.
- BM Who with?

Adrian With my brother and some other kids from up our end.

.....

BM How often do you play football?

Luke I would say about three or four afternoons a week.

.....

BM That's all you do?

Adrian Yes apart from cricket sometimes.

Luke Half the time I only meet them after school sometimes so its only in school when we're really all in a great big group and that's it. Most of the time we're round different parts of the ends. Denis is in (---), Simon and Roland are right over the other side of the estate, me and Adrian are in the middle of it all.

Adrian And Roger.

Perhaps because of the flexible nature of the boys' group arguments and making and breaking friends which were such a dominant feature of the girls' group were not a striking feature of the boys' group. When there were arguments they tended to centre almost exclusively on the playground football matches. These arguments from my observations tended to be much less frequent than what I would have expected. There arguments were usually about off-side decisions which were arrived at by some sort of consensus, and were only ever made if a goal had been scored, and about whether or not the ball had actually gone through the 'goal'. The makeshift goal was usually marked by two coats or a couple of school bags and so there was a potentially tremendous amount of latitude as to whether or not the ball had actually passed through the imaginary goal. Decisions of too high or too wide were usually accepted but it was in this area that most of the arguments occurred. Often these arguments were not really resolved, as there was always pressure to get on with the game, and so were often taken up later on the way into class and in the classroom itself. When questioned about arguments and breaking

friends none of the boys saw this as a very important feature of their social lives. This is in direct contrast with the girls.

BM Do you sometimes fall out?

Roger Not very often no.

Matthew We fall out but then we make friends again.

.....

Roland Last year, it was really bad. This year at the beginning it started badly as well, but recently the arguments have been cut down quite a lot.

Conrad Me and Mo don't really seem to fall out.

Those boys who would rather not play football all the time find themselves under considerable pressure and this can be a potential source of 'breaking friends'. Two of the boys, Henry and Gordon, discuss this:

BM Why do you break friends?

Henry Mostly over football, 'cause if we don't play they break friends with me, and they want me to play but sometimes I don't want to play.

BM Over football or over other things?

Gordon It they say a goal was off-side, then if its a goal they shout at each other, and F's and B's and then they start calling each other names, they say 'shit head' or 'long legs', they just don't call them proper names.

Leadership was not seen by the boys as an important feature of or within the group. To the observer the only indication of leadership was the captains of the two sides in the playground football games - Matthew and Roland. Situations where leadership in decision making could be exercised or observed were rare. As Gordon said (quoted

earlier) "We always play football so there's no decision". When the boys were pushed on the question of leadership they usually came up with the names of the football captains but were quick to add that this didn't mean that he 'bossed' them around or decided what to do.

BM Who decides what you're going to do?

Denis Matthew usually is the leader, he's usually in charge of the gang, but he doesn't boss you about.

Luke No. He doesn't boss you about.

BM So who decides what you're going to do.

Adrian No one really, we decide for ourselves.

In many ways the 4F boys are just 'coasting' along. School does not really impinge upon them. It is as if they have not really thought much about it and just accept the fact that they must go. It is a great place to meet your friends and play football. The academic aspects of school have not really been thought through, although many of them would argue that school is a good and necessary thing. At this stage of their lives there are far more important aspects than academic school work. Almost certainly this will change very soon after they get to the high school and they will be 'forced' to adopt positions in regard to their academic school work.

6.5. Relationships between the Boys and Girls of 4F

The boys in 4F were very much dominated by the 'P.E.' girls. Where there were friendships it was with the girls from the 'Science lab' group and there tended to be very little contact with the other two

groups of girls except for Vera who was often teased mercilessly by some of the boys, particularly Tom.

"The boys in this class are a bunch o' weeds, I could do the lot o' them," Josephine announced to the class one registration period while they were waiting for Mr. Fisher to arrive. The boys chose to ignore the challenge.

Mrs. Price, the fourth year coordinator comments

"its perfectly obvious that the girls are more, far more mature than the boys and far more dominant...."

In this interview one of the 'science lab' girls refers to the immaturity of the boys when she says:

".....the boys in our class they wear little 'heel things' and that puts you off, well they pick their nose and things like that in front of you don't they? Some of the boys in our class do. Its just the stupid things they do and the way they act, they sing the Muppets song you know, its a bit crackers....."

The big majority of the boys in 4F while perhaps not publicly acknowledging the superior toughness of the girls certainly did so by their actions. In the following interview the boys acknowledge the superiority of the girls and describe the way they always get what they want and how they can interfere with relative impunity with their sacred playground football matches.

BM Do you get on with the girls alright?

Adrian Yes.

Luke Yes as long as they can borrow your things they're all right.

BM They borrow your things do they?

Adrian Yeah.

BM Do you borrow their things sometimes?

Adrian No.

Luke The only thing I've borrowed is a pen off Josephine. Everyone borrows things off her because she's the only one that will let you borrow anything and she knows that you will give it back anyway.

BM Why's that?

Luke She'd have you if you didn't give it her back. There's one thing though when she's outside that's when she's at her worst because she'll try and grab hold of your football and run away with it.

Adrian And then pass it to all her friends.

Luke Like Betty and Barbara

Adrian and Lorraine.

Many of the boys, particularly the physically smaller ones found the 'P.E.' girls somewhat intimidating. They were 'picked on' teased and called names. The following transcripts express the boys' feelings.

BM And how do you get on with the girls in your class?

Henry Not well! We don't like no girls in our class.

BM Oh. Do you like girls in other classes?

Henry We don't like any of them!

.....

BM And the girls in your class, do you have much to do with them?

Henry Sometimes Betty comes and calls me names.

BM What sort of names?

Gordon Like scruff. They call Brian that as well. He used to wear a really big flashy tie, not a school tie, and they used to say he's going to a wedding.

.....

BM What about the girls in your class do you have much to do with them?

Brian No.

BM Why not?

Brian Just don't. Argue with 'em.

BM What do you argue about?

Brian Just argue, calling each other scruff and that.

BM What about you Tom?

Tom Don't get on with them much. Don't like girls that much.

BM Don't you? Why not?

Tom They're big heads, they think they're better all the time. Keep calling you names.

BM What sort of names.

Tom Scruff and weed an' tramp an' that.

The 'big headedness' of the girls was often remarked upon by the boys. In this case it is of the 'science lab' girls who are 'attacked' as being teacher's pets and big headed.

Luke There's only one person in our class who everyone doesn't like except for Conrad and Roger - Diane's the teacher's pet isn't she?

Adrian Yeah. (Adrian and Diane became boyfriend and girlfriend later in the year!)

Luke There isn't a single mark that she has had below 'A'. She hasn't had a B plus even, she usually gets 'A' or 'A-' all the time.

Adrian Yeah.

Luke She's a snob. She thinks that she's too good for everyone like Jennifer does. Jennifer is one of the most common people in our class and yet she thinks she is the best person in the whole world. She goes round saying "Oh you little shrimp".

Adrian She thinks she's fantastic.

Luke I know. She used to be Matthew's girlfriend for three years and then he jacked her in.

Adrian It wasn't three years.
BM Why did he do that?
Luke It was two then. He just didn't like her, she was acting too big headed.

It was felt by at least some of the boys that the girls were responsible for 'getting them into trouble'.

BM What about Betty and Josephine and that lot?
Matthew They're all right but we don't play with them.
Roger They can be a bit spiteful.
Simon If you go anywhere near them and you start talking and then they start talking really loud and the teacher blames the boys and its really the girls.
Denis Yeah that's true.

It is perhaps important to note that Matthew, the only boy to comment that the 'tough 'P.E.' girls are all right' is probably the most physically mature boy in the class.

The 'quiet' and 'nice' girls appear to play very little part in the social lives of the 4F boys. The following is the response when I tentatively raise the names of these girls.

BM What about the other groups in your class then - Anne and
Denis Oh my God.
Matthew We don't have anything to do with them.
Roger They're a private group.
Simon They keep to themselves.

One of the 'quiet' girls, Vera, often receives attention from some of the boys, especially Tom, in the form of teasing (she is also teased by the 'P.E.' girls). Peter explains what often happens.

Peter Tom is the worst for getting Vera, he keeps getting her bag and running round with it.

BM Why does he do that?

Peter Just to get her aggravated.

BM Why don't you like them?

Peter Nobody ever talks to them.

The only group of girls where positive relationships with the boys does sometimes occur is the 'science lab' group of girls. In a general way there seems agreement among the boys that they 'like' the 'science lab' girls best. This was not the case with boys from outside the class who found the 'P.E.' girls as most attractive. This is perhaps only to be expected in view of the comments made by the 'P.E.' girls about the boys in their class. Tom and Brian illustrate the general 'liking' for the 'science lab' girls.

BM What about the girls in your class, what do you think about them?

Tom There's only one group that I like, that's Jennifer's group I think.

Brian Yeah.

BM And why do you like them?

Tom Because they're quiet and Josephine's group ('P.E.') shout about and that, though Jennifer's got a big head though. She thinks she's tough and everything.

BM You quite like that group though?

Brian They're all right yes. The best group out of the girls.

Usually there was very little interaction or contact between the boys and the girls in the class except for the few classroom 'romances'.

BM How do you get on with the girls in your class?

Mo We leave them alone.

BM You have nothing to do with them?

Conrad Nothing.

BM Do you get on with them but just don't have much to do with them?

Conrad Nothing whatsoever. Some people have but we haven't.

Mo Yeah.

Roland Yeah, Yeah.

Mo Its mainly Matthew and Simon and Roger joining in with the girls.

Roland Matthew really. Not so much Simon. Simon hasn't got a chance with Jennifer.

BM Why not?

Mo She's as stubborn as a cow she is.

Conrad Got a big mouth as well ain't she?

The three boys with girl friends were, as mentioned earlier, causing a certain amount of disruption to the football matches much to the annoyance of the rest of the boys.

Denis This business with their three girlfriends is causing a bit of trouble in the playground.

Adrian Lot of aggro.

Matthew So why shouldn't we be with our girlfriends sir?

Denis When we play football say we were winning, they go off at any time and then we have to lose 'cause they go off.

6.6. Summary and Implications

The peer network appears to be the dominant organizing principle in the social life of these 12-13 year old middle school boys and girls. The group of friends was seen as a central and vital part of their

school lives. The bulk of interaction was, wherever possible, within the bounds of the peer group. With one group of girls particularly, the 'quiet' girls, peer interaction was almost exclusively within the peer group.

The girls were involved in constant manoeuvres to keep the network together, particularly as in the fourth year groups were increasingly being split up by setting procedures. Groups of girls outside classrooms waiting for the rest of their friends were a constant and obvious feature. All of the girls were aware of the composition of the various groups and were able to identify very clearly the differences in attitudes, interests and behaviour between their group and the other groups.

There were differences in the culture of each of the four girls networks and each network did seem to exhibit a relatively consistent culture. This relatively consistent culture was recognized and identified by the girls themselves, by the teachers, by the other girls' groups, and was certainly apparent to an observer. Some features, such as the importance of the friendship, fun and support offered by friends in the group, the almost continuous process of making and breaking friends, and the considerable amount of helping each other and sharing, were common to all groups. Other features, such as orientation to school, helping each other in tests, commitment to elements of teenage culture and relationships with teachers, tended to distinguish groups from each other.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in attempting to place these groups of girls on a pro/anti-school continuum. In gross terms, some groups, when compared to others, were more positively oriented towards the academic values and the importance of learning promulgated by the school. But this form of classification presented problems, for example, in comparing the 'quiet girls' with the 'P.E.' girls. The 'quiet girls' were almost complete in their inversion of the value of academic learning and had developed rather elaborate mechanisms to cope with the demands of the school. On this criterion they would have to be classed as anti-school; however, they were quiet, well behaved, caused no trouble, said that they were happy and even enjoyed school. The 'P.E.' girls, on the other hand, were much more successful academically and yet they were very robust in their rejection of and reaction to school rules and discipline. They enjoyed 'messing about' and 'causing trouble'. The 'science lab' girls were clearly pro school and yet 'rebelled' against the school rules concerning jewellery and make-up. The nice girls were neither pro nor anti but managed to avoid trouble and to a large extent avoid being noticed.

An, at least, equally significant distinguishing dimension among these groups of girls is that of commitment to elements of teenage culture. In contrast to the findings of Sugarman, with boys, this commitment to teenage culture was not necessarily associated with anti-school attitudes or poor school performances. Indeed, it was the most pro-school group, the 'science lab' girls, as well as the most publicly anti-school group, the 'P.E.' girls, that were most involved in elements of teenage culture. Both groups reacted strongly against the school's

attempts to prevent them from wearing jewellery and make-up.

Similarly, it was these two groups who were most able to create space for themselves to avoid school rules. The 'science lab' girls' work in the science lab, for example, meant that they could, with a degree of impunity, be late for (and sometimes not even attend) registration or assemblies. The 'P.E.' girls, with their boisterous natures, their sense of fun and their preparedness to 'try it on' either because of the sheer force of their personality as a group or because, perhaps, some teachers found it easier to avoid confrontation over rule infringements with this group, were also able to negotiate more space for themselves. An example of this is the playing of radios which were banned in school.

One occasion when I walked into the fourth year area (out of bounds at break times) the 'P.E.' girls were all sitting around in a circle listening to the radio. They told me that they were bored and had nothing to do, so the teacher had said they could stay there. (Nobody else was allowed in the area). Not long after this, the 'science lab' girls told me how they had been playing a radio in the rural science room and the deputy head had seen them and hadn't said anything - just smiled. Both groups were successfully able to negotiate the school rule about radios (see Cusick 1973).

The girls' peer networks can be seen as aiding, supporting and reinforcing the processes of sorting out and stratification within the school. There was evidence in all groups of varying degrees of 'collective efforts' in the doing of work in school, homework and in tests. There were, however, important differences in that the 'science lab' girls

clearly saw the 'need' for individual competence if they were to be successful in the academic school system. They realized that they 'had to be able to do it themselves' and that they were in competition with each other, and so at times would definitely not show each other answers. There was certainly a large degree of mutual support, but this only went as far as to help each other in 'small one to ten tests' or with spelling.

In the other groups, this awareness of the need for individual competence was not present, except in isolated individuals and then for different reasons. Getting the work or the homework done was what was important. Collective support and help in tests was provided wherever possible, particularly in the case of the 'quiet girls' and the 'P.E.' girls. The 'quiet girls' were in fact able to explain to me the elaborate systems they used to help each other in tests. The girls saw nothing wrong in this 'cheating' and, particularly in the case of the 'P.E.' girls, saw helping each other as the important factor. The peer network for these girls acted as a buffer against the academic demands of the school.

There seems to be fluidity within the groups in the sense that no clear leader or role of leader emerges (unlike Whyte's Street Corner boys or Willis' 'lads'). It may be that equality of status is a feature of girls' peer networks. It certainly would appear to be a prominent feature or at least aspiration of the womens' movement. It is, perhaps, possible that this may be related to the 'caring', 'supportive' role of women in our society i.e. the girls' peer

networks may act as a particular kind of socializing agency within capitalist societies that produces women who find it difficult to or prefer not to compete with men. The exception to this in terms of the peer groups here examined would be the 'science lab' girls and one might speculate about their future roles, both in the family and within the occupational structure. They might be more competitive, independent and autonomous.

The peer groups networks appear to considerably reinforce the performance hierarchy particularly because of the clear way in which each group sees the performance of others. We have the pathetic and disturbing example of the way in which the 'quiet girls' have accepted their placement in the bottom sets and the definition that they are 'thick' to such an extent that they see this as being preferable, indeed 'more fun' and offer thickness as a positive virtue. The 'science lab' girls see themselves as positively oriented to learning and academic achievement and because of this, and their hard work and good behaviour which had brought them success and 'good reports', other groups are jealous and call them names such as 'teacher's pet'!. The 'science lab' girls see the 'P.E.' girls as being just as 'clever' as them but not succeeding to the same degree because of their own unwillingness to do so. The 'P.E.' girls on the other hand see the success of the 'science lab' girls as a result of their being 'snobs' and 'teacher's pets' and argue that they are more interested in having fun and 'causing trouble'. The 'nice' girls maintain a position of almost casual indifference, do enough to get by and keep their 'heads down' to avoid trouble.

The continual interaction and reinforcement of attitudes within the group plus the explanation of the academic success or failure of other groups results in a locking-in process which is continually reinforcing the performance hierarchy and the processes of stratification within the school and this, of course, may relate to later careers at school and eventual placing within the occupational structure. Some of these possible implications and ramifications are discussed in Chapter Eight. The boys' peer networks present a different and less clear cut picture. If, as has been suggested in the previous chapter, the boys peer networks are an example of a more immature social formation then it may well be that the largely undifferentiated peer group will not have the same sort of long term effects as are being suggested in the case of girls. It may well be that the embryonic sub groupings which the boys of 4F suggest exist in some form, and which from the sociometric analysis would appear to be a little more developed in two of the other classes, are the basis of peer networks which in the future will have similar effects in terms of orientation to school and longer term career possibilities.

The school social world for these boys was largely contained within the boundaries of the class group. Except for a few exceptions boys from other classes were felt to be 'not known'. The dominant, and very often it appeared to be the only, concern of these boys was football - the national football scene generally and the passionate involvement with playground football games. Boys were 'judged' by their prowess and commitment to these playground matches. Those reluctant to join in were considered deviant and not 'being fair'. When there were disagreements among the boys it was almost invariably over football.

Sharing, of books, pencils etc., was seen as an important feature of the group as was helping each other with school work and the doing of homework. These tended to be much more ad hoc arrangements than the well organized schemes of the girls. Consensus seemed to be that it wasn't a 'good' thing to help each other in tests. In many ways, similar to the girls, being able to take a joke, being loyal to your mates and not being big headed were all important features of the peer network.

Ability or interest in school work was far from important, certainly in comparison to ability and interest in football. School acted as a meeting place for friends and the academic aspects were something to be tolerated although most boys acknowledged that school was important for their future.

The boys had somewhat different relationships with each of the four groups of girls. They were dominated and intimidated by the 'P.E.' girls. The boys in turn either ignored or intimidated the 'nice' and 'quiet' girls and where there were boy/girl friendships the girls invariably came from the 'science lab' girls. This obviously had tremendous effect on the nature of the interactions that took place between boys and girls. The boys avoided the 'P.E.' girls whenever possible. If the 'P.E.' girls approached the playground football match en mass the boys would pick up their ball and run. Alternatively the 'quiet' girls would keep close to the school building and the staff on duty to avoid confrontation. So while there may have been little obvious contact and interaction between the boys and girls the girls had a considerable effect on the school lives of the boys and vice versa.

CHAPTER 7

The Formation of Peer Networks

7.1. Outline

7.2. Introduction

7.3. Factors affecting Peer Network Formation

i. Selection of variables

ii. The Analysis of data

iii. Boys and Girls

7.4. The Peer Networks of the 4F girls

7.5. Summary and Implications

7.1. OUTLINE

This chapter looks at the complexity of peer network formation and tries to answer the question "Why is it that some pupils associate more with some pupils than with others?" A considerable number of possible factors are identified and analysed in the attempt to locate those variables that most influence peer network formation. The results of this analysis, for the cohort as a whole, for the boys and girls separately, and for some of the peer networks, are discussed.

7.2. Introduction

The previous two chapters leave us in little doubt that the pupils in this cohort of middle school pupils do form regular patterns of association in their lives at school. These friendship groups and peer networks are a vital part of the school lives of these 12-13 year old pupils. These peer networks appear to be quite different in their organization and form for the boys and girls. The girls, who form more separate groupings than the boys, display considerable differences. This raises the question of how do these networks form. What are the factors that bring pupils together in peer networks? Why do pupils spend more time with a particular set of pupils than with others? Is it possible to identify the factors that affect the formation of peer networks?

There has been a great deal of research conducted in the attempt to answer these questions (see Chapter 2.6 for a full review). The results of this research are less than clear cut, with a large number of factors being identified as those which affect the formation of peer networks. Socio-economic status is seen by many, Hollingshead (1949), Sugarman (1967), Nash (1973) and Lambart (1976) as being the most important factor. School organizational factors were identified by Seago (1933), Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and King and Easthope (1973) but as Lacey points out, this does not determine friends but limits the population from which friends can be chosen. Age and sex, King and Easthope (1973), Singleton and Asher (1977), Nash (1973), Blyth (1960), Scholfield and Sugar (1977), are seen as particularly important in school based peer net-

works. Blyth (1958), Barker-Lunn (1970) and Lambert (1976), found proximity of residence to be an important determiner in friendship choice and peer network formation. Ability and attainment at school have been identified by many researchers, e.g. Willig (1963), Bradley (1977), as being important while others, e.g. Sugarman (1967), Hargreaves (1967), Bellaby (1974) and Willis (1977) see attitude, orientation and adjustment to school as being the important determiner of peer network formation.

School pupils themselves are often very unsure and are usually unable to identify the factors which led to the formation of their peer networks. When questioned on how they became friends Willis' 'lads' claim that it was very much chance occurrences and meetings that led to the formation of their group - they just happened to be in the same place at the same time. However, when questioned further they argue that before their group formed in the second and third year they very much knew who were the 'same sorts' as themselves i.e. who were 'lads' and who were 'ear 'oles'.

The pupils in this study find it equally difficult to say what it was that led to the formation of their peer networks. In many ways, to the pupils themselves, it was an unimportant almost non-question. How or why they became friends was irrelevant to them. In one sense of course how these peer groups form is irrelevant in terms of a cultural analysis. It is what these groups are like and the effect that they have on individuals orientation and performance at school, life chances and future social structural locations that are important. That they do form and that they are part of the processes which are reproducing particular cultural forms is in many senses what is crucial. Who the

actual bearers of these cultures are and where they have come from is, in this sense, not important. They are just examples of cultural forms. If, however, one is concerned with teachers and pupils in schools and understanding educational processes then how these peer networks form is a vital part of that understanding. By exploring how these groups form, insights may be provided into the process of, and change in, group formation which will considerably increase our understanding of the social relations of these pupils, that are likely to develop, and their effects on their careers at school and life chances. Also a part of the way in which cultural forms are reproduced may be understood by an exploration of the mechanisms of group formation.

The boys in 4F provide uniform answers when asked about how they became friends and became a peer network. Peter, the non-footballer in the class, and Richard attempt to describe how they became friends.

BM And how did you become friends?

Richard We just seen each other and started speaking.

BM What was it about Richard that made you friends?

Peter Don't know really. I trusted him if he offers to play with you he will.

Many of the boys explain that the reason they are friends is that they are in the same class together and that they have very little to do with the boys in other classes.

BM And how do you get on with kids in other classes?

Gordon We don't like the kids in other classes.

BM Do you have much to do with other years?

Henry No.....mostly with our class really.

Gordon Its mostly in your own class really, those in your class.

The boys in the following interview give the impression that the boys in the classes inhabit a completely different social world. They are aware of them but that's about as far as it goes.

BM How do you get on with kids in other classes?

Roland We leave them alone.

Mo We don't mix with them really.

Conrad You sort of know people, but we don't mix with them really.

Mo You know who they are but you don't mix with them.

In the following interview the boys express a dislike for the boys in other classes.

BM What about the boys in other classes?

Denis We don't play with them because they're all big heads.

Luke They act big headed and that but they're as scared as anything.

Matthew We don't have much to do with them we just stick together.

Denis Its just one main group in our classroom and that's it.

In a very matter of fact way in the following interview the boys describe how the 4F network of boys begins and ends with the class group and how that other boys can only really become part of their network by being transferred into their class.

BM How did you become friends?

Adrian Because we're all in the same class and we just play football.

Luke We became a certain group when Simon and Roger came into the class, into the third year with us but before that, in the second year, before Simon and Roger came and we were still one group, and apart from them that was it.

Tom, who has a network of friends which extends to another class, explains that the reason for this is simply because he used to be in another class. (He was transferred into 4F at the beginning of the fourth year).

BM Why do you have friends in the other classes?

Tom Because I used to be in other classes. I've been swapped around.

For these boys then class group is clearly the most important factor in the formation of their peer network.

The girls, as one would expect from the more differentiated nature of their peer networks, present a more complex set of reasons but even so they find considerable difficulty in trying to explain to me how the peer networks came about.

BM And why do you think you became friends?

Val Good looks!

Christine We're just friendly.

BM Why do you think so Natalie?

Natalie Don't know. I mean me and Christine live in the same close and we play together at weekends.

Christine When I first moved down (Christine had been transferred in the third year) they were sort of friends with me so it just grew and we grouped up.

Natalie We don't know the reason really.

Val No.

.....

BM And why do you think you are friends with each other?

Diane/
Elizabeth

We don't know really.

Jennifer

I copy the comedian bit and she's the very brainy one over there (indicating Diane).

.....

BM

Explain to me how you started to be a group.

Margaret

I kept breaking friends with Barbara. Then I started playing with Betty, Penny, Josephine, Sylvia and Cathy. That's how I got to be part of the group. Barbara and me made friends and Barbara just started coming round with us, we all play together now.

The girls in the above interviews find it difficult to explain the reasons why they became friends and make it appear, similar to Willis' lads, that their friendship groups were almost chance events. In the following piece of transcript the 'quiet' girls explain how it was that they became friends not through any deliberate choice on their parts but almost by default because no one else would have them.

BM

How did you become friends? Tell me about it.

Vera

Well when I moved into the third year, I moved into the class and I moved on the same table, I used to play with them at breaks.

Judy

And she always sits by us. Really no one would let her sit by them so she sat by us.

BM

Did you have many friends in the other class, Vera?

Vera

I knew a few but I didn't play with them, they had their own little group of friends.

BM

And you weren't part of that?

Vera

No, I felt a bit left out.

.....

Ros

Its good this lot. We ain't got no other friends to turn to, we just got these lot.

In the following interview the girls outline the importance of the

class based nature of their peer network and also the personal characteristics of the girls in their network.

BM Tell me about your group. Why are you friends?

Josephine Well we don't know really. We got together in the same class and we just started going around together and we sat together. In the third year we were in the same group as well.

BM How did you become friends? Why are you friends?

Betty Well we're not snobs or anything. We're always playing together.

Sylvia We became friends because we all liked each other, we're all similar.

In a further series of interviews with the 'science lab' and 'P.E.' girls these girls attempted to explain to me that they were in different groups because they were different from each other. Here the 'science lab' girls talk about themselves and how they are different from the 'P.E.' girls.

BM Now tell me why you're different?

Diane Because once their group start smoking they would make all the rest smoke but if we started to eat we wouldn't make all the rest do it, and we do more sensible things.

BM What do you mean when you say sensible things?

Diane We don't stick staples through rubber and chew gum and things like that and they sit together and they don't do any work hardly at all in the class, and we do work even though we sit together.

.....

Jennifer Sometimes we don't feel like working but we still do it and they just stop working and mess about most of the time.

.....

BM Why, then, do you think that you are different?

Diane We're more sensible aren't we?

Jennifer I think we've matured before they have.

Diane I think sometimes ('P.E.' girl's) Mum and Dad don't really care for her at all. They care for her but when I used to live near her she used to be on the street at 12 o'clock at night.

Jennifer Their Mums let them run wild and my Mum and Dad wouldn't let me do that. I have to come in at half past seven at night.

These girls see their whole attitude and approach to school and in some ways to life more generally as being different from that of the 'P.E.' girls. In the reverse way the 'P.E.' girls see themselves as being 'normal' and the 'science lab' girls as being hardly done by and unfortunate. (See also discussion in Chapter 6.3.vii). The following section of transcript follows on from that reported in 6.3.vii. where the girls have been explaining the differences between themselves and the 'science lab' girls. They see themselves as normal and the 'science lab' girls as snobs and teacher's pets. I then ask:

BM Why then are you in your group and not in their group?

Betty Because we're more like the people in our group.

BM In what ways?

Betty Well.....(pause) I don't know.

Penny I don't know really.....

BM Its hard to explain isn't it? Do you ever think about this? Why you're friendly with some kids and not with others?

(pause)

Betty No.....

Penny Never bothered about it really.

It became clear that if one was to be able to answer the questions of peer network formation in a thorough manner then other approaches would need to be employed to supplement the explanations and reasons

put forward by the pupils. To this end as much information as possible was collected on all the pupils from a number of sources - interviews with parents and teachers, school records, tests administered by the high school and pupil attitude surveys. The information collected fell into four broad categories - school organizational factors, gender, individual characteristics and background family/home variables. It was hoped that by collecting these variables that a greater understanding would be gained of the patterns of sociometric choices of the pupils in this cohort.

This chapter describes the procedures adopted in the analysis and discusses the results of the analyses. Additionally as well as identifying trends for the cohort as a whole the trends for boys and girls are looked at separately. There is also a detailed examination of these variables in relation to some of the peer networks of 4F.

7.3. Factors affecting Peer Network Formation

In an attempt to identify general, common factors affecting the formation of peer networks data was collected on a very wide range of aspects of the pupils' school lives. It was hoped that this extensive data collection exercise may offer some insights into the crucial factors affecting peer network formation and offer some clarification of the rather confused picture presented in the literature (see discussion in Chapter 2) and supplement the subjective explanations of those pupils interviewed in this study and in others.

As much information as possible was collected on the cohort. The aim was to have as complete a picture as possible on the factors affecting the school lives of this cohort of pupils. The guiding principle in the collection of this data was that as far as possible the data collected should be actual data that was present in the school situation. This meant that whenever possible, variables that were social facts within the home and school environments and that structured the lives of these pupils were collected rather than ones administered by the researcher. A complete profile was constructed on each pupil, his friends, attainment, effort, behaviour, attendance as well as home background factors.

Data was collected from school records plus data from the battery of tests, standardized and school based, given to the pupils as part of the transfer to high school process. Data was also collected specifically by the researcher from the pupils and their parents on background factors and from pupils on attitudes to school. It was hoped that the crucial factors affecting peer network formation would be identifiable and against this background the interview and observational data could be interpreted. To this end well over 100 variables were collected (a full list with a brief description and how each variable was collected appears in Appendix B).

7.3.i. Selection of variables

A computer programme was written in order that the information present in these variables could be used to assess the relevant factors in the determining of friendship choice on the part of the subjects.

(This programme is described in detail later in the chapter).

Because of the nature of the programme, which works by matching and computing distances between, a subject's variables and those of his or her friends, it was found that the analysis of a large number of variables in one run would result in a delimited set of predicted friends. In order to guard against this, variables were collapsed and then grouped into blocks, and one block at a time was analysed. If the block proved to be a significant factor in the determining of friendship choice, it would then be broken down into its original individual variables which would in turn be analysed.

The variables fell into four separate groupings and although there were obviously connections between some of the variables for the purpose of the analysis these were treated as separate blocks.

Block 1 Variables - School organizational factors

Block 2 Variable - Gender

Block 3 Variable - Individual Characteristics

Block 4 Variable - Background home/environment factors

a) School organizational factors included

- class groups (3rd and 4th years)
- first school attended
- maths set at each of 3 waves (i.e. Wave 1 = end of third year, Wave 2 = December of 4th year, Wave 3 = end of 4th year.
- French set at each of three waves
- English set at Waves 2 and 3
- the band in which they have been placed at high school

- the maths set in which they have been placed at high school
- the English set in which they have been placed at high school

In this block class group was clearly important. First school, the previous school attended was seen as an important determiner of peer network formation by others (e.g. Lambart, Lacey). It was decided to retain the Maths set for various reasons. It was more accurate and real than some artificial average set placement but to include English, Maths and French would add little if anything to the analysis. The pupils were not set for English in the third year so English set placement was not available for all three waves and was excluded. The setting for French was the combining of two classes and then division into three sets and as setting was not really across the year French was excluded. Maths set seemed the most logical because it had been in existence the longest and if setting procedures did have an effect on friendship choice then the maths set would have been the greatest opportunity to have an effect. The high school banding and set placements were omitted as they are outcomes rather than causes at this stage. They are of course important but not to peer network formation at this stage. They will no doubt affect the nature of peer network formation at high school. Some aspects of high school set placement are discussed in the following chapter.

b) Gender was obviously, from the sociometric responses and observation a crucial determiner of peer network formation and so was treated as a variable on its own rather than included in the block of individual characteristics. Treating this variable separately

also meant that the comparisons could be made between the sexes.

c) Individual characteristics included:

i. teacher awarded A-E grades for attainment in:

Written English)
Maths)
Science) at each of the three waves.
French)
P.E.)

Teacher awarded A-E grades for effort were eliminated after correlations with grades for attainment were found to be consistently significant at the .001 level. The following table lists the correlation between the grades for attainment and effort.

Table 12

Person Correlation between attainment and effort grades

	Corr.	Sig.
Written English	.55	.001
Oral English	.78	.001
Maths	.62	.001
Science	.74	.001
Integrated Studies	.74	.001
French	.65	.001
Music	.62	.001
Art	.83	.001
P.E.	.73	.001

This full list of subjects was reduced to the 'short' list of five above because of high correlations between subjects and because

the Staff of both the middle and high school placed more emphasis on some subjects than others. The correlations between the various subjects are reported below.

Table 13

Person Correlations Between Subjects

(Significance level in brackets)

	Written English	Oral English	Maths	Science	Integrated Studies	French	Music	Art	P.E.
Written English	1.00								
Oral English	.67 (.001)	1.00							
Maths	.63 (.001)	.47 (.001)	1.00						
Science	.65 (.001)	.59 (.001)	.59 (.001)	1.00					
Integrated Studies	.81 (.001)	.54 (.001)	.56 (.001)	.61 (.001)	1.00				
French	.60 (.001)	.42 (.001)	.50 (.001)	.54 (.001)	.55 (.001)	1.00			
Music	.43 (.001)	.46 (.001)	.33 (.001)	.42 (.001)	.33 (.001)	.42 (.001)	1.00		
Art	.49 (.001)	.42 (.001)	.48 (.001)	.42 (.001)	.57 (.001)	.38 (.001)	.16	1.00	
P.E.	.31 (.001)	.24	.30 (.001)	.32 (.001)	.38 (.001)	.27	.19	.42 (.001)	1.00

- ii. The Barker-Lunn (1970) Attitude to School Scale scores
 - (scales F. General Attitude to School) at each of the
 - H. Attitude to other pupils behaviour) three waves (for
 - K. Estimation of friends' attitude) a discussion of
 - to school) these attitude
 - L. Estimation of friends' attitudes) scales see Appendix B
 - to other pupils behaviour) paragraph 17).

iii. reading age at the end of first school

iv. reading ages at each of the three waves

- v. attendance i.e. number of half days absent at each of three waves
- vi. teacher evaluation of cooperativeness with teacher at waves one and three
- vii. teacher evaluation of integration with other children at waves one and three
- viii. non verbal I.Q. at wave three
- ix. Richmond Comprehension score at wave three
- x. Richmond Maths score at wave three
- xi. English essay score on test set by High School at wave three
- xii. Maths score on test set by High School at wave three

One was looking from this group of variables for two basic characteristics of the individual - as good a measure as available for ability/performance and the best measure of attitudes to school. It is no easy task discarding data that has been meticulously collected, coded and run through preliminary analysis but data must be used to address the specific questions and not retained just because it has been collected coded and analysed. It is very easy to get 'carried away' when masses of data have been collected but the focus is on what factors affect friendship choice and peer network formation.

After considerable debate it was decided to use reading ages as the most suitable measure of ability and attainment. Children's reading ages were available at each of the three waves and were certainly known and used by teachers when describing or classifying the pupils. Reading ages were a very present feature of the situation and were seen by teachers as a measure of a pupil's ability/performance. A pupil was in a sense labelled with his/her reading age in much the same way as teachers used I.Q. in the late 50's and 60's. There

were limitations with the use of reading ages (outlined in Chapter 4) but because of the desire to use classificatory information that was being used by the school and therefore more likely to influence the situation rather than embark on large scale testing it was decided that reading ages were the most appropriate.

It was decided not to use teacher awarded grades for attainment. Teacher awarded grades were felt to be less reliable than reading ages for many reasons. These grades were highly subjective, were not standardized between classes and often grades were awarded on the basis of different tests and in subjects where setting took place the full range of grades was often used in each set, i.e. A-E grades in set 1 maths and in set 4 Maths. Whereas the measured reading age was standardized across classes even though there may have been some differences between teachers in the administration of the tests. Other measures of ability/performance, Non-verbal I.Q., Richmond Comprehension and Maths and High School Maths and Essay tests, were not used because they were only available at the end of the middle school.

It may have been possible to use non-verbal I.Q. but there is considerable debate about the consistency of I.Q. - does it change with age? - and the reliability of the non-verbal I.Q. tests. As the I.Q. scores were only available at Wave 3 their inclusion in the earlier waves would have raised these not inconsiderable issues.

Reading age seemed to combine performance and ability in a way that

none of the others did. Many of these other measures are looked at in relation to particular groups or networks but were omitted from the large scale analysis in favour of reading age.

The Barker-Lunn (1970) attitude scales were selected as being the most suitable measure of attitudes and orientation to school (see Appendix B Para 17). The general attitude to school scale (Scale F) was used even though there are considerable doubts about the suitability of these attitude scales because of the range of different interpretations possible, and in fact made by the pupils, with the attitude statements.

Cooperativeness with teacher and child's integration with other pupils were eliminated because there was no standardization between teachers. This section of the record cards seemed to be filled in as a formality and indeed was seen by most teachers as very much of a 'chore' and not really taken seriously. Most of the pupils received the comment 'good'. The distribution in the table below illustrates the point.

Table 14

Teacher Evaluation of Cooperation and Integration

Evaluation	Integration with others (3rd year)	Integration with others (4th year)	Cooperation with teacher (3rd year)	Cooperation with teacher (4th year)
Excellent (1)	2%	5%	2%	9%
Very Good (2)	1%	10%	7%	10%
Good (3)	65%	62%	62%	65%
Fair (4)	30%	19%	23%	13%
Poor (5)	3%	4%	6%	3%
S.D.	.628	.850	.750	.830

Attendance which may be an important indicator of attitudes to school as pupils get older was felt to be unsatisfactory as an indicator for these pupils because attendance was good and, more importantly, there were very few unexplained absences. This should not of course hide the fact that pupils came to school for many different reasons.

d) Home and Family background variables included:

- parental attendance at parent evenings in the third and fourth years
- the nature and composition of the family unit
- number of siblings at home
- whether the house is rented or privately owned
- father's occupation
- mother's occupation
- address coded by street
- address coded by estate

(A full description of these variables appears in Appendix B)

From these variables three were selected as being most crucial - the nature and composition of the family unit, the father's occupation classified by the Hall-Jones index and the estate where the child lived. Family size and parental attendance at interview were discarded as not adding considerably to the three variables chosen but were used as additional information when further analysis was conducted on particular groups. Mother's occupation was discarded not because of its unimportance but because of the unsatisfactory indices available which classify women's occupations. Mother's occupation is used when looking at the characteristics of particular peer networks.

7.3.ii The Analysis of Data

In order to conduct any sort of meaningful analysis one has to cope with two very different types of data. A set of sociometric data which consists of the sociometric choices of the cohort of pupils (used to construct the sociograms) and a data set of variables which is divided into four blocks and which was selected after a considerable amount of preliminary analysis.

- Block 1 School organizational factors
 - class group
 - previous first school attended
 - maths set
- Block 2 Gender
- Block 3 Individual characteristics
 - reading age
 - attitudes to school
- Block 4 Home/Family background factors
 - composition of family unit
 - residential location
 - father's occupation

The analysis of these two sets of data attempts to identify possible patterns from the four blocks of variables in the friendship choices and peer networks. Do any, or all of these variables affect the choice of friends? Do for example children from similar home backgrounds form friendship groups?

Searches to locate programmes or statistical techniques which would allow a comparison between these two very different types of data proved fruitless. A new programme was devised*which allowed these necessary comparisons to be made.

* I am deeply indebted to the expertise provided so willingly by P. Coxhead, M. Ginsburg and A. Narayanan in the writing of this extremely complex programme.

"The programme works on two data sets. The first data set consists of subject's identification numbers, and each I.D. number is followed by a list of variables for that particular subject. The second data set consists of subjects' I.D. numbers, but this time each I.D. number is followed by a list of that subject's friends. The information for the second data was derived from the subject's response to the sociometric questions. From the information present in the two data sets, the programme is able to work out the number of predicted friends a subject has given on the one hand, the subject's variables and, on the other, those of his/her chosen friends.

The variables used in this process are called 'fixed' variables and a 'goodness' figure is computed by means of the fraction $\frac{\text{number of actual chosen friends}}{\text{number of predicted friends}}$. However, it is plausible to assume that if the subject's set of predicted friends computed on the basis of these 'fixed' variables is to have any significance, then the addition of extra variables should not decrease the number of predicted friends to any great extent. That is, if the subject has indeed chosen his friends on the basis of similarity of, e.g. attitude, then we can hypothesize that if the subject's predicted friends share similar attitudes, the addition of further information should still result in the same number of predicted friends being computed. If it does not - that is, if the addition of extra variables reduces the number of predicted friends - then we can conclude that the information present in the 'fixed' variables (those used to compute the set of predicted friends in the first instance) does not by itself accurately describe the factors present in friendship choice. In order to test this hypothesis, the programme randomly chooses from the set of predicted friends, computed by means of the fixed variables, a subset of 'chosen' friends and, by using the extra information present in what are known as 'unfixed' variables, computes a new set of 'predicted' friends in exactly the same way as it computed the original set of predicted friends. It is to be hoped that the new set of 'predicted' friends is exactly the same as the old set of predicted friends. A second 'goodness' figure is computed by means of the fraction

$$\frac{\text{number of actual chosen friends}}{\text{number of newly predicted friends}}$$

and by comparing the first goodness figure based on the 'fixed' variables with the second based on the 'unfixed' variables for the group as a whole, we can decide whether the information present in the 'fixed' variables is of significant importance in the determining of friendship choice." (Narayanan, 1978)

The analysis has been run on three waves of data (at the end of the third year, December in the fourth year, at the end of the fourth year). It is important to note that where the programme calculates scores for the whole cohort it may not produce highly significant results for a particular variable but this particular variable may be significant for some of the most 'tight' groups which exhibit more uniformity than the cohort in general. This is perhaps understandable and not surprising but it does highlight the point that it is difficult to make generalizations about pupils and their friendship patterns.

The following table presents a summary of the results.

Column 1 is the block of variables

Column 2 headed 'f' (fixed) is the score for the cohort of the calculation of $\frac{\text{actual chosen friends}}{\text{Possible friends}}$ by knowing the scores

on a particular block of variables.

Column 3 headed 'r' (random) is the score given from the random set of people predicted to be friends by the particular block of variables so that a comparison can be made between the score predicted by a person's actual choice of friends (Col. 2) and a person's computer randomized choice of friends. Because this randomization is repeated five times the fraction in the table represents the average of the five runs. The additional figure, in brackets, in the column is the standard error which, similar to a standard deviation, represents the amount of variation between the five runs.

Column 4 is the level of significance of the difference between the fraction in Column 2 (f) and that in Column 3 (r) and indicates for the cohort as a whole the importance of this particular block of variables in friendship choice and peer network formation.

It is important to note that what is crucial is the difference between (f) and (r) and the significance of this difference.

Also that the figures in the columns are cumulative, i.e. that the figure given for gender is, that knowing the school organizational factors how much does our knowledge of peer network formation increase by knowing gender. These figures must be viewed in relation to the factors produced by random generation.

Table 15

Factors Affecting Friendship Choice

		f	r	standard error	sig.
Wave 1	school organization	.172	.062	(.002)	.0001
	gender	.361	.183	(.003)	.0001
	individual char.	.599	.537	(.016)	.05
	background	.828	.739	(.007)	.0001
Wave 2	school organization	.165	.061	(.002)	.0001
	gender	.351	.171	(.001)	.0001
	individual char.	.548	.498	(.021)	n.s.
	background	.792	.694	(.010)	.0001
Wave 3	school organization	.157	.062	(.002)	.0001
	gender	.324	.162	(.002)	.0001
	individual char.	.474	.457	(.010)	n.s.
	background	.747	.638	(.008)	.0001

No. of pupils: 117

Clearly the variables with the most significance in friendship choice and peer network formation are those of school organizational factors, gender and home background. Initially, at least, 'attitudes' and

'abilities' of boys and girls are not so important as these other factors in friendship choice and peer network formation. It may well be that once groups have formed, attitudes become important and alternatively that after school organization, gender and background characteristics have sorted out a 'range' of possible friends that actual friends are chosen from within this range according to attitudes and orientation to school. From this evidence one could argue that whereas others have argued that 'ability' is an important factor in friendship choice and peer network formation it may well be that it is not ability per se that is the crucial factor but that pupils of similar perceived ability are grouped together by the various setting and streaming procedures of most secondary schools.

Sex, school organizational and home/family background factors are shown in this analysis to be more important than the characteristics of the individual such as attitudes to school, ability and performance. This is indeed thought provoking and of potentially crucial significance in our understanding of the way childrens peer networks form. The school structure and the background social structure would appear to be what are important rather than the attitudes, abilities and performance of individuals. School structural and social structural factors would appear to be dominant in the friendship choice and peer network formation.

The analysis this far has been conducted on blocks of variables which in the case of blocks 1,3 and 4 consist of more than one variable.

By 'unpacking' the blocks one and four, which appear to be of most significance in friendship choice and peer network formation, one is able to determine whether the variables within the blocks are of equal significance.

So if one 'unpacks' the school organizational block of variables, and looks at the individual variables within, it becomes clear that the contribution of first school attended and maths set is negligible.

Table 16

<u>School Organizational Factors</u>				
(Wave 2)				
Variable	f	r	standard error	
First School	.009	.007	(.000)	
Class Group	.072	.014	(.002)	sig. .0001
Maths Set	.019	.01	(.001)	

So the variable that contributes most in this block is class group. There is over the two year period a slight decrease in the contribution of this block of variables which may be a result of the increasing 'mixing up' of pupils by setting arrangements. (See previous table for fraction for each wave).

When the block four variables - home and family background are 'unpacked' the following emerges.

Table 17

Home and Family Background

Variable	f	r	standard error	sig.
Variable blocks 1, 2, 3 & family composition	.633	.582	(.006)	.001
Variable blocks 1, 2, 3 & father's occupation	.592	.605	(.008)	n.s.
Variable blocks 1, 2, 3 & estate	.677	.582	(.003)	.0001

In this block place of residence and the composition of the family make the biggest contributions with father's occupation being non-significant. The non-significance of father's occupation is perhaps surprising in view of the likelihood from previous research that saw peer group formation as being closely linked with social class usually as measured by father's occupation. This may well be due to the fact that the estates are very homogeneous and very much working class and so it is factors and differences within the working class other than differences between levels of working class occupations that are important and that it is these differences that need to be looked at carefully.

The only occasion when the block 3 variables (reading age and attitude to school) are even mildly significant is at the end of the third year (Wave 1). This block is 'unpacked' below to see if there are any factors of importance.

Table 18

Individual Characteristics

(Wave 1)

Variables	f	r	sig.
Block 1 and 2 + Reading age	.472	.445 (se = .006)	.05
Block 2 and 2 + Attitude to school	.477	.456 (se = .006)	n.s.

This adds little additional information. Reading age is barely significant and attitude to school non-significant. By wave 2 and wave 3 even this minor degree of significance has disappeared. This only confirms that this block of variables appears to contribute little to friendship choice and formation of peer networks.

7.3.iii. Boys and Girls

Up to this point the analysis has been conducted on the cohort of pupils as a whole in order to locate general factors which are of significance in the choice of friends and peer network formation. Further analysis which treats the boys and girls separately allows us to identify differences, if any, between the boys and girls. The following table shows the results of the wave 2 analysis for boys and girls separately.

Table 19

Boy/Girl Differences

(Wave 2)

BOYS' RESULTS

Variable	f	r	sig.
School organization	.205	.065 (se = .006)	.0001
Individual char.	.371	.330 (se = .005)	.001
Background	.611	.515 (se = .014)	.01

GIRLS RESULTS

School organization	.123	.062 (se = .003)	.0001
Individual char.	.250	.212 (se = .013)	n.s.
Background	.564	.382 (se = .010)	.0001

This separate analysis for boys and girls reveals several interesting statistics only some of which one would have been able to predict from observation and other qualitative methods. School organizational factors, remember the variable that was most significant within that block was class group, have a far more powerful influence in friendship choice and peer group formation among boys that they do among girls. This is not surprising where clearly the main factor affecting boys' peer networks is the class group. This factor for boys has a greater significance than either individual characteristics or home/family background. However, it is interesting that the individual characteristics, i.e. ability/performance and attitudes to school, while still remaining a non significant factor in the formation of girls' peer networks, is significant for boys, which perhaps indicates that the loose sub groupings referred to by the 4F boys and the movement into more separate groupings, that were observed among the boys in some of the other classes, are and will be increasingly along these lines. This is an intriguing possibility and may well prove to be a significant difference in the way in which boys' and girls' peer networks

While home and family background variables are significant factors in the formation of boys' and girls' friendship networks they play a far stronger part with girls than with boys. The following table looks at these variables in detail.

Table 20

Home/Family Background
Wave 2 Girls only

	f	r	sig.
Block 1 and 3 + family	.372	.285 (se = .003)	.0001
Block 1 and 3 + father's occupation	.308	.283 (se = .005)	.05
Block 1 and 3 + residence	.379	.283 (se = .004)	.0001

Here father's occupation has some significance where as it did not for the group as a whole. Family composition and the proximity of residence are still of greater significance. It would appear that factors such as living near to each other and having similar family backgrounds are more important for girls while attitudes to and ability at school are of increasing importance for boys in the choice of friends and peer network formation.

7.4. The 4F Girls Peer Networks

When one is aware of the data collected in the indepth study of the one class group (4F) the results of the general analysis, or of that of boys only, shows little surprise. Where their main social organization

is that of an all male class group then it is obvious that the bulk of their friendship choices are going to be within these gender/class group boundaries. The 4F girls peer networks do however provide more variety and so it is worthwhile to examine these networks in more detail. It is interesting to look at some of the variables in terms of the four networks of girls in 4F. The information for these four groups may help to explain and further clarify some of the identified trends in the large scale analysis.

The following table looks at the distribution of scores on the block 3 (individual characteristics) variables among the girls in the four groups. (Block 1 and 2 variables are irrelevant because these are all girls from the one class group). Several other variables that were excluded from the computer runs have been added to give a fuller picture. For the general runs and for the girls only run this block of variables was non significant.

...

Table 21

4F Girls Individual Characteristics

		Attitude to school			N.V.	Reading	Maths	English	Richmond	Richmond
		Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	I.Q.	Age	Grade	Grade	Maths	Comp.
'P.E.' girls	1	20	23	25	99	12.6+	C	B	85	97
	2	19	11	15	103	12.6+	C	C	103	99
	3	12	11	22	112	12.6+	B	B	103	108
	4	28	16	17	103	9.11	D	D	98	91
	5	11	18	15	112	10.10	C	C	90	103
	6	16	21	16	107	12.6+	B	B	108	94
		Av.18	Av.17	Av.18	Av.106					
'Science Lab' Girls	1	22	29	23	95	12.6+	C	B	95	115
	2	11	24	21	117	11.0	B	B	105	94
	3	20	23	27	103	11.4	B	C	98	94
	4	24	30	27	118	12.6+	B	B	109	96
		Av.19	Av.28	Av.24	Av.108				Av.102	Av.100
'Nice' girls	1	24	20	17	94	10.5	C	B	100	105
	2	27	18	27	99	11.1	C	C	92	95
	3	21	20	16	104	10.5	D	D	98	85
		Av.24	Av.19	Av.20	Av.99				Av.97	Av.95
'Quiet' girls	1	15	8	9	99	9.0	D	D	85	70
	2	15	20	16	99	10.6	D	D	90	84
	3	12	13	15	84	10.4	D	B	78	91
		Av.14	Av.14	Av.13	Av.94				Av.84	Av.82

The picture presented by the table is very complicated and shows clearly why this variable produces non significant results in a general analysis. However, this does not mean that these factors are insignificant or do

not have important effects on particular networks. On average the 'P.E.' and 'Science lab' girls are of higher 'ability' than the 'nice' and 'quiet' girls. There is though considerable variation within and between networks in terms of measured performance in the academic aspects of school. Just how these differences in performance are viewed and evaluated by the staff and the school organization will be discussed in the following chapter.

The most 'uniform' group are the 'quiet' girls who perform consistently poorly at school and who express the most consistently anti attitudes to school. In terms of public expression of these anti school attitudes this group on the contrary appear to be very conforming. Just because they don't particularly like school and are 'browned off' doesn't necessarily mean that they are going to 'take up arms' against or become anti school in their behaviour. This group of girls tends to accept school as a chore and as they described in the previous chapter devise ways to make school as tolerable as possible. This may well be a typical response of groups of children who don't like and don't do very well at school rather than that, admittedly far more exciting, response described by writers like Hargreaves and Willis.

It is the 'P.E.' girls who are far more boisterous and rebellious but are of higher 'ability', and perform better academically at school than the quiet girls, who are the group most likely to be classified as anti school and perhaps suffer the consequences of such labelling. The 'P.E.' girls adopt strategies which are far more public in coping with their disaffection with aspects of school. They want to challenge and confront the system while the 'quiet' girls adopt far more conforming

and unobtrusive strategies. The implication of these two approaches, learnt and developed within the peer network, may be far reaching in terms of their future at school and longer term life chances and social locations.

The attitude scales used are a good example of the inadequacy of relying solely on such as instrument. The pupils when responding to items such as 'school is fun' and 'I like school' do so from a variety of perspectives. Pupils may say that they like school, or find it fun, and so obtain a similar score on the attitude scale. However, this may be because teachers make lessons interesting, its a good place to have a laugh, its boring at home, its a good place to meet your mates but may not necessarily mean that a pupil wants to do homework, nor sees school as important, crucial or even relevant for their long term future. The importance of how pupils view school in terms of its usefulness is exemplified by the 'science lab' girls' responses to the item 'going to school is a waste of time'. All of the girls strongly disagreed with this statement whereas in none of the other groups was there this uniform certainty that there was some utility and purpose in going to school.

The following table looks at the block four variables as they apply to the 4F girls. Block four variables consist of home and family background and several others have been added in an attempt to make the picture more complete. The following key explains the coding used in the table (for full description see Appendix B).

Family composition

- 1 = live with Mother and Father
- 2 = live with Mother and Step father
- 4 = live with Mother only
- 5 = live with Father only

Father's occupation Hall-Jones scale of occupational prestige

- coded 1 - 8 9 = no Father at home
- 10 = unemployed

Estate Coded 1 and 2 adjacent estates on one side of school

- 3 = estate on opposite side of school
- 4 = pupil living outside of catchment area

Mother's occupation Hall-Jones index.

- 9 = no Mother at home
- 10 = housewife

Housing

- 1 = rented
- 2 = home ownership

Parental Attendance Parental attendance at interviews

- 1 = both Mother and Father attended
- 2 = Mother only
- 3 = Father only
- 4 = neither

Table 22

4F Girls Home and Family Background Characteristics

	Family Composition	Father's Occup.	Estate	Mother's Occup.	Housing	Parental Attendance	No. of siblings	
'P.E.' girls	1	1	3	1	10	2(own)	2 (mother)	3
	2	2	6	1	5	1(rent)	4 (none)	0
	3	2	7	1	6	1(rent)	4 (none)	7
	4	5	10	2	9	1(rent)	4 (none)	5
	5	1	7	2	7	1(rent)	2 (mother)	1
	6	1	6	1	7	2(own)	4 (none)	1
'Science lab' girls	1	1	5	2	7	1(rent)	2 (mother)	1
	2	1	4	1	5	2(own)	1 (both)	2
	3	1	5	3	8	1(rent)	1 (both)	1
	4	1	2	4	3	2(own)	1 (both)	0
'Nice' girls	1	1	4	2	6	1(rent)	1 (both)	1
	2	1	6	2	8	1(rent)	4 (none)	3
	3	4	9	1	10	1(rent)	4 (none)	5
'Quiet' girls	1	1	10	1	10	1(rent)	2 (mother)	12
	2	1	6	3	10	1(rent)	1 (both)	1
	3	1	6	1	10	2(own)	1 (both)	1

This table exhibits once again the considerable range within and between groups on these particular dimensions. This illustrates the complexity of peer network formation and the difficulty in trying to define precisely the factors affecting peer network formation or indeed in identifying features shared by peer networks.

One very obvious trend is for the girls whose backgrounds have been affected by some form of separation or breakdown between their parents to group together. This is not meant to imply that single parents or families where one or other of the parents have remarried are necessarily any less happy or secure than those where there has not been this disruption. Indeed there may well be cases where there is more unhappiness or insecurity in families where there is considerable marital tension. If one included the information for the other three girls who are part of the 'P.E.' girls group (2 from 4S and 1 from 4J) all of whom come from single parent family backgrounds, one actually becoming so during the course of the research, then this means that of the nine 'P.E.' girls six are from families where there has been some form of marital breakdown or disruption.

Another trend which is noticeable is the generally higher socio-economic status (S.E.S.) as gauged by father's occupation of the 'science lab' girls. This may indicate a tendency for girls who see school as being more worthwhile and useful to come from skilled working class or middle class backgrounds. As was noted when discussing the previous table, while there may be some variation among these girls on whether they see school as fun or not, or whether they actually enjoy it, they will all circle the strongly disagree category for the item 'going to school is a waste of time'. This group of girls see school as having a purpose. Other possible indicators of S.E.S. that of housing and the size of families also indicate that the 'science lab' girls are from higher S.E.S. backgrounds. Allied to these factors is the marked

difference in the attendance of parents at parental interviews. All of the parents of the 'science lab' girls attend compared with only two out of the six 'P.E.' girls. This is a very good indication of the attitudes of the parents of these girls towards school and certainly provides an explanation for the 'science lab' girls' view that school is important for them and their futures.

All of the mothers of the 'science lab' girls and all but one of the mothers of the 'P.E.' girls go out to work in paid employment whereas none of the mothers of the 'quiet' girls do so. This may explain differences in these girls approaches to school and life more generally. The 'P.E.' and 'science lab' girls are far more outgoing, aggressive and competitive and far less likely to tolerate situations that don't please them or that they think are unfair or a waste of time. This may well be because of the models they have from their mothers competing in the labour market and of their possibly greater personal independence as a result of having their own income. In contrast the 'quiet' girls who are much less demonstrative and far more accepting have a model of a mother whose chief tasks are domestic and caring and who is financially dependent on her husband.

The two groups of girls who have the most contact outside of school, the 'P.E.' and 'science lab' girls, present two contrasting pictures of the importance of residential location in peer network formations. The 'P.E.' girls all live on the two adjoining estates with all their homes within easy walking distance of each other. The 'science lab' girls live in four different places - two on adjoining estates,

one on the estate on the other side of the school and the fourth in a different area. So perhaps residential location is an important contributory factor to the solidarity of the 'P.E.' girls whereas maybe school orientation acts as a substitute for the 'science lab' girls.

7.5. Summary and Implications

How peer networks come about and what are the factors that affect and influence their formation is very difficult to determine. It would certainly appear to be a complex interrelated set of factors. For the pupils themselves this issue is something of a non question. They find it very difficult to articulate the reasons why they are friends or what were the factors that led to the formation of their peer networks. It's something they are not really concerned about - "never bothered about it really".

There is also considerable uncertainty in the literature on previous research that has been conducted in the area with a variety of factors being suggested as important. For the boys in this study the factor which is undoubtedly of the most importance in the formation of their peer networks is the class group. This factor above all others determines the membership of the boys' peer networks. The girls also identify class groups as being important and when discussing the formation of their peer network identify chance, almost accidental factors as being important. They also argue that they are in groups with others who are the same types as themselves "We're more like the people in our group" and when pressed identify attitudes and orientations particularly towards school as being one of the differentiating factors. The other factor that they see as being important is that of

the background and attitudes of the families of the girls. This is seen by some of the girls as one of the reasons why they are different from others.

In the attempt to address the question of peer group formation a systematic collection of data was undertaken. A wide range of variables affecting the school lives of these pupils was collected and a programme was devised that would identify the influence of a particular variable or group of variables on the pupils' sociometric choices and hence the pattern of peer networks. These variables which divided into four different groups needed to be reduced as much as possible so as to avoid the cumulative effect of what may be only random variables. The analysis was conducted on these two very different sets of data. On the one hand was the huge bank of sociometric data and on the other the variables concerned with school organization, gender, individual ability, performance and attitude characteristics, and family/home background factors. The programme was able to produce results which showed which of these variables affected the choice of friends.

For the cohort as a whole school organizational factors, gender and home/family background characteristics had the most affect on the sociometric choices of the pupils. Pupils' attitudes to school, abilities and performance at school were not, in this cohort of pupils, important factors in the choice of friends and formation of peer networks. So it would appear that the structural features of the school and the social structural features of the pupils' background

are the main determiners of peer network formation.

Among the features of the school's organization the class group was the most significant factor while among the family/home background characteristics the family composition and residential location proved to be the most important. The relative non-significance of father's occupation is perhaps surprising but this may be partially explained by the relative homogeneity of this cohort of pupils. The big majority of pupils are from working class backgrounds and so this variable on its own is not a discriminating factor in the formation of peer networks. It is features and differences between these working class families that need to be identified more clearly.

Because of the considerable differences between the nature of the boys' and girls' peer networks one might expect differences in the factors which affect their formation. The analysis was run separately for boys and girls. School organizational factors are far more important for boys than they are for girls. For the boys the influence of the school organization, particularly the class group, is more powerful than either the individual characteristics or the home/family background features in determining their sociometric choices. For the boys the individual characteristics are the second most important influence while for the girls this still remains a non-significant variable. On the other hand the home background features are of more significance and influence for girls than they are for boys. This may signify a very different trend in the future development of the social relationships of girls and boys. After the obvious influence

of gender and class group it may well be that girls' sociometric choices are made from within girls of similar social structural backgrounds while boys' sociometric choices are made from among boys of similar attitudes, abilities and performance at school.

A detailed examination of the four girls' peer networks in 4F revealed several additionally interesting features. The girls most consistently anti in their attitudes to school (as measured by the attitudes to school questionnaire) were the 'quiet' girls. This is at first somewhat surprising as they were a quiet, conforming, self-contained little group who did little to 'rock the boat' or publicly challenge the school rules. The 'P.E.' girls on the other hand who were more pro school on the attitude scales were far more publicly anti, constantly challenging and confronting the school rules and often disruptive. The differences between the approaches of these two groups is indeed salutary and underlines the position that just because individuals or groups of individuals don't like or are 'browned off' with school doesn't necessarily mean that they will publicly express their disaffection or become disruptive. These different strategies adopted and developed by the two groups of girls, one submissive and conforming and the other somewhat rebellious and challenging may well have very fundamental implications for these girls' future at school and life chances and lifestyles generally.

There is a tendency, which showed up in the general analysis, of pupils from backgrounds that have experienced marital breakdown and disruption to form friendship groupings. It may well be that boys

and girls who have had these common experiences find that they are better able to share and discuss these experiences among others who have had similar experiences. There may also be a measure of support and comfort from those with this similar feature in their home background.

It appears that the socioeconomic background of the 'science lab' girls is somewhat higher than that of the other groups. They are from skilled working class or middle class backgrounds. Other S.E.S. indicators such as home ownership and family size also show a tendency to support this fact. If one takes this together with the indication of considerable parental concern over their daughters' education shown by the attendance of the parents at parents evenings then one begins to see a pattern and explanation for the orientation of the 'science lab' girls towards school. One item in the attitude scale proved to be very revealing in this regard where the girls unanimously and strongly rejected the statement that school was a waste of time. This unanimity was present in none of the other groups.

It may also be possible that part of the reason for the more confident, outgoing nature of the 'P.E.' and 'science lab' groups stems from the models they have in their mothers. These girls see their mothers going out to work in paid employment and the independence that this brings while the 'quiet' girls have a model of dependent mother looking after the family.

How peer networks form remains complex but at least some of the complexities have become clearer by the analysis.

CHAPTER 8

School Peer Networks : Teachers, Parents,

Jobs, Marriage and the Future

8.1. Outline

8.2. Introduction

8.3. Peer Influence

- i. The Pupils
- ii. The Parents
- iii. The Teachers

8.4. Peer Networks and School Performance

8.5. Peer Networks and Wider Social Factors

- i. Future plans
- ii. The usefulness of school
- iii. Parental attitudes to Education and School
- iv. Parent/Daughter Relationships
- v. Social Class Influences and Pressures

8.6. Summary and Implications

8.1. OUTLINE

This chapter addresses the issue of the impact that the peer network has on the lives of its members. It attempts to assess the impact in two broad areas, that of performance at school and on the careers, future plans and life chances of these pupils.

8.2. Introduction

Considerable time has been spent examining the issues of whether or not pupils of this age range do actually form stable peer networks, what these networks are like in terms of their peer culture, and how do these networks form. These issues lead to the final crucial question of whether or not it makes any difference? Do these peer networks that the pupils form have an impact on a pupil's performance at school or long term career prospects or life chances?

To attempt to assess the effect of the influence of peers, discussions were held with pupils, parents and teachers. It was hoped that they would be able to identify and describe how the influence operated, whether or not it operated in some areas and not others, and did they see this influence as having positive or negative effects. There have been of course hints in previous chapters, especially chapter six, where norms, values and the peer culture of groups was discussed. Here pupils outlined, clearly, peer norms over such areas as doing of homework, behaviour and work rates in class, the answering of questions, cooperating with teachers and helping each other in tests.

Clearly, how teachers see the importance of peer norms and influence in regulating behaviour will affect their evaluations of different networks and the individuals within them. This in turn may well affect the expectations that teachers have of their pupils and maybe lead to the differential levels of performance of pupils. This raises questions as to whether teachers make general classifications of groups. It is likely, I feel, that faced with a class of

thirty pupils some form of generalization about individual and/or groups of pupils' abilities and aptitudes will take place. Informal comments such as:

"they're a bright group,
they're hard working, they'll be able to get on with the
task without much supervision,
that lot are going to need a lot of help and guidance,
I'll need the whip out to that lot if I'm to get any work
out of them",

are an integral part of the daily routines in any classroom that help to make a teacher's task manageable. Do these classifications apply to the informal peer network groupings within a class? This may be more likely to happen in situations like those at Hilltop where in many of the classes pupils are able to sit where and with whom they choose. If this does lead to differential treatment and expectations of the different peer networks, are the pupils aware of this and how do they see it operating?

These different levels of expectations and differential treatment may lead to differential levels of performance on the part of the pupils for two reasons, firstly the norms of the peer group coupled with the level of expectation of the teachers can lead to pupils performing either above or below their level of ability, and secondly over a period of time a pupil's performance irrespective of its quality may be judged according to the expectations of that pupil or indeed of the group of pupils. This chapter will attempt to identify examples of how these processes have operated with the pupils in this study.

It follows on that if the peer network can affect performance or perceived performance then it may also affect the longer term careers, ambitions and future life styles of pupils. The pupil is of course subject to much wider social and cultural influences than those of the school and yet these have a considerable affect on how the pupil performs at school. This chapter looks at how the different peer networks respond, adapt, reject or assimilate the wide cultural and social influences of social class, family and the media. There has, in previous chapters, been discussions of the differential responses of the peer networks, particularly of the girls, to cultural influences such as teenage, pop and femininity, however, in relation to performance at school and life chances a closer look is needed at the future plans of the girls and especially how they see the school as helping them to achieve these ambitions. The perceived utility of school may be closely related to those held by the family.

How do the girls within their peer networks react to and relate to the wider social and cultural pressures they are experiencing? Does the peer group in any way mediate responses to these pressures and do, within the bounds of the peer group, girls develop different responses and strategies? Do the boys peer networks operate in a similar fashion?

This chapter explores the impact that the peer network has on a pupil's performance at school and on the future career and life chances of these pupils.

8.3. Peer Influence

In general, from experience and from the literature, there seems to be a form of agreement that peers exert a considerable influence on each other. However, when one discussed this issue with the pupils themselves, their parents and their teachers, there was a considerable variety of opinion as to whether or not this influence was an important factor, whether it operated in some areas rather than others, the mechanisms by which it operated and whether or not this influence was a 'good' or 'bad' thing.

8.3.i. The Pupils

The pupils varied considerably when asked about the influence of their peers. Some pupils, and this tended to be girls rather than boys, were quite definite about the influence of their peers and able to illustrate with specific examples while others seemed to be either unaware of any influence or else found great difficulty in articulating it.

In the girls' eyes the dominant area of influence was that of clothes, fashion and make-up. In the following extract two of the 'science lab' girls discuss the way they influence each other in this area.

BM ...and do you always try and do the same things as the others in your group?

Mary Mostly, yes, like having to wear a long skirt. I like wearing long skirts but at the moment mum's going mad at me...we try to dress the same as each other. Me and Elizabeth like to wear jumpers don't we? And Diane came to school yesterday and wore a jumper. Sometimes we do like to dress the same 'cause it means that you're just part of a group and we often try to dress the same.

Elizabeth Yes we do.

.....

Mary Like when I had my hair cut, Jennifer after a few days had her hair cut as well and then Diane had hers done a few days after and Elizabeth had hers cut on Saturday not exactly as mine but a little different.

In the following extract the 'science lab' girls discuss their influence over each other in appearance and dress but go on to emphasize that this does not extend to their school work.

BM Do you all try to do the same things as each other?

Elizabeth Yeah, in the holidays.

Diane In the holidays we 'phone each other up asking what are you wearing and she says a pleated skirt, and I say right I'll put mine on too.

BM So you like to do everything the same as each other?

Jennifer Well with school work we do our own. You've got to learn to do it yourself.

Here the girls emphasize that they act as individuals when it comes to school work and don't try to do the same as each other. This in itself though may be an important area of influence. The group norm being one of individual competence in school work rather than collective efforts. The girls though quite understandably see this as being an indication that they do not influence each other in this area whereas in fact the influence for individual competence at school may be the most significant in terms of their future success at school and with their careers generally.

In the following interview two of the 'P.E.' girls explain very articulately the influence of their peer network.

BM Do you always try to do the same thing as the others in your group?

Bessie We don't try but we do.

BM In what ways?

Lorraine Say black pleated skirts. Me, Betty, Bessie, Penny, Josephine's got a different coloured one, Margaret's got a black one, most of us have. And shoes. They've all got to be wedge and black. All of us have got black.

.....

BM What about the way you think about things? Do you all have similar ideas?

Bessie Yes. It depends on what the subject is. Most of the time some of us will pop up with the same idea.

.....

Lorraine Barbara, Cathy and Sylvia they're the ones who haven't got the same ideas as us.

Bessie They're allergic to boys. Boys are great.

.....

BM And how much would you say the group, your friends, influence you?

Bessie A lot. A lot. I mean if we were left on our own for about two years we'd be completely changed. They're one big influence, you see. They're the ones who started off the smoking lark and just all different things like that you know.

Lorraine Yeah.

.....

Bessie I take quite a bit of convincing but in the end you know they get through.

In this interview Bessie particularly explains the pervasiveness of the peer group influence. They, similar to the previous transcript, emphasize the importance of the peer influence in the area of appearance. They also, early on in the transcript, make

the point that its not that they try to do the same things as each other, they just do. Similarly, in the following interview with two 'P.E.' girls, Margaret and Penny, they point out that they don't really try to be alike its just that they are alike! This highlights the two-way process of peer network formation and influence. In one way people form peer networks because they are alike and in the other individuals become more alike because they are part of a peer network.

BM Do you also try and do the same things as each other?
Your group do you influence each other?

Margaret Dress like each other and things like that do you mean?

BM Well anything, your ideas and things you're interested in.

Penny Not on ideas 'cause our ideas are the same!

.....

BM Do you influence each other? Have an effect on each other? If someone thinks something do you all think the same thing?

Penny Yes, we do certainly.

BM Give some examples of what you mean.

Margaret Boys, we like the same boys.

Another feature often stressed by the girls particularly the 'P.E. and 'quiet' girls was the support and security they found in their peer network and how crucial this was for them at school.

BM How much do they (the group of friends) affect what you do?

Cathy 'Well, I couldn't do anything if they didn't, they help you with your work really. I wouldn't be able to concentrate if I didn't have other friends with me.

BM So they're very important to you?

Cathy Yes.

BM What about you, Sylvia?

Sylvia Well the same thing really they help you out...and its someone to talk to while you work in class.

Barbara Most of the group they help you with your work and I don't think I'd be able to do my work without my friends either.

For the girls then the peer network is seen as an important influence as well as providing considerable support and security. Peers seem to exert substantial pressure in the area of dress, fashion and appearance and also in approach to school work although in the case of the 'science lab' girls the group norm of individual work and competence is taken as an indication by them of their independence from the influence of their peer network.

The boys, who are not in the same, separate discrete groupings as the girls, find it more difficult to assess the implications or power of the influence of their larger more diffuse network of friends. The majority of the boys interviewed were only able to specify football as an area of influence. They were undecided whether or not their friends influenced them and seemed unable to conceptualize how this influence might operate. This did not mean though that their friends were unimportant. The following is typical:

BM How much do you think your group of friends influence you, Tom?

Tom Not so much.

BM You do what you want to do mostly, you don't get influenced by them?

Tom I like them, though.

Brian So do I.

Tom They're good.

BM What about you Brian? How much do you think your friends influence you?

Brian A lot. When I went to the school I wasn't a very good footballer. Now I'm all right.

BM How's that? How have your friends influenced you there?

Brian I just try to do what they've done.

Some of the boys seemed quite sure that they were not influenced by their peer network.

BM do you all try to do the same things as each other?

Luke No, not really.

Adrian No, I don't think so. We're not really a gang like that.

Others were uncertain about whether or not there was an influence but were sure about the importance of the group.

BM Do you have a lot of influence on each other?

Conrad Yeah, probably.

Mo Not really.

Roland Conrad has a lot of influence on me.

.....

Mo Yeah, they probably do sometimes.

BM In what ways?

.....

Conrad Partly, maybe, interests say football 'cause I wasn't particularly mad on football until Roland came along so that's one thing.

.....

BM What other sorts of things do they influence you in?

Conrad Can't think of any really.

Roland No.

Mo. No.

Conrad Its hard you know when you're forced to think like this.

 (Laughter)

BM Its good for you.

Conrad I think its important to have some best friends.

BM Why?

Conrad Like I said before, someone you can trust, have a joke with and perhaps have a game with...

The boys find it far more difficult to identify and locate influence from their peers except in the area of the dominance of football. This is understandable because of the diffuse nature of their peer network and the great variety of individuals who made up this network. There was certainly no mention in any of the interviews of their being aware of influence in the area of school work. This does not necessarily mean that just because the boys are unable to identify influences from other members of their peer network that this influence is not present. Indeed it appears likely that increasingly individual characteristics (i.e. attitudes to school and ability and performance at school) become an important factor in friendship choice and peer network formation among boys (see chapter 6 for discussion).

8.3.ii. The Parents

The majority of boys' parents interviewed (see Appendix E for copy of the interview schedule used) were aware of who their sons'

school friends were and on the whole seemed to approve of their friends. Most of the parents felt that their sons weren't very easily influenced by their mates but many were also aware of this potential influence. Most parents felt that they should allow their sons to choose their own friends. Some claimed that if they felt that this group of friends were leading their son astray then they would do something about it while others said that if this happened they would advise their son but it would be up to him to decide if he continued on with these friends or not. The following extracts from interview transcripts illustrate these points:

From an interview with Richard's mother and father.

BM What about who he plays with and this sort of thing...?

Dad Well we know most of his friends.

Mum They all play together.

.....

Dad We don't stop him playing with who he wants to, he's got the freedom of choice with his friends.

.....

BM Do the other kids have a big influence on him?

Dad Not at all, not at all. He never comes in and says so and so's doing this and so and so can do the other but I can't.

In the following Simon's mother gives the impression that she would like to know a lot more about who her son is friends with but that in some way Simon is in control of this area and she shouldn't interfere.

BM And do you find that other lads have an influence on him?

Mum Football I should say more than anything else.

BM What about in attitudes to school and doing homework and that sort of thing.....?

Mum I don't think so, no.

.....

Mum One of his friends came yesterday to call for him.
So I was pleased about that.

BM If you felt that friends weren't what you would like
would you try and influence him to choose different
friends?

Mum I might tell him why I didn't like them but I wouldn't
tell him he couldn't play with them, no.

In the interview with Roger's mother and father they are very much
aware of and approve of Roger's friends. However, they are also
very much aware of how these peers can influence his performance
at school.

BM You approve of his mates?

Dad Oh, completely, yes.

.....

Mum Well we've told him the first time he brings any trouble
here, you know, is when we start dictating who his friends
are. We haven't got no trouble come to the door and,
touch wood, we never have.....

.....

BM Do you think that the kids that he's friendly with
have a big influence on him?

Mum Yes.

Dad Well some of them do.

Mum This is what we found that year he wasn't doing so well
at school, they were holding him back.

Dad They were sort of telling him "Oh you're too far in
front of us, Roger" you know. And he wasn't.

Mum And he was ashamed to be in front, wasn't he?

Dad Yes.

Mum ...It did worry us at the time - because we went up
and asked (teacher) didn't we?

BM So when you felt that he was being influenced by these
other kids, did you try to get him....

Dad Yes, we tried to tell him...the way I put it to him was
that you was sort of in a race and you get a good 200 yard

lead and the trouble was you were marking time waiting for the others to catch up with you.

While in general terms Roger would agree with what his parents have said he would acknowledge that his friends still do regulate to a large extent his activities at, and approach to, school.

The following two extracts of interviews with Dennis's parents and Gordon's parents illustrate very clearly the approach that many parents seem to adopt with their sons. That of not interfering with their choice of friends. Many of the boys appear to be given far more freedom in the choice of friends than are girls. It seems that some parents feel that boys have got to learn to sort these things out for themselves whereas the girls need to be far more protected from those who might 'lead them astray'.

Denis's mother and father who feel that their son is not easily led argue that, he must be allowed to choose his friends as he has to learn to select good from bad.

BM Do you supervise who he plays with?

Dad No.

Mum No, because he's the sort of child where he doesn't pick rough kids, he's got a real good circle of mates.

Dad I don't believe in that, saying who he can play with because he's got to meet the bad 'uns and the good 'uns and has got to sort them out now rather than meet all the good ones and then suddenly he's thrown in at the deep end at work. So if he can sort them out now at 13 he can pick the ones he wants for mates....

Mum But his mates are a nice bunch. They always come in here.

BM Do you find that he's very much influenced by his mates?

Mum Denis has got a mind of his own. He knows what he wants and that's it. He gives and takes ideas and that but....

This interview reflects two very definite features which may at first seem contradictory. On the one hand the parents are very much concerned and aware of their son's friends and indeed approve of them, while on the other hand they do not want to interfere in whom he chooses as friends as this is a definite and deliberate part of preparing him for his independent role in the world after school.

A very similar approach is taken by Gordon's parents in the following interview.

BM What about who he plays with? Do you check up on that?

Mum I don't think you can...if I thought that he was getting into any trouble then I would, but as far as I'm concerned he's got to have friends anyway.

BM And you let him choose?

Mum He chooses. I mean its no good me trying to choose his friends for him. It just isn't on. He'd probably go behind your back anyway and find out who he wanted to. I mean if I think anybody's a bad influence then I will tell him and then its up to him whether he takes notice or not.

.....

BM And you approve of Gordon's friends then?

Mum The few I've seen yes. As I say I can't pick and choose his friends for him.

Dad There's only one stage we're not very sure about - and that's the next stage from this school to the higher one....

BMAnd you think Gordon's easily influenced.

Dad I think he's very independent but their mates can lead them astray as they get older.

These parents, who adopt a 'child choose' policy perhaps not so

much from the point of view of it teaching the child to be independent as did the previous parents but from the stance that he'll probably go ahead anyway, are obviously concerned about the possibly increasing power of the peer network as their son goes on to the high school.

The parents of girls present a somewhat different picture with there being far more control and supervision and one suspects far more knowledge of who the friends are. Compared with the boys' parents those of girls seem to acknowledge considerably more peer influence. Most girls seem to be able to 'choose' their own friends but this is closely monitored and there is certainly no talk of encouragement to be independent as there was with many of the boys. Not all parents though were able to maintain the control they they would have liked and some felt that they were losing control. Significantly none of the parents of boys felt that they were losing control.

The following interview with Diane's (science lab girl) mother and father acknowledges the influence that other girls have on their daughter and indicates that while Diane chooses her own friends they must know who they are.

BM What about Diane's friends? Do you check up on who she is friends with?

Mum I don't pick Diane's friends...you can't pick children's friends for them..... However she has always had friends that she brought home and she has never been allowed to go out without me knowing where she's going and who she's going to and more often than not me actually taking her there and fetching her at a later time...

.....

BM And do you approve of Diane's friends?

Mum Yes.

BM Do you think they have an influence on Diane?

Mum Yes, not always to the good, not always to the worse. I think they've just got to learn quite honestly that friends that they've got change the same as they change but as they get older perhaps their tastes will alter in friends as well as in other things.

(Dad pours me another whiskey while Mum continues in full sail).

There's a lot of bitchiness between girls of this ageyou get a constant battle where so and so's mother will let her, so why won't you let me. Its usually over dress or make-up or something like that.....

Mary's ('Science lab' girl) parents know and approve of her friends and feel that they are all responsible girls.

BM What about who she keeps company with.....Do you check up on that?

Dad Yes we do really because we know all the girls that she does play with. What's going to happen over the next two or three years remains to be seen.... All the girls that she plays with we know and have known for a number of years.

.....

BM Do you think the other girls have a big influence on her?

Dad I don't know the other girls' families all that well but basically I think their relationships with their families is about the same as us, so in actual fact they're all responsible children.

Mum She'll talk to us. I can't ever remember me talking to my mother the way she talks to me. We can talk as friends, she'll confide in us when she wants to which is nice.

Here the home background of friends is obviously seen as an important factor in their approval of Mary's friends.

Elizabeth's parents acknowledge the influence for the good as far as school work goes that her friends have had on her. They feel that Elizabeth ('Science lab' girl) is easily influenced and indicate the difficulties of trying to change friendship patterns.

BM And you say you think other children have quite a big influence on her.

Mum I think so, yes.

Dad Its all right while she's with the right crowd...

Mum I mean the ones she's in the class with are marvellous. They work very well, you know they're good at it, and she seems to want to push herself in these groups.

BM And would you ever try to encourage her to play with, or be friends with different children, different from these ones?

Mum Well I try to find out the bad sides of any of her friends, I try to say well if you want to play with them Elizabeth don't lose your head and follow them being dependent on them, be independent. But I don't, you can't stop them not playing with her because she sits down or just sulks.

Josephine's ('P.E.' girl) parents feel that perhaps because she is an only child she looks to and is more influenced by her friends.

Dad We've got no objections about her mates...

BM Do the other kids have much of an influence on Josephine?

Mum When Josephine's got a friend she'll stick by the friend so I should say they have got an influence over her but that's possibly with her being an only one. Because she's an only child she looks to her friends.

While all parents of girls seem to want to approve of their daughter's friends this does not necessarily mean that they are able to do anything about it if they don't approve. In the following interview with Margaret's ('P.E.' girl) mother she explains how she is not happy with the influence that the 'P.E.' girls have over Margaret.

BM Do you approve of her friends?

Mum Some of them, only some of them.

BM Do you feel that other children influence her?

Mum Yes.

- BM In what particular ways?
- Mum I think she's easily led. The rest are all the same, I mean all her friends.
- BM.what are the most obvious ways you see them influencing Margaret?
- MumWell she copies them a lot, in clothes, not wearing socks and things like that. But because she's gone with these few friends and we say something she'll argue because some of them might want to go to the pictures and we mightn't want her to. You know she'll say 'they can do it why can't I do it?' - you know. I don't know, she just doesn't seem to understand whatever you do for her you do for her own good, you know.
- BMWould you ever try, do you ever try to get her to play with different ones?
- Mum Yes, but it doesn't do any good. She doesn't want to know.

While all parents acknowledge the importance of friends for their children, it would appear, that for children of this age, that parents feel that girls are more influenced by their friends than boys. It would seem that girls and their friends are much more closely monitored than boys with the boys being encouraged to be 'independent' and autonomous in their choice of friends.

8.3.iii. The Teachers

Teachers appear in little doubt about the importance of the influence of peers particularly with the girls. They appear to be less certain about the boys largely because at this stage the teachers find it difficult to identify stable boys' groups. With the dominance of the large undifferentiated class group it is difficult to identify origins and see differential effects of peer group influence on the boys.

The teachers do not see peer networks simply in terms of the influence, good or bad, they have over their members but see them as important to the social development of children of this age. In the opinion of the fourth year coordinator

"I see the friendship groups as being very important indeed and they should be the basis of as much of the organization in the fourth year. If there is too much movement between classes then it can lead to an unsettled year".

Another of the fourth year teachers comments on the importance of the friendship group, in the case of the 'quiet' girls, in social development.

Mr. Jones Can I put this to you, is not the school group the socializing medium for kids like that? I mean Vera's never allowed out to play, Anne is, Judy is never allowed out to play with kids of her own age group, Ros just does not make friends for some unknown reason, I don't know why, and when they get to school you see they've all got something in common. I'm sure to a certain extent that school is the socializing medium for them.

Teachers acknowledge the influence of peers in general terms and see it as a very important factor in school performance. Mrs. Price sees this age range as being the time when membership of peer networks and the influence they have as being very strong and feels that their future at school will depend to some considerable degree on the nature of the peer group associations that form once these pupils get to the high school.

Mrs. Price Although in a way they're going. They're just at a stage when they very much want to belong to a peer group and they want to form these strong bonds and they will become insecure for a time and they will be looking a lot of them for a very immediate strong peer group and the groups that form will be very strong, very very strong. The groups that form when they get to the high school are going to be of very particular types and very distinct in orientation. The peer network can have either a good or a bad influence.

Mr. Fisher uses the case of Elizabeth, whose parents also made the

same point, to illustrate how peer influence can have positive benefits.

Mr. Fisher I think they put in a lot of extra time, I know Diane does and Mary certainly does as well and then Elizabeth does it because the others are doing it.

In the following Mr. Jones discusses the influence and uniformity among the 'science lab' girls.

Mr. Jones I would say they come from backgrounds with similar outlooks. Financially and that sort of way they're different.....but in terms of outlook the four of them are very much the same. When you talk to them about what they want to do when they leave school for example and the four of them have got much the same ideas. They want some sort of professional, some sort of training....Diane has obviously matured, Mary certainly has, Jennifer, well I think Jennifer will always be a little girl at heart all the way through her life, and Elizabeth is certainly showing signs of maturity. She's thinking on a little bit more higher level, she's worried about what she does now but she's trying to improve herself all the time.

However, most of the comments on peer influence tend to emphasize the negative aspects with the 'P.E.' girls being cited as examples with surprising regularity by all of the fourth year teachers.

Mr. Jones discusses the 'P.E.' girls:

Mr. Jones I've got my reservations about this group, I think they are going to be a real problem next term. If not next term certainly if they're not split up when they get to the high school. You've got Betty who is a very clever kid and a smashing kid on her own as well but when they're all together that group they have a bad effect on each other.....I like Barbara very much, she's a very likeable girl. Always works hard unless she is led off by somebody else and that's the only time that Barbara and Cathy get into trouble is when somebody else is pulling the strings, they're puppets, pure puppets.....

When discussing a dispute among the 'P.E.' girls

BM What was the dispute over?

Mr. Jones Smoking, would you believe? Penny wants to pack up you see and the others won't let her....

The teachers seem in little doubt that peers have a considerable influence over school performance and attitudes to school. Here Mr. Fisher discusses the effects peers are having on Margaret's ('P.E.' girl) attitudes to school (part of interview with Margaret's mother appears in the previous section).

Mr. Fisher I have seen her mother. She is very positive towards school and she obviously wants Margaret to do well. She's worried at the moment that Margaret is sort of leaving school studies to branch out socially - boyfriends, fashion, discos, going out in the evening, and she's worried that that's going to take the place of her school work altogether.

Mrs. Price sees the peer network having far wider and longer term effects on the future life styles of the girls. This influence goes much further than just affecting performance at school it can affect a girl's entire future. In the following interview she talks with considerable concern about the fourth year girls.

Mrs. Price Now this year and the first year at the high school will be absolutely decisive for the way they go, I find it very depressing as far as the girls are concerned.

BM In what ways?

Mrs. Price I see potential and independence of thought which I have nurtured and tried to encourage and tried to bring out and so on being in some cases almost deliberately cast aside in favour of the expected from home.

BM Can you give me some examples?

Mrs. Price Sylvia, I mean I have not been in close contact with her but I have had some very interesting talks with her and so on. She is a very able girl who can think and make quite reasoned, sound judgements about what's going on around her. I see her taking on more and more of the norms of the group that she is in.

BM Which particular norms?

Mrs. Price Really looking forward to sixteen, to leaving, and of accepting the prescribed job areas of whatever it may be, a secretary or what have you. Of living in the ideal of being a 'Jackie' very much influenced by 'Jackie' of getting a flat with two or three girls and being a secretary. In fact hardly any of those will happen and girls who go along that track to start with end up marrying a local boy at seventeen or so and never exploring any potential there might be.

Mrs. Price here identifies a combination of peer influence and home background as 'preventing' girls like those in the 'P.E.' group from realizing the potential that she sees within them and has been trying to develop.

Because of the nature of the boys' peer networks teachers found it difficult to identify and discuss the effects of peer influence in the same way as they did with the girls. The following is typical.

Mr. Fisher The lads. Well as I've said before its a big group altogether and all separate as well. Its difficult to say who's with who for any length of time.....

and Mr. Jones discussing the boys' peer networks:

Mr. JonesI don't notice them in groups quite honestly.

BM Do you notice them in the playground?

Mr. Jones Not really. Of course there's the soccer playing fraternity. I think the groupings are very much based on football, the groupings that they've got.

8.4. Peer networks and School Performance

Many of the pupils themselves recognize the effects that their friends have on their performance at school in areas such as behaviour in class, the doing of homework, answering questions in class, helping teachers, and helping each other with work and in tests. Much of this has

been discussed in the previous two chapters. In the following discussion with Betty and Penny, both claim that they think school is important but that other factors, especially the preference for playing out with their mates, prevents them from doing things like homework. This gives some insight into the power of the peer group in affecting school performance.

BM And what about homework and that sort of thing?

Betty We never do homework. Say we've got a week to do it or so, we do it then. If we know we're going to get done the next day, we'll do it then.

BM Do you think school's important, then for getting the job that you want?

Betty Yes, it is really.

BM So, why don't you work hard at school?

Betty When I came into the fourth year, I was going to try harder, but I couldn't.

BM Why not?

Betty Don't know.....

BM What about you, Penny?

Penny I never do my homework. I enjoy going out with my mates too much.

Even if the direct influence of peers over each other in regard to school performance varied, there was probably considerable impact because of the way in which teachers often classified and generalized about the girls' peer networks. This may have had the effect of making the groups more alike and bring about solidarity and also a self-fulfilling prophecy effect on the group members. It also meant to a certain extent that performance at school was often seen to be uniform within a group and this conceivably had both advantageous and disadvantageous affects on the teacher evaluations and assessment of some pupils.

The groups of girls were sometimes seen in terms of social class background by the teachers with broad generalizations being made. The 'science lab' girls were seen as coming from backgrounds with 'similar outlooks' of considerable encouragement from home, while the 'P.E.' girls were usually described as working class with on one occasion one of the 'P.E.' girls whose parents owned their own home being described as 'very working class'. As we have seen from the tables of the previous chapter such generalizations are not totally accurate.

More typically though the groups of girls were described and treated according to the manner in which they performed at school.

The following are typical descriptions:

- Mr. Jones You've got Mr. Fisher's class which has two very good extremes, not in terms of ability but in terms of personality and the way they come out. You've got the Diane and Co. at the top end who will do anything and work very hard and then you've got the Betty and Co. at the bottom who'll do bugger all. They do nothing.
- BM That's not related to ability you feel?
- Mr. Jones No. I don't think its related to ability its related to attitude more than anything else.....

It is not at all surprising that if you are part of this group that is seen as doing 'bugger all' then the evaluation of your performance at school is likely to be somewhat depressed. Here Mr. Fisher is talking about the 'P.E.' girls.

- Mr. Fisher They have positive attitudes towards school but they're not sort of pro examinations, they're not looking to the future, they're pro social activity and so they don't do as well as they could with their school work. I think they are there for a good time rather than for really enjoying the work they're doing.

This differential classification of groups leads to different treatment of the groups by the teachers. Very often, one suspects, this differential treatment is not really deliberate on the part of the teachers. However, as has been discussed in Chapter 6, the different groups of girls are able to devise strategies by which teachers treat them differentially. Examples such as teachers avoiding confrontation with the 'P.E.' girls over school rule infringement and the ability of the 'science lab' girls to be absent from or late to assemblies and registration have been discussed in Chapter 6. 'Seeing' the groups differently also meant that teachers held different expectations of the groups. The 'science lab' girls were seen as reliable and hard working and so were entrusted with jobs like science lab monitors. The 'P.E.' girls were acknowledged as doing 'bugger all' and so standards of work expected from this group were often lowered. Some teachers saw it as something of an achievement to get work out of them at all.

The girls, who, as outlined earlier (Chapters 6-7) were very aware of and able to identify differences between their groups and also offer possible reasons for these differences, were able to identify some of this differential treatment and expectation.

In the following series of extracts the 'science lab' girls are talking about their differences from the 'P.E.' girls.

BM Are there any other ways that they're different in class?

Diane They mess about all the time in class, but never get told off. Like if we messed about in class we'd get told off ever such a lot, we hardly do that now.

Jennifer The teacher tells me to move in Maths when I sat next to Josephine and I got told off and I got moved but Josephine didn't.

.....

Jennifer She (unspecified 'P.E.' girl) gets a good report though, doesn't she?

Diane That's the trouble, she gets a good report but doesn't hardly do anything for it.

BM Why do you think she gets a good report?

Diane She doesn't get a very good report in Science, most of the time she was cheeking a teacher like mad and from then onwards he was nice with her, he gave her good marks and things like that.

.....

BM And how do you think your group gets treated differently to the other groups?

Diane Well, if we do something wrong they shout at us.....

Jennifer I think its because he expects us to behave better, he knows he's going to get a lot of cheek back from the other groups so he just ignores them and so when we do something wrong he doesn't want us to turn into what they are.....he knows that they won't do the work, he knows they won't work properly in class, so he just takes no notice of them.

Here the 'science lab' girls spell out in no uncertain terms the different expectations in terms of behaviour and school work that they experience.

At the end of the fourth year there was a very extensive, and impressively thorough, exercise in the transfer of pupils to the high school. This transfer process involved high school administered testing (see Appendix B for full details) together with reports and evaluations from the middle school. Additionally, a whole day was spent when the head and fourth year coordinator together with the first year coordinators from the high school discussed each child. This was a brief verbal picture of each child's career at middle

school, the school's evaluation of their performance.

As a result of the high school 'tests' and the middle school's evaluation of performance the pupils were placed in a general band and in sets for English and Maths. It is interesting to look at the relationship between the 4F girls N.V.I.Q. score, their middle school maths and English grades, their standardized test scores in maths and English and their ultimate high school set placement and see if any patterns are discernible in and between the peer group networks. The following table presents the scores relating to English.

...

Table 23

Transfer to High School Scores - English

		N.V. I.Q.	Reading Age	Middle School English Grade	Richmond Comp. Score	High School Set Placement
'P.E.' girls	1	99	12.6+	B	97	2
	2	103	12.6+	C	99	7
	3	112	12.6+	B	108	2
	4	103	9.11	D	91	7
	5	112	10.10	C	103	6
	6	107	12.6+	B	94	4
'Science Lab' girls	1	95	12.6+	B	115	2
	2	117	11.0	B	94	4
	3	103	11.4	C	94	4
	4	118	12.6+	B	96	-
'Nice' girls	1	94	10.5	B	105	2
	2	99	11.1	C	95	6
	3	104	10.5	D	85	7
'Quiet' girls	1	99	9.0	D	70	9
	2	99	10.6	D	84	6
	3	84	10.4	B	91	6

While it is difficult to suggest generalizations from such small numbers of pupils it is none the less interesting to see if being a 'P.E.' girl or being a 'science lab' girl can have perhaps made any difference to the high school set placement. Some interesting patterns emerge as well as contradictions. Look at 'science lab' girl number 3 with a non verbal I.Q. of 103, reading

age of 11.4, Richmond score of 94 and is placed in set 4. Contrast this with 'P.E.' girls 2 and 5. 'P.E.' girl 2 has an I.Q. of 103, reading age of 12.6+, a Richmond score of 99 and is placed in set 7. So 'P.E.' girl 2 with the same I.Q. but with a higher Richmond English score and higher reading age is placed three sets lower than 'Science lab' girl 2. Similarly, 'P.E.' girl 5 has an I.Q. of 112, a reading age of 10.10 and a Richmond score of 103 but despite the higher I.Q. and Richmond score she is placed two sets lower in set 6.

Who these girls actually are needs to be revealed as it fits in so well with what one might have predicted from the other data. 'Science lab' girl three is Elizabeth whose parents and teachers felt was considerably influenced by the 'Science lab' girls into working harder and achieving very much above her ability. She obviously has benefited, in terms of set placement from being seen as well motivated, hard working, reliable 'Science lab' girl. 'P.E.' girl two is Josephine and five is Margaret, the girl whose mother and teacher felt that she had lost interest in school and become more interested in social activities with her mates. These girls, both very central members of the 'P.E.' girls, certainly seem to have suffered from being seen as part of a group that is out for a good time and is seen as doing 'bugger all' as far as school goes.

One would predict that in all probability the girls concerned would live up to expectations embodied in these set placements confirming quite conclusively, to the teachers, that their assessments were accurate.

Stark examples of the locking in process and the impact that this can have on a child's school career.

The situation in the setting for maths presents somewhat similar patterns.

Table 24

Transfer to High School Scores - Mathematics

	N.V. I.Q.	Middle School Maths Grade	Richmond Maths Score	High School Set Placement	
'P.E.' girls	1	99	C	85	5
	2	103	C	103	7
	3	112	B	103	2
	4	103	D	98	9
	5	112	C	90	7
	6	107	B	108	4
'Science Lab' girls	1	95	C	95	5
	2	117	B	105	4
	3	103	B	98	4
	4	118	B	109	-
'Nice' girls	1	94	C	100	4
	2	99	C	92	8
	3	104	D	98	9
'Quiet' girls	1	99	D	85	9
	2	99	D	90	Remedial
	3	84	D	78	9

Once again 'P.E.' girl 2 and particularly 'P.E. girl 4 seem to suffer while 'science lab' girl 3 seems to benefit although not so markedly as with the English set placement. The big contradiction that appears

to run counter to these other patterns is the case of 'P.E.' girl 1 who in spite of being a 'P.E.' girl seems to extract 'favoured' treatment. This girl was very popular and well liked by the teachers and while she definitely spent most of her time with the 'P.E.' girls - 'they're good fun, got plenty of life' was able to dissociate herself from them in their rowdy disruptive activities in class. That she enjoyed the 'P.E.' girls company, but wasn't really one of them completely, became more clear when her mother explained that she didn't really spend much time with them out of school and had discussed with her how they were all 'having a go at smoking' and how she didn't think it was a very good idea. She is also the girl who with two others Bessie describes as being a bit different from the rest because they were allergic to boys. This girl is able to enjoy the company, fun and high spirits of the 'P.E.' girls and yet still 'get on' with her school work.

8.5. Peer Networks and wider social factors

This section which concentrates on the wider social and cultural effects of membership of different peer networks deals with the girls. Because of the large undifferentiated class group of boys any analysis of this type is impossible. This type of analysis for boys will need to be conducted when the boys form into definite groupings which some teachers, and girls, claim is likely to happen when they get to high school. If of course this wasn't to be the case then the peer network could not be a significant factor in cultural and social reproduction and one would need to identify other sources of influence and other arenas where cultural and social behaviour was learned.

The question expressed very simply as: Does being in a different peer network make any difference to a girl's life chances and future within the social structure?

The influence of friends is of course only one source of social and cultural influence. The family and the media are of course other crucial sources. Do the peer groups play an important role in reproducing different cultural forms? It would appear from discussions with the girls, their parents and teachers, that the peer network is the arena where some wider cultural influences are translated, interpreted and mediated. It is often among their peers that girls work out and try out their attitudes and orientation to life which affects their aspirations towards career and life style. It is in these terms that girls are likely to interpret the utility of their schooling.

The elements of wider cultures that are drawn upon and interpreted within the peer group chiefly come from the class and family background of the girls and in particular with these girls the largely working class background with considerable role expectations regarding marriage and future life styles and already at this age significant demands upon their domestic labour (in direct contrast with the minimal demands placed by families upon boys). The other cultural input appears to be the teenage subculture and the culture of femininity. These influences play a considerable part in the cultural and social lives of these girls.

Much of the culture and differences and similarities between the girls peer networks in 4F has been discussed in earlier chapters.

It is worthwhile here when trying to assess the impact and implications of peer network membership to examine in some detail the future plans of the various networks of girls.

8.5.i. Future Plans

The range of job ambitions held by the girls was narrow and traditionally female in orientation - shop assistant, typist and hairdresser being most common. In the following extract, the 'quiet' girls discuss the type of jobs they would like when they leave school.

- BM What sort of jobs would you like when you have school?
- Vera Sometimes I want to be a teacher, I'm not really sure. Perhaps a typist - secretary. That's what my mum used to be.
- Judy I want to work in a shop.
- Ros I don't think I could work in a shop. I wouldn't be able to give the right change.
- Judy I've always wanted to work in Woolworths.
- BM Which counter?
- Judy Don't know. I always wanted to work on the till best.
- BM What about you, Anne, what sort of job would you like to do?
- Anne Work in a shop.
- BM What sort of shop?
- Anne A clothes shop. Shoe shop.

The 'science lab' girls tend to indicate a preference for similar types of jobs with hints that they wanted something a little more than just the traditional occupational roles open to girls.

Mary To be a hairdresser.

BM What about you, Jill?

Elizabeth I would like to be a hairdresser as well; I think it would be good, that would.

BM What about you, Diane, what would.....?

Diane I wanna go travelling round the world.

Elizabeth I tell you what Jennifer and me want to try and go in the army, that's my dream.

In an interview with Mary's mother and father, the father explained how he would like Mary to get on and if she wanted to be a hairdresser then he would encourage and help her to set up her own business.

Two of the 'nice' group offer a fairly predictable job choice - hairdresser, shop assistant. The comments of Christine perhaps indicate a point made earlier that at least some of the girls, for various reasons, have not thought seriously about the sort of job they might do after they finish school and may account for Christine's, in some ways, unrealistic choice.

BM What sort of things would you like to do?

Christine I don't know. I want to be a writer.

BM Do you? And what sort of things do you want to write?

Christine Stories, books.

BM That's what you want to do when you're finished. How long do you plan on staying on at school?

Christine I don't know. I want to stay on and do 'O' levels.

BM What about you, Natalie?

Natalie I don't know.

BM Have you any ideas of what sort of jobs you want when you leave school?

Natalie Work in a shop.

BM Work in a shop? What sort of shop?

Natalie Sweets shop.

BM How long do you have to stay on at school?

Natalie Don't know. Just normal, I think. You'd have to get something at Maths, like adding the total up and the stamps up, and that's it.

BM What about you?

Val I want to be a hairdresser.

BM Do you? And what do you have to do for that?

Val I don't know. I think I'll have to go to college or something.

The 'P.E.' girls express a considerable degree of uncertainty, but what job preferences are indicated tend to be of the traditional female type.

BM And do you think about what sort of job you'd like to do when you leave school?

Barbara Hairdresser.....

BM What about you, Sylvia?

Sylvia I want to go to America and get a job there.

BM What about you, Barbara?

Barbara Unless I've got a job, I don't want to leave school. I want to work away.....

BM What sort of job do you want, then, Sylvia?

Sylvia Don't know. Don't really mind as long as it suits me.

BM Have you any ideas about what you'd like to do, Margaret?

BM Go on...

Betty Secretary.....hairdresser - don't know really.

Cathy I want to be a vet, I always wanted to be a vet... but at first I wanted to be a nurse but now I want to be a vet.

While it may be true for many of the girls that they have not given serious consideration to their choice of future job, many of them have more definite life plans and ambitions.

The 'quiet' girls see getting married and settling down as being important and what seems most likely for them.

BM You got any plans for the future?

Vera Getting married....

BM So that's your plan for the future, is it? And what's your plan for the future Ros?

Ros Well, getting married, and having a big house and lots of rooms, that's my one ambition.

BM Prepared to have a big house?

Ros Yes, a big mansion.....manor.

BM What about you, Judy?

Judy Don't know.

BM You have no ideas - you haven't thought about it?

Judy Sometimes I want to get married.

BM That's what you want? What about you, Anne, have you got any plans? Do you want to get married?

Anne Don't know.

The 'science lab' girls, while they do see marriage as a part of their future plans, do not, unlike the 'quiet' girls, see it as being the "be all and end all" of their plans for the future. They have ideas of living away from home out of a familial situation.

BM Have you got any sort of plans for the future? What do you think about when you leave school?

Jennifer We're all going to live in a flat together, all four of us.

- Diane I think that's what we all picture. We all picture living together in a flat.
- Mary When that programme, "The Angels" was on I used to picture all of us staying in a flat like that together.
- Elizabeth Well, I'm going to live my life first. I am going to get a good job and settle down first, before I get married, but I shall get married and have a couple of children. I like children.
- BM How do you feel?
- Mary Well, I know I will get married. Its just that feeling, because I want a child, but I am not going to get married until I am about 22. I know that. I definitely do not want to get married before that because I don't want to settle down and get used to....you know! Without having people....to get used to that. I was talking to my friend who left school a couple of years ago and went on to college and got her qualifications and did hairdressing.

The 'nice' girls offer an interesting range of perspectives from wanting to get married at seventeen, through wanting to have a 'good life' first before marriage, to not wanting to get married at all. This last position may be a result of the experience of her parents' divorce.

- BM Do you sort of have any plans for the future?
- Val Not to get married.
- BM Why not, Val?
- Val Its not worth it; you're just going to get divorced again.
- BM So you don't want to get married. What about you, Natalie?
- Natalie I want to get married.
- BM You want to get married, Why?
- Natalie I just do.
- BM How old do you think you'd be when you get married? How old would you like to be?
- Natalie Seventeen, probably.

BM What about you, Christine?

Christine I don't know. I want to have a good life first.

BM You don't think you're going to have a good life when you're married?

Christine No, 'cause if you have kids they tie you down.

The 'P.E.' girls seem somewhat unsure about future plans apart from having a good time or if there are plans for marriage, then they are for 'later on'.

BM Do you think about your future. Do you think about your plans for the future?

... Yes.

BM What sort of plans do you have, then?

Josephine Ice-skating in the summer, swimming - we all go swimming.

BM I mean in the long future.

Josephine Well, me and Penny are going to have a flat together.

BM What other sort of plans do you have for the future?

Betty We're going to Barbados and all of those countries.

BM What about you, Sylvia, have you got any plans for the future?

Sylvia I want to save and go to America, and live in America.

BM What about you, Margaret?

Margaret I haven't got any plans really.

.....

BM What about Sylvia?

Sylvia I am not going to get married at all.

BM And you?

Cathy I'll get married when I am 25 and have two kids.

And in another interview:

BM ...Now, do you have plans for the future? What are your hopes, plans for the future?

Penny Well, I want to travel round, really, but there's not really much I can do for travelling around. I want to be a hostess, but I want to be a secretary as well. But I want to travel around.

BM How about you - your ambitions?

Penny I want to have lots of money, get married to somebody rich.

Margaret That's why my dad tells me to do.

BM What?

Margaret Marry someone rich.

Penny I won't be getting married until I'm in my late twenties. something like that. Enjoy myself first.

BM What about you, Margaret?

Margaret I want to be a typist, but I don't want to get married until I'm about twenty-five, something like that.

It is interesting here in this discussion with the two girls that they see the route to being 'rich' as marrying a rich man. The route to 'success' is by their initiatives on the marriage market as if they have no real control over their own future success in life in terms of an independent career.

While it does appear that there are only slight differences between the girls in terms of their job aspirations, there are more noticeable differences in their life plans. The range of job choices does follow the narrow range of job choices traditionally open to women. None of the girls, nor their parents, aspire to work in factories which realistically is where most of the ones who do find employment are likely to find themselves. This is in direct contrast to Willis' 'lads' who wanted jobs on the shop floor.

How successful these girls are in achieving their job ambitions will depend in no small way on how they perform at school and whether or not they see school as being relevant to their job aspirations as well as the state of the local labour market.

8.5.ii. The Usefulness of School

There were differences between the groups when they were asked if they thought education and school was important in helping them realize their ambitions or get the jobs they wanted. The 'quiet' and the 'nice' girls saw school as being important in a general sort of a way.

For example:

- BM Do you think, then that school is important in helping you get the job you want?
- All Yes...
- BM Do you think school's important?
- Judy In some ways.
- BM In which ways?
- Ros Learn to read and write, and add up and things like that.
- BM You think it would be helpful in getting the job that you want? Do you think school's helpful in helping you get what you want out of life.
- Vera I think it might be useful to add up and things like that.

The 'science lab' girls saw a more specific relationship between schools and the jobs they wanted.

- BM How important do you think school is?
- Diane ...very important.....

Jennifer Well, I don't see the point in sixth years. I don't see the point in teaching music. I mean, we're not going to need music to be a journalist. Some people might want to become musicians, but all we do is write things down.

Elizabeth I think school's very important for you.

BMfor getting a job or....?

Mary For getting a job, and for getting what you want.

BM What do you mean by that?

Mary Well, I wouldn't be able to get on in life, even when you go shopping. You'd never get a job if you haven't gone to school, because you got all the...

Diane I like English and Maths, Science because, well its essential.

The 'P.E.' girls, while they saw school as being important, were not convinced that it was essential.

BM Do you think school's important?

Josephine Sometimes people get lots of 'O' levels, but they don't get the job they want.

.....

BM Do you think school's important in helping you to get what you want?

... Yes, I think it is.

BM Why?

Cathy People I've seen wouldn't get exams because they wouldn't know how to do them.

BM What other things, Cathy?

Cathy I think it helps you a lot because you can grow up to be somebody.

BM What about you, Sylvia?

Sylvia Its alright, but some of the things you do you don't really need to know because you get a job anyway if you don't do exams.....sometimes.

The girls differ in rather predictable ways. The 'nice' and 'quiet'

girls feel that school is important in a general sort of way without really being aware of the implications of this. The 'science lab' girls are in no doubt about the utility of school and this no doubt contributes to their determined, positive approach to school. The 'P.E.' girls are much more equivocal. One is left with the distinct impression that they realize the importance of school but other things, particularly social activities with their peer network, have taken over or are beginning to take over as their dominant concern.

These different evaluations on the purpose and usefulness of school, undoubtedly in some cases, are extensions of evaluations held within the family.

8.5.iii. Parental Attitudes to Education and School

In many cases the attitudes of the parents towards school and education were reflected in that of their daughters. There were considerable and arguably significant differences between the attitudes of the parents of the 'P.E.' girls and the parents of the 'science lab' girls towards the school and their daughters and her friends.

The 'P.E.' girls' parents tended to be more critical of the school than the 'science lab' parents but seemed, somehow, to be detached from it and felt that they were unable to exercise any control or intervene in any way. The following is part of a recorded interview with Josephine's mum and dad.

Mum Well....could be better.

BM In what ways?

Mum I don't think the discipline's enough, I really don't, and I believe in the three R's and I don't think they do enough of it. I mean, you ask Josephine anything about history, she doesn't know. She's got the bare knowledge in geography. When we were at junior school, you'd got the basic knowledge of all that before you left the junior school....where's Josephine now.... being in the last year of the middle school, would have been in the second year of the senior school and she would have been far more advanced than that she is now. I think so, anyway. The old fashioned school....

The above can be contrasted with an interview with Mary's (a 'science lab' girl) mum and dad, who are very much aware of what the school can do for their daughters:

Dad When they are sixteen today, I think they know a lot more than what we did at sixteen.

BM More?

Mum They've got a better chance, especially with this system of taking 'O' and 'A' levels. I mean, if we failed the eleven-plus that was it - we were finished - whereas now if they can reach sixteen when their minds...they've got a better chance now.

and are very positive about aspects of the school. Where there are criticisms of the school or what they perceive as weaknesses,

"remedial" action is planned and implemented at home. Mary's mum comments:

"We made our girls learn the tables because when she, Mary, first went to Hilltop and she was doing Maths... "you just couldn't possibly get that wrong" so we made them learn their tables, didn't we? But they were never taught it at school."

In the following, a particular "weakness" of spelling is not seen as poor teaching or, indeed, dismissed with a comment on how 'they don't teach spelling anymore' but is classed as the child's problem and Diane's mum arranges to do something about it at home.

- BM Have you been satisfied with Diane's progress?
- Mum Very satisfied. No complaints at all, really.
- BM How aware are you of her progress? What checks do you have to see how she is getting on?
- Mum We have school reports, we have Parent's Evenings and also I look through her work, to have a look at what sort of marks she is getting. Diane has a problem with spelling - whilst her work was very good her spelling was very poor and I was very much aware of this, as much aware as her teachers obviously were. She had a word box for Christmas.
- BM One of those Blackwell's Word Boxes?
- Mum And we worked through that together at Christmas...

The remoteness from the school that Josephine's mum feels is evident in the following. Josephine's mum, who had not attended either of the parent evenings that were held during the period of the research, is obviously unhappy about aspects of the school that she sees have deteriorated since she was at school and while she feels that she and her husband have no control over this she acknowledges that other parents, the "ambitious" ones, have influenced these changes.

- Mum ...but they were punished for things then they're not punished for now. They're allowed to get away with a lot more than we were allowed to get away with. It didn't do us any harm, whereas I think it is doing the children harm because there's not many children got respect for parents anymore and the schooling's got a lot to do with it. Because they spend most of their life at school than they do at home and we always...the teacher or mom and dad, we always had that, even ourselves when we were younger, and I think what it is now, the ambitious parents have got a lot to do with it - its something I can go on about for ages.

see Bernstein's (1975) thesis on visible and invisible pedagogies and the new middle class.

In contrast, Diane's mum and dad obviously have established a very good relationship with the staff of the school.

Dad Because they make you very, very welcome.

Mum Yes, you are not a nuisance if you go to the school, not a nuisance in any way. If you've got a problem, then your child's got a problem.

Dad I've 'phoned Mr. (headmaster) up a couple of times....

Mum Yes, yes. I've found everybody I've spoken to very approachable, very approachable and they always, always are willing to discuss anything.... every teacher she's had and the headmistress, if I've had something to say and I've wanted to speak to them about something, they have always been....pleasant, always very helpful.

BM You've never felt any barriers at all?

Mum Never, never.

.....

Mum I popped in the other morning because I took Helen to school late and I only put my head round and said, 'sorry she's late, we...dropped five litres of paint at the top of the drive. Well, we couldn't leave it we just had to clear it up. She's not the only one who's accident-prone in this family'.....he (headmaster) said Oh God, not something else at your house". No, I think....

BM Do you go to school very often?

Mum I go more than most parents, actually...various medical reasons and always taking her back to the school, never dropping her off, always making sure I personally take her back and I've established quite a rapport. And I'm very happy with the relationship we've got.

There were also differences in parent awareness of how much homework their daughter was expected to do and day-to-day knowledge of how she was getting on at school. The parents of the 'science lab' girls all claimed that they never had any problems in getting their daughters to do their homework and often checked up or showed an interest in what they were doing.

Mary's mum She always does it, she wouldn't dream of going to school without doing it.

Diane's mum I don't supervise her homework in any way. She knows what she's got to do. If she wants any help she always comes down and asks. We very often spend a lot of time looking through books, finding things, but she's only got to ask for any help if she wants to. If she can cope, she doesn't ask - she will get on with it.

Whereas the parents of the 'P.E.' girls, except for Sylvia's mum, all seemed to be of the opinion that their daughters didn't get very much homework, even though some of them thought that they perhaps should get more homework but that this, once again, is up to the school. Margaret's mum reflects this separation when she says: "I don't know if she's really that interested in school anymore." There also appeared to be differences in the relationships between girls and their parents.

8.5.iv. Parent/Daughter Relationships

The mothers of the 'science lab' girls were very much aware of their daughter's friends and had them in their homes. Relationships between mother and daughter seemed to be good, with the parents very much aware of the influence of the peer group but, as Mary's mum explains, they are able to reach a compromise.

Mum She'll talk to us...I can't ever remember me talking to my mother the way she talks to me. We can talk, say, like friends, you know. She'll confide in me.

.....

Mumfashion shoes. She has those long skirts, although I don't like them, I mean, they look like old ladies.... but we sort of compromise, you know.

BM Yes.

Mum I think particularly with girls this fashion thing, you know, they do have a tremendous influence on each other... they also, as they get on with the mothers, they have an influence with the mothers, they tend to tell the mothers to....smarten themselves up a bit.

On the other hand, 'P.E.' girl Margaret's mum felt that her daughter was "growing away" from her and becoming more and more influenced by her friends.

Mum I like to know who she's playing with, especially Margaret. The kids in the fourth year - I think they seem to change her.

BM In what ways do they change?

Mum Well, I don't know! They seem to grow away from you.

BM Do they? When you say "grow away" from you, what do you mean?

Mum Umm...its sort of more influenced by her friends.

BM Does this worry you?

Mum It does, yes.

.....

Mum Just little things, like she wanted to come with me shopping and now she doesn't want to. I mean, she don't even want to go out. I mean, its really really hard, I think its her friends. Well, I've questioned her, but she said no, it was her boyfriend. Her friends have become more important. She puts her friends before her family and, I mean, that worries me.

Finally, while all the parents interviewed wanted "the best" for their daughters and wanted them to "get on" some had much more positive ideas of how this might be achieved. Mary's dad discusses her desire to become a hairdresser.

BM Do you have any ambitions for Mary?

Mum Well...

Dad Well we want her to do what she wants to do.

Mum Which is hairdressing.

Dad Which is hairdressing...they each do what they want to and Mary's chosen, at this stage, to do hairdressing. She'll

be good at it...and if she is good at it she'll set up on her own.

BM You'll support her in that?

Dad Certainly...she'll make a good living at it, and hopefully, when she comes to get married or whatever, she'll maintain it.

Diane's mother's comments indicate her awareness that her daughter may not follow the traditional female role.

"As I said, you know, I think she's got ability and I would like her to use it. I hope she doesn't waste her ability but I want her to be happy in what she does. You know, now more these days, more than any, you've got so much freedom of choice about whether they stop at work or stop at home and I hope, you know, if she chooses a career - well, good luck to her. I hope she's happy in it.

Margaret's mum is much less specific about the ambitions and hopes she has for her daughter.

BM And do you have any ambitions for Margaret or for your children?

Mum Yes, I would like them to get a job better than what I did, and I wouldn't like them to work in a factory.

BM And what sort of thing would you like them to do?

Mum Well, I don't know - really, you know, I haven't really got a thought about it.

It is very difficult to decide whether it is because of relationships with parents that girls become more involved with and influenced by their peers or because of the influence of peers that relationships with parents become strained. It is probably a two-way process. However there are considerable differences between the parent/daughter relationships found among the 'P.E.' girls to that found among the 'science lab' girls.

8.5.v. Social Class Influences and Pressures

The pressures and influences on the 12-13 year old working class girl are considerable and appear to be far greater than those experienced by working class boys. Mrs. Price, who has had considerable experience in the fourth year and becomes very closely involved with the fourth year girls explains to me how she never ceases to be amazed at what is expected of these girls domestically, particularly those in one parent families or where mum goes out to work (the large majority of mothers did go out to work).

Mrs. PriceYou've got the twilight shift which a large number of mothers work, which may start at, well the usual time is six till ten. Quite a lot of the mothers work the afternoon two till six so the parents are just not around for a large amount of time. Large numbers of girls go home and cook a meal for the rest of the family and have peeled the potatoes and done everything the night before and then gone home and put the meal on and sort out young brothers and sisters and put them to bed and as I say there is in many ways a sort of artificial maturity.

There's also the fact that the girls tend to be very much more...um...shall I say non-liberated than in other areas because a lot of them do work so damned hard in the house. O.K. some of them react against it but a lot of them accept that this is what life's about and they're doing it now anyway and in three or four years time they will be doing it full-time and that's how they see that's their job. They're already mothering all and sundry....

Mrs. Price describes many of these girls with considerable domestic responsibility already and sees their future in terms of further domestic responsibility clearly mapped out for them.

Many of the girls themselves reported considerable baby sitting commitments.

BM Tell me then, how do you spend your time out of school?
 What sort of things do you do out of school?

Natalie I baby sit for my mum until five then 5.30 I have to go out again baby sitting for someone else till 10.30.

BM Every night?

Natalie Yes, except Friday.

.....

BM And you look after them from 5.30 till half past ten.?

Natalie Yes.

BM Do you like doing that?

Natalie It gets a bit boring sometimes.

BM Do you do your homework and that sort of thing or what?

Natalie No.....I'm always getting told off for not doing my homework.

One can see very clearly here an example of a girl being very definitely and surely propelled away from attaching any importance on a high level of performance at school. Indeed it is very clear why girls such as Natalie try to get by at school with the minimum of fuss and effort. Full-time domestic labour seems for girls like Natalie to be an inevitable next step. This is often associated with starting a family. Mrs. Price reports a conversation she had at parents evening with one of the 'quiet' girls mothers.

Mrs. PriceShe is very pleased with the family, she has produced and she is very anxious for them to reproduce as well.....at parent interviews she was telling me about an older daughter who was just sixteen who was married and just left school. Her husband was working a night shift and Mrs. - said to me what that girl needs is a baby because she is lonely and gets fed up and its about time. The kid was only sixteen, just left school.....

These expectations for the girls are in direct contrast to those of the boys, none of whom report having to contribute domestic labour

apart from occasionally being expected to wash or dry dishes. These differential expectations also operate in what is expected from boys and girls in terms of school performance. Gordon's mother expresses some commonly held opinions:

BM Do you think school is as important for your sons as your daughters?

Mum More important for the boys isn't it. The boys are the breadwinners. The girls are going to get married at seventeen or eighteen so there's not much point. More important for the chap to have a good job, he's got to be the breadwinner and keep the family... They (presumably teachers or schools) should learn them to look after themselves, should learn more housewifery, laundry and so on, especially in the last twelve months - they should be able to look after themselves. Don't do enough of this in school. Used to do more of this at school when I went - cooking, laundry, starching and so on. I think myself they ought to have more lessons on how to look after themselves.

Here school is seen as not doing a good enough job in preparing housewives. While others may not express the different use of schooling for boys and girls quite so openly or strongly, these differences are there in the differential sets of expectations held for boys and girls. Mrs. Price explains how she sees the expectations for boys.

Mrs. Price I think far more is expected of the boys (at school) from home....this is more an individual thing and the expectations differ.... The unifying factor may be the sport and so on but you'll have the influence of individual parents and so on who have very definite ideas about the way they want their boys to go and this will play a much larger part in determining what they do than it will for the girls.

One can identify three types of reaction to these social and cultural pressures. Three different strategies adopted by the girls in their peer networks. Firstly is that adopted largely by the 'nice' and 'quiet' girls who don't really challenge the

system and accept the dominant cultural norms and values as being 'right' for them or at least what is most likely to happen to them. They expect to and will in all probability become young housewives and mothers. The peer network for them functions to minimise the demands made upon them by the school. It helps them to make life at school as easy as possible.

The second type of response is the type made by the 'science lab' girls who have additional cultural influences that mean that they have definite aspirations to some sort of a career and see the value and purpose of school in helping them achieve their ambition. These girls provide very strong mutual support and encouragement which means that cultural norms which might otherwise propel them towards early domesticity are able to be resisted.

The third type of response is that adopted by the 'P.E.' girls who use the peer network, their group of friends, to in a way ignore these cultural pressures. The peer network is the venue of fun, glamour, fashion, make up, jewellery, boyfriends, discos, etc. This in turn directs their paths away from success at school which may have, ironically, been the one possible alternative path for them. Very few indeed are likely to 'find' the 'rich' man who will provide the mansion of their fantasies. The peer network is seen as an escape whereas in effect it leads them more surely along the route from which they are hoping to escape. In one sense I suppose it will make this inevitability more easy to tolerate. In discussing this type of response the experienced, sensitive and perceptive Mrs. Price provides us with very salutary

observations of the path followed by these girls.

Mrs. Pricethe girls are now becoming set along one track or the other.....I find it very depressing as far as the girls are concerned....I see potential and independence of thought....being in some cases almost deliberately cast aside in favour of the expected from home.....taking on more and more the norms of the group.....really looking forward to sixteen, to leaving, of accepting the prescribed job areas... a 'Jackie' ideal.....getting a flat with two or three girls and being a secretary. In fact hardly any of those will happen and girls who go along that track to start with end up marrying a local boy at seventeen and never exploring any potential there might be.

Mrs. Price then goes on to talk about the individual members of the 'P.E.' girls network. She says that she's seen it happen over and over again and that she finds it depressing. She claims "There is always a group of that kind in the fourth year." In one sense the interpretation of this type of response is a value judgement on the part of the researcher and teachers. These girls find tremendous value in make-up, having a good time, etc., they are living in and enjoying the present not preparing for the future.

8.6. Summary and Implications

Many pupils experience considerable difficulty in identifying the influence that their peer network has over them. The girls on the whole are more able to isolate and identify the influence of their peers. The girls see this influence being particularly strong in the area of clothes and fashion and only with some do they see this influence extending to school work. Many stress the fact that the peer network is a considerable source of security and support. The boys were far more undecided and inconclusive and found it far more difficult to identify and locate influence.

This may well be as a result of the present nature of their peer network which is very diffuse and undifferentiated. The only area where influence was identified was football! This inability to identify influence should not be interpreted as meaning friends were unimportant for the boys. On the contrary friends were a crucial part of their school lives.

Parents were of the opinion that the girls were influenced by peers more than were boys. They stressed that this was especially so in areas such as clothes, fashion and social activities. Some parents of both sexes felt that peers could also have a considerable influence over performance at school. An interesting difference emerged between parents of girls and boys over the amount of control that was exerted over the child's choice of friends. Parents allowed much more freedom in this area and saw it as an opportunity for boys to learn how to choose the 'good 'uns' from the bad 'uns. The girls on the other hand were seen to need protection from those who might 'lead them astray'. This resulted in far more control and supervision. This though was not always achieved and several parents felt that they were losing control of the girls activities with their friends.

The teachers saw a child's involvement in peer networks as being an essential part of their social development. They argued that the peer network was a very significant feature in the school lives of these pupils and that the peer network exerted a big influence over their future at school. Teachers did stress that the influence of the peer network can have positive benefits, but most of their emphasis was on the negative aspects and used, very often, as their example, the 'P.E.' girls. The teachers' maintained that the peer network

had a considerable influence over school performance but also had far wider implications as this influence affected future careers and life styles.

As we have seen in previous chapters peer norms affect school performance particularly in areas such as homework, behaviour in class and helping in tests. In addition to this direct effect there was the effect of the generalized group expectation. Different evaluations had been placed on the different networks and this led to different levels of expectations from the different groups. Some groups (e.g. the 'P.E.' girls) were evaluated, very correctly on many occasions from my observations, as doing 'bugger all' and not surprisingly 'bugger all' was expected from them. This had the effect of lower standards of work being accepted from them than would have been accepted from the 'science lab' girls who were seen as conscientious and hard working.

When looking at the high school set placement there are concrete examples of how these factors can affect a pupils' school career. There is a tendency for some pupils with similar test scores not to be placed in the same set but in either higher or lower sets than others. As the set placements are made on the basis of test scores and the middle schools evaluation of how they performed at middle school and how they are likely to perform at high school, it is the school's evaluation that is the factor that is responsible for these differences in set placement. There may well be the double effect of the peer group and the assessment of the peer group by teachers. The tendency, as one would expect, is for the 'science lab' girls to be placed in sets above their actual performance while

'P.E.' girls are placed in sets below their actual performance. The factor which causes considerable concern is that the expectations that have led to these differential placements are more than likely to be confirmed by the pupil's performance at high school - a frightening example of the locking in effect of peer network influence.

The peer network is very definitely an arena where wider social and cultural influences are discussed, interpreted and mediated. The future plans of the girls in terms of jobs are very traditionally female in nature with hairdresser, shop assistant and secretary most popular. The girls do exhibit more variety in terms of general life plans and ambitions. Some very definitely want a career for themselves with marriage a possibility at a later date, while others see marriage as more important or perhaps more likely to occur after they have completed school. In contrast to Willis's lads none of the girls nor their parents mentioned factory work as their future occupation. Nevertheless the reality of the situation is that there are not enough hairdressing or shop assistants jobs to meet the aspirations of the girls. Some of them at least, if they wish to enter paid employment, will probably have to take factory jobs. Similarly, none of the boys or boys' parents mentioned factory work as their likely future occupation but then the boys were much less clear about their future jobs probably because of their greater immaturity at this age. .

The use of school in helping achieve ambitions was seen as central by some of the girls and as almost irrelevant by others. The pupils' views on the utility of school appeared in many cases to be closely related to those of their parents. The parents of the 'P.E.' girls

seemed to see school as being somewhat remote and beyond their control while the parents of the 'science lab' girls are much more aware of and involved in what goes on in school. They also appear to be more aware of their daughter's progress at school and claim better all round relationships with their daughters. Some of the 'P.E.' girls parents see their daughters growing away from them into the peer network.

The girls in this study who are largely from working class backgrounds are expected to provide a considerable amount of help around the home. This is especially the case where there are one parent families or families where mothers go out to work, which is the case in the vast majority of families. They are expected to perform a considerable amount of domestic labour in the way of cooking, housework and baby-sitting. For many of these girls their future in terms of domestic responsibility is clearly mapped out for them. The domestic expectations of boys are minimal. Very few demands are made on the boys, they are expected to grow up to be the independent 'breadwinners'.

These largely social class and family cultural expectations exert considerable pressures on the girls and seems to evoke three types of reaction which are quite clearly, at least partially, developed within the peer network. The first response is not to challenge these pressures and this is the response largely adopted by the 'quiet' and 'nice' girls. Their peer networks function to make their lives at school as easy and pleasant as possible and to minimize the demands made upon them by the school. The second type of response is that made by the 'science lab' girls who are able to reject some of these pressures and to take on more of the ambitions and aspirations of the school. They are also

able to integrate some of the cultural elements which stem from the more middle class backgrounds of two of the girls. The peer network assists them in their ambitions at school and their desires for the future. The third type of response is to attempt to ignore some of the cultural pressures. The 'P.E.' girls are an example of this type of response. They look to the peer network to provide fun and excitement. This path leads them away from school values and school achievement. This though does not mean that they will be successful in avoiding or 'escaping' from the cultural pressures. In the words of Mrs. Price, this type of response usually means that these girls "end up marrying a local boy at seventeen or so and never exploring any potential."

It should be made absolutely clear that I am trying not to make or imply value judgements on the relative merits of careers v family responsibilities and domesticity for women. It is just that as a result of this intensive study which looked not only at the school lives of these girls but also at the social-cultural milieu in which they are located, one is able to see and identify the socio-cultural forces acting in such a way, among those girls, that many of them have little individual choice over their destiny. They are propelled towards it by these social and cultural forces. These processes have already started and it would certainly appear that these expectations and pressures at this age are far greater on the girls than they are on the boys. The peer network in the case of these girls is a crucial factor in their response to

these social and cultural pressures*

This chapter has explored the interaction of a variety of societal pressures which are mediated by teachers, family and the media on pupils in peer networks. It has explored the way in which these peer networks deal with, modify or amplify these pressures and influences and what this may mean in terms of school and life chances generally.

*The comments in this final paragraph are as a result of the sensitive, and trenchant criticisms of this chapter by my wife who throughout the writing of this thesis has been my most supportive and yet severe critic.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

9.1. Theory

9.2. Method

9.3. Research Issues

Conclusion

The first chapter set out the aims of this study and this final chapter assesses how successful the research has been in achieving these aims and also attempts to assess the implications of some of these findings. Briefly, the aims were three fold. Firstly, to answer four basic questions about school pupils and their social relationships, i) How do pupils of this age range organize their social lives at school? ii) In the network of these peers' social relationships are there distinctive subcultures? iii) How do these peer networks form? and iv) How do the peer networks interact with school performance, future careers and life chances of these pupils? Secondly, to adopt a theoretical approach which took account of both interaction and structure and saw neither on its own as being adequate. Thirdly, following methodological procedures which allowed the in depth intensive study on one class group to be located within the entire cohort of pupils so that the research was directed at a cross section rather than one particular part of that cross section of these pupils.

9.1. Theory

The theoretical framework of this research has been one which has sought to combine the interactional level of analysis with an analysis of the social structural influences and constraints. It is possible that some of the confusion in previous research findings has resulted from a too strict adherence to one perspective or the other. Many of the differences that have resulted from

research into the social relationships of school pupils may be explained by the different theoretical positions adopted.

Limited, and I would argue incomplete, results and explanations will possibly accrue where there is a concentration on one theoretical framework. Any social situation and in particular the social relationships of school pupils is a combination of individual and group interactions as well as institutional and social structural constraints and influences. I would argue that one cannot be adequately interpreted or explained without knowledge of the other.

In understanding the social lives of these pupils there is a constant need to be aware of interplay between the macro and micro levels of analysis. Structural and material constraints and circumstances always influence and affect interaction and through an exploration of the interactional level one is better able to understand social, structural and material forces. A concentration on one of these levels will always be limited in understanding the processes that take place with schools.

These theoretical propositions have had direct implications for the conduct of the research. There has been a constant attempt to locate the micro level interactions within their wider context. So, where, for example, the account of the interaction that takes place within a girls' peer network is always located in relation to other girls networks within the same class, to the other girls within the cohort and to the boys within the cohort. Where there

is a detailed examination of the nature, culture and formation of individual peer networks these are set against those of the rest of the cohort. The research clearly indicates that the interactions that take place within any one network of pupils are affected by the relationship with the other networks of boys and girls within the cohort. The interactions within any one network of pupils can only be completely understood by understanding the relationships of this network with the other boys and girls in the cohort.

The reactions, interactions and social networks of these pupils need to be understood within the organizational and material constraints of the school which they attend. The historical, ideological and organizational factors all impinge on these pupils' social formations. The history and ideological climate of middle schools in general and of this particular middle school interrelate with organizational factors which determine to a large extent the degree of freedom these pupils enjoy in forming their school peer networks. The fact that the fourth year teachers allow the pupils to sit with whom they choose means that peer networks are a constant feature of the classroom. The situation would be very different in a more formally organized classroom where the pupils were allocated places and the desks were arranged in rows.

These pupils need to be understood in relation to their family and community background. To be fully understood this cohort of pupils was located in the material context of their backgrounds

on the interactional level of peer networks and social relationships. If one had concentrated on either the macro or the micro level of analysis then the full impact of the importance of the peer network for girls would not have become apparent. The peer network has proved to be a crucial area for an investigation of the 'meeting' of micro and macro levels of interaction and effect.

Any research which attempts to provide a full and satisfactory understanding and explanations of the processes that take place within school must acknowledge and explore the micro interactional as well as the macro structural levels.

9.2. Method

The methodological aims resulted in the use of a wide range of methodologies and data collection techniques and hence resulted in many different types of data. Broadly, the data could be divided into two types, quantitative and qualitative and in some ways it would have been easier to write two separate reports, one based on the quantitative data and one on the qualitative data. The integration of observations, interview transcripts and socio-metric data with quantitative data is not an easy task, however, the temptation to concentrate on one form of data or the other was resisted and in fact not seriously contemplated.

When research is being conducted into complex social issues, which the peer networks of these school pupils undoubtedly are, the use of different methodologies proved invaluable for the purposes of

cross checking. They provide different inroads and ways of exposing these complex issues. For example in attempting to identify the nature and form of the peer network patterns observations can be checked against pupils', teachers' and parents' accounts which in turn can be checked against the sociograms which have been drawn up from the sociometric questions which have been administered. This process of methodological triangulation must lead to a fuller and undoubtedly more accurate picture and account of these peer networks.

In a very real sense the different methodologies informed each other. Information gained by one methodological approach meant that other approaches were better informed and more able to accurately probe areas of crucial significance. If there had been a concentration on one methodology then the range of insights would have been reduced. I was in the end able to achieve a great deal of complementarity between the various methods with one continually informing the other.

Qualitative methods are indeed very time consuming and proved to be physically and emotionally exhausting for the researcher. The personal relationships that the researcher has with the subjects of the research are crucial for the success of the enterprise. Undoubtedly the quality of the data collected will depend, to a large extent, on the success with which these relationships are established and maintained. Any researcher involved in long term field work must maintain a practice of reflexivity if the data collected is to be of use. All too often, and one suspects very easily, a field worker can become

emotionally involved and lose objectivity which renders the data collected very suspect. This danger is an ever present possibility and hence the constant warnings of the anthropologists about 'going native'. (Powdermaker, 1967).

While quantitative methods are time consuming and fraught with potential pitfalls, they are in the end essential because of the insights they provide, particularly in the area of the subjective meanings and interpretations of the subjects of the research. Similarly I would argue quantitative methods also involve a considerable amount of time in the field if the results they are to produce are to be meaningful or indeed credible. Quantitative data which is hurriedly collected can only result in misinterpretation and misunderstanding. The tendency and temptation to rush out into the field, collect data, and then spend months or even years working with and manipulating this data, often in front of the undeniably seductive computer terminal, is to be avoided at all costs. Additionally, I would argue that wherever possible the quantitative data that is collected should be variables which are present and an existing part of the social situation under investigation rather than more artificial variables.

Perhaps because of the lack of precedents in educational research where multi methodological approaches have been employed an inordinate mass of data, both qualitative and quantitative was collected. I was faced with the, at times very difficult, task of selecting out what seemed to be the most relevant and that which addressed the issues

most directly. This discarding of data was no easy task as there was a definite tendency to 'cling' to the data which I had so meticulously and painstakingly collected. In the end it was necessary to become quite ruthless. This did certainly bring a sense of waste - of time, effort, resources and more importantly of much interesting, if not directly relevant, data. One hopes that in the end the data which has been used is of far higher quality than what would have been the case if a much more limited data collection exercise had been undertaken.

Engaging in cross gender data collection has been a notable feature of this research. The tendency with research in the past has been for men to undertake research on boys and women research on girls. However, it seemed artificial for me to omit half of the population of the school I was studying. In the end the research that was conducted on the girls and that into boy-girl relationships was in many ways the most fruitful and indeed exciting part of the research. There were though undoubtedly aspects of the school lives of these girls that were barred to me because of my gender but there may well have been other aspects which I was able to explore that a woman researcher would not have been able to nor seen as significant. The same can be said of the boys. A woman researcher may have been able to encourage the boys to talk more freely about aspects of their lives which they were reluctant to do with me or alternatively which because of my maleness I did not see as important.

Cross gender and multi methodological approaches are definite ways forward in the field of educational research. Ideally it would be good to have male and female researchers conducting research on both sexes.

and community. The social structural family and class location of the pupils constantly impinges upon the social formations and relationships of the pupils. The proximity of residence, for example, was seen to be a factor in the formation of peer networks while the attitudes of parents towards school and education more generally was seen to be reflected in the approach and orientation to school of some of the peer networks.

While clearly the nature and culture of the school peer networks can be seen as responding to and in part determined by the school constraints, pressures and expectations they can also, particularly in the case of the girls, be seen to be responding to the wider social and cultural pressures. At this age for girls the peer network is the arena where wider social and class cultural pressures and expectations are discussed and where appropriate strategies for coping with or adapting to them are developed and learned. The peer network with these girls becomes an arena and structure of cultural assimilation and reproduction. The different peer networks interpret, cope with and react to these cultural pressures in different ways. These differences it would appear have considerable implications for the orientation and performance of these girls at school and for their long term careers and future within the social structure.

The girls peer networks would appear to be a critical point where micro interactions and macro structural constraints can be seen to meet. This is an arena where one can see the structural constraints particularly in the form of class pressures and expectations operating

9.3. Research Issues

The peer network is certainly the dominant form of social organization in the school lives of these twelve and thirteen year old middle school boys and girls. Most of the pupils indicate that their peer friendships 'yer mates' are the best and most important aspect of their school lives.

The nature and organization of the peer networks differ considerably for boys and girls. The boys consistently make more reciprocated sociometric choices than the girls while the girls make significantly greater numbers of reciprocated sociometric cross class group boundary choices than the boys.

The girls form networks or groups rather than pairs and are quite adamant that this is a superior and preferable form of organization. This fact is confirmed by the observation, by the drawing of sociograms from the sociometric choices and by the interviews with the girls themselves, their teachers and parents. The girls' peer networks tend to be separate from each other with very few connections or overlap between the different groups. The importance of these peer networks can be gauged by the constant manoeuvres of the girls to keep in their peer network. They sit together in class wherever possible and when split up because of the setting procedures wait for each other outside the classroom. In their words they 'try to do everything together'.

Some doubt was expressed by some of the girls that this organizational form would continue once they go to high school and that

pairs rather than networks may become the dominant form of social organization. Further research is obviously required to see if this is in fact the case and to identify the factors and pressures which bring about or necessitate this change in their social relationships.

The boys' peer networks are large and undifferentiated and bounded by the class group. This is the dominant form of boys' social organization with in some cases two or three boys forming a small network. Whether or not this will change to the more separate pattern of the girls' networks is a matter for future research. There was some evidence in one of the class groups that this change was beginning to take place and it was suggested by one of the girls and one of the teachers that this is what would happen once the boys got to the high school. If this is indeed the case then it may well be that the large undifferentiated group is the earlier form of organization. There is a slight indication in one of the class groups of girls of this process taking place though for the other three classes if this is a developmental process then it must have taken place before the onset of this research project. This then may well be a very crucial period in the school lives of these boys and in view of the impact of the 'locking in' process of the peer network the next twelve months in the life of the boys will probably be crucial.

The peer networks do exhibit distinctive and in many ways different sub cultural patterns. Once again there are considerable differences between the boys and the girls.

For the boys their social world and peer social relationships were largely contained within the school class group boundaries. By far the dominant and often the only expressed concern of the boys was football. The playground football matches were for most of the boys the most important and best thing about school. These playground football matches were held at every opportunity and there were interminable discussions and arguments about these playground matches. There was also a keen following of the national football league and usually the first question asked of a stranger was "what team do you go for?"

Apart from the dominant concern with football the boys' networks were rather loose and undifferentiated. The boys identified a general 'code of conduct' which included such things as sharing, sticking up for and being loyal to your mates and being able to take a joke. However, ability at football appeared to take precedence over any of these factors and was certainly seen as more important in terms of social relationships than ability in school subjects or attitudes to school.

The girls' networks presented a much more varied picture. These differences were recognized and clearly identified by the girls themselves. The networks had many features in common such as the fun and support offered by friends in the group, the importance of having a group of friends, the almost continuous process of breaking and making friends, and helping each other and sharing. Other features, though, differentiated the networks. Attitudes and orientation to school differentiated the networks but this

did not follow the pro-anti polarization suggested in much research such as that conducted by Hargreaves, Lacey or Willis. These differences in 'ability' and orientation to school between networks were clearly recognized and commented on by the girls themselves with for example the 'Science lab' girls as hard working 'teachers pets', the 'P.E.' girls as 'clever' but not very interested in working hard with their school work, the 'nice' girls making things as easy as possible and the 'quiet' girls taking on the definition of 'thick' because of their low set placement. The peer networks with these girls acted to continually reinforce the school defined performance hierarchy.

A distinctive distinguishing feature of the girls' peer networks was their level of involvement in elements of what might be described as the culture of femininity, pop and teenage culture and fashion. In the school situation this was obvious by the girls, particularly the 'P.E.' and 'Science lab' girls, attempts to wear make-up, jewellery and fashion clothes. This was frowned on by the school and the 'Science lab' girls particularly found this as somewhat incongruous as in most other ways at school they were treated as responsible and mature young adults.

The other main difference between the girls' networks was their ability to avoid or 'get round' some of the school rules. It was the most publicly pro school group, the 'Science lab' girls and the most publicly anti school group, the 'P.E.' girls who were best able to 'negotiate' the school rules. The 'Science lab' girls, because they

were seen as mature and responsible, and the 'P.E.' girls, because on many occasions it seemed easier not to confront them over rule infringements. By contrast the 'nice' girls and 'quiet' girls in slightly different ways, in terms of behaviour in school were judged to be conformist or at least no trouble. Nevertheless, by a number of measures they were not academically able nor particularly pro school in their attitudes, thus the simple notion that academic ability or lack of it equates easily with pro and anti school behaviour is challenged fundamentally.

The relationship between the boys and girls varied with each of the girls peer networks. The 'P.E.' girls dominated the boys both in the playground and in class. The 'P.E.' girls were physically far more mature than the boys - 'a bunch of weeds' and particularly in the playground the boys avoided these girls at all costs. In the classroom this dominance was indicated by one of the boys who said that the boys were able to borrow things from Josephine, one of the 'P.E.' girls, 'because she knew that you would give it back'.

How and why these peer networks form is difficult to isolate precisely. The formation of peer networks is a very complex issue and no watertight formula is ever likely to emerge. However, there are significant tendencies and trends which the analysis has identified. The most important and clear cut of these, for boys and girls of this age are gender and the school organization factor, the class group. This second factor also implies of course that peer network formation is age specific. For the cohort as a whole the other significant factor

was the home and family background with place of residence and the composition of the family being the most important. Fathers occupation did not show up as significant, this may be because of the relative homogeneity of this cohort of pupils which means that the variable does not act as a discriminatory factor. However it does indicate that this factor is not important as a factor affecting peer network formation for children of this age group and within the broad social strata. This is of course an empirical question which lends itself to further investigation as findings may well differ in schools with more marked variations in social class background. Attitudes to school as measured by the Barker-Lunn (1970) attitude to school scale and ability at school do not, for this cohort, appear to affect the formation of peer networks. So it is the structural features of the school and the social structural features of the pupils family and background in addition to age and gender that are the factors which most affect the formation of peer networks.

For the pupils themselves, how their peer networks came about, was somewhat of a non-question. It was something that they didn't really think about or concern themselves with. If pressed they usually offered chance, almost accidental factors, as the reason for the formation of their network.

When the analysis was conducted separately for boys and girls some significant differences occurred. School organizational factors were far more important for boys than girls. However, the second

most important factor in the case of boys friendship choice was that of ability and attitudes to school while for girls this remained non-significant. In the choice of friends for boys this factor takes on increasing importance and this may be of particular importance if or as the boys begin to form more separate groups. For the girls the second most important factor is that of home and family background. This factor is also significant for boys but more so for the girls.

These differences signify important differences between boys and girls in the choice of friends and peer network formation as it would appear that girls sociometric choices are made from within girls of similar family backgrounds while boys sociometric choices are made from within boys of similar attitudes, abilities and performance at school. This possibility warrants further investigation particularly in view of the generalizations that are so often made about school pupils from research that has been conducted on boys.

A detailed investigation of the 4F girls' peer networks reveal several additional features. On the attitude to school scales clearly the most anti school group are the 'quiet' girls, however, these girls were quiet, unobtrusive and conforming in school. This feature reinforces the point that just because pupils are 'browned off' with school doesn't necessarily mean, as is often indicated in the education literature, that they are publicly anti school or disruptive. There is a tendency for the 'Science lab' girls who are the most positive towards school to be from the higher S.E.S. backgrounds, while there does

also appear to be a trend for girls who have had some upset or breakdown in their family to group together. It may well be that these girls are able to gain considerable support and understanding from other girls who have had similar experiences.

The final chapter attempted to assess the impact that the peer network has on these school pupils. Does it make any difference to their careers at school and life chances generally? The pupils themselves found difficulty in identifying areas where their friends influenced them. The two areas which were most readily recalled were fashion in the case of girls and football in the case of the boys. That the pupils were largely unaware of the effect that their friends had on them may well mean that the influence of the peer network became seen as 'natural'.

Some parents felt that peers had a considerable influence over performance at school. Parents also felt that girls were more influenced by peers than were boys and certainly boys were allowed far more freedom and were not as nearly closely supervised in their relationships with friends as were the girls. The teachers saw the peer networks as a prominent and important feature of the school lives of the pupils and felt that the peer network was important to the social development of the pupils. Teachers indicated that peers exerted considerable influence and that this influence could be to both good and bad effect. However most of the examples and instances recounted by the teachers tended to be where they felt that peers were a bad influence on a particular pupil or group of pupils.

The peer network does have an effect on attitudes to and performance at school. This appears to operate in at least two ways. Firstly, there is direct influence of peer norms over such things as doing of homework, answering of questions, how hard to try in class, which over a period of time undoubtedly affects actual performance. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, because it is not so obvious to those involved is the perceptions and expectations of performance held by the teachers of the different peer networks. This can be seen operating particularly in the case of the girls. Different expectations are held of the different groups. These differences over a period of time can and do lead to the pupils' fulfilling these expectations. Additionally, these different expectations often lead to different evaluations of performance with similar standards of performance being evaluated differently. This favours those in the networks seen as hard working and pro school and works against those networks who are seen as more interested in having a good time. Further evidence of these tendencies and an indication of how these cumulative expectations are 'passed on' was found in the set placement of pupils for the high school.

Closely allied to the impact of the peer network on performance at school is the effect on future careers and life chances. The peer network acts as a very important arena where hopes, plans, ambitions for the future, social and cultural expectations and pressures are discussed, formulated, assimilated and responses and strategies learned and adopted. As such the peer networks for these girls have a crucial effect on the futures of these girls. The girls' job ambitions in

general are very traditionally female with none aspiring to factory work, the most readily available form of employment in the area. Already though the girls differ in the way they see school helping them to get the jobs they want. Some networks saw it as essential to achieving their job ambitions while others saw school as almost irrelevant.

The nature of patriarchal relations in our society does mean that girls are going to experience a considerably more constraining or restricting set of social pressures and expectations. The peer network for these girls was a crucial venue in coping with and adjusting to these pressures. The responses to these pressures appear to be of three different types: i) An acceptance of these pressures and expectations, the 'quiet' and 'nice' girls are examples, which will probably mean these girls being propelled into early marriage and domestic responsibility; ii) A partial rejection of these pressures and the acceptance of school and some more middle class values, the 'Science lab' girls are examples, which will probably mean some sort of career before or as well as marriage and domestic responsibility; iii) The ignoring of these pressures and a looking to the peer network to provide fun and excitement further decreasing performance at school, the 'P.E.' girls are an example which will probably mean at best only a temporary avoidance of these pressures towards marriage and domestic responsibility. Here the peer network can be seen as mediating wider social structural forces and the locking in processes of the peer networks mean that for many of these girls they have very little control over their future.

A follow-up study, of the same group of children, which was conducted by a male and female research team could very usefully address some of the questions raised here. Research into the development of these pupils' social relationships would provide valuable longitudinal information and enable more comparisons to be made with existing studies. For example, are the 'P.E.' girls the female equivalents of Willis' 'lads'? A study of this nature would also allow further development in the linking of the interactional and structural levels of analysis.

Understanding social relationships is no easy task. Social relationships are an integral part of human lives. The social relationships of children at school are inexorably bound up with their futures. An understanding of the social relationships of school children is imperative for parents, teachers and all concerned with education and the well being of the next generation. It is hoped that this research increases our understanding.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

This presents a transcript of the actual administration of the following
at wave 3:-

A. The Five Sociometric Questions

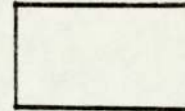
- 1) Who do you usually play with after school?
- 2) Who would you most like to be friends with at school?
- 3) Who would you least like to be friends with at school?
- 4) Who do you usually play with in the playground?
- 5) Who do you usually work with in class?

B. The attitude questionnaire.

C. The Family background information.

Name _____

Class _____



Columns

1 - 3

Please read each of the following statements carefully. Put a circle around the number which most clearly fits your feelings about each statement:

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = agree
- 3 = no feelings either way
- 4 = disagree
- 5 = strongly disagree

- a) I bet going out to work is better than school 1 2 3 4 5 4
- b) It's nice to fool about in class 1 2 3 4 5 5
- c) I dislike children who are noisy in class 1 2 3 4 5 6
- d) School is boring 1 2 3 4 5 7
- e) When the teacher goes out of the room I play about 1 2 3 4 5 8
- f) School is fun 1 2 3 4 5 9
- g) I like people who get me into mischief 1 2 3 4 5 10
- h) Going to school is a waste of time 1 2 3 4 5 11
- i) I like school 1 2 3 4 5 12
- j) I like children who get into trouble 1 2 3 4 5 13
- k) I would leave school tomorrow if I could 1 2 3 4 5 14

Now please answer the questions in the way that your group of best friends would answer:

- a) I bet going out to work is better than school 1 2 3 4 5 15
- b) It's nice to fool about in class 1 2 3 4 5 16

c) I dislike children who are noisy in class	1	2	3	4	5	17
d) School is boring	1	2	3	4	5	18
e) When the teacher goes out of the room I play about	1	2	3	4	5	19
f) School is fun	1	2	3	4	5	20
g) I like people who get me into mischief	1	2	3	4	5	21
h) Going to school is a waste of time	1	2	3	4	5	22
i) I like school	1	2	3	4	5	23
j) I like children who get into trouble	1	2	3	4	5	24
k) I would leave school tomorrow if I could	1	2	3	4	5	25

INSTRUCTIONS OF SOCIOMETRIC AND ATTAINMENT TESTS

(Transcript of tape recording of actual administration)

Now the information required then.

Sociometric questions

Who do you usually play with, hang around with, after school? Important word is usually not cousin Billy who comes from Cornwall once a year, who do you usually spend your time with evenings, after school, weekends, holidays? I want the name of the person, the class that they are in, the school they go to, the year that they are in, how long you have been friends, how long you have been spending your time with that person. The main one.

Make sure your name and your class and the question is at the top.

There is no limit to how many names you have on your list - it is up to you to answer the question.

The second question is, who would you most like to be friends with at school? At school this time - so the choice is from people who are at Hilltop. Who would you most like to be friends with at school? You may already be. In fact, I would suggest that most of you probably will already be friends with these people. But who would you most like to be? Not teachers, The important word is most once again.

No, it is up to you once again. There is no right number. I would guess in most cases you already would be. You don't need to put for how long with this one but if you could put name and class. Remember, this is at this school. Who would you most like to be friends with at this school? It is private - no conferring.

Next question, question 3. The opposite to question 2. Who would you least like to be friends with at school. I want this to be kept to yourself - no calling out - no being silly because it can hurt people.

Just be a bit sensitive about it. Who would you least like to be friends with at school? Don't forget to put a question 3 at the top. Make sure that you have got your name, your class, a big 3, and a summary of ...

The fourth question is who do you usually play with, hang around with in the playground, lunch time, breaktime, within the school hours? Who do you usually play with at lunch times breaktimes? You may not play, but who do you spend your time with? Who do you spend your time with lunch time breaktimes?

One other thing could you give me the three bits of information again this time - the same that we did for the first question? The name, what class, or what year they are in and how long you have been friends with them, spending your time with them. Once again the important word is usually. Who do you usually spend your time with in the playground at break?

Now the fifth question is, who do you usually work with in class? Say on a project. This may be people from your own class or it may be in subjects like English and Maths and French. Kids from different classes - depending on the groups you are in. So the question is who do you usually work with in class? Any questions? Remember the important word is usually. Not someone that you have worked with once last year. But who do you work with most often, in class? If you could also, please, three bits of information again. Name what class they are in and how long you have been working in class. It might be since the beginning of the first term in the fourth year, or since the third year or this term.

Attitude questionnaire

Now make sure that you have your name, please, and you have turned over on this side. Don't turn it over. Name, class on the front. Everybody watching carefully while I read through the instructions so that they know absolutely sure what is required.

Please read each of the following statements carefully, and put a circle around the number which most clearly fits your feelings about each statement.

Right. You have got number 1 means strongly agree.

2 agree

3 no feelings - don't care either way

4 disagree

5 strongly disagree

Let's have a look now at some of the statements.

Letter a - I bet going out to work is better than school. Now you have got to try and match up your feelings with 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Now if you think I bet that is the case, I am sure going out to work is better than school you put a circle round the 1. If you think on the other hand no school is miles better than work you would put a circle around the 5 or somewhere inbetween, Put your pen down and don't do them yet please.

Right let's have a look at another letter c. I dislike children who are noisy in class. So if you agree with that statement if you do, if kids who are noisy in class really get up your nose then you put a circle round letter 1. If you do like kids who are very noisy in class then you put a circle round the number 5. If it didn't bother you either way then

you would have a circle round the number 3.

Let's have a look at letter j. That is a bit tricky, letter j. I like children who get into trouble. If you agree with that and like the kids who get into trouble and you strongly agree with that then you put a circle round the 1. Or if you don't at all then you put a circle round the 5 or somewhere inbetween.

Now read them carefully. Think about them carefully. If you make a mistake scratch over the top and put a circle round the one that you want. It doesn't have to be neat but it does have to be clear so that I know which one you mean. Don't touch the column of the far right hand side that is for the computer and stop when you get to the black line in the middle. Right. Get cracking. Any questions.

When you have finished read them through again. And as a check make sure you have got 11 circles not that you have forgotten one and left one question out.

That g - I like people who get me into mischief, right and j - I like children who get into trouble. They look as if they are the same but they are very different really.

Right the bottom half of the page - the instructions are now please answer the questions in the way that your group of best friends would answer. They are exactly the same statements again. I want you to imagine how or what your friends would answer. What do you reckon they would answer in answer to these questions?

Just think about your best friends - your main friends.

Your group of best friends. In fact it is much more difficult than you think. I want you to really concentrate. Any other questions? And I don't want comparing either. So put your hand over it and do it yourself. Because if you see what your friend is writing you may be tempted to copy his.

Family Background Information

Now look carefully - this side is a little bit tricky. Look carefully please. We will just do one question at a time I think.

Describe your father's occupation - your dad's job. If you can things like where he works. The place that he works - what the name of his job is, is he a welder, a fitter, a bus conductor or a mechanic. And then if you could describe what he does at work. Put it underneath the questions not in the columns in the side-- where he works - the name of his job and try and describe for me what he actually does.

Anybody who is uncertain about that or has not got a dad or something like that come and see me.

Question 2 then is the same sort of thing for your mom. Whether your family is buying, paying of the mortgage or renting a house. Just put buying or renting a the house.

Listen carefully then to the fourth question. I want more than just a number if I can. This is the people, your family that is living at home now. So you will have something like, mom, dad, two girls, two boys or something like that or you might have mom, stepdad, grandpa, two boys, two girls. No not your pets! And you might also have if you have got say a brother who is working in London, or a sister who is married put them in brackets at the bottom. They are not actually living at home

but they are still part of your family. Is that clear everybody. Or you might just have yourself and your mom or you might have yourself and your dad just put so. Important to include yourself. Either write down me or when you put in say two boys or three girls, count yourself or if you haven't counted yourself say two boys, three girls, plus me. Make sure that you are included in your families is that clear? It is a little bit tricky.

Appendix B

Paragraph 1 - 16 - Full list of data collected on cohort of pupils.

Paragraph 17 - Discussion of attitude measures.

1. Teacher awarded grades for attainment and effort in the following subject areas:-

Written English

Oral English

Mathematics

Science

Environmental Studies

French

Music

Art/Craft

Physical Education.

A - E grades coded 1 - 5 were given in all subjects for both attainment in the subject and teacher evaluation of how hard they tried. There was little standardisation between teachers teaching the same subject to different classes except in science where one teacher taught all four classes.

These grades were collected from the record cards at each of the three waves: end of third year, December in the fourth year, and June/July at the end of the fourth year. This resulted in the collection of 54 variables.

2. Parents attendance at parents evening interviews. These interviews were held once a year and the attendance of parents (or not)

entered on the school record card. Here two variables were collected - parental attendance when the child was in the third year and again when the child was in the fourth year. Attendance was coded as follows:-

- 1 = both parents attended
- 2 = mother only attended
- 3 = father only attended
- 4 = no family representative attended.

3. The gender of the pupil.

- 1 = male
- 2 = female

4. Reading Ages.

Where possible a child's reading age at 4 different points in time was collected:-

a) Where available the 1st school record card indicated the reading age of the child at the end of his/her 1st school career. On most of the record cards there was no indication as to what means had been used to calculate the Reading Age so comparability is somewhat dubious.

b) Reading Ages at the end of the 3rd year (wave 1). Here most of the pupils were tested using the Schonell word recognition test but some were tested using the Hoborn reading tests.

c) At wave 2 and wave 3 reading ages were measured using the Schonell word recognition tests. These reading age tests were administered by the class teachers and entered on the child's record card. Individual variation between teachers may cause some variations although standard

procedures were followed by teachers. Reading ages were coded as follows:-
e.g.

11 years 2 months = 11.16 coded 1116

10 years 10 months = 10.80 coded 1080

12 years 6 months + = 13.00 coded 1300

12 years 6 months = 12.50 coded 1250

5. Attendance

Numbers of half days absent were collected from the class registers.

These numbers were collected at the end of the three waves. So the wave 1 figure represented the number of half days absent for the whole of the third year. Wave 2 figures represents the number of $\frac{1}{2}$ days absent for the 1st term of the fourth year and the wave 3 figure represents the number of $\frac{1}{2}$ days absent for terms two and three of the fourth year.

6. Family unit (see also Appendix A for transcript of administration)

This variable identifies the composition of the family unit and was collected by the pupils themselves describing their family unit in response to a questionnaire item. This data was collected at wave three at the same time as the wave three attitude questionnaires were administered.

The responses were coded in the following way:-

1 = child living with both mother and father

2 = child living with step father and mother

3 = child living with father and step mother

4 = child living with mother only

5 = child living with father only

6 = child living with two new parents

7 = child living with one new parent

7. Number of siblings (see also Appendix A for transcript of administration)

This variable was simply the total number of siblings in the family. Included were step brothers and step sisters or half brothers and half sisters if they were actually part of the present family arrangements. This was collected by the pupils responding to a questionnaire item administered at wave three.

8. Number of siblings living at home. Collected by pupils responding to a questionnaire item at wave three.

9. Status of housing (see also appendix A for transcript of administration)

This variable indicated whether or not the pupil's family were renting or owned their own home. It was collected by asking the pupils the question and checked on the plan of the housing estate from which the assistant working for the housing cooperation was able to indicate which areas were the rented housing.

1 = rented

2 = own home

10. Residence

The addresses of the pupils were coded in the different ways. Firstly by the name of the street in which they lived and secondly by the estate on which they lived. There were three estates served by the school, two of them (coded 1 and 2) were adjacent and the third (coded 3) on the other side of the school. All were in walking distance of each other. Some pupils were from other areas and these were

coded 4.

11. Father's Occupation (see Appendix A for transcript of administration)

Father's occupation was coded according to Hall-Jones (1950) occupational prestige scale. Pupils were asked to describe what work their fathers did. Where pupils seemed unclear or unsure then they were followed up by a brief discussion with me and this led to a reasonably satisfactory definition of father's occupation. This was checked with the record cards. However record cards often proved to be incomplete or inadequate and in some cases inaccurate where father had changed jobs. The following coding was used:-

- 1 = Hall Jones Class 1
- 2 = Hall Jones Class 2
- 3 = Hall Jones Class 3
- 4 = Hall Jones Class 4
- 5 = Hall Jones Class 5 (a)
- 6 = Hall Jones Class 5 (b)
- 7 = Hall Jones Class 6
- 8 = Hall Jones Class 7
- 9 = No father at home - deceased or separated
- 10 = Father unemployed

12. Mother's occupation (see also Appendix A for transcript of administration).

There is no satisfactory index for classifying the occupational prestige of women's occupation. There are many reasons, some of which have been explained earlier, why to attempt the task is difficult. However just to get some idea of the jobs the mothers of pupils in the cohort

had the mother's occupations have been coded on the same Hall-Jones scale. Similar procedures were followed for collecting and coding of data as those for the fathers. There was only one difference.

Code 10 = housewife

13 Child's cooperation and integration

Teachers were required to fill in on the record cards an evaluation of:-

- a) the child's cooperativeness with the teachers, and
- b) their evaluation of the child's integration with other children.

These evaluations while not treated very seriously by teachers were completed annually. So data was collected at the end of the 3rd and 4th years (waves 1 and 2) for both cooperation and integration and teachers evaluations were coded as follows:-

- 1 = Excellent
- 2 = very good
- 3 = good
- 4 = fair
- 5 = poor

14. Transfer to high school test scores

A battery of tests were administered by the high school as part of the transfer process. Some of these tests were nationally standardised tests and others were set by the high school. The results of these tests were made available by the high school and for each child included:-

- a) Standardised score on the N F E R (Calvert, B) non verbal I Q test
- b) Standardised score on the Richmond Test (1974) of basic skills - comprehension (Test R)
- c) Standardised score on Richmond test (1974) of Basic Skills Test M Mathematics skills. This score is the mean of the score test M.I. Mathematical Concepts and M2 Mathematics problem solving.
- d) A score on the High School set, administered and marked English essay (expressed as a percentage)
- e) A score on the High School set, administered and marked Mathematics test expressed as a percentage.

15. School organisational factors

- a) First school attended. This was collected from the school record cards and where this was unavailable by checking with the pupils themselves. The data was coded as follows:-

- 1 = First school A }
 - 2 = First School B } The two main feeder first schools
- 3 = Any other first school

- b) Third year class group. Information was collected from the third year class lists. Coded:-

- 1 = 3F
- 2 = 3S
- 3 = 3J
- 4 = 3P
- 5 = Not at school in 3rd year

c) Whether or not pupil has changed class since beginning middle school. This was collected from school records and also checked with the pupils. Coded:-

1 = been in same class since first year

2 = have changed classes

3 = Started at Hilltop late but have been in same class since

4 = Started at Hilltop late but have changed classes.

d) Fourth year class group. Collected from class lists and coded:-

1 = 4W

2 = 4S

3 = 4J

4 = 4P

e) In the third year the pupils were set for maths and French. For maths all classes were regrouped into five sets while for French two of the class groups were divided into three sets. The data was collected from records and checked with teachers and pupils. The Maths sets were coded:-

1 = Set 1

2 = Set 2

3 = Set 3

4 = Set 4

5 = Set 5

and the French groups were coded:-

1 = Set 1

2 = Set 2

3 = Set 3

f) In the fourth year the pupils were set for English, Maths and French. In Maths and English the whole year was regrouped into five sets while for French two classes were divided into three sets. Data was collected from school records. Pupils set placement was recorded for the first term of the fourth year (Wave 2) and for the third term of the fourth year (Wave 3). Pupils set placements for English and maths for both wave 2 and wave 3 have been coded as follows:-

- 1 = set 1
- 2 = set 2
- 3 = set 3
- 4 = set 4
- 5 = set 5

For French two classes (4P and 4F) (4J and 4S) were combined and divided into three sets. Pupils French set placements were recorded for wave 2 and wave 3 and were coded as follows:-

- 1 = Set 1
- 2 = Set 2
- 3 = Set 3

16. High school organisational placement

At the end of the fourth year the high school staff after the thorough testing and interviewing procedure drew up lists of teaching groups for the following year. i.e. the cohort of pupils 1st year at High School. The high school staff made these records available. There were several different groupings:-

- a) Teaching bands:

- 1 = Top Band (2 class groups)
- 2 = Middle band upper - takes German (1 class group)
- 3 = Middle band (4 class groups)
- 4 = Middle band - lower (1 class group)
- 5 = Lower band - remedial (1 class group)
- 0 = Hilltop pupils going to other schools

b) Maths and English sets. Coded as follows:-

- 1 = Set 1
- 2 = Set 2
- 3 = Set 3
- 4 = Set 4
- 5 = Set 5
- 6 = Set 6
- 7 = Set 7
- 8 = Set 8
- 9 = Set 9
- 10 = Remedial group
- 0 = Hilltop pupils going to other schools

17. Attitude measures (See also Appendix A for transcript)

A simple, easy to administer attitude to school questionnaire was required in order to provide an additional measure of attitudes to those from the interviews with pupils and of observation. It was also felt that a standard measure for all pupils in the cohort was desirable. The Barker-Lunn (1970) attitude scales were selected as being most suitable as they were designed for 11+ year old children and had been very extensively validated and tested. Scales F and H were selected. Scale F was a general attitude to school scale and consisted of the following

six statements to which the pupils were asked to respond on a 5 point scale:-

- a) I bet going out to work is better than school
- b) School is boring
- c) School is fun
- d) Going to school is a waste of time
- e) I like school
- f) I would leave school tomorrow if I could

Scale H which was designed to tap attitudes towards conforming and non-conforming pupils consisted of five items:-

- a) It's nice to fool around in class
- b) I dislike children who are noisy in class
- c) When the teacher goes out of the room I play about
- d) I like people who get me into mischief
- e) I like children who get into trouble.

The pupils were also asked to respond to the exact same item in the manner they thought that their group of best friends would answer. These items were classified as scale K (corresponding to F) and L (corresponding to H). The attitude questionnaires were administered to one class at a time. The sheets were distributed and what was required was explained carefully when scales F and H had been completed the pupils stopped while what was required for K and L was carefully explained. The items for the two scales were mixed together and it should also be noted that for some items a circle around 1 indicates a positive attitude to school while for others this would indicate negative attitudes. These responses were reversed by the computer so

that the higher the score the more positive an attitude to school. So on Scale F there was a maximum score of 30 and a minimum of 6 and on Scale H there was a maximum score of 25 and a minimum score of 5. Barker-Lunn (1970) reports alpha co-efficients of internal consistency of 0.89 for Scale F and 0.90 for Scale H. The results from this cohort give the coefficients of 0.86 for Scale F and 0.68 for Scale H. The low coefficient for Scale F is almost certainly due to the difficulties experienced by the children with the double negative implications of item c) I dislike children who are noisy in class where the pupils showed obvious signs of confusion. The alpha co-efficient for scale K was 0.86 and for scale L was 0.72.

The following table presents the mean scores on each of the 4 scales for the three waves.

Attitudes to school scales

	<u>Wave I</u>	<u>Wave II</u>	<u>Wave III</u>
Scale F	(range 6 - 30) 19.381 (SD 6.120)	(range 6 - 30) 21.354 (SD 4.747)	Range 9 - 30 20.894 (SD 4.6.4)
Scale H	(range 9 - 25) 17.867 (SD 3.636)	(range 5 - 25) 17.743 (SD 4.001)	(range 11 - 25) 18.283 (SD 2.962)
Scale K	(Range 6 - 30) 16.398 (SD 6.293)	(Range 6 - 30) 18.195 (SD 5.649)	(Range 6 - 30) 17.956 (SD 5.149)
Scale L	(range 5 - 25) 15.319 (SD 4.145)	(range 5 - 25) 15.991 (SD 4.113)	(range 5 - 25) 16.699 (SD 4.213)

Two interesting features emerge from the scales. The general attitude to school scale increases significantly between the third and fourth

year. This increase is most marked between the end of the 3rd year and the first term of the fourth year. This 'enthusiasm' for school can probably be explained by the pupils becoming 'top' of the school. This 'enthusiasm' does decrease slightly as the fourth year progresses but still at the end of the fourth year remains higher than what it was at the end of the third year. For this cohort of middle school pupils at least there would not appear to be a 'browning off' process like is so often reported in other forms of educational institution.

At all stages the pupils perception of their friend's attitudes is significantly more anti-school than those of their own. Pupils judge that their group of best friends are less positively orientated to school than they are. This factor may well have an important impact on the behaviour of peer networks. If an individual perceives that his group of best friends hold more negative attitudes to school than he does then he is likely to modify his behaviour accordingly to fit in with these perceived peer norms. This may have fundamental consequences over a period of time and could well regulate an individual pupil's response in areas such as doing homework or answering questions in class and a consequent depressing effect on long term ambitions and performance.

Barker-Lunn reports a correlation of 0.37 between the two scales F and H. The table below presents the Pearson Correlations for the various four scales at Wave 1 and Wave 3.

Wave 1 Attitude Scales

	<u>Scale F</u>	<u>Scale H</u>	<u>Scale K</u>	<u>Scale L</u>
Scale F	1.00	0.52	0.43	0.24
Scale H	0.52	1.00	0.19	0.34
Scale K	0.43	0.19	1.00	0.57
Scale L	0.24	0.34	0.57	1.00

Wave 3 Attitude Scales

	<u>Scale F</u>	<u>Scale H</u>	<u>Scale K</u>	<u>Scale L</u>
Scale F	1.00	0.38	0.43	0.19
Scale H	0.38	1.00	0.19	0.54
Scale K	0.43	0.19	1.00	0.51
Scale L	0.19	0.54	0.51	1.00

Wave 3 produces a similar correlation between scales F and H as that reported by Barker-Lunn (1970) while wave 1 results produce a considerably higher Pearson correlation coefficient.

APPENDIX C

Interview Schedule used to interview pupils

(Interviews were audio and video tape recorded)

- (i) The group and the individual's relationship to the group
- (a) How do you like school?
 - (b) Which parts do you like/dislike?
 - (c) Which subjects?
 - (d) How do you get on with the teachers?
 - (e) Do you have a group of best friends?
 - (f) Who is in this group? Tell me about your group.
 - (g) Do you spend most of your time in school/out of school with this group?
 - (h) Is there someone who is the most important in your group?
 - (i) Where do you think you fit into the group?
 - (j) How do you spend your time out of school?
 - (k) What are the important things about being in your group?
 - (l) What sort of things does your group do?
 - (m) What sort of person do you have to be to belong to your group?
 - (n) Do you have rules or ways to behave?
 - (o) Is sharing things important in your group?
 - (p) What does your group think about helping each other with work, copying, cheating?
 - (q) Is being in your group important to you - why?
 - (r) Do you always try to do the same things as the others in your group?
 - (s) How much does the group/your friends influence you?
- (ii) The group and the others
- (a) How do you and your group get on with the other boys/girls (same sex) in your class?

- (b) What do you think of the boys/girls (opposite sex) in your class?
- (c) Do you have much to do with the boys/girls in your class?
- (d) Do you have a special boyfriend/girlfriend?
- (e) Do you/your group have much to do with the kids in the other classes?

(iii) The group and the institution

- (a) What do the teachers think of you?
- (b) What do the teachers think of your group?
- (c) Do they ever try to split you up - which ones?
- (d) Does going to different classes for different subjects affect your group?
- (e) Have you always been in the same class?
- (f) How long have you had the same group of friends?
- (g) Are you looking forward to going to High School?

(iv) The group and the social structure

- (a) Do you think about what sort of job you'd like when you leave school?
- (b) What does your dad do? What does your mum do?
- (c) Do you think that school is important/useful in helping you get the job you want?
- (d) What do your parents think about school?
- (e) Do your parents have any ambitions for you?
- (f) Do you belong to any clubs?
- (g) Do you think this area is a good place to live?

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule used for interviews with teachers

1. Can you tell me about the fourth year. How you see them as a year?
2. Do you think that being the top year in the school makes them special?
3. Do teachers in other years regard teaching in the fourth year as more difficult?
4. Do the pupils form friendship groups?
5. How stable are they?
6. Is there much change between the third years and the fourth years?
7. Do you see any difference between the boys and the girls?
8. Do you see differences between the four classes?
9. What are the kids like in this area?
10. Are there differences between the estates?
11. Do you see any differences in the way the girls group and the way the boys group?
12. What are the major factors in determining groupings?
13. Can you describe some of the groups of girls?
14. Is there any criteria for the formation of these groups?

15. Are there any differences in the way that boys' groups and girls' groups form?
16. What are the boys' groups as you see them?
17. Do you think that the groups have any effect on the pupils?

Appendix E

Interview schedule used to interview parents

(All interviews were audio tape recorded)

1 What do you think of the middle school idea? Do you think your child is at an advantage by attending a middle school compared to if they changed at 11+?

2 Are you aware of your child's rate of progress? What happens if the school or you feel that progress is not satisfactory?

3 Do you go up to the school? How often? For what reasons? Any barriers?

4 How much do you supervise/check up on children's:-
homework?

who he/she plays with etc?

set times for going to bed?

limit the amount of television watched?

5 Do you approve of his/her friends?

6 Do other children have a big influence on him/her?

7 Do you ever try to get him/her to play with others?

8 Do you have any ambition for your children? What would you like him/her to do/be?

9 Do you think school/education is important in helping your child to get a job?

10 Did school help you get the job you have got?

11 Do you think school is more/less important for your sons than your daughters?

12 What is it like living on the estate?

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