FEMALE WORKING CLASS YOUTH CULTURE IN A WORK SITUATION

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SUMMARY

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This thesis, which examines female working class youth culture in work, was prompted not only by the lack of studies of female youth but also the limited range of locations where youth had been studied, two major weaknesses in the sociology of youth culture. Previous empirical and theoretical research had focussed almost exlusively, either explicitly or implicitly, on male youth. Studies had been conducted in either schools where youth was in a subordinate position to adults, or leisure spheres, where adults were usually absent. In contrast, in this study among semi-skilled workers, youth and adults had similar tasks and similar status.

The research was carried out amongst women and girls in two contrasting locations, a ceramics factory and the computer input department of a mail order company, over a period of six months. A flexible research design, using participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire was adopted.

The activities and responses of the workers reflected a culture which, though it could be described as youthful, was not confined to the young girls; it was a feminine, rather than an age based culture. Yet, in both companies, management in expectation of disruptions by young workers, had developed containing strategies. Though all existing theories of youth culture postulate differences between youth and adult responses, they do not always consider the circumstances under which such differences occur. Hence, since it appears to be different from other locations, work as a critical case for the testing of youth culture is discussed in the final section of this thesis. The discussion is concluded with a consideration of the extent to which youth culture is a response to the class, age and gender position of young people in contemporary society.

Sociology - Youth culture - Female - Work

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

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CHAPTER 1

SOCIOLOGY, YOUTH CULTURE AND FEMALE YOUTH

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the wealth of studies, in the broad field of what can losely be called 'youth culture', there are still major problems at a theoretical level and yawning gaps in the empirical studies. In this chapter I consider the suitability of existing definitions and theories of youth culture for the study of female youth culture. In order to do this, I faced two immediate problems. The first was that most of the existing theories have been developed either explicitly or implicitly with male youth in mind and rarely do they address directly female youth. The task of evaluating these theoretical statements in terms of the culture of young girls has been made even more difficult by the second problem, namely, the lack of empirical studies of female youth culture against which theoretical statements could be tested. Nevertheless, because this study is attempting to add to the data on young girls, I did feel it was necessary to assess briefly the contemporary theories of youth culture and their potential explanatory power for female youth. In doing this I have followed the framework proposed by Woods (1977) who divided the analyses of youth culture into generational and cultural explanations.

Before looking at specific theories, I consider definitions of the term 'youth culture' itself. This, I felt, was important because firstly different sociologists have either used different definitions or have not given one at all and, secondly, these definitions, derived from the study of male youth, may or may not be applicable to female youth.

In the fourth section I have looked briefly at the literature on women and work, because of the locations in which this research took place. Here again, although there is a vast literature, there was a failure, for the most part, to consider young girls as a separate group from women in general. Therefore, what I have done is to trace some of the main themes in the sociology of women and work and comment on their usefulness for the study of female youth subculture in work.

In the final section I have drawn together the influence on my study of the literature on definitions, youth subculture and women in work, and I discuss how it has influenced the research design and location. This material is then referred to again in Chapter 7, when it is discussed in terms of my findings.

1. Some Definitions

'Youth Culture' is a term used in both the popular press and in sociological writings and, in many cases, its meaning is taken for granted in the sense that "we all know what is meant" by youth and, at least amongst sociologists, assumptions can be made about the

meaning of culture. However, the lack of a precise definition has resulted in a wide range of studies of young people of different ages, of their activities and behaviour all being referred to as youth culture. Some clarification of the term is particularly necessary for this study because it is concerned with female youth. 'Youth Culture' itself would seem to be a gender-free term but its use, in the literature, indicates it is nearly always assumed to refer to male youth. The mere fact that, in this study, I have to use the term female youth suggests my own awareness that youth, as a noun, has a masculine gender. The two parts of the term, youth and culture, each suggest boundaries which mark off a subset in society from other groups along two dimensions - age and culture. I propose to look at discussions and definitions of each and then consider the term as a whole and its applicability as a description of young girls.

The first part of the term, youth, has proved easier to define than culture. It clearly has some reference to age though it also is used synonymously with the term adolescent in some studies, which is a developmental criterion. The more popular term 'teenager' is not one widely used by sociologists as it confines itself strictly to young people in their 'teens: 13-19. One of the most quoted definitions is that by Buhler (1965):

> "Youth is an inbetween period beginning with the achievement of sexual maturity and ending with the acquisition of social maturity, that is, with the assumption of the social, sexual, economic and legal rights and duties of the adult".

This definition takes a developmental criteria, the achievement of sexual maturity, as the beginning of the period in the life cycle known as youth, and a social criteria - social maturity, as its completion. This has, in the past, proved to be a useful definition because it could cover a wide range of studies of young people of all ages. However, I do not think it is quite as suitable for a definition of contemporary youth because it does not give enough emphasis to the social aspects of the beginning of the period. It is possible that children may consider themselves as members of this youth category before they have, in fact, achieved sexual maturity, a physiological state. In the last few years there seems to have been a movement in this direction, either conditioned by young people themselves or fuelled by commercial interests anxious to extend the market for their goods. This is more noticeable among young girls, possibly because of their earlier sexual maturity and the presence of consumer goods, such as clothes and records which can be directed down the age range to them.

With this reservation, Buhüler's definition could be suitable as a description of female youth provided that it is understood that the timing of social maturity will differ for boys and girls. The girls I studied were in the youth category, being over the age of 16, sexually mature but unmarried, which is the status the girls themselves would take as an indication of social maturity.

Arriving at a useful definition of youth is much easier than finding a definition of culture which has wide acceptance. A major survey of the use of the term in the social sciences was published by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) who suggested that it had been used in six different ways. Their composite definition, derived from 160 sources, was:

> "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (ie historically derived and selected) ideas, and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other hand, as conditioning elements of further action".
>
> (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, p.2)

However, this definition is only one of many and the debate over the meaning of culture is extensive and can be followed through Cohen A.K.(1955), Downes (1966), Hall et al (1976) to Fine and Kleinman (1979). As can be seen, Kroeber and Kluckhohn's definition could apply to the culture of a whole society or a group. As youth is a subset in society it is usual to see its "patterns" as a subculture and here again the literature on the relationships of culture to subculture is extensive and has been reviewed by Clarke (1974) and Fine and Kleinman (1979). I propose to take a modified form of the approach suggested by Hall et al (1976) since it would seem to be the most useful for the examination of girls in work. They define culture in this way:

> "The 'culture' of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in moves, in customs, in the use of objects and material life. Culture is the distinctive shapes in which this material and social organisation of life expresses itself. A culture includes "maps of meaning" which make things intelligible to its members". (Hall et al 1976, p.10)

They suggest that, instead of there being one 'culture' in a society, as is suggested by consensus sociologists, there may be a dominant culture which itself is not homogeneous. There may also be other cultures which, though they have something in common with the dominant culture, express their subordination to that dominant culture in their own cultural forms.

Subcultures, according to Hall et al, are subsets, small, localised and differentiated structures within one or other of the larger cultural networks. They call the relationship between a subculture and a wider class culture a relationship with the parent culture. From this discussion, a subculture needs to be seen as having a relationship with both its parent culture and with the dominant culture(s). Hall et al would seem to suggest that the distinctive patterns, beliefs, values and meanings, which are developed by people of this age and social status, must be analysed in relation to both the 'parent culture' of the working class and the culture(s) of the dominant classes. This is the approach taken by Cohen (1972), Clarke (1974) and others. Although I find this a useful approach it seems to have one weakness. It is derived implicitly from a study of male youth cultures. For the working

class boy, age and class might be the perameters which determine his responses. However, for girls there is one further dimension, that of patriarchy. The culture of working class female youth needs to be examined, not only in terms of their relationship to their particular social class and other classes, but also in terms of their relationship to a society in which, in each social class, males (men, fathers, boys) make the dominant definitions. Therefore, any definition of Youth Subcultures needs to include not only age and class but also gender.

One other term which is used in this study is patriarchy. Again, as with terms like youth and culture, there is no widely accepted definition and the literature is equally extensive. Beechey (1979) shows that the concept is "neither single nor simple". Mitchell (1974) for example uses it to describe a kinship system in which women are exchanged by men, in which fathers have symbolic power and women have inferior status. Other definitions of patriarchy relate male dominance either to women's role as mothers and domestic labourers servicing men, or to the control men have over women's reproductive capacities (Firestone 1971). Rowbotham's (1979) comments on these sort of definitions was that their use of the term suggested that it was a structure that was fixed rather than being one which contained a changing range of forms within which men and women encountered one another.

For the purpose of this study, the most useful definition was that provided by MacDonald (1981):

> "Patriarchy refers to a set of relations between men and women which, although appearing to be based upon biological sex differences between men and women, nevertheless derives from the social and cultural transformation of these differences into concepts of masculinity and femininity, ie gender categories. Gender relations within patriarchy contain the hierarchy of the male over the female, and the economic, political and cultural subordination of women to the domination of men". (MacDonald 1981, p.7)

I found this particularly useful in this study of young girls because it covers the patriarchal relationships which the girls face, at home in the form of fathers and brothers, outside the home in the form of boyfriends and at work in the form of male superiors. This was the network of relationships to which all female youth culture, in work and without, was a response. However, in using this definition, I do not want to imply what Rowbotham calls " a fatalistic submission which allows no space for the complexities of women's defiance". Rather, I want to see patriarchal relations, together with class, as the structural contexts in which the culture of the girls, as I have defined it, takes place.

The provision of a comprehensive definition of youth culture, if such a thing were possible, is outside the scope of this study, although my findings do have implications for the way that what constitutes 'youth' is defined in society. However, to summarise, the term as a whole implies that a group of people, who can be defined as youth by their development and by their economic, legal and social status, can also be identified by their subculture, that

set of social relationships and social meanings which are different in some ways from those of children and adults. Thus far I have written as if the existence of a youth subculture is accepted and the problem has been to define and delineate it. This is not so. In the next section the existence of youth subculture is reviewed through a consideration of different theories and, again, the purpose of such a review is to consider the applicability of existing theories for the study of female youth subculture.

2. Introduction to theories of Youth Subcultures

Before looking at specific theories of youth subcultures it is necessary to raise a number of problems which apply to all the theories. The first has already been touched upon in the previous section on definitions. In many studies the meaning of youth culture is taken for granted, with the result that the perameters vary from study to study and, therefore, any theoretical statements may have only limited application. This is reflected most clearly in the differences between those sociologists who have attempted to explain delinquent youth and those looking at youth in general. Other differences have arisen from the study of different social classes and different age groups. Secondly, this failure to define the phenomenon to be explained has led to the absence of all-embracing theories. If one of the aims of the sociological enterprise is to produce theories about the relationship between different parts of society, then theories of youth culture, at least at the level that Glaser and Strauss (1968) call substantive,

should embrace all youth as defined, ie working class, middle class, younger, older, boys and girls. Some, such as Eisenstadt (1956) and Parsons (1964) attempt to do this without saying as much explicitly. Others have developed low level theories about groups of young people such as delinquent boys or Hippies. Hence, there is still a need for overall theories which attempt to embrace these different elements.

The third problem, which gave rise to this study, is the failure of most statements on youth subcultures to take any separate account of female youth. Most theories contain the implicit assumption that they apply to all youth, both boys and girls. And yet, it is equally implicit that the image of youth which they have in mind is male youth. Therefore, anyone who is interested in female youth subculture has to draw on theoretical statements which purport to be about youth in general but which, in fact, have been derived from only the circumstances of male youth. These assumptions severely limit the value of such statements for youth in general and females in particular now that feminists have made sociologists aware of them.

Moreover, this is compounded by a lack of empirical studies of girls (something which this has in common with other branches of sociology; as Rowbotham (1973) pointed out). This produces problems when the different theories are examined; in the absence of specific studies, for example on female punks, to say that a particular approach does not embrace the experience of girls is

merely to trade one assertion for another. Women's studies is a slowly expanding field, but as yet there are very few studies of young girls. Most of those that are available are in the form of references to girls as they appear in studies of male youth (see McRobbie and Garber 1976). Without empirical material derived from studies focussed specifically on girls, it is difficult to make anything but the most tentative statements about existing theories.

Here I do not propose to produce a detailed review of all the literature on youth subcultures. This has been recently done by Brake (1980) and, to a lesser extent, by Hall et al (1976) and Woods (1977). Where necessary reference will be made to these summaries. Instead, I propose to examine the potential usefulness of the different theories for the analysis of female youth. This provides the background to my own research which, in a small way, was trying to remedy one of the omissions.

To introduce an element of clarity into the extensive literature, I propose to follow the method of classification used by Woods (1977) who divided the analyses of youth into generational and structural explanations. This is a convenient device provided it is made clear that by generational he means those studies concerned with the continuity/discontinuity of intergenerational values and, by structural, those which have focussed on the relationship of youth to social class, the mode of production and the consequent social relations. However, this is not to imply that the two sets of

explanations are theoretically incompatible or discrete. As there are not, as yet, any satisfactory overall theories of youth subculture, these two approaches do overlap, the generational approaches, in particular, have had some influence on structural ones. At this point it is necessary to note again, that such a classification derives from the study of male youth and may not be appropriate for both boys and girls. This problem is very clearly demonstrated by Brake (1980) who, in his book, divides the study of youth into four main areas, respectable youth; delinquent youth; cultural rebels and politically minded youth, all clearly male-derived categories. There is no easy way around these problems of sexism in sociological writing but I have tried to be aware of them in this study.

Murdock and McCron (1976) have charted the changing trends in these theories over the last forty years and claim that these changes reflected changes in wider society, moving as they did from theories derived from functionalist/pluralist positions in the 1940s and 1950s, through a generational unit approach of the '60s with the Hippie movement, to a class analysis of the troubled '70s. It is also no coincidence that, with the rise of the feminist movement in the '70s, there should emerge the first tentative attempts to produce a framework for female youth subculture. In spite of the difficulty of getting away from the masculine-orientated paradigm of youth, I propose to take the existing theories as they are, and discuss them in terms of their suitability for the potential analysis of female youth.

3. Generational Theories - Structural Functionalist Models and Female Youth

Those sociologists who have approached youth culture from a structural functionalist perspective have to explain how, in a social system that is more or less integrated, a youth subculture can develop that is both separate and different from the adult culture and yet, at the same time, allows the transition of the neophyte from the world of childhood into the world of adults. There are a number of sociologists who have written about youth using this perspective, of whom the most influential have been Davis, Parsons, Eisenstadt and Coleman and, therefore, I propose to concentrate principally on their ideas. Though there are differences of emphasis and interpretation among these writers, I propose to extract and summarise the central functionalist position on youth subculture. Then, having looked at the way they dealt with young girls in their studies, I shall consider the usefulness of the functionalist approach for the study of female youth subculture.

The best developed explanation for a youth subculture in Western Societies is that provided by Davis (1950) who attributed it principally to the rate of social change and the impact of industrialisation. Thus, because of the rapidity of change during industrialisation, parents were no longer able to adequately prepare their children for the situations they would meet when they became adults. In particular, the location of work outside the home and

the complicated division of labour has meant that the family could not prepare children for their economic roles which had to be done by other agencies. Moreover, since young people were no longer required by the economy to work as soon as they were physically able to do so, they experienced a period of indeterminate status between childhood and adulthood. This increased the length of family-child contact and meant that the young person was still financially dependent upon the family at a time when, in other ways, he felt the need and had the capacity to be independent of them.

Such a period in the life cycle of the Western youngster was seen as functional. Davis implied that it enabled new generations to prepare for conditions not anticipated by their parents. Parsons (1964) saw the period and status of youth as a form of social control as it acted as a safety valve as the association of the youth subculture with the school brought it under indirect adult supervision. Its function was to prepare the child for adult life through what he called its "self liquidating" features. For example, the relationship with the opposite sex in the youth subculture freed the individual from the emotional attachment of the parents, while the 'mating and dating' complex protected him from premature mate selection. A similar approach was taken by Eisenstadt (1956) who saw the youth subculture as providing an opportunity to act out different political, occupational and moral roles.

The functionalist position, therefore, predicted differences between parents and children because of the weak integration between age groups and society caused by the rate of social change and the spcial conditions of industrialisation:

> "...in these societies the major political economic, social and religious functions are performed not by family or kinship units but rather by various specialised groups (political parties, occupational associations, etc) which individuals may join irrespective of their family, kinship or caste. In these societies, therefore, the major roles that adults are expected to perform in the wide society differ in orientation from those of the family or kinship group. The children's identification and close interaction with family members of other ages do not assure the attainment of full self-identity and social maturity on the part of the children. In these cases, there arises a tendency for peer groups to form, especially youth groups; these can serve as a transitory phase between the world of childhood and the adult world".
> (Eisenstadt, S N 1964 p.28)

However, the nature and extent of the differences was seen differently by different writers. Coleman (1961), for example, argued that there was increasing separation but Eisenstadt and Parsons saw such differences as serving to reintegrate the individual into society. Much of the research evidence since 1963 has tended to be against separation (Sherif and Sherif 1964, Turner 1964). Work carried out in Britain, where many of the studies have focussed on the relationship of youth to schools, also tended to refute Coleman's findings (Morris 1958, Sugarman 1967, Hargreaves 1967, Musgrove 1968), where it appeared that it was the teacher, rather than the parents, whom they rejected. This contrasted with the American situation,

described by Parsons, where youth culture involved high participation in school or at least part of it. Sugarman's study and others, indicated clearly that there were differences between British and American youth subcultures which derived from the different social structures of each society as well as from their different school systems. These differences are discussed more fully in Hargreaves (1972).

Few of these studies of youth subculture, dealt specifically with girls. Although girls were included in the sample of both Turner and Coleman, their differing conclusions referred to youth in general and it was implicit in the text that the image of youth was male. Because of this focus, it was difficult to distinguish the distinctiveness of female youth culture if, indeed, it existed in these studies. Because it had not been their central concern, studies in the functionalist perspective have not considered girls as a separate entity from boys. However, it is proposed to examine briefly the explanations and findings of Parsons and Coleman on girls, as they provide clear examples of the ways in which an implicit assumption that youth is male has influenced their theories.

Parsons (1964) analysed both boys and girls and looked at their different patterns of socialization. However, when he discussed the period of adolescence and youth culture, in spite of these different patterns, he brought them together as a unisex (male) adolescent. By implication he suggested that girls subscribed to irresponsibility and having a good time, while being hostile to

adult expectations and discipline. For boys, the preferred image was the athlete and "swell guy" whereas for girls it was the glamour girl and socially popular person. Although these patterns were polarised sexually, ie between the star athlete and the socially popular girls, both were expressions of certain youth values. Though it is assumed, for example, that"swell guy" is paralleled by "glamour girl", the latter may be much more significant for the 'career' of the girl where the main pressure is towards marriage.

This was not considered by Parsons when he went on to discuss the transition from adolescence to adulthood and he failed to differentiate between the careers and adult models of boys and girls. For the boy his destination is the world of work, a strong contrast with the world of youth culture, but the destination of girls is more ambivalent. On the one hand, marriage and responsibility for children is a strong contrast with youth culture, but on the other hand, the "glamour pattern" is a role also open to housewives who do not pursue an occupation, others, are the developing of cultural interests or community welfare involvement. The glamour pattern is compatible with any of these other roles and therefore is a continuation of the skills and ploys which are developed in adolescence.
Unfortunately Parsons did not take up these points. In particular, he did not relate them to social class or patriarchy. It could be that some characteristics of youth culture, such as glamour, are the only possible roles available to some women besides that of housewife. Furthermore, he failed to discuss the pre-adolescent experiences of

boys and girls and how these influence their participation in youth culture.

Coleman's (1961) empirical study did not take the issue any further. His main concern was to show the form of adolescent society rather than to explain the reasons for its existence. He, too, generalised about a subculture which embraced equally boys and girls. Coleman's data on girls, which was very extensive, went some way towards confirming the suggestions of Parsons. Girls saw good looks and having nice clothes as important attributes for popularity with boys, although the importance attached to "beauty" as opposed to "brains" varied from school to school. The girls, in response to a parallel question to the athlete/scholar dilemma presented to the boys, preferred to be remembered as a leader in activities rather than a brilliant scholar and more wanted to be a model rather than a teacher or nurse.

Some of these differences were social class related, a point which was not adequately taken up. Girls, in schools drawing from working class areas, thought brains were more important for popularity than girls in schools drawing from middle class areas. He explained this by saying that middle class girls, as wives, were expected to be more companionable than working class girls. He suggested that good grades were seen as a sign of conformity to adult values and, therefore, middle class boys, who themselves wanted liberation from parental control, also wanted girls who were similarly free. For working class boys the choice was between the "good" girls and the "bad" girls whereas for the middle class boy this had been replaced by a choice between the "active" girl and the "passive" girl.

Brittan's (1963) critcism that the form of question posed by Coleman did not enable him to distinguish between deeply held values and those which were 'actually' conformed to is relevant here. Coleman's questions were presented as idealised choices and did not ask which would be the most useful or most fulfilling. Adults, as well as young girls, might have dreamt of being a movie star but this was not to say that it represented a value which influenced their actions.

It is now necessary to consider whether the functionalist theory of youth subculture, as a mechanism for adjustment in a rapidly changing industrial society, is one which is potentially fruitful for the analysis of female youth. As young girls, too, are part of a changing society then their subculture could serve in a similar way as a means of adjustment. However, the functionalist position does stress particular changes, especially in work roles, and it does not necessarily follow that such changes will be experienced in the same way by girls. The female sphere of the home may not be changing so rapidly and, therefore, the girls can be adequately prepared for the 'motherhood mandate' (Russo 1976) by, and within, the family. Even in the sphere of work, although a greater proportion of women are in paid employment outside the home, it has been suggested that the type of work available to women is of a type which only represents an extension of their mother/wife role. It remains for further historical and demographic studies to determine

whether the rate of change affects girls in the same way as boys. It must also be remembered that the rate of such changes in work, as they affect girls and women, may also be controlled by the power of men and boys. However, the more subdued forms of female youth responses (as compared with boys) could then be interpreted as a consequence of their different experience of these changes and, if this were so, the functionalist position would still be valuable.

Similarly, Parsons (1964) analysis, in seeing the youth culture as a means of social control, could apply in a general way to girls, though here again the number of reservations which need to be made about the different position of girls in relation to the family, school and work weakens its usefulness somewhat. For example, the 'self liquidating' features of the boys' culture may be less applicable to girls who have, at adolescence, a different relationship to the family, particularly to the mother, and who also, in the "mating and dating" complex, take a more passive role. Finally, Coleman's proposition that the youth culture was increasingly cutting off the young person from adult society, could apply to girls, if there was evidence that their responses were similar to boys. However, the socialization of the girl in the family (Sharpe 1976) and her training by her mother directly for her wife/mother duties, makes such an estrangement less likely. It can also be suggested that the female peer group, both in the working class and middle class, is less structured than boys and it lacks the instit-

utional location of the football match or street corner.

Coleman, himself, even for the boys did not demonstrate clearly enough, in my opinion, that the apparent values espoused by youth were sufficiently different from the ideal or leisure values of American adults.

All of these approaches within the functionalist paradigm can be criticised from the point of view that they assume the social system is more or less integrated and, therefore, need to explain youth culture in terms of the functions it performs towards this integration. By under-emphasising conflict in the form of either class or gender, it fails to offer a fully convincing framework for the study of girls' subculture.

4. The Generational Unit Model and Female Subculture

Another approach within the generational framework is that provided by Mannheim (1952) and his notion of generation units. Mannheim was less concerned with youth subculture than with the problem of generations and, therefore, his theory has a wider application than some of the others I have dealt with. He wrote his key article in Germany in the 1920s and so much of his material was drawn from a European context. This is useful because it acts as a reminder that theories of youth subcultures should be able to encompass the phenomena as manifested in at least the developed countries. As with most studies in this field, it implicitly referred to male generations.

Mannheim saw a generation as different from a concrete group, such as the family or an organisation, because it was not characterised by a deliberate act of foundation for a specific purpose. Instead he saw it as similar to a social class. In the same way that a person's social class position depended on a location in the power and economic structure of a society, generations were located in the time structure of the history of a society. Hence, just as class position provided certain intellectual and emotional experiences, so did historical circumstances, such as war or unemployment, and these became crystalised in a generation. However, a generation involved more than just a common location in time and in a cultural region, it involved what Mannheim called "participation in the common destiny" of an historical and social group. However, just because a group of approximately the same age, living in the same social environment, had experienced the same social events, it did not mean they would react in the same way. To deal with different responses within the same generation, Mannheim introduced the idea of generation units which he defined in this way:

> "The generation unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units" (Mannheim 1952, p.304)

The important characteristic of a generation unit was the similarity of data making up the consciousness of its members. In other words, they had experienced events in a similar way and this had produced a similar 'natural view of the world'. This mental data was important because of not only its content, but also its socialising effect. In addition to this mental data, formative forces, such as slogans or books, were important because they provided a feeling of solidarity and unity as well as links between individuals who might never meet face to face. Not every generation would produce generation units. He suggested that this was more likely to happen when the rate of social change was rapid. Particularly when, as a result of the speed of social change, basic attitudes changed more rapidly than could be accomplished by traditional mechanisms (a position similar to Davis and Eisenstadt). Then the various new phases of experience were consolidated somewhere, to form a new generation style, what he called a new generation entelechy. This could manifest itself in two ways; the generation unit could produce its reaction to the new situation without realising its group characteristic as a generation unit, or the groups could consciously experience and emphasise their character as generation units. The rate at which generation units emerged would depend on the rate and nature changes in society.

In drawing attention to the historical dimensions of youth subculture, Mannheim's model provided a potential enlargement of both generational and structural theories. His idea of a generational

unit being a product of, and response to, specific historical circumstances, could apply equally well to female youth subcultures. In the same way that the changing position and consciousness of women can be related to historical events, such as war, then it might be possible to relate female youth cultures, such as the Teeny Boppers, to their historical context. However, to do so, would alter Mannheim's own model in an important way. While acknowledging social class as a separate dimension, he saw the basic unit of his model as a generation. The examples he gave were all of male generation units. This is clearly unsatisfactory in that it assumes that the way a generation experiences its historical period is the same for boys and girls. Boys and girls, men and women, stand in a different relationship to both specific events and to historical movements and therefore any model which emphasises generations needs to be able to incorporate not only class differences but also gender ones. Mannheim, unlike some sociologists who have utilised his model, did acknowledge the class dimension though he did not develop it in his article. Nowhere did he comment on gender or even race.

The model itself was described at a fairly high level of generality, even in relation to male youth and it would be difficult to demonstrate empirically how a specific generation unit emerged in the way he predicted. The major problem being to demonstrate the causal connection between the specific historical circumstances

chosen and the generation entelechy or, indeed, to show that what is chosen as a generation unit, is discrete. Studies by Jefferies (1974) and Weider and Zimmerman (1974) demonstrated this difficulty. There are also a number of other criticisms of the model which, although made in the context of male youth groups, are by extension, relevant for its use in connection with girls. The first of these was put forward by Allen (1968) who maintained that the generational unit approach suggested that historical experience was all important which neglected the fact that class, education, housing and status would also produce different experiences and therefore potentially different entelechies. A similar criticism was made by Murdock and McCron (1976) who commented that, although Mannheim acknowledged the question of the relationship between generational consciousness and class consciousness, he never made explicit that relationship. Whilst these criticisms apply equally to the use of the model for boys and girls, a particular weakness in its use for girls is its neglect of gender and its relationship to age and class.

Mannheim's model is compatible with both the functionalist approaches of Davis (1950) and Eisenstadt (1956) as well as structural approaches, such as that developed by Hall et al (1976), which will be dealt with in the next section, because it focusses on the historical dimension. However, there is a danger that, by emphasising differentiated and antagonistic generation units, it could draw attention away from other dimensions, such as class and gender. This was

true of some of the studies of the counter culture of the 1960s, such as those of Wieder and Zimmerman (1974). This historical dimension is an important contribution to the study of youth subcultures in general but it needs to be incorporated with other variables. In the next section I propose to examine approaches to youth subcultures using a structural framework which have incorporated a time dimension into a class analysis.

5. Structural Theories

The second group of explanations of youth culture, structural explanations, present a more complex field to survey than generational theories because there is a greater number of them and they have generated a much larger number of studies. Moreover, some of them were originally developed in America and have to be applied with caution to the British situation with its different form of stratification. Finally, as most of them were developed to explain delinquent youth cultures, their usefulness for non-delinquent youth, although taken for granted in many studies, cannot be assumed.

I intend to extract the essential features of the four main approaches to youth subcultures which have influenced contemporary British sociology and which have culminated in the work on youth culture at the Centre for Contemporary Studies at the University of Birmingham and also at the University of Leicester. In approach-

ing such a complex array of literature in this way, there is always a danger of over-simplication. To try to remedy this, to some extent, I give a more detailed explanation of the current subculture/Marxist School of thought in which these different trends have been brought together.

The oldest of these influences was the ecological approach of the Chicago School, which was developed in the 1920s by Park (1925). He drew his ideas from biology and zoology and suggested that the city could be seen as consisting of a series of natural social areas within which the behaviour of people was influenced by their environmental and social conditions. Delinquency, for example, was greater in areas characterised by social disorganisation because there was a lessening in the influence of existing rules of behaviour on individuals. This approach gave rise to a number of studies of youth, particularly of gangs (Thrasher 1927, Shaw and McKay 1927, Whyte 1955). It has also had its critics: Downes (1966), Matza (1969), Taylor et al (1973), who considered behaviour characterised as 'disorganised' actually required a high degree of organisation but of a form not recognised by the Chicago sociologists. However, it has been an influential theory because it drew attention to the relationship between neighbourhoods and delinquency and, in more recent studies, to neighbourhood, territory and non-delinquent youth subcultures. British studies, such as those by Mays (1954), Morris (1957), Kerr (1958), Downes (1966),

Cohen (1972), owed something to this approach, although their main inspiration was subcultural theories. In trying to develop theories of female youth culture, this ecological approach in a general way could draw attention to the spatial location of different groups of girls. To a great extent this may well be class related but, nevertheless, it is possible to suggest that the social characteristics of a neighbourhood may be experienced differently by girls. An area of social disorganisation (though this idea has been severely criticised) for boys may mean redevelopment or a changing job structure but, for girls, it might result in a break-up of the extended family network or an increase in the availability of routine office jobs. The way in which social and environmental factors are experienced differently by girls needs to be looked at empirically but this approach is potentially useful.

More influential on British studies, particularly of delinquent youth, have been American subcultural theories. These drew their inspiration from Merton's (1938) seminal article extending Durkheim's discussion of anomie. Merton saw anomie as endemic in American society because of the disjunction between goals and means of attaining them. He offered a number of adaptations which were responses to this situation. Merton's article, although it has had its critics, has been a major influence on what can be collectively described as subcultural theories, drawing attention as it did to the relationship of subcultures to the dominant culture of a society.

In the post-War period a number of developments and responses to Merton's ideas appeared, most of which were focussed on an explanation of male working class delinquency. Cohen (1955), for example, saw it as a reaction to the dominant values of American society, an approach which was developed further by Cloward and Ohlin (1960). Miller (1958), on the other hand, suggested that the delinquent instead of being in opposition to, or reacting against, the dominant culture was, in fact, in harmony with his own working class culture. Studies in Britain by Mays (1954), Sprott (1954), Morris (1957) and Downes (1966), which were derived from these approaches, have drawn attention to the differing values, attitudes and socialization patterns of groups in society, particularly to working class patterns. Whilst most of these studies were about delinquents, Downes' (1966) study moved from a consideration of the delinquent culture to the general teenage culture. One of the disadvantages of Downes' approach, according to Clarke (1974), was that he saw the teenage culture as a creation by commercial interests for teenagers and therefore as monolithic and essentially classless, which ignored the wide range of adolescent groups and responses.

The application of these approaches to the study of girls has to be done with caution. As models for the study of delinquent female youth they are somewhat inadequate as they were developed from data on male delinquency, acts and patterns. Female delinquency is of

a different type to that of males and, therefore, may not be generated in the same way. For example, the low rate of female delinquency is said to be explained by the fact that girls do not ascribe to the Protestant Ethic and, therefore, do not feel the discrepancy between means and ends which leads to anomie, in the way that boys do. Having said that, however, none of these theories adequately explains the particular nature of female delinquency, concentrated as it is on sexual and moral offences (Smart 1977).

The fact that female delinquency is more likely to be of a moral nature, could say something about the relationship of girls to the dominant values and control agencies of society, but my own feeling would be that an explanation deriving from patriarchy would be more fruitful, ie females should be seen in relation to the economic, political and cultural domination of men over women.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of these subcultural approaches which could be utilised in the study of non-delinquent female youth. They do draw attention to the subcultures of different groups in society, such as the working class, of which girls are a part. There is a general agreement that girls' subculture is less aggressive and less visible than that of boys and they could be examined as reactions to dominant values (Cohen) or as extensions of class cultures (Miller). These suggestions have to be speculative as studies using such approaches have not been carried out.

More recent British approaches to youth cultures, both delinquent and non-delinquent, have been influenced by these American theories but have also drawn on other traditions. The origin of these new approaches was the National Deviancy Conference of 1968, from which developed two theoretical strands. The first of these had its origins in the work of Albert Cohen (1955) in America and saw subcultures as "problem solving". The second drew on Marxism and saw class as the major explanatary variable in the analysis of youth. Important papers which reflected these influences were those by Murdock (1973) and Brake (1973) which presented youth culture as the response of young working class boys to their class position. These youth existed in a situation where they had been classified as failures at school and where they took up unskilled, monotonous, poorly paid jobs. Music, fashion and aggravation were attempts to bring excitement and interest into this situation.

According to Hall (1976), both Murdock and Brake acknowledged the class base of working class youth culture but they did not work out its full ramifications. They both saw youth culture as a response to the situation of the working class youth, as expressed through style, but they did not explore the relationship of this youth culture to the parent culture of the working class. The responses of youth, which they call styles, were not analysed in as much that they failed to explain how a particular style emerged, or how two styles could emerge from similar locations.

This gap was to some extent remedied by Cohen (1972). He located youth culture firmly in the working class culture which, he then discussed within a framework of material and cultural domination and subordination. In his study he described how changes in the East End of London produced specific youth responses which were attempts to solve some of the problems and contradictions which these changes gave rise to. Valuable though Cohen's study is, there were still other questions which remained unresolved and undeveloped. Clarke (1974) said Cohen had not explored all the changes which had influenced the parent culture, or looked at the way the parent culture was, itself, trying to respond to these changes. Cohen did not account for the fact that similar groups in the same situation responded in different ways. I wonder myself whether Cohen was being wise after the event because his theory did not allow him to predict the nature of a youth response or even whether there would be one. It is worth remembering that youth style would appear to be the response of a minority and that there were many who did not adopt a style but accepted the clothing and activities approved by their parents and looked for their leisure through 'approved' outlets.

Cohen's study provided the foundation and inspiration for a growing number of ethnographic studies of youth in this country (Mungham and Pearson (1976), Hebdige (1976), Willis (1978). Many of these studies have located youth culture in this framework, seeing it as a

cultural response to the position of the working class in the social structure. Working class youth cultures, although not identical to the parent cultures, were seen as attempts by the young to win space for themselves and to mark out territory and key concerns. These responses of youth did, of necessity, reflect the structural location of the working class as a whole, but the working class adolescent experienced his class position differently from his parents. Moreover, different working class adolescents experienced the same situation differently. Although young people have won space for their own social life, they were not completely independent of the institutions of the dominant culture. Their areas were 'penetrated' by outside forces, such as teachers, police and state officials.

Another area where youth experienced its class position in a different way from their parents was in the realm of leisure. Because, as a group, youth had benefitted from the post-War affluence (Abrams 1959), it not only had the financial resources to pursue leisure activitues, but also the encouragement to do so, through the production of goods and services specially designed for it. Commercial interests provided not only the opportunity to buy such things as record players and clothes but also, at the same time, the location for their use and display in the form of clubs and discos. In this way, young people were presented with the opportunity to segregate themselves from the adult institutions of the pub and the Labour Club (although the separation is not complete as pubs put on disco evenings, etc).

These goods and activities have not removed youth from the class system but have placed youth in a distinct relationship to that system. Hall et al (1976) suggested that this may be the basis for the formation of a generation consciousness, which means that working class youth derived some things from their class position, but were also aware of themselves as young people and not adults. This consciousness of generation was a product of the experiences of working class youth as a whole, but it did not mean that class was dissolved.

Because it is very visible, generational differences is one which has been common in other youth culture theories (Eisenstadt 1964, Mannheim 1952). Clarke (1974) attempted to put these overt signs of youth culture, clothes, hair, music, into a conflict perspective. He maintained following Marx, that every aspect of a person's behaviour derives from his class position. For the working class in general, leisure was an important focus of attention, because it represented relatively 'free' time, time to be used as the individual wished. It was particularly important for youth, because they had more of it than adults and, therefore, it was in this area, leisure, that youth constructed its own subcultural style.

In order to explain the way in which style was generated, Clarke drew on Levi-Strauss's concept of 'bricolarge' which he defined as:

> "the re-ordering and re-contextualisation of objects to communicate fresh meanings within a total system of significances, which already includes prior and sedimented meanings attached to the objects used". (Clarke 1976, p.177)

He saw the styles of the youth culture as adaptations of objects and activities of the wider society and suggested that through style and subculture, youth was attempting a 'magical resolution' to the contradictions of their class situation, not in a real way by changing society, but in a symbolic way.

Because the 'solution' was manifested only in the leisure sphere, it eventually led to the subculture's dissolution. The youth culture phenomena was only possible at a time in the generation cycle when youth was between the tight control of the family and the assumption of parent responsibilities. As soon as youth started planning marriage, leisure as the central interest was replaced by work or setting up a home and the collective leisure of the group or gang declined. Thus, the essence of this approach to youth cultures was its recognition of style as a response of youth to its class location.

This approach has been outlined in more detail because partly it is more recent and partly because it would seem to be potentially the most useful for embracing the analysis of female youth culture. The idea that youth subculture is a generational response to class position could apply equally well to boys or girls, although women's experience of class and their position in the class structure may be different (an idea examined at length by West 1978). However, girls do have a class location as daughters, and this must form one dimension of the analysis. Therefore, it could lead to an

examination of the spatial and social location of girls within their class culture and an explanation of their subculture and styles as a response to this location.

The approach of Hall et al, puts class in the centre of its analysis, whether this is applicable to an analysis of girls needs to be confirmed empirically. It does raise the questions of whether women, themselves, constitute a class or whether gender is the essential dimension against which their subculture has to be seen. In other words, the subculture of girls may have to be analysed as a response both to their class location but also in relation to boys, fathers, men and a patriarchal society.

My other main reservation about this approach is that, in bringing forward the centrality of class, it has tended to underplay the age dimension, a point also made by Smith (1981) who comments that Hall and his colleagues have failed to distinguish between age and generation. Exploring male youth's response to its class location has been useful, but young people are also 'opporessed'by the adults of their own social class and the 'space they win and the 'style' they adopt are also responses to a society where age is a fundamental part of the structure of social differentiation. For girls this has to be seen in relation to their male peers, their fathers and men in general.

Two studies which have used this approach to female youth were those by McRobbie and Garber (1976) and McRobbie (1978). McRobbie and Garber charted briefly the manner in which girls have been mentioned in the literature, usually in the degree of sexual attractiveness to the males in the studies. A partial explanation for this may have lain with the mainly male researchers who might have created problems for themselves if they had approached any girls in the groups they were studying. Hence, it is easy from the existing literature to assume that girls are 'marginal' to youth culture. McRobbie and Garber argued that this might not be the most useful way of describing girls. They admit that girls could be marginal, in the sense not only that they are excluded by male youth from the centre of their activities, but also because they are central to some other activity such as the family or fan club.

Their attempt to apply this idea was hampered by the paucity of empirical studies, though they do offer a brief discussion of the role of girls in three male cultures, namely, the motorbike culture, the Mods and the Hippie movement. None of these descriptions were developed fully to fit the framework of Clarke or Cohen. Similarly, their attempt to analyse an alternative response in which the girls were more central, the Teeny Bopper culture, was limited by lack of data. However, I think their approach in general is a useful one and it is one I propose to take up later in this study.

In a later article, McRobbie (1978) made a useful contribution to the study of the younger adolescent girl, by looking at some aspects of schoolgirl culture in relation to class and family. Her material was gathered by participant observation with some working class girls from a youth club in Birmingham. She suggested that the girls' subculture of femininity was a response both to their class position, as in the school, and to their sexual oppression in relation to boys.

Boys were necessary for their future yet they had to be kept at a certain distance until they were married, or at least going steady. The problem for the girl was that she had to be friendly enough to be invited out, but not too friendly to be labelled as a 'scrubber' or 'whore', who was taken out for one purpose only. 'Feminine wiles' were one response to this dilemma; another was the attachment to a 'best friend'. Two girls going out together offered protection to each other and moral support as well as providing the only intimate contact with whom these issues could be discussed. Hence, developed the culture of exclusion, secrecy and resentment. For the working class girl there was little alternative to this situation (McRobbie says there was no alternative, yet clearly some working class girls do make a 'career' for example in office work or hairdressing, which is central not marginal to their identity). The wages they earned would not allow them to set up a home for themselves, even if they could get a mortgage, and therefore the only

alternative to marriage was to live with their mothers on some sort of terms. Moreover, there has been no real social role for the unmarried women in the 'working class community', especially once her parents have died. This analysis is similar to that of Willis (1978) who identified a similar contradictory process of resistance to school via the emphasis on masculinity. McRobbie's and Willis' research into working class youths raised the possibilities that "forms of resistance which are based on the celebration of traditional sexual identities paradoxically confirm the cycle of reproduction" (MacDonald, 1979-80, p.153).

McRobbie's conclusion to her paper makes, I think, a challenging statement against which to judge future studies of working class female youth culture:

> "The culture of adolescent working class girls can be seen as a response to the material limitations imposed upon them as a result of their class position, but also as an index of, and response to, their sexual oppression as women. They are both saved by and locked within the culture of femininity". (McRobbie 1978, p.108)

To summarise, if the general features of the approach of Hall et al (1976) are extracted, principally the centrality of class, the general societal context in which subcultures emerge, and the importance of school, work, leisure and the family, then there is a framework which can be used equally as effectively for the analysis of girls. However, to this list has to be added the crucial dimension of gender, which most of these theories have ignored which is essential for the understanding of female subculture. Moreover, it has something to say about male youth cultures since many features of masculinity can only be understood by reference to relations between the sexes.

6. The 'Invisible Girl' in the Sociology of Women and Work

As an important feature of my research was to be its setting, the workplace, I felt it was necessary to examine the literature on women and work to see whether there were any fruitful lines of enquiry, which I could incorporate into youth subculture theories. My search proved disappointing because, although there were many studies of women in work, there were very few which examined the particular position of unmarried girls. In the same way that most writers on youth subculture had male youth as their implicit model, so writings on women in work focussed almost exclusively on married women. Therefore, as the position in work of young unmarried girls seemed very different from that of married women, the approaches were of limited value.

Oakley (1974) has talked about the 'invisible woman' in sociology. This was true of many books on the sociology of work and there has also been, until recently at any rate, a lack of theoretical approaches. In most books on work, women as such were largely ignored but, when they were mentioned, they were seen as having the same attitudes as men at work, or as giving rise to certain problems either for their employers or for their families. What was true for women in general was even more true for young girls. There was a general tendency to assume that all workers in a particular category,

regardless of age, were the same because it was the nature of the job which determined attitudes. Few studies had attempted to differentiate between young, unmarried girls and married women, yet even at a most superficial level, they exist in different situations, the one as a daughter and another as a wife (this is not to deny that they do not share a common situation as women).

Brown (1976) made a comprehensive critique of existing studies as they related to women. He listed a number of studies which involved women in their sample but which treated the workers as unisex, and therefore which failed to examine the differences which gender might produce. (For example, Brown (1973), Coch & French (1948), Morse and Reimer (1956)). Brown argued that men and women were so different that few generalisations or assumptions could be true of both sexes and, therefore, he questioned whether any study could be complete without mention of the effects of gender. The largest group of studies, according to Brown, were those which regarded women as a 'problem' and had been designed from that point of view. The main 'problem' areas have concerned women's two roles, such as combining the wife and employee role (eg Myrdal and Klein 1956), the frequency of absence and turnover (eg Klein 1965), young children of working mothers (eg Thompson and Finlayson 1963), and husbands' reactions to working wives. Most of these studies assumed that there was something problematic for women in employment especially married women, which was not problematic in the same sense for men. Few of the studies of women, nor Brown in his review, pay attention

to the implications of age. Though individual studies have mentioned age differences in attitudes, eg Benyon and Blackburn (1972), Morgan (1969), none of them explored this variable in depth. Few studies looked specifically at women and work in a broader context with the exception of those by Caplow (1964) and Barron and Norris (1976). Both of these approaches were attempts to provide an explanation for the similar sex segregated occupational distribution of women in the USA and Britain. For example, in the UK, in 1971 at least half the working women were found in jobs where women comprised at least 70% of the workforce (HMSO 1975). Moreover, women are confined to jobs which were described as "women's work" and this was reflected in their concentration in particular in industries such as service industries, distributive trades and textiles. Hakin (1978) showed that this segregation of male and female workers appears to have increased over the last sixty years. Most of the figures for the UK were based on both young and old female workers. Although I could not find figures on the occupational distribution of female youth, as I have defined them, Social Trends No.8 (1977) dealt exclusively with the 15-25 age group and this show d that what was true for women in general was also true for young girls.

Girls, too, were concentrated in similar types of occupations, though they were less well represented than adults in skilled jobs or jobs requiring good qualifications as obviously they had not had

time to achieve such positions.

Caplow's explanation for this situation was derived very much from a perception of married women workers. He argued that, as their careers had not been continuous, they were at a disadvantage in gaining promotion and, as secondary breadwinners, they were less concerned with the financial rewards of the job. They were further hampered by not being mobile, being tied to the location of their husband and his job, by there always being a surplus of female workers and by legal restraints. All these factors were specifically derived from their position as married women. Their importance for the study of young girls was only a general one in that as girls see themselves as getting married eventually, this could influence their perceptions of the importance of work when they were single.

Caplow's comments on inter-personal relationships and attitudes are more useful, as examples of those factors were seen during my fieldwork. He suggested that attitudes about women in work were held, not only by men, but also by women and consisted of two central themes: that it was disgraceful for a man to be directly subordinate to a woman and that intimate groups, except those based on family or sexual ties, should be composed of either sex but never both. The consequence of these cultural prescriptions was the sexual segregation of work and the domination of men in work. These attitudes were held by both the girls and adults with whom I worked, though I was not sure that they were completely aware of the way work was sexually

segregated. Similar attitudes were also found by Ashton and Maguire (1980) in their study of three local labour markets.

Caplow's work omitted an analysis of the technological aspects of work as they affected women. Scharf (1977) maintained that capital-intensive technology as it required teams of workers to work continuously for long periods, would favour the use of male workers or, at least, allow males to assume a monopoly of skilled positions. A related, though different, point was made by Gubbels (1972) when he described women as not only economically but also technically 'marginal' in that many machines were designed for men in terms of their strength, height and grip and the organisation of production was planned on the pattern of a man's day not a woman's. These articles were important because they drew attention to the relationship between the physical, temporal and spatial aspects of the workplace. In the case of the two situations I worked in, these had been partly designed for women, more so in the case of the office than the factory where the overall work process was dominated by a male-work pattern. In my account of the work situation I have tried to bring out the way in which the social, spatial and technological features of the work done by the girls and women had been developed specifically for them on the basis of the beliefs and expectations of management.

A more theoretical framework for examining women and work was provided by dual labour market theory. This was not developed specifically for the analysis of women but was used in this way by Baron and

Norris (1976). The theory itself, as propounded by Doringer and Poire (1971), Gordon (1972) and Edwards (1975), amongst others, supposed that the internal labour market was differentiated into two strata, a primary sector containing relatively well-rewarded and stable jobs and a secondary sector containing low paid and insecure occupations. Baron and Norris suggested that this was a useful framework for looking at female employment because women were employed largely in the secondary sector. They stated that there were five main characteristics which could make a group a likely source of secondary labour, namely, dispensibility, clearly visible social differences, little interest in acquiring training, low economism, lack of solidarity, and that these were said to be the characteristics of women as workers. Baron and Norris differed from other dual labour market theorists in that they argued that, firstly, dualism could cut through individual firms, industries and industrial sectors and secondly that dualism was a matter of degree, some labour markets being more divided or dualistic than others. Their approach has been criticised by Rubery (1978) and Beechey (1978) for being functionalist and for their failure to encompass the fact that the setting up of internal labour markets was not just a rational process by employers but a product of negotiation between labour and capital. As an alternative, Beechey suggested that women's employment could be analysed in terms of patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation in the workforce which would illustrate the patterns of labour market segmentation

rather than a straight forward dual labour market. Both Baron and Norris's modification of dual labour market theory and Beechey's comments proved useful for my study as not only was there sexual differentiation in work but young girls were perceived to be of lower status as employees than married women. In other words, this pointed to the segmentation of a secondary labour market. This is referred to again in the conclusions to Chapter 7.

Since I began my study in 1977 numerous publications on women and employment have been initiated by feminist writers using a Marxist-feminist framework. They have introduced new approaches to the study of women and work and broadened the debate. At first the analysis concerned the relationship between domestic labour and capitalism, but more recently it has widened into a number of fields such as the relationship between class and patriarchy, labour market segmentation and schooling, capitalism and patriarchy. An overview of these developments has been provided by MacDonald (1981). Useful though these have been for the study of women and work in general, they have been only of limited value for my study as they were exclusively concerned with married women and so have failed to consider the related, but different, position of the young unmarried girl either in work or, indeed, in the family. Some of these approaches have been criticised because they tend to present an over-socialised view of women. Morgan (1975) in his book on the family, remarked that the Marxist-feminist account was very similar to functionalism in that it sought to account for social phenomena in

terms of a relatively fixed wider economic and social system and glossed over the possibilities for change, negotiation and manipulation.

Other studies which, although deriving from this background, have tried to look at how women perceive and respond to their work situation and these have had more relevance for my particular study, though even these have focussed almost entirely on married women. Two in particular, those by Barker and Downing (1980) and McNally (1979) have proved particularly useful as both were studies of female office workers.

The focus of Barker and Downing's study of secretaries was the ways in which technology, in the form of word processors, acted as a form of control, in replacing other forms of control which had their roots in patriarchy. In the course of their analysis of the traditional secretary they drew attention to the ways in which, because the tasks they were asked to perform had little meaning for them, the secretaries produced specifically feminine forms of resistance, or responses. These took the form of almost ignoring the work itself and concentrating instead on their own concerns which they imported from outside the office, such as talking about their families, husbands, boyfriends, knitting or reading novels. Resistance to both work and their male bosses took the form of sabotaging their typewriters, leaving the telephone unanswered or being deliberately obtuse. They described how the office girls broke up

the work routine by going for stationery, ringing up other offices, watering plants or making tea. The emphasis throughout this part of their study was the way women actively responded in a uniquely feminine way to their work under patriarchal conditions.

McNally's study of temporary office girls covers some of the same ground but she was primarily concerned with the variables which influenced the women's response to and choice of work. She showed that women did not work merely for pin money, or companionship, as was traditionally supposed, but took into account a wide range of other factors. She also made the point quite strongly that, far from being passive in the situation in which they found themselves, these women had a capacity to negotiate the structures which confronted them by using a variety of strategies. Though not always successful they indicated the way in which women could actively participate in their work situation.

Both of these studies had some affinity with Willis's (1978) work though only Barker and Downing refer to it directly. Not being published when I did my fieldwork, they did not influence my research design. However, I have drawn on my field notebook to look at the work culture of the girls in these terms in Chapter 7. Theirs was a similar approach to that of McRobbie and Garber (1976) and the combination of these approaches suggested that the culture of the girls could be examined as an age-based class response to work, and as a specifically feminine form of resistance both to work and to the work-world of men. However, in the very special conditions of this study, where girls and women worked together, it was necessary to explore whether this response was an <u>age</u> response or a common response of women workers.

7. The Review of the Literature and the Research Design

The review of the literature, which I undertook in the first months of my research, proved to be disappointing in the sense that there was little material which had a direct relevance to what I wanted to do. Although it would have been possible to extract a series of hypothesis from the material on male youth subcultures and test them in the situation I had chosen, I felt that this would be unsatisfactory just because they had been generated for male youth. The lack of studies of female youth meant that the field was wide open and I preferred to keep it like that rather than put a straight-jacket on my research, convenient though that might have been.

Nevertheless, I had done a great deal of reading before I began to design my fieldwork and I had also presented a paper to a post-graduate seminar group on youth culture theories and girls, so I was hardly entering the field without preconceptions and, indeed, it was my reading of the literature in the first place which had led me to choose to study girls in work. At that time, early in 1977, I had not come across any studies which looked at young people in work from this point of view. Even Willis' book, "Learning to Labour" (1977), which was published after I had begun, did not contain a great deal of empirical material derived directly from the factory.

At the same time as I was thinking about the location of my research, in terms of the previous literature, I was also thinking about methods. The absence of studies of girls and of youth in work was clear, but also there was an absence of studies of youth based on direct observation. The massive studies of Coleman (1961) and Turner (1964) were based on questionnaire data. Others, such as those by Sugarman (1969), Brittan (1963), Epperson (1964) on questionnaires or attitude surveys. There were just beginning to emerge a few studies of an ethnographic kind and I thought that my choice of topic and location made participant observation a useful and interesting method of data collection.

Finally, a third factor which emerged from the literature review and which influenced my design, was that I should look at youth and adults together. All the previous studies had either looked at youth in a subordinate position to adults, such as in schools or at street groups where adults were distant. All the theoretical approaches suggested, to some extent, that there were differences between adults and youth, per se. I was never convinced that these differences were not the result of different statuses in the first place. Therefore, I decided to try to find a situation where both adults and youth had the same status and faced common problems in order to see whether age itself conditioned different responses. The work situation is unique in providing such a situation. I hoped, therefore, to isolate the age dimension and so reveal the so-called youth culture.

From the literature review emerged a number of ideas and themes which I was aware of when I entered the field. These are stated below because they inevitably influenced what I looked for and how I interpreted what I observed:

(i) was there an identifiable female youth culture which was different from that of adult women?

(ii) in what ways was the work culture a specifically feminine one?

(iii) to what extent was the culture of the girls an age and class response to work?

(iv) how did the work situation differ from other places where youth was located?

(v) to what extent was the organisation of work related to the perceived characteristics of young workers?

These ideas were deliberately left in question form because I did not have preconceived answers to them and I wanted to be as receptive as possible to new ideas. These questions, together with new themes which emerged during my research, are reflected in the reports on my fieldwork which are presented in Chapters 3 to 6. In Chapter 7 they are referred to again when I discuss my findings.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH DESIGN : LOCATIONS AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe two aspects of the research design; its locations and methods. These are interlinked in the sense that the choice of location and the choice of methods went together, the location influenced the methods and the methods the choice of location. Each is presented separately although in terms of the research sequence they were being considered synonymously. A description of the work locations is given first because I think it makes the discussion of methods clearer.

The chapter is divided into two sections, the first is concerned with the locations of my research and the second with the methods I used. Each section then contains a number of subsections. In the first section, having given my reasons for the choice of two locations, I then briefly describe the main work areas and processes of the factory and the office so that the interaction which I describe in the next three chapters can be understood. In section two I provide a brief discussion on my choice of methods and an explanation of how each was used. The chapter is then concluded with a table summarising my field work schedule.

1. Factory and Office, two locations of female labour

Although girls are employed in a wide range of occupations, figures from Social Trends No.8 (1977) show that, in common with female labour in general, they are concentrated in certain types of occup-

ations in the less-skilled grades. The two locations of this research, a ceramics factory and a mail order office, were chosen at random as potential arenas for a female youth culture rather than as respresentative locations of female work in general. (They were potential in the sense that I had to leave as problematic whether there would be a distinctive youth culture there or in any work location as the previous literature had not been very helpful.) However, the fact that quite a large percentage of girls do work in offices and in manufacturing industries does mean that the locations I chose were not untypical. As the focus of my research was youth culture (or cultures) in work the basic condition which I needed to meet when looking for a location was that it contained a sufficient number of young girls working together in a situation where they could interact together so as to produce a potential youth response. I also wanted a situation where adult women did the same or similar kinds of work.

Fortunately, in both the office and the factory, adults and youth worked side by side performing identical tasks. I also needed permission to carry out the research by participant observation. These were not easy conditions to meet. Twenty firms were contacted whom it was thought might employ reasonable numbers of young girls, but only five employed them in situations where they could interact together as they worked. Of these five, only two allowed access. The main stumbling block in the other three cases was my request that I be allowed to do the same work as the girls. The result of this procedure was that the two locations used were in no sense either randomly chosen or chosen to be representative in some way. They were quite simply the first two which met the conditions and which would allow me access.

The original conception had been to use only one location, but because access had been refused by three companies and because each application had taken at least five weeks to process, two companies were applied to at the same time and, as it turned out, both were prepared to accept me. As these were contrasting locations - a ceramics factory and a mail order office - I decided to extend the research design so as to provide the possibility of a comparison.

Both companies were situated in the same medium-sized city in the Midlands and both drew their employees from the same schools and housing areas. All were 'working class' girls and had similar qualifications, or rather lack of qualifications. I was not able to quantify the qualifications of the girls with whom I worked as I did not have access to personnel records. However, I was told by the Personnel Managers in each case that the girls as a whole lacked formal qualifications. This was confirmed by the few pieces of information on this subject I gathered during my observations. The older women - those over 30 - seemed to lack any paper qualifications at all. A few of the younger girls mentioned having Grade 3 or 4 passes at CSE.

It might be thought that those who worked in the office and, therefore, had typing skills, would be better qualified. I was not able to confirm this. In fact, there was some interchange between the two companies. Two girls in one department of the factory, when they heard I was going to the office, said how boring they had found it. And one married woman in the office took the trouble to explain to me why she had moved from the factory - the hours suited her better with her children.

The advantage of studying girls in two locations involving different kinds of work was that it would provide not only contrasts but also an indication of the distribution of any features I might discover. Therefore, I was studying girls from the same background who were working under different conditions. In both locations there was a sufficiently large sample of girls to enable me to quantify any differences which might emerge if I required it. Each also had enough girls to allow for sub-groups to be present if this was to be a feature of the work culture. In both locations the girls were working in areas where they could interact together if they wished, though their discretion to do so was structured differently by management. Also in each place there were adults doing identical work. Throughout my account I have used pseudonyms for both the companies and the workers.

The Factory Location - Tableware and Co

The ceramics company was a very old one which had been on its present site for more than 200 years. It was well known for its tableware and for its limited editions of porcelain figurines. All of these products required a great deal of skill, both in their production and decoration, and therefore the company tried to recruit people who showed artistic potential.

In an attempt to expand the company and to acquire new markets, a new factory had been opened about five years previously which was to manufacture a more mass-produced type of product called oven-to-table ware. The processes in this new section were more automated and less skilled and so a less skilled labour force was required.

This new development, on a site about 100 yards from the old factory, divided the labour force. Those who worked on the new site felt that they were looked down on by the workers from the old site because they were less skilled. The physical separation of the two sites, even though it was only 100 yards, was reinforced by other features such as recruitment policy which sent potential applicants first to the old factory and then, if they were unacceptable there, to the new one.

It was suggested by the Personnel Manager that I did my research in this latter section of the company because it was an area which had quite large numbers of young girls working with, and doing the same job as, older women. The smaller workshops of the older plant did not have this. Also the jobs in this section were such that I could pick up most of them in a few hours and so I would be able to quickly get to a situation where I was fully working alongside my target groups. It also had the advantage that there were men and boys doing other tasks in the production process so that it provided the opportunity for studying their interaction with the women.

The factory was organised on a loose flow-through system in the sense that clay, in a powdered form, came in at one end of the factory and left at the other in the form of finished products packed in boxes. It is necessary to describe briefly the main sections in this process in order to understand the interaction between the various groups which is described later.

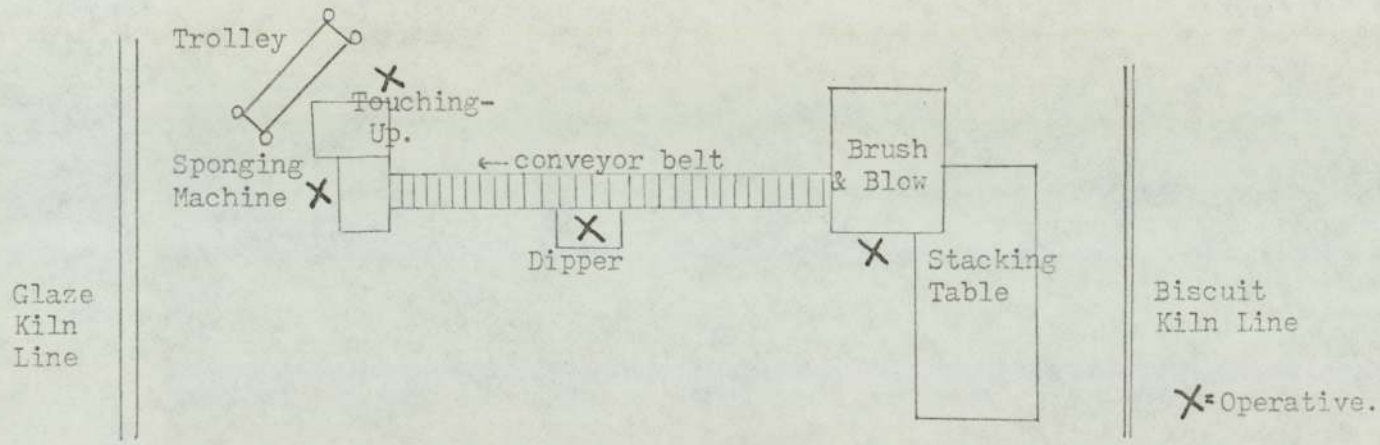
The moulding section

The clay arrived at the factory in powder form by road and by canal where it was mixed with water to form a liquid (slip) which was used for slip moulding or made into a length of clay for press moulding. All of this work was carried out by men.

The glazing process (the dipping lines)

Once the ware had been biscuit fired (fired at a low temperature) it passed to the glazing section which was staffed mainly by women and young girls. Each piece of ware was dusted and cleaned, dipped in glaze, checked and touched up and then stacked on trolleys. This process was carried out on a number of short production lines similar to Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 A Dipping Line



This was the first area where I worked.

The firing process

The glazed ware was then moved from the trolleys to the kiln trolleys to be fired again at a higher temperature. This was done entirely by men. These men interacted with the girls on the dipping line because they were at right angles to them and sometimes the speed at which they emptied trolleys determined the amount of work which the dippers could accomplish.

The checking and grinding section

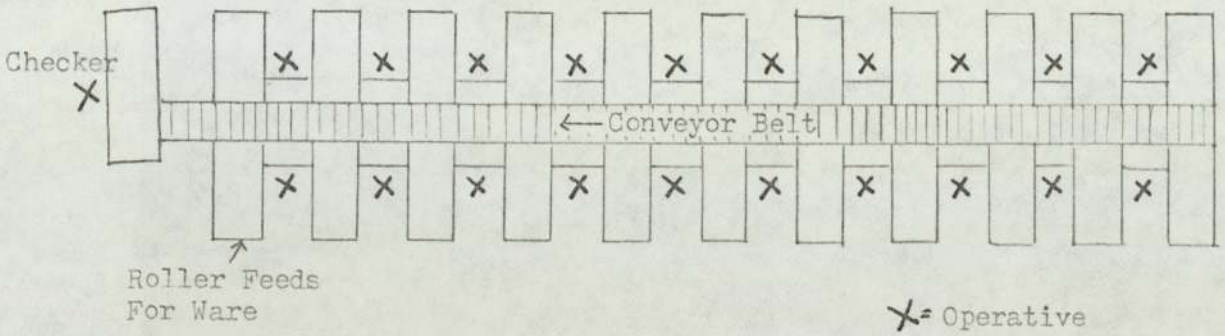
When the ware had been glazed and fired it was taken on trolleys to the grinding section where it was checked again for faults and then the bottoms were cleaned up from any glaze which might have run.

Some ware was stored in its white state but most of it was wiped clean and stacked again ready for decoration. The grinding and cleaning section was again staffed entirely by men, although cleaning at another stage was done by women.

The decoration of the ware (Litho Section)

The area where decoration was added to the ware was called the Litho Section after the form of decoration, transfers, which were slid off backing sheets on the glazed articles. It was considered to be one of the most skilful processes in the new factory and was the highest paid. The ware was brought from the grinding and cleaning section on trays - each tray containing the same type of produce - dishes, egg cups, souffle dishes, etc. The trays were stacked in the centre of the area and then distributed by "trolley boys" who, in giving out the work, also collected the appropriate transfers. All the workers on this type of decoration were women and young girls - some 40 in all. Each girl sat in her own section separated from her neighbour by feeder rollers down which the work came. These roller areas were boarded in so that, when they were seated, they could not see the person next to them. The girls fed the finished work on to a central conveyor belt but were so far away from the girls opposite that it was necessary to shout to be heard. The factory manager described these girls as looking like "battery hens" and this was an apt description as can be seen in figure 2.2. Although they had the benefit of doing skilled work, their situation was such that they felt as if they were tied to a production line.

Figure 2.2 A Line in the Litho Section



As I was not allowed to do the same sort of work as the girls - "It will take too long to train you" - I worked as a trolley boy when I came to this section. This was in many ways as good as working alongside the girls. As a "trolley boy" it was my job to keep the girls supplied with work. As their feeder roller held only enough work for about 15 minutes it meant that I was continually having to re-load it. In this way I was able to keep in touch with all the girls on the line I was servicing. This mobility - I had to keep all 20 girls and women supplied - had the advantage that I got to know the whole line and to record data from them, whereas if I had been working on the line I would only have got to know those working closest to me.

Having the job of trolley boy also brought me into contact with a small group of male youth. There were four trolley boys, all under 18, and in addition there were four others of the same age group working on inspection and in the stores. These eight tended to come together in various combinations at breakfast time and lunchtime to play cards.

The packing department

Once the decorated ware had been fired for a third time, it was dusted clean and then stacked into piles for the Packing Department. All the packing was done by women and girls working in teams of two or three based around flat tables.

Work was brought to the packers and taken away to the stores by two trolley boys who were under the control of the packers supervisor - a married woman in her early forties. In this section working conditions were such that it was quite easy to talk to other members of the team across the table. It was away from the machinery and, therefore, reasonably quiet. There was a combination of young girls and older women and I arranged to work with each of the three teams so that I could get to know them. I spent a week with each team.

Management Structure

The management structure on this site was in the form of a pyramid. At the apex was the Factory Manager. He had two Section Managers below him and they, in turn, had supervisors at the shopfloor level. The usual pattern was for information to pass down this line of authority, although managers might deal directly with workers if they saw something amiss as they walked around. The tendency was to leave the supervisor to organise the day-to-day tasks and who did them. Industrial relations were very good in the factory; perhaps that is why I was given access and, as there was a shortage of workers and the order books were full, there was overtime to keep those who wanted extra money happy. All of the managers were men and the only women holding positions of responsibility were the supervisors of the Litho and Packing Departments.

The Office at Forbes

The office location was part of Forbes, a mail order company, which did not itself have any retail outlets but sold its goods through catalogues which were held by agents, usually married women, who operated from their homes and got orders from friends and neighbours. The company had started between the wars and had expanded piecemeal so that it was located on a number of sites in the city. It was part of a larger company operating catalogues under different names and had offices in Bristol and Leeds. It did not manufacture goods itself but bought them from established companies, though occasionally it would have a special line produced for itself.

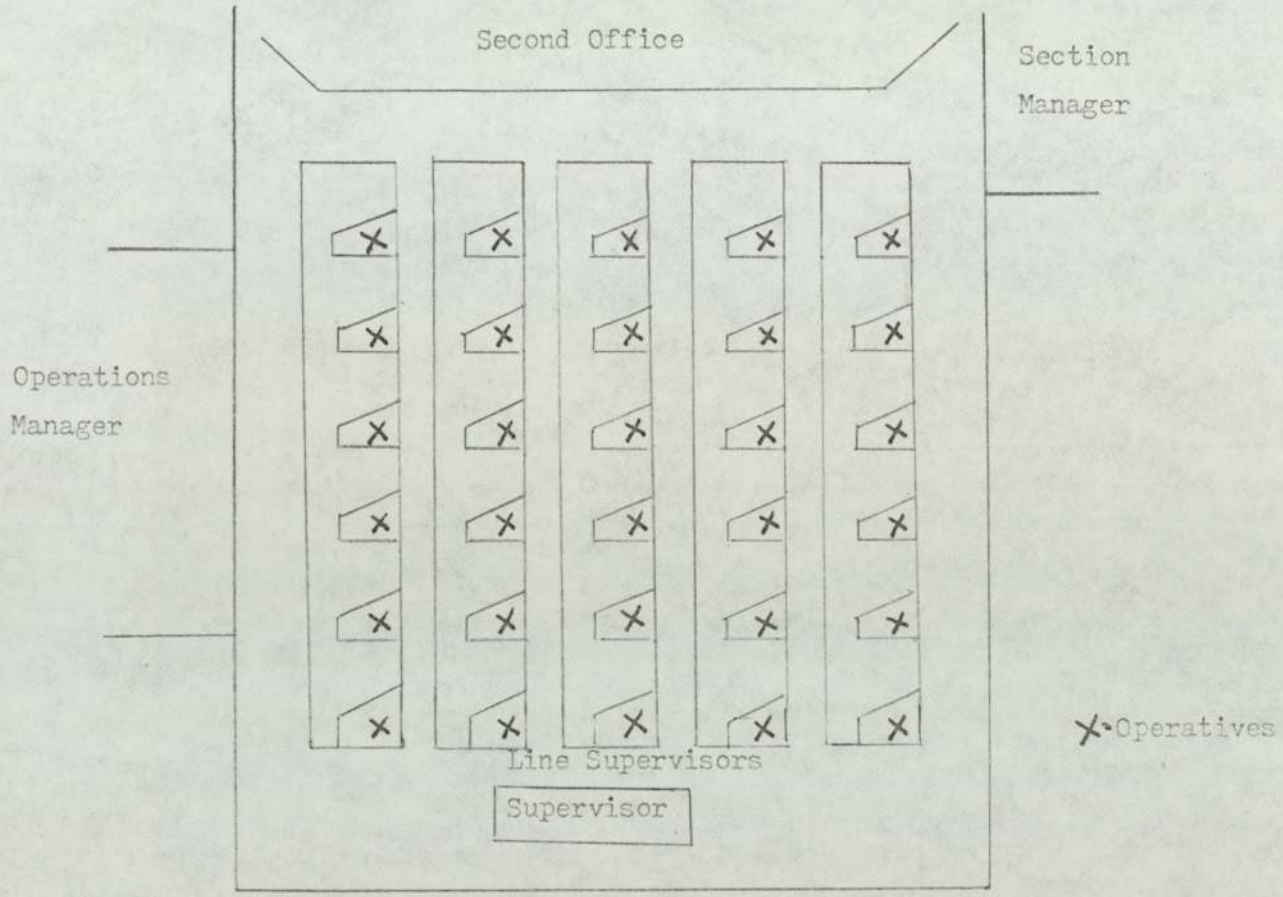
The office where I worked was at the centre of the company's activities in the area and consisted of the finance and administrative departments. It was situated on one side of the city's shopping centre and was about a mile from the ceramics factory which was situated at the other end. The warehouses which stocked and dispatched the goods were a few miles away in the suburbs. The administration of the business was based on a computer which was actually sited in the building where I carried out my research. The offices in Leeds and Bristol all fed into this central computer. The general process was that orders came into the office from the agents on standard proformas. The orders were typed into the computer which then sent the order to the warehouse for it to be made up and dispatched, a confirmation note to the agent and the account to the Accounts Department.

I had contacted this company in the first place because I had assumed that it would have a high proportion of females in its packing and dispatch departments but it seemed that this process was very largely automated. Instead, the main area where women and girls were employed was in the computer-input department. They were employed to feed information from the agents' order forms into the computer via a typing console, which was similar to that of a typewriter but had extra facilities. The keyboard was in front of a screen onto which the data appeared as it was being typed. This enabled the operator to check the message before it was finally put into the computer.

All the input operators for this branch of the company were housed in two offices. This had formerly been one large hall and only been divided a few months before I began my field work. There were about 30 girls and women in each room. In one office were the experienced operators who could deal with all types of work that came in - usually this meant they had worked there for at least a year - and in the other office were the temporary typists and girls still learning the work.

The layout of each office was similar and is shown in figure 2.3. In each room there were 5 rows of workers and each worker sat at a diagonal to the row. The room was quite crowded so that it was difficult for one person to pass another in the centre rows. Both rooms were surrounded by a ring of offices so that there were no windows which looked directly to the outside. The work came in from offices upstairs and was distributed by the supervisor who then collected it in at the end of each work period.

Figure 2.3 The Layout of One Office



Management Structure

The whole of the computer operation was the responsibility of the Operations' Manager who had a room adjacent to the input offices. The Input Section was the responsibility of a section manager and each room was under the control of a supervisor. At the end of each line of consoles there was a line supervisor who dealt with immediate queries. Both managers were men and the supervisors women.

2. Research Methods

The choice of research methods and the research locations was the result of both my reading of the previous literature and also of my own experience and preferences. When I began the literature search I deliberately tried to keep a flexible attitude towards the empirical part of my study, hoping that it would emerge as part of the total research process. As Chapter 1 shows, the previous literature was not very fruitful in providing specific studies of young girls in work. Therefore, I decided that the best approach would be to use a combination of methods. However, in choosing to use a number of methods, this did not mean that each method would be used equally. From my reading of the literature I felt that the sub-cultural approach to youth cultures was potentially the most fruitful and, as many of the more recent studies within this paradigm had used participant observation, it seemed the most appropriate one for my study. The other methods were used either to complement the data obtained by participant observation or to explore areas and issues which were not readily accessible by that method.
The research in both locations began with participant observation, during which informal interviews were carried out with workers.
At the end of this period I returned for one day to each location to conduct semi-structured interviews with management and supervisors.
Finally, on the basis of the participant observation and the interviews, a questionnaire was developed which was administered personally by me to groups of workers in their workplace.

The Principal Method - Participant Observation

Although the research design included several methods, the main one was participant observation because this seemed the most appropriate one for a small scale study of work cultures in a situation where the findings could not be anticipated. This would agree with Zelditch (1963) who suggests that, on the criteria of informational adequacy and efficiency, it is the 'best type' for incidents and histories. The advantages and disadvantages of participant observation have been adequately summarised by Dean et al (1967) and Willis (1972). Its particular advantages as far as this study was concerned, were that it could deal with the unexpected, I could get behind the front which might be put on for strangers, I could make relationships with the girls which would enable me to get the information I required casually and, finally, I anticipated that by recording my experiences in a field notebook I would be able to capture material which might be useful to me at a later date but which, at the time, I may not have felt was particularly relevant. There were also disadvantages to the method which I tried to keep in mind and find strategies to overcome, such as bias resulting from relationships established in the field, a lack of empathy and prior theorization. Some of these strategies and research dilemmas are described in Appendix 2.1.

The form of participant observation which I adopted was what Gold (1958) called "the observer-as-participant". This form was adopted because I wanted to gather my data from a role where I was totally accepted by my subjects, as far as this was possible. It offered me the opportunity to justify why I was there and, at the same time, provided me with a role and a location which would enable me to get access to the data I was interested in, once I was accepted.

Although I anticipated that the target groups would be uneasy about my presence to begin with, I hoped that the reasons I had given for being there, together with the fact that as a worker I would always be occupied and experiencing the work situation for myself, would enable them to accept me. Therefore, in each of the three areas of the factory and in the office, I worked alongside both young and adult women doing either identical or similar work to that which they were doing (the exception being the Litho Department - see page 59). The ways in which I introduced myself and tried to ensure acceptance are described in the next Chapter (pages 74 to 81). The length of the period of participation in each place varied between three and four weeks and in each place, as a social actor myself, I felt that I was readily accepted and did not disturb the situation to any significant extent. When I had finished I specifically asked the Section Managers when I interviewed them, whether they felt I had been accepted by the workers or whether I had disturbed the situation. It is worth remembering that in checking this with them I was consulting 'professional observers'. They looked down on the workforce from their glass offices and were very sensitive to the slightest ripple in their area. They confirmed my own feelings that, after the excitement of the first few days, the groups returned to normal and I was undistinguishable from the other "girls". My acceptance by the girls was well illustrated by an incident in the factory when I was asked to draw up a petition to be presented to the Personnel Manager asking that one of the girls be given time

off with pay to go to a funeral. This showed that I was not identified with management.

My main concern, as I have already indicated, was to gain acceptance and therefore I had to choose a method of recording my experiences which would not interfere with that process, particularly as I was a man working with women and girls who had never been the subject of a research project before. In anticipation of this I decided not to do any recording in the factory during the working periods. I felt that the presence of a tape-recorder would be too inhibiting even if I could overcome the technical problems of recording a group in a noisy factory or a 'clicking' office. In the same way I felt that the writing of field notes would continually remind the group that I was studying them. This writing could not have been concealed because in the factory the only writing which took place was to fill in the crossword puzzle of the 'Sun' or 'Mirror' during breaks. At that time, we all sat close together so there was no opportunity to write anything in a notebook. I had planned to write brief notes during my 'toilet breaks' and at lunchtime but again there was not enough time to do this as I did not want to leave my work groups at these key leisure periods. Also, in the factory location, it would have been difficult to conceal a notebook. It was so hot that only a shirt and trousers were worn. A notebook would have been easily seen. Trips to the locker to collect and return a notebook would also have been commented upon - especially as I always shared a locker with one of the group I was studying.

For these reasons I decided to keep a field notebook which was written up each evening. This strategy was continued in the office location even though it would have been easier there to write brief memos. I found that my short term memory was good enough to hold all the events of the day, although it was not always possible to recall the exact words of some incidents. Also, by not keeping a notebook at all at work, I removed the possibility of it ever being seen by my subjects. There was never an occasion when I could not recall something which I knew to be relevant.

The benefit of this method was that the research location was not disturbed at all by the process of data gathering but it did have some disadvantages. As I have already mentioned, there was the possibility that an event or insight may not have been recalled. As far as I am aware, this did not happen. Recall was facilitated by the writing up of my field diary immediately after work so that events were fresh in my mind and I almost re-lived the day again. However, this did involve the possibility that the recollection of an event might be rationalised or interpreted with the hindsight produced by the delay. I was sensitive to this possibility and I tried to record the events as factually as I could but I have to acknowledge that, as an actor in the situation, they were seen through my eyes.

The Interviews with Management

Approximately a week after the completion of each period of participant observation I returned to each location and interviewed managers and supervisors. Interviews were necessary because, although

I had gathered some data on management attitudes in the course of the observation, I had not had the opportunity to talk with them at length because this would have been inappropriate for a shop-floor worker. Also, the data gathered on the shopfloor had given rise to certain questions, the most important of which was management attitudes to, and perceptions of, young employees. I also felt it was necessary to ask them how I had fitted into the work situation.

The interviews with both managers and supervisors were semi-structured. I had a list of questions and topics which I wanted to raise which I presented in an order which seemed appropriate as each interview progressed (see Appendix 2.2). As the need arose, supplementary questions were added and other topics discussed. Brief notes were taken at the time which were then written up in more detail at the end of the day. This form of recording was felt to be the only one which would allow a frank discussion, as management was reluctant to discuss anything 'on the record' - i.e. I felt that tape-recording would have been too inhibiting.

A semi-structured form of interview was considered most suitable because I did not want to anticipate what might be said or give them too specific an idea of the issues that had been raised about management attitudes during the period of participant observation. The interviews explored four areas: management feelings about young workers; the methods management used to control and motivate young workers; the relationship between workers of different ages and the effect of my presence on the workforce.

The Questionnaire

The last method which I used was a questionnaire administered two months later to all the groups with whom I had worked. The purpose of this questionnaire was threefold: to provide further data and confirmation of information gathered by participant observation and interviews; to probe some issues which had arisen from this data and to explore new areas which had not been covered or which could not be covered by other methods. A similar version of the questionnaire was given to both adults and youth, modified only in respect of questions involving age and status. The same version was used for workers in both the office and the factory. This, I hoped, would provide the possibility of analysis by age and site. The main areas which I tried to explore through the questionnaire were relationships between different age groups, feelings about the job, relationship with supervisors, their use of time outside work and their use of their wages(a copy of the questionnaire is given in Appendix 2.3)

The questionnaire was pre-tested for understanding by giving it to students on day-release courses at a College of Further Education. The final version was then administered personally by myself to small groups of workers in each of the places where I had worked. It was pointed out to them that they did not have to complete it but, in the event, only one refused by returning it blank.

The schedule of these methods is summarised in table 2.1. All the data was gathered over a period of six months with participant observation occupying the first four months and then the questionnaire being administered two months after I had left the field. The reason for this gap was that it took me two months to design the questionnaire, pre-test it and get it printed.

Table 2.1 The Fieldwork Schedule

Participant Observation

	No. of Adults and Youth	Period of time worked in a section (weeks)
Location 1 : Factory		
Dipping Lines	8	3
Litho	40	3
Packing	13	3
Location 2 : Office		
Office 1	30	4
Office 2	36	4

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with management and supervisors one week after completion of participant observation at each location.

At the factory, the two Section Managers were interviewed and three Supervisors. In the office, the Section Manager was interviewed and the two Supervisors.

Questionnaire

Carried out two months later

	No. of Adults	No. of Youth
Factory	26	31
Office	25	36
	51	67

This combination of methods produced a considerable amount of data not all of which proved to be directly relevant to the focus of my study - youth culture. However, at the time I felt it was important to record as much as I could in case it proved useful later. In the next four chapters I present my findings. In Chapters three, four and five I describe young girls at work in the factory and office based on data drawn from participant observation and interviews. In Chapter six I present the results of my questionnaire.

CHAPTER 3

THE GIRLS AT WORK - DIPPING AND PACKING AREAS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter and the two which follow, I provide an account of young girls at work in a factory and an office as I saw them. All three chapters have been organised by location. My aim in writing up the period of participant observation in this way has been to place key features of young female workers' culture in specific contexts, rather than to provide a day by day account of everything I saw. All the chapters are about girls in work but the material has been divided into three chapters to make it more manageable. What I have done is to describe key events and features which relate to youth in the work contexts in which they occurred. In most cases these were not isolated examples but ones which were replicated in other locations. Therefore, at the same time that a feature is described in a particular place, it is supplemented with examples from other contexts. For example, I deal with youth and the pacing of effort in the context of the packing department, but I also refer to observations made in the Litho Section and in the Office.

In this chapter I begin with an account of my first days in work and how I tried to ensure that I was accepted by the girls and women. This I think is important because the material I collected by participant observation is the most important source of my data. Then, in the context of the dipping lines and the packing department, I

describe a number of features of the girls in work; their daily work routines, their responses to work in terms of joking and talking, the differentiation of female workers and the bonus system and the pacing of effort.

1. Starting on the Dipping Line

The First days - getting accepted (on female terms)

I had been told on my preliminary visit that work began at 8.00 am so I reported to the gateman at 7.50 and he took me to Mr Stockton, the Section Manager.

The section of the company where I was to work was a large hanger-like structure with brick walls and a corrugated roof with glass panels let into it. Mr Stockton's office was a glass and metal box set high in the roof approached by cast iron stairs. It was perched at one end of the building so as to give him and his supervisors a clear view of most of the activities in the area for which he was responsible. I had met him on my previous visit so we shook hands and he introduced me by my christian name to Steve Dempster, the supervisor of the section I was to work in.

I was asked to explain to Steve exactly what I wanted to do so that he could suggest the best place for me to start. I said that I wanted to work with a group of girls and women and, as far as possible, to do exactly the same as they were doing and be treated as one of them. They both smiled at this idea and Steve gave me a warning which was to be repeated by other supervisors, that I should be prepared for bad language. This was the only advice I was given by management about the work situation.

As we stood in the office, they pointed out to me the processes which were taking place in their area below me. Basically, clay came into the factory as powder, was mixed with water and then moulded into shapes. It was fired once at a low temperature, a biscuit firing, then glazed and fired a second time. The ware then passed on to the next section to be decorated. Of all the groups which I could see immediately below me, only one had the composition I required. It was a dipping line of four workers, two of whom were mature women and two were 'girls'. Steve said that a fifth worker could be put on to that section as he had done this before, so this seemed to be a suitable place for me to start, especially as there were two other lines nearby. I asked to meet this group in order to explain what I wanted to do and to ask their permission to work with them.

While Steve went to bring them up to the office, Nigel Stockton sorted me out a set of white overalls so that when they arrived I was already dressed as a worker. Nigel introduced me as Tony Russell from North Worcestershire College, who had come to work in the factory. He asked me to explain what I wanted to do. I had anticipated that this first meeting would be a crucial one and so I had carefully prepared what I was going to say. I made two points: firstly, that at my college I was changing from the training of teachers to teaching young people from industry, and that my own background of school-college-school hadn't really given me any experience of work. I had, therefore, been given a year's study leave by the college to get work experience and had arranged to work at Tableware and Forbes

for three months each. At the same time, I had registered at the University of Aston for a Master's Degree on the subject of young girls in work and I was hoping to combine the two things.

Having given the reasons why I was there, I went on to emphasise that I wanted to do exactly the same job as they did, as far as I was able, because there were very few people in the college who had had experience of working in factories at women's work and I wanted to experience this for myself. I would also like to talk to them and get their opinions. I told them that, although I had the permission of both management and the unions, it would be their decision as to whether I worked with them.

There was a short silence as they looked at each other a little embarrassed. Eventually the eldest member of the team said, while looking at the rest for confirmation, that they would be willing to give me a try. I thanked them and we all filed out, the women first, talking and giggling to themselves. Steve came with us to start me off. He introduced me to the group; Lili, the eldest, was a woman in her late 40s, Betty in her late 30s, Paula 21 and Anne 18. I shook hands with each and then they went back to their positions on the line. Steve consulted Lili, who was the unofficial leader to the group, about where I was to fit in and it was decided that I should work near her, loading up the table.

The area where I was to begin work was a dipping line. This was where the clay, having been moulded and fired at a low temperature, was dipped in white glaze. The ware came from the biscuit kilns

on trolleys to the end of our line where each item was checked for flaws as it was unloaded onto a table. It was then dusted and cleaned before being put on a conveyor belt down to the dipper who dipped it in white glaze and returned it to the line, to pass down to the sponger, who cleaned off the glaze from the bottom. The ware was then touched up with glaze on any part which had been missed and stacked on trolleys ready for the kilnmen to take away.

My task was to inspect the biscuit ware for flaws, rub off any bits and stack it on the table. Some articles needed very little attention but others had to be thrown away and at the end of the day there was always at least one bin full of waste. This first task brought me into contact with Lili, who was working on the blower/ duster, a machine for removing dust from the ware after I had rubbed it down. She turned out to be my chief informant about the factory in general and about this area in particular. She also 'sponsored' me into other parts of the factory as well.

I began my period with this first group by concentrating on the work I was doing. I checked each item carefully and did not look round. As I was next to Lili, and as she was a fairly talkative person, she began to ask me questions about where I lived and whether I knew the city. Included in these first questions was one about whether I was married. When I said that I was, this information was immediately shouted down to Paula who was the dipper in the middle of the line. "It's no good Paula, he's married." This was greeted with laughter by the other workers. In the course of this first conversation Lili told me that she had worked there for fourteen years and that her son had recently started work in the slipware section - "I spoke to Nigel Stockton about him."

I realised from my first meeting with the group up in the office that the unofficial leaders were the two adults and therefore I decided that I needed to gain their acceptance before that of my target group - the girls. Therefore I was very conscious of the need to relate to them as women. With Lili I talked about her son and other children. As she knew I was a teacher she said that her children hadn't liked school much to her regret and that she hadn't been able to persuade them to stay on at school. We chatted on along these lines for the rest of the day so that by five o'clock I knew a great deal about her and she knew about me and my family. The next day I worked near Betty, the other adult who, up to that point I had felt was slightly suspicious of me. Betty was more reserved than Lili and, I suspected, less interested in the work. All the workers were in one sense only there for the money, but I felt that some, like Lili, enjoyed the companionship of the work situation. Betty seemed to resent being at work and her only reward was the wages. My relationship with Betty was transformed by two incidents; on the first morning we worked together I mentioned that I was feeling tired because I had been up during the night with one of my children. She immediately showed sympathetic interest as it emerged she had a daughter the same age as mine. As I took an interest in my children we began to discuss our children and compare them. She was obviously very fond of her daughter and this always gave us something in common to talk about.

The second incident, which I think set the seal on my acceptance, involved the washing of trolleys. When the trolleys came back from the kiln they were dirty with bits of glaze which had come off the

ware. These had to be cleaned off lest they stuck to the bottoms of the new ware. I had noticed that this was normally done by the worker who was doing the touching up - my job that day - but Betty kept doing it. When I realised this, the next time I fetched some trolleys, I immediately got the bucket and cloth and went down on my knees and wiped off the shelves. Nothing was said about this, but it was noticed, and I felt it convinced them that I really did want to do exactly the same as they did. In a minor way the same applied to the drinks machine. About every hour, someone from the team would come round and take orders for drinks and go to a drinks machine to fetch them. Once I had seen this, I took my place in the rota.

By these actions, I felt that I was demonstrating not only my desire to be a worker but also my desire to be accepted as a female worker. Inevitably, sometimes the conversations would be specially selected for me - talk about schools for example, but on the whole I let them lead the discussions and then I joined in. As far as I could I did exactly the same tasks as the young girls, in the same manner, wherever I worked.

Having made good relationships with the mature women I then set about getting to know the young girls. As I was obviously accepted by the group as a whole this did not produce much of a problem, but I did want to make it clear that I was interested in them as young persons. The mechanism I used for this was pop music. I had always been interested in pop music so that when I worked next to Anne I commented on the fact that I missed not having music around me when

I worked and I asked her why the Company didn't put the radio on. She said that some of the workers had objected but they could bring their own radios if they wanted to. She had always intended to do so, but had never got round to it. This led into a discussion of radio programmes and we found that we had a lot in common. The conversation was joined by Lili and Betty, both of whom listened to Noel Edmunds' early morning programme whilst they had breakfast. They also watched 'Top of the Pops' because it was put on by their children.

In this way I made my first real contact with Anne and she walked down with me to lunch that day, still talking. On my first day I had brought sandwiches, having decided beforehand that I would always take the form of lunch taken by the group with whom I was working. As the dippers usually bought a hot meal I did the same. After lunch had been eaten, the dippers from all three lines who were there always sat at the same two tables and played cards. As I was sitting with Anne and Betty, I was invited to play. It was explained to me that they didn't play for money because it caused bad feeling. I think they mentioned this to me because all the men's games in the factory always involved money. This lunchtime activity brought me into contact with the girls and women on the other two dipping lines.

The way in which I had been accepted by the girls in the dipping section was very visible to other workers, both in the factory as they passed by our work area, and in the canteen and I think it made my access to other groups much easier. There was also one other

situation at the end of the day which made my presence known to other workers. In the evening at 4.55 we all queued up waiting for the clock to show 5.00 pm so that we could clock off. I stood with the rest of the girls waiting my turn. For the first few days I was asked what I was doing there, but the fact that I was 'on the clock' signalled, I think, that I was trying to get a real work experience and that I was not part of management.

2. Girls at work - the work routine

Mornings - starting the day quietly

After working for two weeks on the dipping lines I established that there was a standard work routine which the girls followed. Although the pattern varied slightly between sections, I propose to describe the routine of the dippers as it was typical of the patterns of other groups in the factory and illustrates one type of response which the girls made to their work situation. When I come to the descriptions of other sections I will only mention how they differ. Work began at 8.00 am but most of the girls would be there at least ten minutes before. They would change into their overalls, sit down and have a cigarette or a coffee before the work began. It was a sort of period of calm before the rush of the day. I usually arrived early and joined them. The conversation during this period was fairly subdued. They would ask each other about the events of the previous evening but not with any expectations of a lengthy reply. Detailed discussion was saved till later.

A few minutes before 8.00 am Steve would come down from the office and speak to each group as he walked round. His appearance was taken as the signal for all the lights to be put on and the machines to start up. There was no need to tell people what to do. They all knew their tasks and got on with them. The relationship between both managers and supervisors and workers in this section was very cordial. Steve, the supervisor, was popular and always willing to chat and make a joke. In some ways, although supervisors were seen as people employed to keep the girls working, they were also seen as people who facilitated their work. If there was a problem, such as lack of trolleys or materials, then they were called on by the workers to sort it out. Because of this I did not get the impression in this section or the packing section that supervisors were 'watchdogs' or drivers. Instead they were used by the workers to help them achieve their target - a defined output.

The first period in the morning was the quietest, when most work was done and when the girls reacted in a fairly subdued way to each other. Just before 9.00 am someone would offer to go to the machine for drinks but not everyone would take up the offer as often they had had a cup of tea before they started work. Breakfast was taken at 9.30 am in the canteen when there would be a hubub of conversation among all the dippers as they sat together round two tables. This usually concluded with a brief discussion of the lunch menu and orders being placed.

From 9.30 am we began to notice the heat of the factory as the warmth of the lights and machines, added to that of the kilns, which were kept on day and night. In spite of the cold weather outside, it was

hot enough inside for me to wear only a short sleeved shirt under my overalls and even then I found it hot. Some of the kilnmen would work barebacked in the afternoons. Work continued in the morning until 12.30, interspersed with a round of drinks and at least one toilet break. The work on the dipping line was quite varied, so that it was never very boring. For one thing it was always possible to move about a little. Only Paula, the dipper, was stuck in one place. The job allowed the girls to walk a few steps to fetch something or to take goods away and, as it did not require great concentration, it was always possible to talk while working.

The opportunity was also looked for to engage other people in conversation as they passed by. Lili in particular was very good at this as she had worked for the company a long time and knew many people, both workers and supervisors. If anyone passed she would call to them and ask about them and their family. This might then draw that person into our area where the conversation might be shared with all of us. As there was quite a lot of movement in the factory this meant that, on most days, we had someone new to talk to. The presence of the young girls was also an attraction and the men were quite willing to stop by and have a word and a joke with them. As the girls usually kept on working as they talked this was not objected to by the supervisor who often joined them. Not all the supervisors were as friendly as Steve, who was flirted with by the young girls and mothered by the older ones.

Boredom and tiredness were also relieved by the variety of items they were dealing with - bowls, jugs, teapots, plates - all the items

of tea and dinner services. Each item required a slightly different operation for checking, sanding and processing.

In this section each group of workers had also agreed amongst themselves (it wasn't apparently a management decision) to rotate their jobs daily so that, except for the dipper, each worker rotated between three tasks. This was made possible because the semi-skilled tasks were easy to master and therefore all of the workers could do all of them. This seemed to happen whenever control of the work task lay with the workers themselves. In the packing section, for example, they deliberately chose to pack different items in the course of the day rather than stay on the same type which might have been quicker. The same happened in the office as I was to find out later, where the girls would vary the type of invoices they processed.

The opportunity to vary the task was present throughout the factory to some degree. It was only a few workers, such as the girls who worked a machine which only glazed ramekin dishes, who could not vary what they were doing. The factory itself, instead of having long production runs of single items produced mixed runs of all items, I assume in proportion to their sales and the kiln could be used more efficiently if it was fired with different sized goods. Variety was thus created by the technology of the work process, but its effects were beneficial to the workers. Generally speaking the girls found the work in the factory interesting and absorbing enough, given that they had to be there. This was in contrast to the office workers who expressed much greater dissatisfaction and boredom.

Dinnertime is freetime

Dinnertime was used by the girls as an opportunity to rest and relax. Occasionally they would go into town to buy something but normally they stayed in the factory. This was in contrast to many of the married women who used the time to do their shopping so that they wouldn't have to do it on their way home. Because there were always a few of the dippers out shopping it was possible for the remainder to sit together. Usually there were about eight of them. After eating their food they began to play cards, talking as they played. Anne, Paula, Alex and Becki were the regular girls who played with Betty, Vera, Jean and Dot who were married. The conversation ranged over a wide set of subjects depending on the current issues of the day. Looking over the list of examples I recorded, it is clear that most of them were subjects derived from outside the factory and came from their concerns as girls and women. They ranged from Anne's new shoes to Liz's central heating system. Work rarely came into these conversations; there was no discussion of the job, pay or conditions. In fact, if these conversations had been recorded it would have been impossible to have determined whether they had occurred in a supermarket or over the garden fence. Their relationship was one of friends in this context rather than colleagues or workers.

Although, on the whole, it was the married women who were leaders in the organisation of work, in these free periods they shared the interaction with the young girls. The topics of conversation were equally

as likely to be initiated by a young girl as by an older woman. The balance of topics depended on the composition of the group and the degree of interest in the things being raised. Although the exact subject may have been age-specific, such as Anne and her fiancee or Vera and her new coat, everyone participated in them. As daughters in their parents' home, the girls were vitally interested in the same things as the married women as many of them concerned them personally. This was shown very clearly during the discussion on gas fires. Liz was saying how awkward it was being at work when she needed things done on her house. It seemed that the pilot light on her gas fire kept blowing out and she needed it adjusting. The Gas Board had agreed to call, but she had been reluctant to leave the key with a neighbour. This led to a general discussion about gas fires versus open fires. They all liked the idea of an open fire, but they preferred the ease and cleanliness of gas. Anne (aged 18) said how pleased she had been when her father agreed to install gas fires, as she now didn't have to get in the coal and it made her job of cleaning the house quicker. Everybody nodded in agreement. The young girls also had something to say on other topics such as the price of food or sales bargains.

In a similar way there were topics which came up which could be considered 'youth' ones and these were shared by adults. One example was radio programmes, such as the Noel Edmunds Show. Similarly, they had television programmes in common, such as 'Crossroads' and 'Coronation Street' and situation comedies. The young people did not dominate the discussion of such topics, they were part of their common 'culture' at work. The only group which was specifically age

related was the 'Dating group' in the factory, a group of young people who gathered together to joke and flirt (see page 151 ff).

Unlike the other groups I worked with in the factory, the dippers were not allowed to spend their breaks at their work place because of the dust concentration. Therefore they had to go to the canteen for their breaks. This fact probably affected their relations both with each other and with other groups. Although factory work as a whole might be considered "dirty work" compared, for example, with office work, there was among the factory workers themselves a ranking of skills and jobs. This was perceived both by the workers and management.

The highest status among the female employees were the litho workers and the gilders. Lower than them, in terms of pay and status, were the packers who considered themselves superior to the dippers even though they were paid less. The basis for their feeling of superiority was the fact that their work (the packers) was clean. They did not have to wear overalls and they could take their breaks where they worked at the packing tables. The dippers, in contrast, always felt they were considered of lower status because they got dirty (not really - just dusty), had to wear overalls and leave the factory at break times. This also produced a feeling of solidarity among the dippers, who claimed that it was they who did the really hard work. In fact, none of the work was physically hard, it just required continuous effort and probably the group who worked hardest, were the high status litho girls who had little excuse to stop or to have a break.

Afternoons - taking it easy

The afternoon session on the dipping lines was the most relaxed period. The girls were more tired than in the morning and the build-up of heat made them dry and drowsy. It was during this period that the workers would be more inclined to play jokes and fool around as a way of keeping alert and passing time.

For example, one afternoon Harry, a furnaceman (in his 50s), who often used to come across and chat to us, crawled along below the level of the conveyor belt and hid under it on the opposite side to Paula. He had obtained some soft clay from the moulding section bits of which he started to lob at Paula and Anne. From underneath the belt he could see where they were from their legs and he could hear what they were saying. As soon as they settled back to work he would throw at them again. They thought it was Winston (a trolley boy) and kept looking behind them, little realising that it was coming from in front. Eventually they realised where it was coming from and without saying anything they moved away and got the big sweeping brush. Suddenly they rushed forward and brushed under the belt, knocking Harry over from his crouching position.

On another occasion Winston came up to Paula to talk to her. When she turned away from him to talk to Betty he secretly dipped his hand into the slip. He moved backwards slightly, so that she could not see his hand, and as he left her he gave her a playful slap on the back, leaving a blue slip mark on her overalls. We started laughing and when she realised what had happened she took off her overall and chased him round the belt, trying to wipe it off on him. She didn't succeed but left him with the threat that she would get her own back on him.

This reminded Lili, who was working next but one, of another incident with the glaze. A year or two previously, near to Christmas, Steve the supervisor had been acting as dipper. Liz and Sue from the other line had crept up behind him, got him by his overalls and tipped him into the glaze. He had gone in almost up to his shoulders. At another period there had been a spate of annotating overalls with crude slogans and swear words. Nigel Stockton had had to step in as some of them had been offensive and had caught the eye of people passing through.

During the whole of my period of observation in both locations, the number of such incidents which I personally witnessed, was comparatively small - perhaps ten or so. This was, presumably because of the successful control techniques of management. Yet, when I came to interview different managers, they gave the impression that youthful disorder was always breaking out or about to break out. When I asked for examples, they seemed to have a collection of incidents from the past which they telescoped together as if they were recent events.

The workers, too, had a fund of stories about incidents in the past and it was difficult to assertain the period over which they happened. The older women may have been putting together events that had happened over a period of ten years or more. The day after Winston had put handmarks on Paul's overall, playing jokes came up in the lunchtime conversation with the dippers. Someone asked Paula what had happened and when she had explained, it provoked the comment from Sue that they didn't seem to have the fun they used to. There were general murmurings of agreement and a whole flood of events came out.

Sue recalled the big fight with Johnny Allen. Allen, it seemed was one of the slipmen. As an ordinary worker he had always been ready to have a joke and was quite popular. However, once he was 'made up' (made a supervisor) he changed. He started to 'ride' the men and stop the fooling about. This was resented by his former workmates and one day, when they were throwing around the cap of one of the kids, he told them off. Fred told him to "F... off" as it was only a joke. This led to an argument and eventually a fight up by the machines. The two had to be separated and eventually Johnny had to be moved to another shop.

On another occasion the men brought some fireworks into the factory. One of their mates apparently spent a long time in the toilet and this was a standing joke. On this particular day they waited for him to go in and get settled down and then threw a banger under the door.

Both these stories were told by the women about the men. They also had stories to tell about the younger girls. How, for example, on the last day of work before a girl got married, her friends would try to get hold of her coat and decorate it with paper so that she was forced to go home wearing it. They also told me of how some of the young girls went out with some of the married men.

End of the day and finishing on time

As the end of the working day came closer, the girls' effort had to be paced and the amount of work taken on adjusted carefully so as to ensure that there was ample time to complete it, clean up the machines and clean themselves before 5.00 pm. This was an unstated procedure

in which all workers cooperated, but it tended to be unofficially supervised by Lili on our line. She would keep an eye on the work to be done and tell them whether to work fast or slow to complete it. If there was a particularly large amount of mess to be cleared up, a preliminary clearing up would be done early in the afternoon, so that the usual final routine could be operated. Ideally the last fifteen minutes allowed them to clear up, wash their hands, get dressed and be in the line by the clock for 4.58 pm.[1]

I have described at some length the situation I witnessed in the first location in the factory because it was typical of the other places where I worked. In my account of the packing section which follows I look at other aspects of the girls' culture in work.

3. The Packing Section

I spent three weeks working on the dipping line and this served to introduce me to the routines of factory life as well as making me a familiar "worker" in the plant. At the end of the three weeks I knew by sight most of the people on the site, so that I could nod to them if I met them outside the factory on the way to work. At the beginning of the third week I talked to Nigel Stockton about moving to another section and on the Friday he took me to meet Pam, supervisor of the packing section. She said that she would be happy to have me working with her but, again, in a joking way, hoped I would not mind the language.

This question of language was mentioned to me three times in the factory, by Nigel Stockton, the dippers and by Pam, yet it was not spoken about at all in the office. It was almost as if the factory workers were defining themselves as 'roughs'. Pam said she was sure I would like it better in her section than "up there" meaning the dipping lines. When I said that I would like to explain to the girls what I was doing and ask them whether they would let me work with them, she wasn't quite sure how to respond except to say "they'd better". However, she did allow me to do this and again they agreed to let me work with them.

In the packing section there were nine workers. Three unmarried girls under the age of 21, two who were 21, one of whom was pregnant, and four mature women in their forties and fifties. Their tasks were allocated to them by Pam who, unlike the supervisors of the other two sections where I worked, did not have an office of her own. She operated from a desk in one corner of the packing section. The result was that she exercised much more direct supervision of her workers than the other supervisors, and she was quite prepared to shout across at the girls from her desk. To some extent this was 'mock' aggression. One lunchtime, Joan, Stephanie and myself were just finishing a hand of cards which took about 5 minutes after 1.30. We all jumped when a booming voice came over "Come on you lot, get on with it". She was equally as vigorous with the trolley boys who brought packaging from the stores and took away the boxed articles. Kit had an inclination to stop and talk to Pat as he went by. One day she shouted at him "Bugger off into the stores and let my girls get on with their work". For all her rough manner, she was well

liked and it was felt that she had a concern for the workers in her section. She could, I felt, only adopt this manner because she was dealing with girls and young boys.

The girls worked singly or in pairs round flat packing tables. The finished ware arrived from the decorating kilns on low pallets. Each type of ware had to be packed in a particular way and each had a time allocation. The packers, as a group, were very aware of their output, spurred on by one older woman, Judy, who was always keen to work as fast as she could, and who, although assured that my effort would not count against her bonus level, was the only person who was not keen to work with me.

Pam had suggested that I should spend one week at each table so that I could get to know everyone in the section. The routine here was slightly different to that on the dipping lines, due partly to the nature of the task and partly to the form of management. Pam clearly felt that the packing department was superior to the dipping lines because when I arrived on the first day and asked her whether I would need new overalls she said that she didn't like her workers to wear overalls as it wasn't a dirty job. She also confided to me later that, when girls were sent to her for a job, if she didn't like them she shunted them down to the dipping lines. My interviews with the Section Manager of the litho area, Andrew, confirmed this. The most "suitable' girls were first sent to Pauline in the litho for consideration. If she did not fancy them, they went to packing and then to the dipping lines.

Because packing was a comparatively clean job, the girls were allowed to take their breaks at their tables if they wanted to. Pam had a kettle of her own, so she made a pot of "real tea" for her workers. At lunchtime most of the packers brought sandwiches and ate them where they worked. If they hadn't brought anything with them they would go and fetch a sandwich from the canteen and eat it with the rest of us. They would rarely have a lunch in the canteen, preferring if they wanted a cooked meal, to go up to the main canteen on the other site.

In the morning the packers would eat their breakfast at the benches where they worked and read a newspaper, though sometimes two or three would move together and talk. At lunchtime the married women normally went out shopping, so that everyone who remained would sit together and talk or play cards. Two of the married women when they came back early would knit and talk.

As with the dipping lines, there was a variety of work to be done, different shapes to pack and the opportunity to move around to collect the ware, fetch cartons and stack the finished boxes. The type of work seemed to be distributed evenly as it came along - all of the workers had been there long enough to know how to pack every item. Except for my presence, the working groups remained stable and this meant that young and old were paired together. An exception to all this was Thessa, a married girl of about 21, who not only preferred to work by herself, but also chose to deal with one type of ware - egg coddlers. These were large egg-cup shaped vessels

with a metal screw cap lid in which eggs could be baked. They were sold in vast numbers in America. Thessa was said by Pam to be the fastest worker in the factory. Her task was to screw the caps on to the bottoms and to pack them in boxes. She worked at an incredible rate. At the end of my period in the section, I worked with her for one day and even for short stretches of a minute or two I could only do half as many as she could, and she kept the pace up all day. I asked her why she worked so fast and why she chose to stay with just one item. She said that time passed more quickly if she worked fast, and she found that doing egg coddlers was as good as anything. I think she was also quite proud of her reputation as the fastest worker in the company. Pam explained to me that Thessa was on a special bonus rate of her own, because she worked so fast and did so much work in a week that, if they scaled other rates down from hers, no-one would get a bonus.

This was the section of the factory where I found myself working hardest when I was actually working at the task of packing. The reason for this was that, in order to be in a position to pack the items, the worker had to gather on to the table the ware to be packed, packing materials and boxes. Once these items had been brought together then packing could begin but bonus levels were determined by the number of items packed so that the time spent assembling materials had to be covered. The time allowed for packing each item was very brief and once packing began I found it difficult to keep up with the other workers. These periods of frantic activity were broken up by the more leisurely task of

assembling materials, but the continual presence of the supervisor in the general area, tended to restrict interaction largely to talking. During the designated work periods, I did not see any of the jokes and activities which occurred periodically in the other sections where I worked. However, talking was possible for most of the time and this is how the working part of the day was passed.

4. The bonus system - Negotiating the work process

Even though this section was one in which the girls and women were very concerned about their output, it was difficult for me to determine exactly how it worked. The workers knew how it was supposed to work, but I was not able to determine how carefully the output was measured. The system used in both the office and the factory was similar. Wage levels were based on broad bands of output not on the individual piece. Items were rated by so many, per standard minute, and individuals or teams, in the case of the dippers, had at sometime determined what their level of output was going to be. 80% was the standard rate, and 100% and 120% represented bonus bands. It was expected by management that workers would be within their bonus band most of the time. If a worker performed below her band for a period of time, she was dropped to a lower level. In a similar way, a worker could move into a higher band by a period of higher output.

The system was explained to me by one of the section managers. The workers themselves did not discuss it directly at all while I was there. Each individual or group, seemed to have its own work pace

which was maintained almost automatically. As any periods of delay not caused by the workers, such as lack of boxes, was booked as 'average time' and as delays of some sort happened most days, I would have thought it would be quite difficult for the girls to have little more than a very rough idea of how they were going. However, they seemed able to judge their output accurately enough to ensure that they met their targets, as management did not mention this as a problem to me. They were able to do this by their own feelings about the rhythm of work, both on each individual day and over the week. Anne, for example, during my first week on the dipping line when there had been a shortage of trolleys, commented to Lili that she thought the week had been slow and that they didn't seem to have done a lot of work. Lili agreed and said that they would "have to have a go tomorrow". Which was a Friday.
Most workers tried to avoid having a lot to do on a Friday. My observations of the girls in every section confirmed that they quite consciously paced both the day and the week. In terms of the day, the most productive period was the morning, especially the period before breakfast. If an absence of stoppages allowed a good morning's work to be accomplished, then this would mean that things could be taken easier in the afternoon, so that this would be the period of more conversation or more frequent breaks. If, however, the morning had been full of interruptions, then it was necessary to to work harder in the afternoon. This was a particular problem in the office were computer breakdowns were quite common. I remember Pat telling her neighbour one afternoon, that she couldn't talk because she'd had a terrible morning.

A similar pattern was attempted over the week. The ideal approach was to work hard for most of the week so that Friday could be taken at an easier pace, especially Friday afternoon. This could be seen very clearly in the litho section with its "battery hen" layout, where, by the middle of Friday afternoon, only those girls who felt they were behind would be working hard. The rest, although in their seats, would be talking more than working.

I tried to observe whether this pacing of the day was based on a "feeling" for what had to be done, or whether it was calculated from the work output. In all the sections I worked there was some attempt to keep a check on what work had been done. Individual workers, or one person in a group, kept a list of all the items processed. In most cases in the factory, this list would include up to twenty different types of ware each with its own allocation of time. I would have thought it would have been difficult to work out the exact output in standard minutes from this variety. In fact, although the work was recorded, it did not seem to be added up by the workers. With the exception of the litho workers, I did not see any other group tallying their output either at the end of the day or at the end of the week - something they would have had to do if they were to pace their effort by this means. In most cases, I suspected it would not have been possible to check the accuracy of these records.

Amongst the packers, for example, once an item was boxed and stacked on a pallet, there was no check on which team had packed it as everybody was packing similar items. The same was true for the dippers where items from different lines were mixed together on the firing trucks.

It was clear to me that the bonus band was a very crude incentive system. The output bands were fairly broad and as a worker could not improve her pay in any one particular week by extra effort, it tended to encourage workers to stay within their bands. In order to change to a higher band a worker had to achieve the new target for three or four weeks, so there was only the crudest of incentives there. Forbes used a similar bonus system and when I returned to the office to carry out the questionnaire, I was told by the computer manager that they were dissatisfied with it because it did not encourage the girls to try for higher bands, and so he was introducing a number of in-between levels, so that the extra effort required to move up a band would not be too great.

Another possibility, to account for this pacing of effort, might have been that they could see the results of their day's labour and, in this way, judge what they had done. This sort of estimate would only have been possible for the office workers. They were given fairly uniform bundles of invoices to process and so, by the end of the morning, there were often accumulations of bundles on their desks. However, in the factory, work did not accumulate. As soon as a process had been completed, the item was moved on out of sight to the next section, so there was no way of getting a physical impression of what had been done. The frequency of remarks about how they felt about their output, and my observations at the change in pace during the day, led me to conclude that they were mostly guided by their feelings. I was not able to pick up this feeling for the pace of work myself as I was only working in each section for a limited period, so I barely had chance to settle into the routine.

The opportunity to pace the work in this way was only made possible by the discretion allowed in the fixing of the rate of work. In most places where I worked it was possible, by steady application, to achieve the 80% standard rate. However, in the packing section I suspected that when the rates had been fixed, not enough consideration had been given to the time it took to assemble the packing material and articles on the tables, because once the materials had been assembled the actual packing had to be done at a very hectic pace. During the periods when I was working on my study I did not witness the fixing of rates for women's work. However, parallel to where I worked on the dipping lines a new furnace had been installed and the time and motion men were watching the men there in order to fix the rate.

This was taking place during my first week in the factory and it gave me a false view of the work process. When the ware had been dipped it was loaded on to trolleys to be re-stacked on trucks to go through the kiln. During that first week the girls were alwaysshort of trolleys and there were several delays while they waited for the kilnmen to unload them. I thought to myself that this was rather inefficient of management not to provide enough trolleys as there was plenty of room for them. By the Thursday I felt well enough accepted to mention this to Paula at breakfast. She explained that the time and motion men were checking each operation for the new kiln and therefore the kilnmen were doing everything correctly as these times would determine their eventual bonus levels. After the first week and the completion of the study, we rarely had any problems again over the supply of trolleys.

What was interesting about this incident was the fact that both sides appeared to know what was going on. For Lili and the other dippers the circumstances, which produced a lack of trolleys, were well enough known to them not to be commented upon. If I had not brought it up, it would not have been mentioned to me, as it was not discussed by anyone else that week. It was also know by management. I asked questions about this when I interviewed the section manager and supervisor. They were both aware that there was not normally a shortage of trolleys and that this was being caused by the work study. It seemed from the interviews that the time and motion men were not particularly liked by anyone and certainly the works management did not identify with them. They were described as "those from up there" referring to the other site. In this situation management and men were closer together than might be expected. The workers clearly wished to establish a price for their labour which was attainable and provided some scope for bonus without too much hard work too often. The line managers wanted the work done without any problems and so were anxious that a reasonable rate be established which would produce a satisfactory output and not provide aggravation over bonus payments. The time and motion men could threaten the relatively harmonious relationships and therefore both sides accepted this particular routine with its stoppages as necessary for that week.

I can only assume that when the bonus levels had been fixed for the areas of women's work, a similar process had gone on, because in most of the tasks the average level could easily be achieved at the pace I have described. Even in the litho section which I describe

next and which was more like a production line, the girls had enough discretion to adjust their work pattern to one which suited them. This was, I assume, because any system of measuring a work process had to involve the girls performing the tasks themselves, and if they were aware that they were being measured it would be an obvious strategy to ensure at that time that they did not work too strenuously. The main point is that the girls had come to terms with the bonus system and produced an adjustment to it which suited them. All the work teams consisted of girls and married women and there seemed to be agreement between them as to what level they would work at.

In this chapter I have set the scene of my research and drawn attention to a number of features which were very fundamental to the girls' culture in work - their reactions to the work process, both in terms of passing time by jokes and talking and in terms of the pacing of their effort. My focus has been young girls although it has been necessary to mention older women in my account because they were fellow workers. Everything I have said about the girls would also apply to the women as well. In the next section I describe further aspects of the girls in work in the context of the Litho Section where the ware was decorated.

Footnotes

1. For me the working day did not finish at this point because, like the married women I suppose, I had another job to do when I got home. I arrived home at about 5.40 pm and my usual routine was to have tea with my family and talk to the children till 7.00 pm. After a short sleep I would then write up my field notebook. As the research period proceeded, this routine became more and more of a burden. The reason was that, having worked for a day as a factory hand, I then had to re-live that experience and analyse it

in order to capture those parts which I deemed relevant for my research.

At the weekend, having copied up Friday's notes, I would then photocopy the weeks entries and break them down into categories. I found this all a very intensive experience, especially as it lasted over such a long period - some 17 weeks with a break in the middle. Returning to my family at night was both a relief and a distraction. Although there was my normal social life going on - but more limited as there wasn't time to go out in the week - I was at the same time turning over the material in my mind looking for themes, ideas and inspirations. To relax into the job, and become just a factory worker, was a constant danger because it prevented me doing the real job I was there for which was to observe girls in work.

CHAPTER 4

THE LITHO SECTION - BATTERY HEN WORKERS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe the Litho section of the factory. It provides a contrast with the packing department, described in the previous chapter, because it had been organised very much like a production line in spite of the level of skill required to decorate the ware. It provides a clear example of the way in which management, having decided that the task was most suitable for young girls, then created a working environment to meet their perceived problems of such employees. In this connection I give an account of other tactics developed by management for the control of young workers. This section of the factory also contained a number of young boys, the trolley boys, who moved goods around the factory. I have described some aspects of their work situation because they provide a contrast to young female workers. Finally I consider the sexual division of labour in the factory.

1. The Litho Section

This was the last section of the factory in which I worked and was named after the lithographs or transfers which provided the decoration on the ware. The application of these transfers was said to be the most skilled task in this part of the factory. I suspected that the reason this section had been left until last for me was because the supervisor there had the reputation of being harsh and

unpleasant. The girls in both the packing and dipping sections, had stories to tell about Pauline. It appeared that she had worked for the company all her life and was then in her late forties. Unlike her sister, who held a similar position on the other site, Pauline was unmarried and this was seen as part of the explanation for her vindictiveness (a stereotype spinster). She was said to be someone who was determined to have her own way and therefore she only chose girls who were reasonably docile. Isobel, one of the packers, quoted herself as an example. She had been recruited by Pauline but after a week had been told that she wasn't fast enough, even though she claimed she had been told she would be given a month's trial. Isobel had then been offered an alternative job in packing, where I worked with her, and she attributed her demotion to the fact that she had stood up to Pauline.

Both the packers and the dippers had warned me that I would find it different in the Litho section. It was. The task itself was more difficult and required some concentration, at least at first. The transfers came on sheets of backing paper from which they were removed by soaking and slid on to the plain white ware. Each part of the design had to be precisely positioned and smoothed out to remove air bubbles. As there were about twenty different pieces, the girls had quite a lot to remember about the exact placings of the pattern, as they dealt with a number of items each day. Each girl sat in her own seat facing a conveyor belt. To her left was a short roller run down which came the items to be decorated. Once the decoration had been applied, the item was placed in an

empty tray and when this was full it was dispatched down the conveyor belt to be checked and passed on to be fired again. There were two parallel conveyor belts, each with ten girls either side, divided by the roller feed so that they looked like "battery hens" (as the factory manager described them).

It was Pauline's policy only to take on 16 year old applicants for training. Her reason, as she explained to m e, was that at 18 girls got the full rate and it seemed unfair to be training people over 18 side by side with girls under 18, knowing that they were getting a higher rate of pay. This policy was interpreted by the other workers as the way Pauline ensured that she got only compliant workers. This was the one part in the factory where there were large numbers of young girls - some twenty-eight out of forty. These girls were the most highly paid females in the factory and, as training them to know all the patterns took two years, management was anxious to get the maximum production out of them. They worked, therefore, under a fairly strict regime.

It was difficult for me to judge whether this regime was necessary for the tasks. Pauline's argument was that the application of this decoration was such a skilled task that it needed continuous concentration. Therefore, the division of the girls into little compartments, the strong disapproval of talking and the generally serious atmosphere, was vital. At the time I could not comment on this though I did wonder whether it owed more to Pauline's management style than to the requirements of the task. My work in the office convinced me that this was so, because there, although management

tried to prevent it, the girls were able to read invoices, enter them into the computer and talk, all at the same time. I am sure that decorations could have been applied whilst chatting.

In view of Pauline's reputation, it was interesting that this was the one section in the factory where I did not work as a woman. When I came to discuss what I should do with Pauline and Andrew, the Section Manager, she had already convinced him that I could not work on the litho lines, because it would take too long to train me and, as they were short of staff, she couldn't even begin. Therefore it was suggested that I should work as a trolley boy, the young lads who brought the plain ware to the girls. This suited me better, because as a trolley boy, I had the opportunity to move about anywhere on the two lines, to listen, to observe and to get to know a greater number of girls than I would have done if I had been confined to working in just one place on the belt. Moreover, it gave me access to the trolley boy group themselves.

It emerged later that I could quite easily have been taken on to work as a litho girl. When I had been working as a trolley boy for ten days and had become known and accepted, I mentioned to Val, a girl in her late 20s who helped with training, that I would have liked to have had a go at decorating. She agreed to give me a trial one lunch-hour. Potential recruits were shown how to decorate saucers, which were considered the easiest to do, when they were being interviewed, and they then had to do a specimen six to assess their aptitude for the job. Val showed me what to do and

agreed, when I had finished, that my six were up to the standard they would require for trainees. I did not comment on this, but I thought at the time that, if I could do it, as someone who hadn't particularly sensitive fingers, then this cast doubts on Pauline's claim that another reason for training only young girls was that their fingers were nimbler than older girls.

I learned from the Personnel Manager that six months previously the shortage of recruits for the litho work, a crucial part of the factory, had prompted him to force Pauline to accept some boys for training. They had managed to attract six quite easily, but soon after they started work they asked to leave. Apparently they found out that they were doing "girls work" and didn't like it. Only one of these boys, Angus, remained with the company. He had become an inspector checking the decoration. I asked him why he had given up the chance to be trained in this skilled work and he confirmed that he had not realised, when he accepted the job, that it was usually girls work. He also found the pace too intense; there was no chance to relax.

I think I saw something of Pauline's selection system myself. When I had first visited the factory to talk to the Personnel Manager, a young girl was being interviewed. When she had left, I heard the Personnel Manager on the telephone saying that she was sending down "a very nice girl. I think she is just the sort you are looking for". As this same girl was training in the litho section when I began work, I assumed that the telephone call had been to Pauline. When I interviewed Andrew, about the selection of girls, he was a

little rueful about Pauline's system, but admitted that he wanted "nice girls" who would work hard and accept Pauline's regime.

It was in the litho section that I became particularly aware of the impact of technology on the work process. This was the one part of the factory where management had been able to "furnish" the location as they wished because it had been purpose-built and it reflected clearly the management's perceptions of the workers, they inteded to use in this section. The work was deemed delicate and requiring care and concentration. As it was thought to be particularly suitable for girls, then conditions had to be created which offered a partial solution to what were seen as the problems of young girls as workers, namely, their low level of motivation, their inclination to talk and their desire to mess about. The result was a "battery hen" system. To some extent these perceptions were echoed later by the manager of the mail order firm when I spoke to him as he lamented the fact that he had not got the space or the screens to divide his operators from each other. However, in spite of the design, the girls were able to overcome the barriers. Although not encouraged to talk to each other they still did so across the conveyor belt by a form of lip-reading and by talking carefully. The presence of the trolley boys also provided the opportunity to talk as they worked.

2. The division of labour - male and female

Angus's rejection of litho training, because it was "women's work" reminded me to look again at Whytes (1949) comments on the relationship between men and women in work. The issue of what was men's work and what was women's work arose mainly in the factory, because there were few men in the office. My observations suggested that there were a number of conventions, if not rules, which operated and which were fairly constant from section to section, although their justification varied.

The first feature was that men rarely worked alongside girls or women engaged in the same activity and the same status as themselves. There was only one place where men, girls and women were exactly equal and that was in the gilding area. This area consisted of skilled artists who added gold to the rims, patterns, knobs, etc., of special sets of china. These were people who were not considered quite good enough to work on the limited editions of the north site, but of sufficient talent for this delicate job. They sat at their own desks and worked individually like artists.

In every other situation where men worked alongside women, the man was always doing the more skilled job, or was in a supervisory capacity. This was the case on one of the dipper lines where the dipper was a man. Normally men and girls worked separately at different tasks. For example, men were exclusively employed in the moulding section, on the kilns and in grinding. The justification for this division, in terms of strength, the need for a night shift or the heat, was accepted by the girls, although they admitted they could in fact have done them.

On the other hand, the explanation that only girls should do litho work was accepted even though boys had been tried and there were men amongst the gilders doing delicate work. This inconsistency was not commented upon. Equal opportunity legislation was in operation at this time, but it hardly affected the factory. Only in the case of the gilders were men and women doing the same job and paid at the same high rate. For the rest of the factory where I worked, differential rates were justified in terms of the jobs being done and it could be seen as only coincidental that the tasks corresponded to gender, the less skilled or ones with less overtime being filled by women.

Contact between male and female workers was very restricted. One of the few examples I saw was, curiously, between older men and the young girls. Singing Harry who had thrown the clay at Paula, would sometimes come and put his arm round her as she was working and make a joke. In the packing department, the storeman did the same to Pat. When I was working on the dipping lines, Malcolm, foreman of the moulders, said to me "You want to watch our Paula or she'll have your trousers off." I was working with Lili at the time and she whispered to me that the men rather fancied Paula and Anne, and that both of them had, on different occasions, been out with married men from the slipware section.

This familiarity was shown only towards the young unmarried girls. Though the men would joke with the married women, they never approached them in this way. The young boys employed a different method of approach. Winston, when he came to chat to Paula, would make a

'mock aggressive' approach such as bumping into her, or crack a joke as he came near. It seemed as if the older men had the protection of their age, whereas the young boys had to be wary of not being too familiar.

Men and women worked separately, even if they did the same sort of job, such as the gilders, and this separation extended to non-work times such as breaks, a reflection again, I assume, of the dominance of the work situation. The only example I saw of an older man sitting with a woman, was in the dining room, where one married couple usually had lunch together and would play an occasional hand of cards afterwards. There was also a man who worked as a grinder who used to come occasionally and sit with Eileen and some of the older women there and talk to them, usually telling smutty stories. I thought he was a bit odd; he was small with a hunched back and a funny grin permanently on his face. As I did not work in the grinding section, I was not too sure how well he was accepted there by the men.

In the office there wasn't the opportunity for this sort of contact in the work area. Very few people passed through the rooms and for those who did, the layout and atmosphere inhibited contact with the operators. What contact there was took place at lunchtimes and on special occasions. One Friday lunchtime, Sylvia suggested that we went up to the pub for lunch for a change. There I was introduced to two of the van drivers who Sylvia and Margaret knew well enough to talk and joke with. When they had gone, Sylvia told me that one of the drivers, a married man, was seeing one of the girls in their office. Apparently, when he was due to make a night

journey he told his wife that it would take longer than it did, so that he could see the girl first before setting out. This brought out other reminiscences of misconduct in the office.

The only males who were subservient to females and paid less, were the trolley boys. This seemed to be because they were literally boys, aged 16 to 18, and therefore not men. They 'served' the litho girls in the sense of having to keep them, the skilled workers, supplied with work and they earned less than they did. I asked them how they felt about this. Their comment was that they saw working as a trolley boy as only a temporary situation. When they were 18 they hoped to move to an 'adult' job in the factory.

Although they agreed that they served the litho girls, they felt that they had an element of control over them because the girls, to some extent, relied on them. David was the most awkward and mischievous of the boys. June had annoyed him by calling out loud for him to load her up when he was talking to his friend. This happened when Pauline (the supervisor) was close by, so he had to do what she wanted. When he had finished loading, he whispered to me that he would teach her to call out like that, when Pauline was about. There was a general agreement that, although we would all help each other, we tended to keep a special concern for one part of the line. June was in David's part. For the rest of the day he kept an eye on her. As soon as she had finished half a load he put in some more. She didn't have a pause all day. He also fed into her smaller items, which he knew were less popular. The next day he did just the opposite. She found herself waiting between

each load, not long enough to complain, but long enough to destroy her work rhythm. By the third day the incident seemed to have been forgotten.

Because the boys knew which items were popular and unpopular with the girls, the latter tended to try and keep on good terms with them. Egg coddlers were considered to be particularly boring as there were 50 to a load. If there was more than one tray each to be done, it always lay with the discretion of the boys as to who should do the extras. Laura once complained that she had been given too many, but it was difficult to prove as someone had to do them and Pauline told her to get on with them. If the boys did decide to annoy someone, it had to be done subtly, so as not to give the girl any firm grounds for complaint.

Angus, the boy who had been recruited for Litho but who was now working as an inspector, told me jokingly how he sometimes got his own back on girls who were "snotty" to him by being extra vigilant when inspecting their decorations. For each piece there was an exact place where the pattern should be put. Obviously, as the patterns were applied by hand, there was some variation and he had the discretion as to whether to accept or reject. Pieces, which were rejected, were marked with the girl's initials and put to one side. They were then returned at the end of the afternoon for correction. This was not a popular task as it meant doing small corrections to patterns and finding the odd pieces of patterns which were required. He said he quite liked the look on their faces when he turned up with the rejects.

The most obvious difference between male and female workers was at supervisory and management level. In both the factory and the office, all the top management I met were male. Women only appeared at supervisory level and in no case did a woman supervise adult men. In two sections young boys were supervised by women, but where there were men working there was always a male supervisor.

3. Male youth - the "trolley boys"

The "trolley boys" provided an interesting contrast to the young female workers. They were one group of workers who had a certain freedom in the factory. In the Litho section there were two boys servicing each conveyor belt. Their job was to fetch ware from the stores or the grinders, stack it in the area, divide it into tray loads and feed it into the girls. This involved quite a lot of movement about the factory, none of which could be controlled as exactly as other operations in the factory. The result was that they, as a group, were much more able to pursue activities which were not part of their prescribed job. For example, if the amount of work to be done was slack, as it often was in the first period of the morning when all the girls were working on egg coddlers, they would slip off behind some lockers, out of sight of the supervisor, and play a few hands of cards.

At lunchtime, the trolley boys provided a striking contrast to the female workers and a similarity to the adult males. They had their own card-game which, like the men, they played for money. Whereas

the women's card group, in the packing section nearby, was so quiet as to be hardly noticeable, the trolley boys' game was loud and boisterous, with loud exclamations for a very good hand or a near miss and stronger language for poor hands. It was also a time for joke telling so that every so often there would be crackles of laughter.

The number actually playing cards varied according to finance, with fewer having the money to play by the end of the week. Usually the four trolley boys were joined by Winston from the ovens and two boys from the stores. In the course of the play there would be much banter and chatter. A number of the boys had been given nick-names, which I thought were both witty and cruel, but which seemed to be accepted. Winston, a West Indian, was called "Roots" after the American television history of the negroes which had recently been screened. John was known as "Brains" because he was notoriously slow on the uptake. This showed particularly in cards, where the pace of the play needed quick decisions. This banter was given more edge by the fact that John and Kit were active members of the National Front and had, John confided in me, recruited several of the other boys who were less willing to declare their membership openly. The National Front routines often concerned Winston but he took it very well. He was a cheerful, popular boy. He was physically quite able to take care of himself, if he needed to, and he was also able enough to return the insults. When David, who delivered his lines with more venom than the others, went on one day about monkeys and coming down from the trees, Winston came back at him very quickly saying that it was funny how the monkeys always won at cards. This brought a rejoinder about black magic.

They were on good terms with most of the girls and therefore would talk to them as they loaded up their roller belts. This was easy to do as they had to go into each section of the belt where the girls were sitting in order to adjust the trays on the rollers. Unlike the girls, the boys were not on a bonus system, so the work imperative was not as strong. Because of these circumstances, the trolley boys took their work less seriously than any other group I worked with. They made jokes, were awkward with the supervisor and did not worry if they had accidents. For example, David was taking a trolley piled high with vegetable dishes from the grinders to stack ready for the litho girls, when he turned sharply causing many of the dishes to topple over and to break. I was surprised that he was not more embarrassed. He just shrugged his shoulders and got on with picking up the ones which had not been broken. The other trolley boys stood round making loud, forced cat-calls, which eventually caused him to tell them to "F" off. Pauline was immediately on the scene and, although she told him to be more careful and not to stack the trolleys too high, she did not seem convinced herself that he would take any notice.

The only dispute I saw was between David and Pauline. She told him to fetch some litho transfers for one of the girls, but he ignored her and carried on loading a trolley. She had to shout at him before he took any notice. David said to me later that he didn't care whether they sacked him or not, because he could always leave or, when he was 18, get a decent job in another part of the factory.

4. Young Girls - a problem to be managed

The incident above was the only real dispute which I saw during my research as, on the whole, relations between employees and management in both locations were very good. This may have been why these firms allowed me to do my research there in the first place. I had been made aware of management styles and attitudes towards young people when I had first started trying to find a location for my research. One condition I required was that there should be a number of young people working together and, when I contacted firms it became clear that this was something that management tried to avoid. As the Personnel Manager of a button making factory said, "the last thing we do is to let half a dozen of these youngsters sit together, we'd never get any work out of them." Similarly, discussions at an electronics firm, which eventually proved abortive, also gave me the impression that young people were seen as a problem to be managed.

This attitude was displayed by Nigel Stockton at Tableware Co., when I met him for the first time to discuss my research. He explained that his young girls were comparatively well paid, receiving the full rate for the job at 18 even though they had few responsibilities. Living at home, and giving their mothers a contribution towards their keep, meant they had plenty of money to spend. Therefore, his problem was to motivate them to work hard within the bonus system and preferably to do overtime. To this end he, and other managers and supervisors, had developed specific tactics to deal with the

special problems of young workers; to some extent, these were tactics for all young workers but they were tailored to meet the control of young girls. The most obvious of these was never to let a number of young girls work together. As I went round the factory and the office, I never saw more than two or three young girls together. Young people would always be allocated to work with older women. In giving his reasons for this, Nigel Stockton showed both a perception of young girls and of older married women. He explained that, in his opinion, married women only went out to work when they were desperate for money or very keen to earn it. Therefore the mature, married woman was a very highly motivated worker, out to get as much as she could while she was there. By placing such women amongst young girls, who were believed to be lowly motivated, he and other managers assumed they would maintain order and keep the pace of work going - "Drag the young girls along" as he put it. This was very clearly seen in both the litho and later in the office, where there were married women or mature women regularly spaced down the lines.

Pauline's aggressive style of supervision was another method of control, which was more likely to be effective with the young than the old. She would shout, threaten or frighten the girls into keeping at their work. However, in the short time I worked in her area, I only recorded one example of this, presumably because her position was established, but stories of girls being reduced to tears by her were fairly widespread. Pam, the supervisor of the packers, had an equally authoritarian style, but it was accompanied by a rough good humour and a friendly tolerance which Pauline lacked.

A different style of supervision was used by Steve in the dipping area. I asked him how he tried to manage the young girls and he said that his style was to get them to "love him" if he could. This may have been an exaggeration, or wish fulfilment on his part, but I knew what he meant. He was always cheerful and friendly making jokes and putting his arm round the girls. In this way he tried to get them to like him, so that they would do what he asked willingly. While I was there, this style seemed to work well. His section of the factory ran smoothly and the people I worked with respected him and did what he asked without question. I gathered later in my interview with Nigel Stockton, that he did not entirely approve of Steve's familiarity and he felt it would prevent him ever holding a management position. From the girls point of view, they found it more pleasant to work with Steve than with Pauline. Both were successful in getting the work done, but the atmosphere was entirely different on the dipping lines, the pace was relaxed and there was always a joke and a smile, whereas in the litho, the nearer the workforce was to complete silence the more it suited Pauline.

Another method used for the control of young girls was used by Enid, the supervisor in the office, who made it her policy to get to know all of her girls as well as she could. She was friendly with all of her workers without being familiar. She would ask them about their affairs and comment on their concerns, but she was never too friendly. For example, she never sat with them at breaks or played cards. She told me when I interviewed her that she did not think

it was fair for her to mix too closely with the workers because, after all, she had to give them orders and even tell them off. This particular approach was shown very clearly at the end of the day when, as the girls filed past her desk to leave, she would say goodnight to each of them by name. The result was that the girls did restrain themselves when they talked and they respected her orders to be quiet and to get on with their work.

A more formal way of controlling young people, which also applied to adults, was the formal discipline procedure. Nigel Stockton explained how this operated in the factory. If a girl was performing poorly, or if her general behaviour was not considered appropriate, then management would begin to act. The first stage was informal. The supervisor, in Steve's words, "would lean on her a bit." In practice, this meant keeping her under close supervision by standing near her for most of the day and keeping her at her task. If, after this had been done for a few days and then relaxed, the individual reverted to her former behaviour, then the official procedures were implemented. The offender was formally asked to see the Section Manager who would give her a verbal warning about her work and tell her what was required to put it right. If this did not produce results then a second written warning was given, which meant that everything had to be exactly right from that time. If this was not heeded, then dismissal followed. The Trade Union was informed in writing of both these official stages. Nigel Stockton said that usually by the time the second stage had been reached, the worker wanted to be dismissed.

Apparently, at that time, if a worker left a job voluntarily she did not receive unemployment pay immediately, but she did if she were dismissed. Therefore, it was in her interests to be dismissed, though it might provide a poor reference. The usual way of getting dismissed was to arrive late at work twice in the week, once the formal written warning notice had been received, as this was sufficient to qualify for dismissal.

Another way of attempting to gain control of young employees was through an appointments policy. My interview with Andrew, manager of the litho section, and with the assistant personnel manager of the office, revealed that they were both looking for a similar kind of girl. They said they were looking for young girls who were neatly and conservatively dressed and who seemed polite and well motivated. They both thought favourably of the products of a local girls' Secondary Modern School, whose headmistress insisted on school uniform and who, apparently, ran a very traditional school. I have already described the incident which illustrates this on page 108

To some extent it appeared that young people who applied for jobs were being assessed on their "youthfulness" and the aim of the selection procedure was to eliminate those who might display it in its extreme form. Certainly there was no-one in either the factory or the office, who overtly embraced any strong youth style, such as the dyed hair of the punk. It made me wonder what sort of employer would take on someone who, at interview, appeared with such youth-style manifestations.

One other means of controlling youth and other workers, which struck me most forcibly, as a teacher who normally worked in a different work climate, was the pace of work. The underlying model of the factory was a workflow process. Raw materials came in at one end and left at the other as packaged finished goods. Management tried to balance this flow through system, so that there were sufficient workers and materials at each stage to keep everything moving at what was considered a desirable and profitable pace. Even though the factory was a new building, the demand for its products had been so strong, that it was almost too small, especially after an extra kiln had been installed. The effect of this was that there was very little space to spare anywhere and, therefore, the workflow had to be so adjusted to ensure that goods did not pile up in any one section.

This was the key to keeping workers continuously working. In each section, where I worked, the girls were always aware of goods coming in behind, which needed to be cleared and, at the same time, of the need of the workers in the next section down for the goods they were working on. On most occasions, except when the kilnmen were being monitored, management always ensured that there was enough work available to be done, so that they could not be complacent about clearing it. As there was Saturday morning overtime this meant that even on Fridays the work did not dry up. Because of this system the pressure to keep working came from two directions - the physical piling up of work behind you and the demand for your products from the workers below you - a sort of push-pull effect.

When the system was going well and the workers were motivated, as they were in the factory, this produced a massive constraint, but clearly it also lent itself to being disrupted by any section.

The Litho section provided a contrasting work environment for the study of girls subculture to that of the dipping and packing sections, which I described in Chapter 3. From the management's point of view this area was close to an ideal situation for the employment of young girls, providing as it did, isolated work spaces. To some extent it was effective in management terms as it did restrict the amount of interaction between the girls compared with other places in the factory. However, this was not completely effective as some talking and joking was possible by a combination of lip reading and voice projection and there was always the possibility of the willing seduction of a trolley boy who could always be persuaded to stop and talk or pass on messages and goods to other girls. Then there were breaks, both official and unofficial: the girls never went to the toilet alone but always with a friend and were very adroit at pacing their effort. When I mentioned this in the last chapter I described how the litho girls were the only workers who kept a close individual tally of their output. I did not see any girl actually use this tally as a check on her wages, but no doubt it could have been consulted if there had been a problem over bonus level. However, by keeping a close tally, the girls had a very good idea of their weekly effort and, if the week had gone by in a satisfactory manner, they could take it easy on Fridays.

The girls in the litho section were in a very similar work situation to the girls in the Imput Department of the Office which I describe in the next chapter. In some ways the computer manager would have preferred the "battery hen" system of the factory but he had not been able to create this. Nevertheless, in describing the office girls as "conveyor belt" typists I am indicating that there were similarities in their work situation and in their responses to that situation. These similarities and some differences are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

CONVEYOR BELT TYPISTS - THE COMPUTER IMPUT OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

The study of young girls in an office situation was included in the research design in order to provide a potential contrast to the young girls working in the factory. In the event it failed to do this because the culture of the girls in both situations was very similar. I had expected that the girls in the office would be more interested in their job and more committed to their firm and that this would influence their responses to work. Instead I found that the imput operators found their task less pleasant than the girls in the factory although there were features of the office which were attractive enough to keep them working there.

To some extent material from my period of participant observation in the office has been utilised in the two previous chapters where I have drawn on it to supplement and illustrate the extent of points made in the factory. In this chapter I focus on aspects of young female workers which were particularly striking in the office, though here again many similar features were also present in the factory. I begin by examining the formal introduction to work provided by the Company and comparing it with the informal processes operated by workers on each other. I then consider the problem of boredom in these tasks and how the girls passed their time in the

more restrained conditions of the office. Finally, drawing on material from both the office and the factory, I consider the relationship between different generations of female workers.

1. Introduction to work - formal and informal processes

I arranged to start work in the office two weeks after I finished in the factory. Then, when I went to see the personnel manager to make the final arrangements for my stay, he mentioned that normally new girls went through an induction programme when they started working for the company. By this stage in my project, I was aware of the way I had been taught the work routine in the factory by the girls and I thought it would be a useful idea, if I could contrast what a company felt was necessary for an employee to know with what other workers taught me. I therefore asked to be put through this formal induction programme.

On the first morning this began when I reported to the assistant personnel manager who was responsible for the programme. This was conducted according to a written programme where each point had to be checked off. On completion the sheet with my name on it was to be filed as a record that the conditions of the job had been explained to me. Mrs Cooper began by telling me about the company as a whole and then about the operations carried out on this particular site. She would also normally have taken my insurance card and explained that the company worked a week in hand. She then emphasised the importance of punctuality and that although she was always available, I should see my supervisor first, if I had

any difficulties. She went through those parts of the Health and Safety at Work Act which might affect me.

After this she arranged for an office junior to take me to the section manager of the imput office where I was to work. He, in turn, introduced me to the floor supervisor and handed her the printed checklist from Personnel, which indicated those parts of the induction programme which had already been carried out.

Enid, the supervisor, was very pleasant and welcoming. She had obviously been briefed by John Morris, the Computer Manager, because she asked me how I had liked working in a factory. The next part of the induction programme was a conducted tour of the building when the computer room, sorting department and fire exits were pointed out to me. I was shown the rest room and the cloak-room and how to use the clock. I was then ready to begin training.

I was shown to a console where, with the typing stool screwed down to its lowest point, I was just able to get my knees under the desk. Enid explained that the console was similar to a typewriter except that it had extra functions and some of the letters were in a different order. Everything that was typed (entered) appeared on a television monitor in front of me in luminescence green com-puter letters. The task, she explained, was to learn how to reduce the orders which had been sent in by the mail order agents, into a code which the computer understood. There was a list of different codes and it was a matter of learning the different codes and instructions for the various items. As I was on a training

programme I had to prefix my work with a special number so that the ccmputer did not process my work. As soon as I had mastered one type of invoice I was shown how to do another. My speed and accuracy were periodically checked and discussed with me by means of a computer printout.

For any new girl this was the end of the official induction programme which seemed to have three aspects to it: an explanation of the legal aspects of work such as wages, fire exits and national insurance, a guided tour and skill training in the task itself. This was largely completed in the first two days, though I was told it took several months to learn all the forms of work. The informal training was equally quickly accomplished though its focus was very different.

The emphasis of the girls own 'training' was to show each new girl the particular routine of the job and, I assume, for a girl straight from school to be shown the routine for the first time. As I had just come from the factory, I tended to follow the routine I had been shown there. That is, I used the official breaks for my main period of relaxation and took short breaks in between just to divide up the work periods, something originally suggested to me by Betty in the dipping department. In my first few days in the office, when I returned from these short excursions comments were made, such as "you've been quick Tony". At first I thought they were just being funny, but I then noticed that when they took these sort of breaks they were away much longer - 5 to 10 minutes, especially in the afternoons. For the first week, when the job was new to me, I assumed that they were just cheating a little.

However, once the boredom of the job and the atmosphere of the office got hold of me, I realised their significance. These longer breaks were necessary in order to make the job tolerable and to keep awake. When I came to work in the second office with the newer girls I noticed how new arrivals picked up this routine.

I was shown by example the routine to be followed at breaks and at the end of the day. About five minutes before the breakfast break on my first day, I was interrupted by Margaret who asked me whether I wanted tea or coffee. She then went ahead with my money to get it ready so that I didn't have to queue when the break began. The same happened at lunchtime when one person from each group of friends would slip away early and get sandwiches. Such procedures seemed to be accepted unofficially by the supervisors. At the end of the day the same routine as in the factory was indicated to me. At about 4.15 Christine who sat in front of me turned round and asked me if I had sorted and bundled. She also asked me how many I had still to do in the bundle I was working on. When I told her she advised me not to start another bundle as I wouldn't be able to finish it before the end of the day. By 4.40 everyone had stopped work and was tidying their desk and fetching coats. Christine, when she had finished her own desk, offered to help me and she went and collected my coat. In this way I was tuned into the routine by the other girls.

2. The organisation of work and social interaction

The area where I worked had originally consisted of one large, hall-like room, surrounded by offices, something like an old primary school. The offices on the outside had glass partitions so that daylight could be seen but there was no direct access to the outside from this central area. Originally all the input operators, some 60 in number, had been in this large room but John Morris, when he first arrived, had decided it was too large an area so he had divided it into two sections and redecorated. The redecoration had been carried out in a modern style with the new partition wall papered in a contrasting green wallpaper. Visually this made the area quite a pleasant one to work in, especially as the floor was carpeted as well, "a work space suitable for girls".

When John Morris explained this to me on my preliminary visit, he also explained the rationale for the seating plan. The operators were placed in four parallel lines, seated at a diagonal to the line (see fig.2.3 p.63). This was done to reduce the opportunity for talking. Unfortunately, he explained there was not enough room to provide a wide gap between the rows, so that it was still comparatively easy to talk. He hoped eventually to get a third room so that he could spread them out more. The division of the girls was on the basis of experience. One office contained new girls and those who could only deal with limited type of work, and the other, where I was to begin, contained fully trained operatives who could deal with all types of work. In each office the task was the

same, to input data into the computer via a keyboard. I had been assigned to the room with the experienced operators, because the supervisor there would have more time to deal with me and because there were a number of new girls starting in the other office.

I tried to keep a record of the different groupings at both breakfast and lunchtime, but this proved difficult to do as there was only an element of stability at breakfast and very little at lunchtime. During the breakfast breaks, I was able to identify the core members of a number of groups, but there was a slight change round of attendance by fringe members. At lunchtime the number attending varied enormously depending on who had gone shopping and, in consequence, people seemed to attach themselves to whoever they happened to know, who was there at the time. The only clear division here was between people from the two offices.

These informal groups in the rest room were interesting in the light of the management's policy of moving people around in the office. I had first noticed this tendency in the litho section of the factory. There, the new trainees began with the decoration of saucers and plates but, as such a lot of these had to be done, each week two or three experienced workers had to be assigned there as well. Pauline rotated this work on plates and saucers among the experienced workers, but she did not necessarily return a worker to her previous position on the line. The same thing happened with the input operators. During this period, after Easter, there always tended to be some away, usually on holiday or taking discretion-

ary days, so there were always one or two vacant consoles. Again, I noticed that some girls were moved around, either as they came back from holiday, or to accommodate someone who had. This change round was less noticeable than in the litho section, where two moved every week, but the changes seemed very dramatic when I returned to the office six weeks later to carry out my questionnaire. As I looked for familiar faces in familiar places, I saw that almost everyone, except the line supervisors, had moved places.

I checked the reason for this when I interviewed the supervisors at the end of my stay. It related to talking; this was seen as a major problem by management, in both the litho and the office, as it was thought to affect the quality of the girls' work. The layout of the office, though not ideal according to John Morris, was meant to reduce this. This tactic was very consciously employed when two people sitting next to each other were constantly talking, but it was also used fairly regularly to move everyone around to break up established relationships. It was difficult to assess how effective a tactic this was, but my impression was that it did influence the cohesion of the girls as shown by their informal groups. In both the office and the litho department, I found it difficult to chart the informal groupings at break times. In contrast to the dipping and packing areas where work groups were stable as were the non-work groups.

I have thought about this since the interviews and it occurred to me that such a tactic could only have limited success. Given a stable workforce, which both locations had, and given time, it would be quite possible for everyone to get to know each other, so that there would be an increasing familiarity amongst them all and the influence of the proximity factor would be reduced. On the other hand, by keeping known friends or chatterers apart, distractions could be reduced. In spite of this there was always a limited amount of talking, particularly in the afternoon, and it surprised me that the experienced operators could talk, read invoices and input them into the computer all at the same time. I commented upon this to Christine who sat in front of me. She didn't think it was unusual at all, though I think that talking did slow down the work rate because, on another occasion, I heard her say to her friend that she couldn't talk that afternoon because she had had a slow morning and needed to get a move on. I was never able to talk and type because I couldn't touch type. I noticed that the trainees couldn't do it either when I went to work with them.

Talking was one way of passing the time in the office, though it was always more circumspect than in the factory. I could not talk and work and I found working in the office, after the excitement of starting a new job had diminished, very boring and tiring. One of the reasons for this may have been the room where we worked. Because the room did not open directly on to the outside, it relied for its ventilation on an air conditioning system. This was only

moderately effective, being too warm for those directly beneath the vents and too cold and draughty for those further away. Although it could be switched on and off, the girls never found it satisfactory and by the afternoon of most days they found the atmosphere very close and fuggy, with the result that it was difficult to keep awake.

3. Input operators - conveyor belt typists

One of the great differences between the office and the factory was the lack of opportunity for extra-operational activity. In the factory most of the jobs I did involved movement of some sort and it was always possible to talk freely. In the office the girls were static and conversation was restricted. The result was boredom. Only in the office did I hear regular complaints about the boredom of the job. The girls may not have liked the idea of working in a factory but, having decided to do it, they found it congenial. Contrary to my expectations, it was the office workers who disliked their work most and it was here that there was the greatest amount of absenteeism. It was the rate of absenteeism, in the input area, compared with their other offices, both there and in Bristol and Leeds, which had prompted John Morris to try to improve the working atmosphere by the division and refurnishing of the large room. During the period I was there I did not notice any great absenteeism, though one or two girls did miss a day because they "didn't feel very well". This did not seem remarkable

at the time but, when I thought of the factory where only one person I knew had missed one day, I could see how the overall rate might be higher. There was a further change, when I returned with the questionnaire; music had been introduced into the office and the girls were collecting donations to buy tapes for the company-provided cassette player.

The feeling of boredom and tiredness was also partly attributable to the tasks themselves. Reading invoices written in a variety of handwriting produced a strain on the eyes and this was exacerbated by the monitor. At first acquaintance the luminous green of the monitor's letters seemed unworthy of comment, but staring at them all day did produce strain. The brightness of the display was adjustable and I noticed that the girls kept it as low as possible. Unlike myself, they touch-typed and therefore did not need to check the input on the monitor very often. The experienced workers had one major job each day, which they found particularly tiring. This was to input systematically, area by area, the names and addresses of everyone on the electoral roll in England and Wales. This information came in the form of finely printed lists which were difficult to read. Only limited sections of the electoral roll were fed in each day, because the task was so monotonous.

This was the one place where the subject of boredom came up in conversation regularly. As I got to know the groups of girls, they would usually ask me whether I found the work boring. To begin with I said that I didn't because it was new to me but, after about

a week, I knew what they meant. It did become very boring. The expression on people's faces said it all, especially in the long afternoons. I could see from the way they left for their afternoon "breaks" that they felt as tired as I did. I could not be sure whether this was caused by the nature of the task or the climate of the office; it was probably both, but complaints were fairly common. Basically the girls sat at their keyboards all day. The work came to them to be inputted and was taken away when it was finished with. They had no excuse to move about and little discretion over the type of work they did. The only variety was the form of message they put into the computer.

This subject of boredom came up when I was talking to Jane and Kay, two of the trainees, when they were explaining why they had chosen to work at Forbes rather than elsewhere. It was the hours that suited them - 8.15 am to 4.45 pm - by this they meant it was easy to get to and from work. They said that they had known, when they applied, that the job would not be as interesting as working in a small office somewhere, but they thought the comparatively high pay and the convenient hours were worth it. This conversation, and others I had about choice of jobs, showed that these girls had not just drifted into the job. The girls gathered information from friends and relatives and then tried for jobs which suited their circumstances, changing jobs if their circumstances altered.

This was also true for the factory workers. Although two in the factory had actually transferred there from the office, I was not

able to judge the extent of job choice open to the workers there. However, there was always the choice of shop assistant. This might have seemed more 'respectable' but when Liz, one of the dippers, was talking about looking for a new job, she said that she did not want to go to Sainsburys, where a friend had arranged an interview, because of having to work on Saturdays and some evenings. Some older women in this conversation said how they had taken the 'twilight' shift at Sainsburys, stacking shelves, when their children had been young because they could leave their husbands to look after them when they came home from work. Choice of job seemed, therefore, to be very carefully thought out and the reasons given varied according to age and family circumstances.

4. Time - the taken-for-granted enemy

The slow passage of time in the office seemed to be made worse by the stoppages. There was a far greater number of stoppages than anywhere in the factory, even when compared with the kilnmen episode. I had always assumed that such things as computers were most reliable, or at least as reliable as machinery in a factory. I was wrong. The computer broke down at least twice a day and on one day was "down" seven times. The delays lasted on average about five minutes but the longest was twenty-five minutes. I, personally, found such delays a welcome relief from the work, as it gave me a chance I needed to talk to the girls and to listen to their conversation.

The girls, however, did not like too many interruptions to their work routine. One or two short breakdowns in a day were welcomed as they relieved the monotony but more than this made the day seem longer. On the day when there were seven, there were signs of annoyance as the number increased through the day. Stoppages were more welcome in the afternoon than in the morning because, as I had found in the factory, the girls paced both their day and their week and so expected to take it easier in the afternoon. We were rarely told the cause of a breakdown, assuming the cause was known. Although the computer itself was in the same building, the cause of a breakdown could have originated in one of the other offices using it, in Bristol or Leeds. Apparently a faulty monitor could be the cause and then there would have to be a check of all the consoles row by row.

Because breakdowns were common and expected to occur most days, the girls made provision for them. This was in contrast to the factory where they rarely happened. A breakdown, before breakfast, occasioned talk about what had happened to them since the previous day, a "How did you get on?" "What did you do last night?" type of conversation.

Another regular topic of conversation in the offices was buying things. Employees received 20% discount on the items they bought from the firm's catalogue, if they collected them themselves from the warehouse. In addition, at the warehouse, there were always

special bargains of damaged goods and ends of lines, which could only be seen by going there. This meant that if someone had been to the warehouse, and it was open in the evenings twice a week, she would be questioned about what was on offer. Everyone would be interested in these conversations because there was such a wide range of potential goods. Sometimes goods were brought back for friends and these would be passed round for everyone to see. If something that had been purchased wasn't quite right this, too, might be passed round to see if anyone else wanted it. For example, Sylvia had bought a pair of shoes which did not fit her very well so she passed them round for other girls to try on. On another occasion Dianna bought a handbag which, when she got it home, didn't match her coat so she brought it into work to see if anyone else wanted it.

If these topics had been fully covered at breakfast, then the second activity would be the reading of a newspaper. About 70-80% of the girls and women bought a newspaper, usually the 'Sun' or the 'Mirror' and this would normally last one or two short breaks and lunchtime. If the breaks were long ones, then one newspaper would be swapped for the other.

At least twice a week the breakdowns would be longer than the time required to read two papers and, on these days, alternative activities would be undertaken. The most common of these was doing the easy version of the 'Mirror' crossword puzzle and there would be a race to see who could get the most clues. Margaret and Sylvia were part of a crossword group and my presence gave them an advant-

age while I was there. Two of the cliques had been keen enough to buy a 'puzzler' book of crosswords and, as they both had the same book, they would organise a competition to see who could complete a crossword first.

Newspapers, talking and crosswords were time-passing activities which could be utilized while sitting at their desks. This had to be so, because during breakdowns they were not expected to leave their places or the room. I wasn't able to discover the reason for this. It may have been that most of the breakdowns were considered too short to be worth sending them off to the rest room, or it may have been difficult for the computer men to predict the length of the breakdowns. Again there seemed to be an understanding among the girls that they should stay seated and not congregate in groups, so that card playing was not taken up - even though some did play cards at lunchtime. I asked Joan the supervisor, about this and she said that John Morris did not approve of cards because it caused too much noise and as it required a group together it might have led to damage to the equipment.

Because the task was inherently boring, and because of the frequent breakdowns, the girls were faced, to a greater degree than in the factory, with the problem of passing time. I found all the jobs in the factory more interesting than office work, because there I was static for most of the day, facing a green-glowing monitor. The girls asked me at the end of my first day how my bottom was. It was quite sore, apparently an occupational disease for typists. Added to this was the aching of my back and shoulders - which was

probably aggravated by my size. Apparently all the girls suffered from sore bottoms even when they were used to the job. So the passage of time was something I was more conscious of because of the physical discomfort.

I had forgotten how important time is to groups of workers such as this. Whereas for me, as a teacher, time is too short, in the day or in the academic year to get everything done I want to do, for the office worker and the factory worker, time is something which has to be passed. It is, somehow, a massive unstated presence; work is being measured in time, in standard minutes; time has to be passed until the next break or stoppage and goods have to be produced in a certain length of time. And all the time there are clocks to remind you of this fact, beginning with the clocking-on routine. I am not sure whether it is an unwritten rule, or a management response, that everyone should be able to see a clock from her work position but, in both factory and the office, clocks were scattered in prominent positions. In the office, the clock was high up on the wall in front of us. The dilemma was that the girls wanted to look at the clock in order to see how much time had passed but, at the same time, looking at it too often resulted in time passing slowly. Betty, on the dipping line, said that she disliked working near a clock and so she tried to avoid looking at it so that she could be surprised by the imminence of the next break. In the office, with the clock immediately in front of the eye and the frequency of breakdowns, discussing the passage of time became a regular feature of the day.

5. Informal work routine

To pass time and relieve the monotony of the work, the input operators had developed a work routine and pattern of activities which took me a little time to work out. As in the factory, the official breaks were punctuated by visits to the toilet. However, unlike the factory, these breaks might last from five to ten minutes. The longer period being in the afternoon. Although most people followed the same routine, an eye had to be kept out to ensure that not too many of us were absent at any one time. As the minimum period between official breaks was $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours, this meant that there was a period of about half an hour, when perhaps half the girls would try to take such a break and so they would half consciously keep an eye on who was missing before going themselves. Not everyone would go every time; it probably depended on how they felt. I myself rarely took the 'break' before breakfast, but after the first few days I always took the two in the afternoon. If there was a breakdown, this time would be used instead.

The afternoon was the longest period of continuous work. As in the factory, the employees had agreed not to have an afternoon break so that they could finish at 4.45 pm instead of 5.00 pm and thus beat the city's notorious traffic jam. The disadvantage of this was that there was a continuous period of $3\frac{1}{4}$ hours in the afternoon to be passed. The need to leave the room was aggravated by the fact that neither smoking nor the consumption of food or drinks was

allowed in the offices in case they spoilt the terminals. Therefore addicted smokers had to use these breaks to have a cigarette and others to have a drink. Because smoking and refreshments were allowed in the factory, the breaks were much shorter. Being a non-smoker I did not realise or appreciate the significance for the first week or so. By the second week I found that I needed the longer breaks in the afternoon in order to keep awake. There were very few men in the office, so I rarely met anyone to talk to in the toilets, so I would close my eyes for a few minutes or wash my face with cold water. My slowness in getting into this routine was in marked contrast to a married woman, Susan, who had worked there before and who was returning as a temporary worker. She started in the second office, after I had been there a week and, as I was sitting two places below her, I happened to be watching her. I noticed that, from the first day, she took breaks at the appropriate time and of the appropriate length. Clearly this was something that was picked up as part of any routine job. To some extent, such a routine must have been known to management and, provided the breaks were not too long or too frequent, they seemed happy to accept it provided the bonus level was maintained. As it was, the input operators had a relatively high rate of absenteeism so there was a reluctance to make the job even less attractive.

The programme of other activities was also more regularised in the office than in the factory. This may have been partly a response to the tedious work or because much of it was initiated by the

supervisor, possibly to increase the commitment of the workers. Throughout the week there was organised a regular pattern of events. On Tuesday, for example, there was 'Spot the Ball' in the Mirror. Everyone in the office would contribute 10p which was used to buy 120 attempts. These would be filled in by different people each week and checked, as far as possible, the next week. As I was a new "girl" I was asked to fill them all in during my first week. We still didn't win but it made for more comments later. On Fridays it was the office 'Sweep'. This was usually run by Vivien, a line supervisor. Each monitor had a number which was also painted on a small square of wood kept by the machine. On Fridays anyone who wanted a go paid 10p and put their number into a box. One was drawn out and that person had all the winnings - some £3 which was a useful bonus. Other events, such as draw tickets, pontoon tickets and raffles often took place, but not on such a regular basis.

In the more 'constrained' situation of the office, there was less opportunity for jokes or boisterous play, particularly as the supervisor had a desk in the room and was always present. The equipment was costly and the room crowded. There was also an absence of boys or men. Very occasionally an office boy would pass through, but as it was possible to by-pass the office by another route, not many people came through. Therefore, the opportunities for more 'youthful' responses were much more limited than in the factory. The only examples I saw actually utilized the technology.

Vivien turned on Sylvia's monitor when she was away at lunchtime and typed in a rude message concerning some shoes, which Sylvia had been trying to sell all morning. She then turned down the monitor without erasing the message. When Sylvia started work again after lunch, the message came up on the screen and she then spent the rest of the afternoon trying to find out who had put it there. Other than this, the 'response' to the work situation was the development of routines and a succession of activities.

6. Generations and Work

It was management policy to mix together youth and adults and, because theoretical approaches to the study of youth involve a consideration of this relationship, I tried to examine the relations between age groups. In terms of work relationships this was something of an artificial distinction which was not operated by the workers themselves. The only age/status distinction which they seemed conscious of was marriage. A married person being accorded more adult status than an unmarried one. However, the distinction between girls and women is retained in this section for the purpose of clarification.

The most obvious thing I looked for was to see whether there was a task differentiation on the basis of age. However, in my choice of locations I had tried deliberately to eliminate this possibility because I wanted to avoid an explanation where differences between youths and adults merely reflected their relative positions in the work situation. Therefore, I had sought locations where adults and youth did exactly the same job. This, in effect, meant choosing

jobs which could either be learnt easily or where both young and old were accepted for training. In my locations, the dipping lines and packing were semi-skilled jobs, whereas the litho and input office required some training. The office took on women of all ages, whereas in the litho the current policy was to recruit only young girls, though there were some older women who had been trained at an earlier period. Therefore, generally speaking, I had a situation where women and young girls worked together enjoying the same work status and doing the same task. Age was not, therefore, a criteria for the job. Both young and old could pick up the skills comparatively easily, although there was an ideology in the litho section that young hands were better than old ones. On the basis of the jobs performed youth and adults could not be distinguished, although their status as workers in the eyes of management was differently. However, I tried to observe and note the relationship between the age groups while they were working, during breaks and, where possible, outside the company.

The decisions as to who worked where and with whom were ones largely made by management and so management's perceptions of young people as 'problems' resulted in the mixing of age groups in every area of work. It may have been possible to negotiate with the supervisor about whom one worked with, but I did not see this take place. During my period of employment, job allocation and work groups were firmly in the hands of the supervisors, and only the workers on the dipping lines had any discretion as to where they worked and that was only on the line itself. Management policy, therefore, meant that young girls always worked with adults, though there were some all-adult teams.

This policy determined most other forms of interaction within the plant. As all workers were faced with the common problems of the need to make so much effort and to pass the time, their solutions were identical. The pacing of effort, spaced breaks, activities such as 'Spot the Ball' and talking were common solutions; there were no differences, on the basis of age, in their responses. It occurred to me later that it would be useful, now, if I could study locations, where young and old worked separately on similar tasks, to see if the separation brought different responses, possibly a result of the latent culture of each age group.

This work location had an important influence on grouping in the non-work periods. The canteen/rest room in both the factory and the office was too small to accommodate all the workers at once and, therefore, breakfast was taken on a shift system with one or two groups there at a time. Because the work groups were mixed ages, it meant that people took their breaks with their groups and there were scarcely enough people there at any one time for a youth element to filter itself out and sit apart, even if it wanted to. At lunchtime there would have been the opportunity for a youth group to form as everyone stopped work at the same time. But very few people stayed in for lunch and those who did tended to sit together, where they were joined by colleagues as they returned from the town. These lunch groups were less easy to chart, in the case of the litho and office, as the tendency of management to move workers about seemed to produce more fluid groupings out of work.

I was interested in the topics of conversation and the activities which occurred between the age groups to see if these reflected any differences. Naturally, the groups discussed topics of mutual interest. The sort of subjects which came up were very similar both at work and during the breaks, though some tended to be a reflection of the location, for example complaing about the food in the canteen. The content of these conversations has already been described in Chapter 3, ranging as they did from central heating to fiancees. Topics related to work came up only occasionally, more so in the office when there was a breakdown; most of the conversation was about out-of-work activities and events and was, in a real sense, women's talk in which females of all age groups could share. The same was true of the tactics and strategies used to pass time; singing, joking, talking, crosswords and draws were all activities shared by employees regardless of age.

It was more difficult to find out what they shared outside the working day. Though this research was carried out inside two work locations I was very aware of the dangers of treating them as closed systems. The problem, which was a methodological one, was how to gather data on activities which took place outside the working day in order to assess their effects on the work situation. It was not possible to solve this problem in a satisfactory way, but what I tried to do was to record in my field notebook instances of this interplay.

Although most of the people in the locations where I worked came from roughly the same geographical part of the city, this was still a considerable area. As both locations were near the city centre they were served by several 'bus routes. In addition, several workers were brought to work by their husbands. This geographical spread meant that the majority had met for the first time at work, though some were neighbours or had met at school. However, there were at least three cases which I learned about of people recruiting their friends or relatives and asking for jobs for them.

I tried to record how often and under what conditions girls and older women met each other outside the work situation, other than sharing common shopping expeditions at lunchtime. The data I gathered on this was very sparse but, nevertheless, the fact that there was any contact at all could be said to be significant in terms of youth culture theories. Contact was most likely during leisure activities, for example Bingo. In the city there was a Top Rank Bingo Club which was well known to all age groups and of which quite a few were members, so everyone could talk about it. Married women in both the factory and the office went, but the girls did too. I recorded two cases of married women arranging to go with young girls and in another instance of a young girl saying she always went with her "mum".

In a similar way everyone knew about certain night clubs and pubs in the city. Although I did not record any examples of young and

actually arranging to go to a city night club together, it was clear from the discussions on the price of drinks or the quality of the cabaret, that both groups patronised them. The difference between attendance at Bingo and attendance at night clubs or pubs lay in the fact that Bingo was very much a woman's hobby. Some men did attend but it was a place where a "respectable" woman could go by herself to meet friends. This was not true of the clubs. For the married women, these were places where they could take their husbands or rather, could be taken by their husbands, and it was socially desirable that this should be so. When they went out with their husbands they tended to meet other married couples.

The unmarried girls, on the other hand, could go to the clubs and the pubs, either with a boyfriend or as part of a group of young people and apparently, when there, would stay with their group, even when they saw their married workmates.

It was difficult to judge from the data I gathered how often these visits were made or who frequented these places most. The only combined visit I heard of, when they were looking at some photographs which had just been processed, was one which the women at the factory had arranged to Danny La Rue's Night Club. Most of the people I worked with in the factory seemed to have gone on this outing.

There was only one grouping which was age specific and this was the courtship group in the factory. Unlike the office, the factory

did employ a number of young, unmarried boys, and therefore there was always some boy-girl joking and contact. This could take place casually in the course of the work activity, such as when Winston dipped his hand in the glaze and put handprints on Paula's overalls, but it usually took place at lunchtime. There were a group of three young girls and three or four young boys, who used to meet at the end of lunchtimes to talk and joke with each other. Two of them were going "steady" together, but there was no permanent arrangement between the rest, though there was always plenty of speculation after lunch about who "fancied" who. This "mating and dating" group was confined to certain young people, but its activities were commented upon and discussed by everyone.

When we returned from lunch, if the group were there by the machines, the married women would make a joke with them. The general feeling of the adults was summed up by Liz, "Good luck to them, you're only young once." The women seemed to look back on the courting stage before marriage as an ideal period and seemed cheered up by the sight of the youngsters talking together. However, this group was not liked by management. Although there were only six or seven youngsters, and although they met in their own lunchtime, Nigel Stockton and Steve were very keen to disperse it as soon as the official break was over.

The interest of the married women in the affairs of the younger group was illustrated by the case of Anne, one of the dippers. She was aged 19 and engaged to a boy, Peter, who was known to everyone as he had once worked in the factory. One morning Anne came

late, having spent most of the night discussing breaking off her engagement with Peter. As she had mentioned the previous day that she was about to do this, the events of the previous evening were narrated to the group. The married women listened to her story and commented on it with stories of their own, most of them claiming to have been engaged at least once before they eventually married. Nevertheless, their general advice was that she should make it up with her boyfriend because he was a nice lad and she might not get another chance. None of the women supported her decision to break off the engagement.

For the rest of the week each event in Anne's saga was reported and discussed in the same detail and with the same concern as Liz's central heating problems earlier. Eventually, Anne did break off her engagement and, when this became known, she began to receive more visits from the trolley boys. One of them, Roger from the stores, invited her out and everyone commented on him. Liz thought he was a bit funny and not as nice as Peter. However, Lili said he lived near her and that he was a decent boy.

At birthdays and other anniversaries there was a public sharing of occasions. Whilst I was working in the Packing Section, Isobel had a birthday. She was given a card from us all and, when she arrived in the morning, we all sang Happy Birthday. I gathered it was common practice to do this for everyone's birthday.

The young girls, to a large extent, were seen by the adults not as an entirely disparate group but as a group with whom they had a great deal in common. Moreover, as they themselves had been young once, they understood the position of the girls and their advice and comments were listened to because of this. There was no indication here of the 'generation gap'. When they talked about courting and what they did with their time, there was little disagreement. Admittedly the topics were discussed in a fairly light-hearted way so that there wasn't any serious opportunity for a clash of attitudes. The women shared the pleasures of the Valentine cards sent to Paula and Anne and they, in turn, took an equal interest in Sue's plans for her Silver Wedding Anniversary. I concluded, therefore, that relationships between the generations were very good and that any divisions were based on personality not generation alone.

In the last three chapters I have described aspects of the work culture of young girls in one factory and one office as I observed and experienced them. I have described four different areas where I worked and used these as a mechanism for drawing attention to certain aspects of girls in work, which relate to my main theme. These features can be summarised under five main headings: work routines, passing time, negotiating the work process, management and youth and young and adult workers. Some of these are explored

further in the next chapter which contains the findings of my questionnaire. In Chapter 7 I then draw together all my findings and discuss them in terms of youth culture theories.

CHAPTER 6

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

When I planned my research design I had included two other methods of data collection besides participant observation. These were interviews and questionnaire. I adopted a number of methods in order to ensure that I could more adequately cover the field of my enquiry. In this chapter I give an account of the findings from the questionnaire which was given to all the people I worked with except the trolley boys. I used a questionnaire for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to verify how widespread some of the features I had seen were, so as to counteract one of the disadvantages of participant observation which was the comparatively small population that could actually be observed. The second was to explore areas of interest which were not available to me as an observer, either because I was not there long enough, or because they did not occur when I was present, for example, how they spent their money or spare time. This chapter is organised around five areas: the relationship between girls and adults, the relationship of adults to the girls, the girls' attitudes to work, sociability in the workplace and the girls and overtime and earnings.

An important feature of this questionnaire data is that I asked adults the same questions as the young girls. I felt this was important because I wanted to establish whether there was a youth culture in work or a work culture in which youth participated. In addition, I wanted to examine the extent to which the responses to work were specifically feminine ones.

1. The relationship between young girls and adults

In the previous chapter I described the relationships between different generations in work and how generally they were very harmonious. This seemed contrary to one of the common themes of youth culture, generational antagonism. Therefore, I asked the girls about their impressions of the adult workers they worked with. It would seem from their responses, shown in Table 6.1, that the vast majority of young girls saw their fellow adult workers in a positive way. Only 18% saw the women they worked with as not very friendly or indifferent, whereas 63% saw them as quite friendly and a further 18% as very friendly.

Table 6.1 How young girls saw the women they worked with

	Don't know each other	Not very friendly	Indif-ferent	Quite friendly	Extremely friendly	No res-ponse	No.
No.	0	7	5	42	12	1	67
%	0	10	8	63	18	2	100

These were very similar results to another question designed to elicit the same information. In this case the youngs girls were asked to judge how adults reacted towards them. Table 6.2 illustrates this lack of generational antagonism as no-one indicated that they felt that adults disliked young people or were not very friendly at all, and a large majority, 73%, thought that adults were friendly most or all of the time.

Table 6.2 How girls thought adults reacted towards them

	They dislike young people	Not very friendly at all	Sometimes friendly sometimes not	Friendly most of the time	Friendly all of the time	No response
No.	0	0	16	31	18	2
%	0.0	0.0	24	46	27	3

The lack of feeling of hostility towards adults was also indicated by their responses to the questions asking them who they would prefer to teach them the job. Brittan (1963) drew attention to the problems of asking young people who they would look to for advice, parents or peers. His conclusion was that young people looked to peers for answers involving short term decisions or changing values but to parents for advice on issues involving long term considerations or static values. The item on the questionnaire which asked young people to choose between an adult and a peer for instruction on how to do the job, was designed to investigate this dilemma. It was not quite the same sort of question as that posed

by Brittan, as usually the instruction of new employees in both companies was carried out mainly by adults, either a supervisor or line supervisor. However, other young people, who already knew the work, were also assigned to keep an eye on recruits especially at break times in the first few days of employment. So there was a possibility of learning from both. The questions were intended to see whether the peer group contact was seen as being more realistic and 'as it really was', than the official instruction of the supervisor. This had happened in my case. In each new location, both in the factory and in the office, I was shown the task by a supervisor and then one of the girls was told to keep an eye on me, or they 'adopted' me, and I was given an employee's view of the task.

The responses to the question were surprising, especially in view of the literature on teaching, which documents extensively the antagonism between the teacher and taught. The majority of young people did not mind who taught them (58%) and the rest were almost equally divided as to whether they would prefer some of their own age (19%) or an adult (21%). This held true for both locations. Therefore, in terms of the suggestion that young people are antagonistic towards adults, it can be said that only 19% actually preferred to be taught by their peers and the other 80% preferred adults or did not mind (Table 6.3, Appendix 6). In terms of Brittan's categories, it is difficult to interpret the response to this question because such a large percentage indicated that it did not matter who taught

them. This could mean simply that the choice itself was not seen as particularly important and therefore it was not a question of choosing between adults and peers.

When it came to saying who had actually helped them to learn the job, as opposed to who they wanted to teach them, 43% reported that they had been taught by older women and the same percentage reported that they had been taught by both older and young women. This partly confirmed my observations that the teaching tasks were largely undertaken by adults but that some aspects were learnt informally from peers.

Generally, the majority of young people had a favourable attitude towards the adults they worked with and perceived them as returning their goodwill. Only a small percentage felt that adults disliked young people.

The other form of relationship with adults which the girls faced in their work was that with supervisors and managers. To be in a subordinate position to an adult was not a new experience for them because they were in that position at home. However, for the first time, they experienced this subordination in common with other adults and I wanted to find out what difference this made. From my observations, the attitude of everyone to the supervisors appeared to be positive with the exception of the girls in the litho where feelings were ambivalent because of the personality and leadership style of the supervisor there. The majority of the girls saw

supervisors as friendly or very friendly, as shown in Table 6.3, and only 24% saw them as indifferent or unfriendly.

Table 6.4 Perceptions of supervisors by the girls

		Don't know each other	Not very friendly	Indif-ferent	Quite friendly	Very friendly	No response	No.
	No.	0	0	10	38	12	1	61
All girls	%	0	9	15	57	18	2	100

When I processed these results by location then it emerged that the girls in the factory were less favourably inclined towards their supervisors than those in the office. The reason for this was that the majority of my sample of young girls in the factory came from the litho section where relations were less harmonious and this influenced the results. As Table 6.5 shows, in the factory 14% of the girls saw their supervisors as not very friendly whereas none did in the office. In spite of this, a very clear majority of the girls in both the factory and the office saw their supervisors in a very friendly light.

Table 6.5 Girls' Perceptions of Supervisors by site

		Don't know each other	Not very friendly	Indif-ferent	Quite friendly	Very friendly	No response	No.
Office	No.	1	0	4	48	8	0	61
	%	2	0	7	79	13	0	100
Factory	No.	0	8	10	23	14	2	57
	%	0	14	18	40	25	4	100

These responses were compared with the responses of married women who were also under the control of the same supervisors. The results, shown in Table 6.6, were very similar. The women were slightly more favourably disposed towards supervisors with 85% of them checking the favourable columns. When the adult responses were processed by site, differences did not emerge, probably because there were few adults in the litho area.

Table 6.6 Women's Perceptions of Supervisors

		Don't know each other	Not very friendly	Indif-ferent	Quite friendly	Very friendly	No response	No.
	No.	1	2	4	33	10	1	51
Women	%	2	4	8	65	20	2	100

2. Married Women and Young Workers

The other side of generational relationships was the relationship of adults to youth. Reference was made in Chapter 1 to Musgrove (1968) who saw youth as an artificial category created by adults and his data showed that there was more antagonism by adults towards young people than vice versa. He suggested that adults allowed young people independence and discretion in areas of what might be called "youthful concerns" but were reluctant to grant independence, or relax their control, in more "adult concerns". The work situation did not offer these two faci. Youth and adults faced a common situation and those adults who were not supervisors, did not have a great deal of formal power over their young colleagues. What they

did have was more informal power especially if they had been in the job a long time and therefore could lay claim to do certain operations or to control a specific routine.

In order to examine the feelings of the adult women towards the young girls, similar questions to those given to the girls were included in the adult version of the questionnaire. On the whole the sense of goodwill which the young girls felt, was confirmed by the data from the adult responses. The question asking them how friendly the young girls were who worked near them produced results which suggested that, if anything, adults felt more positively that young girls were friendly towards them. Ninety-four percent of adults thought that the young girls who worked near them were either friendly or extremely friendly, which is a very clear expression of opinion. The equivalent percentage for the girls' perceptions of adults was 80%. (Table 6.7 in Appendix 6)

When the women were asked who they would prefer to teach them the job, although 41% said they would prefer to be taught by someone of their own age, 55% said it would not matter young or old. Again, this was an indication that the majority did not have strong feelings against young people in that they did not check the category showing that they preferred to be taught by adults. This was an almost identical response to that made by the youth sample where 58% said they didn't mind who taught them.

The general conclusion which can be drawn from the data from both participant observation and the questionnaire, is that the relationship between young girls and adults in these work situations was very good and there was no aged-based antagonism.

3. Restless Youth - Myth or Reality?

The third area I wanted to examine was some aspects of the girls' attitude to work. I asked a number of questions about their present job; whether they wanted to leave it, how they had learned the job and how they felt about their work. A general impression of youth is that it is restless and cannot settle down, something which would be indicated by a high rate of job turnover amongst this group. It was clear from my conversations with the workers that neither young nor old were particularly restless in their jobs. In the whole period of the research only two people mentioned leaving their existing jobs, one of the trolley boys and Liz, who was in her 40s. From the answers it emerged that 58% of the youth sample had only had the job they were in and another 35% had only had one other. The greatest number held by any of the young girls was three and only four girls out of 67 were in that position. The pattern was similar in both locations. The questionnaire did not ask for an indication of changes within the companies, because these could have been interpreted as indicating ambition rather than restlessness.

These results were similar to those found by Hunt (1965) who found that an appreciable proportion of the younger women in her sample had stayed in the job they took when they left school and that the percentage who had only been in their present job for not more than six months was highest in the 25-29 age range group, suggesting that this was a job-changing age. However, what appeared from my figures to be an indication of job satisfaction was not confirmed by the responses to another question. The girls were asked to say whether, if they were leaving school again at 15/16, they would choose the same sort of job. The results were as follows:

Table 6.8 Girls' choice of job if leaving school again

		Similar to present job	Different from present job	No response	No.
Girls	No.	21	45	1	67
	%	31	67	2	100

On average, almost one third (31%) said they would and 67% said they would not. This latter figure may have reflected an ideal choice since so very few of them had actually changed jobs since leaving school, yet presumably they had had the opportunity to do so because, although the national picture of employment was poor, there were at the time of the research still vacancies for semi-skilled females in the city. The women's response to the same question was that slightly more, 41%, were inclined to say they would take the same sort of job (Table 6.9 Appendix 6).

The subject of jobs came up many times during the period of observation, probably because of my known interest in the subject, and partly because I was moving from area to area and there was a natural curiosity about how I felt about the other jobs I had had in the company, or at the other location. What emerged from these discussions was that the choice of job and work place was a result of a rational process. Essentially the girls and women had looked at what work was available, that they could do, and then decided which suited them best. The criteria for what was meant by "best" varied and this, to some extent, accounted for the different choices.

The nature and qualities of different work places seemed to be known, though whether the information was gained before the girls began work, or during their first job, I could not assess. The choice of employment possibilities in the city was not very great and the girls seemed to know what to expect. The office at Forbes was known to be boring work but to have convenient hours and to be well paid. Factory work was seen as more convivial but 'dirty' and less well paid. I met two girls who had moved between the factory and the office, one either way, in order to gain particular advantages. The low turnover figures suggested a minimum acceptance of their jobs. This was partly confirmed by responses to two other questions designed to examine feelings towards their actual job as opposed to work in general. The results, shown in Table 6.10, reveal a division of opinion. Both women and girls were asked to indicate their feelings about their job.

Table 6.10 Women & girls' feelings about their present job

		I hate it	I am not very keen on it	On the whole I like it	I like it very much	I love it	No Response	No.
Girls	No.	5	27	30	3	0	2	67
	%	8	40	45	5	0	3	100
Women	No.	2	11	31	7	0	0	51
	%	4	22	61	14	0	0	100

Forty-five percent of the girls said that they liked the job but 40% said they were not very keen on it. Adults were keener on their jobs than the girls. There was not a great deal of difference in the responses when analysed by location. Workers in the factory were slightly more inclined to view their job more favourably but the difference was not significant (Tables 6.11(a) and 6.11(b) in Appendix 6).

An attempt was also made to ascertain the factors the girls took into account when choosing a job. The responses differed in their stated priorities to the ones which I had recorded during participant observation. The options were designed to offer them a choice of so-called youth culture values - a job you enjoy doing, a job where workers are friendly as against more long term considerations - a secure, steady job; a job with good prospects of promotion. I recognised that the choice of the first variables might not reflect a youth culture but the parent working class culture. For this

item the respondents had to rank the considerations, something which I had anticipated might be difficult for them to do. However, only seven people did not complete it correctly. The five considerations which had to be ranked were security, prospects of promotion, enjoyable, pay, friendly workers. The items were analysed individually, ie the number of people ranking them in each of the five positions, and collectively, ie the number giving each as first choice. Table 6.12 deals with the latter.

Two things stand out as being important considerations for young girls when choosing a job; 52% said that their first consideration for a job would be that it should be enjoyable and 29% said that their first consideration would be that it should be a secure, steady job. When these two considerations were looked at separately, 76% ranked Enjoyable first or second and 45% ranked Security first or second. In one sense this might seem to suggest a youth culture value chosen with a more generally held value. However, again it might represent an ideal choice or it might be one shared with adults.

Table 6.12 Summary of first choices by women and girls of job considerations

		Security	Promotion	Enjoyment	Pay	Friendly Workers	Nil Response	No.
Girls	No.	17	3	35	6	3	3	67
	%	29	5	52	9	5	5	100
Women	No.	19	3	19	5	1	4	51
	%	37	6	37	10	2	8	100

What was surprising was the few people who chose the other considerations as their first choice. Only six girls (9%) put pay as their first choice and only three (5%) put "a job where other workers are friendly" as their first choice. If those who ranked these two considerations second were added to these, it still made them less popular considerations (27% ranked pay first or second and 30% ranked friendly co-workers first or second). Good prospects of promotion was chosen first fewest times. In themselves, these results did not confirm clear youth values.

When the results were compared with those of the adults, then there was a clear similarity. The two considerations ranked first by adults were "a job you enjoy doing" and "a secure steady job". These both received 37% of the first choices. This indicated that security was felt to be slightly more important by adults than youth, and that enjoyment was slightly less important. The distribution of first choices amongst the other considerations was very similar to youth, none being chosen by more than 10%. Although one can understand why security might be considered important for both married women and young girls at a time of general unemployment, the low number of first choices given to pay by both groups was surprising, as this was one of the most important reasons for working which was given in open discussion. The responses were similar for both the factory and the office, even though the office girls continually complained of boredom. Management, too, believed that the main reason why married women worked was because of the pay and this

was the way to motivate them. Neither management nor youth culture theories would have predicted the low value given to the consideration "a job where other workers are friendly". For women, in particular, it was suggested in my meetings with management that friendship and companionship, next to pay, were important reasons for choice of job. Hence their concern to act upon this aspect of the work situation. Very few of either girls or women ranked "a job where other workers are friendly" first and more than a third of the youth sample actually ranked it last.

4. How to be popular at work

In an attempt to evaluate sociability in the work place, the sample was asked what it took to be popular at work. In order to answer this question they had to tick any of a list of seven items which they felt were important. The seven items represented different aspects of work relationships. Two were factors relating to work - working hard, doing your share of work. Two were factors relating to a "Trade Union" approach to work - not working too fast, standing up to supervisors. Two were related to sociability - being funny and buying other people drinks and one was locational - going to the canteen for meals.

The girls were invited by the question to tick any of the seven choices which they thought were important to be popular at work. The results, shown in Table 6.13, indicated very clearly that the most important were work factors. More than 80% of the girls on

both sites ticked this item. The second most important factor was also a work item, working hard, though there was some difference of opinion by site on this, 52% of the girls in the factory thought this was important compared with 39% of the girls in the office. This was probably because the tasks in the office were all individual ones and therefore did not require the co-operation and mutual effort of another girl. Surprisingly, there was a much lower response to the sociability items. Taking all the girls together, only 34% ticked being funny, but here again there was a slight variation by site with 42% of the office girls checking it compared with 26% of the girls in the factory. The explanation might again have related to the office where the nature of the input operators' task meant that joking relief was particularly welcome. Responses to the other items were very small.

Table 6.13 Factors which the girls thought were important to be popular at work

		Working Hard	Doing Share of Work	Being Funny	Standing up to Supervisor	Not Working too fast	Going to Canteen	Buying Drinks
OFFICE	No.	14	31	15	4	3	2	0
	%	39	86	42	11	8	6	0
FACTORY	No.	16	25	8	5	2	1	6
	%	52	81	26	16	6	3	19
ALL GIRLS	No.	30	56	23	9	5	3	6
	%	45	83	34	13	7	4	9

This result was unexpected. I would have thought that being funny or buying drinks would have been sure ways of gaining popularity - they certainly would have in a school or youth club. It pointed again to the importance of location for the study of a group such as youth.

When the results were compared with those of the women, as is shown in Table 6.14, a similar pattern emerged with again more than 80% of them agreeing that doing their share of work was important to be popular. There was a slight difference between them and the youth group over the next item. A greater percentage of the girls thought that working hard was more important than did the women who gave more support to the factor of standing up to the supervisor. Responses to the other items were again small so it can be assumed that they were not considered very important to be popular.

Table 6.14 Factors which were important to be popular at work (Girls and Adults)

		Working Hard	Doing Share of Work	Being Funny	Standing up to Super-visor	Not Work-ing too fast	Going to Can-teen	Buying Drinks
Girls	No.	30	56	23	9	5	3	6
	%	45	83	34	13	7	4	9
Women	No.	14	42	13	11	3	2	2
	%	27	82	25	22	6	4	4

It would seem from the responses to this question that the qualities deemed necessary to be popular at work did not differ significantly between the girls and adults. Such qualities were derived from factors generated by the work situation not from the leisure or social spheres and showed again management's misperceptions of its young workers and how the common work situation produced a worker response rather than one reflecting age.

Another stereotyped impression of youth is that it seeks pleasure above all things, hedonism. Enjoyment of work is something that is said to be found more commonly in more prestigious occupations. It would be expected, therefore, that when asked what they liked best, the things they did at work or the things they did in their spare time, that the responses would be overwhelmingly in favour of the latter. Table 6.15 shows that the majority of girls did choose this, 66%, and only 3 %, two girls, said that they preferred exclusively the work they did in the company. However, a comparatively large percentage, 27%, said that they liked the things they did at work and in their spare time equally. This indicates that there was not a complete antagonism to work.

Table 6.15 Girls and Women's choice of work or spare time

		The work you do here	The things you do in your spare time	Both Equally	No Response	No.
Girls	No.	2	44	18	3	67
	%	3	66	27	5	100
Women	No.	1	32	18	0	61
	%	2	63	35	0	100

The responses of the adult sample were similar. As a group, slightly fewer checked the work they did in their spare time, 63% compared with 66% but a greater percentage checked both equally, 35% compared with 27%. This was one of the few results which showed a significant variation by location. I reported in the last chapter how the girls in the factory enjoyed their work more than the office girls who were always complaining of boredom. This difference was not reflected in the answers to the question as to whether they would look for another job but it did show itself in the responses to the question about liking work. Table 6.16 shows the responses of the girls processed by site. Seventy-eight percent of the office girls said that they preferred what they did in their spare time compared with only 52% of the factory girls. On the other hand, 35% of the girls in the factory said they preferred both equally compared with only 19% of the office girls. There were even two girls in the factory who preferred work to what they did in their spare time.

Table 6.16 Girls' choice of work or spare time activities by location

		The work you do here	The things you do in your spare time	Both Equally	No Response	No.
OFFICE	No.	0	28	7	1	36
	%	0	78	19	3	100
FACT-ORY	No.	2	16	11	2	31
	%	6	52	35	6	100

A similar pattern emerged when the adult sample was analysed by location, as is shown in Table 6.17, but if anything, the adults in the office had a greater preference for what they did in their spare time (88%) and the women in the factory a more favourable attitutde to their work. The table shows that, in the factory, only 38% preferred what they did in their spare time whereas 58% liked both equally, work and spare time.

Table 6.17 Women's choice of work or spare time activities by location

		The work you do here	The things you do in your spare time	Both Equally	No Response	No.
OFFICE	No.	0	22	3	0	25
	%	0	88	12	0	100
FACT-ORY	No.	1	10	15	0	26
	%	4	38	58	0	100

These two results were unexpected, that young girls would have such positive feeling towards what they did at work and that their reactions would be similar to those of adults.

Part of the attraction of the workplace is said to be the non-work activities which take place there. These activities, such as joking, might not have contributed to being popular (as shown by Table 6.13) but they might have served to make work more interesting. These activities have already been described in Chapter 3 where I indicated that they were initiated and shared by all age groups, not

just the young girls. I included an item to test how the participants themselves saw this behaviour and who they thought was likely to initiate it. The question asked, "Who tends to play jokes and fool around here?" The responses, given in Table 6.18, showed a clear difference of opinion within the youth group with almost a half saying it was mainly young people and a half saying it was both young and old. None thought it was mainly the older women. The adults themselves responded in the same way but 4 (8%) said that it was mainly older women.

Table 6.18 Girls and Women's opinions about who played jokes and fooled about

		Mainly young people	Mainly the older women	Sometimes the young girls, sometimes older women	No response	No.
Girls	No.	31	0	33	3	67
	%	46	0	49	4	100
Women	No.	21	4	22	4	51
	%	41	8	43	8	100

This result surprised me because there was such a clear difference of opinion among both the girls and the adults and this difference remained even when the results were processed by location. My own personal observations strongly supported the idea that such activities were common to both, girls and women.

5. Overtime and Earnings

The responses to the question on joking showed again that management's perceptions of young people were not held on the shop floor either by the girls themselves or by their fellow workers, There was a similar discrepency when it came to the question of overtime and their use of money. When I interviewed management there was a generally held opinion that young girls were well paid and comparatively well off, with the result that they were not highly motivated to work and were only interested in overtime when they needed money for a special purpose such as just before a holiday or when they were getting married.

To examine this the girls were asked whether they did overtime when they were given the opportunity. Table 6.19 shows the responses.

Table 6.19 Girls' attitudes to overtime

	Always Accept	Accept most time	Rarely Accept	Never Accept	No Response	No.
No.	8	29	17	10	3	67
%	12	43	25	15	5	100

The girls were almost evenly divided with 55% saying that they always accepted or accepted most times and 40% saying that they rarely or never accepted. I wasn't able to explain this division which appeared in both the factory and the office. Adults were similarly divided with 46% saying they accepted it most times and

49% that they never accepted. However, it is easier to explain the adults as it may have related to the age of their children. Women with young children had to get home from work as soon as they could. However, the fact that nearly half the girls said they would do overtime again shows the misperception by management of their motivation.

Another belief which management had about the girls was that their wages were quickly spent. This showed a certain ambiguity in their ideas, because on the one hand they were saying that they did not work because they had plenty of money but, on the other, they saw them as spendthrifts. I tried to look at this by asking a question about what they did with their surplus money after they had paid their necessary expenses. I realised that this might pose problems because I could not define for them what I meant by 'surplus money'. The result is shown in Table 6.20.

Their responses were spread over three categories: 44% said they spent all or most of it, 33% said they spent half and saved half and 18% saved most or all of it.

Table 6.20 Girls' use of surplus money

	Spend all of it	Spend most of it but save a little	Spend half Save half	Save most of it and spend a little	Save all of it	No Response	No.
No.	3	26	22	11	1	4	67
%	5	39	33	16	2	6	100

The stereotyped impression of youth and functionalist theories, would suggest that youth lived for the present and therefore it would be expected that youth would spend money as fast as it could be earned. My results did not support this as a generalised picture. Although 44% of the youth sample said that they spent all or most of their surplus money there were as many who saved it. Also, it could not be assumed that this surplus money was spent on youth culture goods or activities. I was told that Paula, one of the dippers, spent quite a lot of her wages buying things for her mother and younger sisters. So that the spending of surplus money, by itself, would not necessarily indicate a youth culture value. It could again have been a reflection of a parent culture. A question to investigate specifically how money was spent was included, though it was recognised at the time that this was a difficult and sensitive area to probe. It was difficult because people find it hard to adjust spending into averages and weekly amounts and it was sensitive because people are reluctant to state how they spend their money.

In the event, six girls failed to respond to the item and another four only partially completed it. The accuracy of those who did complete it also has to be queried as the amount of money claimed to be earned varied quite considerably - from £18 to over £40, though this may have reflected overtime. Generally, a greater range and amount of income was reported by the factory girls. The results are reported with some caution but they provide little support for the general idea of youth as a group who spend everything as soon as they have got it.

The average wage claimed by all the girls was £30 and what I have done is to analyse average spending in a number of categories: basic costs (board and lodgings, payment to parents, transport), savings, hire purchase, clothes and leisure (discos, records, gambling, magazines, cosmetics, cinema). Such an analysis did involve value judgements, on my part, for example deciding whether driving lessons were basic costs or leisure. I found it difficult to decide whether expenditure in the category 'drinks, snacks and meals' was a basic cost or leisure soI left it out of the analysis. However, even with these reservations, the findings did show a consistent pattern as can be seen in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21 Girls' average expenditure

Basic Costs	Leisure	Clothes	Savings	Hire Purchase	No Response	No.	Av. Wage
£6	£4	£3.75	£8	£1.50	10	67	£30

The most notable feature of these results was the amount saved by the girls, £8 per week, equal on average to the amount spent on leisure and clothes together. It was also significant that the amount spent on clothes was as much as that spent on leisure. This could have been because, as young girls, they were building up a wardrobe or because clothes were important 'props' in the marriage game. My impression from participant observation was that most of the hire purchase was also for clothes as it was taken on in work

from the women who ran mail-order clubs. The comparatively low level of expenditure on leisure might also be partially explained by the fact that the boyfriend paid most of this, something mentioned in the replies. Two girls also mentioned that their high level of savings were for their "bottom drawer".

These results, even with the reservations I have made, agree with the findings of the earlier question on how they spent their wages. It was not possible to compare them with the married women as only 22 of them completed the question satisfactorily.

In this chapter I have presented my findings from the questionnaire, which have confirmed my observations and have also provided some new information. It has confirmed that the relationship between different generations was very good with each age group viewing the other favourably. The replies also went some way to confirming that both young and old saw joking and playing around as not confined exclusively to the youth group.

The questionnaire provided new information in a number of areas. It suggested that, for young workers, as for adults, the qualities required to be popular at work derived from work (to work hard, to do your share) rather than from youthful concerns. The importance of the work situation was also shown by their choice of considerations when choosing a job; an enjoyable task and security being strongly preferred to friendly workers or pay. The girls as a whole were also favourably disposed towards their present job. In addition, the results revealed how management's perceptions of young girls as

workers differed from the girls' perceptions of themselves. More of them being prepared to do overtime than management would allow and more saving their money rather than spending it.

In the next chapter I bring together the results from my participant observation, interviews and questionnaire in the form of a summary and discussion of my principle findings as they relate to youth culture. In the final chapter I present some suggestions for future research which arise out of my findings.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF YOUTH CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

In previous chapters I described my findings from participant observation, interviews and questionnaires. Each of these chapters was concerned with different aspects of young girls' culture in work. In this chapter I first summarise these findings, as they relate to girls at work, youth culture or work culture, feminine responses to work, the construction of youthful workers and work as a place for women. Then I discuss their implications for the sociology of youth culture, in particular work as a critical case for the study of youth, youth as a social construct, youth culture as ideology and the class and generation dimensions of youth culture.

1. Girls at Work

From my observations of and discussions with the girls, I have tried to suggest that their culture has to be seen as a response to the work situation in which they found themselves. Neither the office girls nor the girls in the factory gained much intrinsic satisfaction from their work tasks and, as they were paid on an easily achieved bonus system, their main concern was how to pass time as pleasantly and as swiftly as they could while still completing sufficient work.

The girls had several solutions to the problem of passing time. The most commonly used device was talking amongst themselves. This was indulged in throughout the day, in those places where it was permitted and possible. Other remedies were joking, messing about, unofficial breaks, sweepstakes, lotteries and so on. The result was a routine which remained flexible through the day and the week. In the office, some of these activities were partially programmed by the supervisor, but in other places they were more spontaneous, sweeps, for example, depended on the fund-raising activities of clubs outside work, such as the local football club draw. In both the factory and the office the work routine consisted of pacing both the day and the week so that, at the end of each day and each week, work could be taken at an easier pace. These routines and strategies were clearly thought out responses to their work situation and were passed on from one generation of girls to the next through a process of on-the-job

socialization. This could be described as a youth subculture, in the sense that I have defined it in my first chapter. Many previous studies of youth have focussed entirely on young people themselves without reference to what was going on around them, and so it is not surprising that they have reported a youth culture. However, the strength of this study, as I see it, is that, by choosing locations where there were not just young girls but also married women working with them doing the same work, I have been able to report on their responses to a similar situation and thus compare the responses of the different generations.

The literature on youth culture suggested that the relationship between young and old could be seen in a number of ways. For Coleman (1961) it was one of growing estrangement and antagonism, whereas for Mannheim (1952) the relationship was more of a dialectical one, with youth influencing the old but the latter preserving certain priorities. In contrast, all my evidence indicated that inter-generational relationships were harmonious. Responses to the questionnaire showed that more than 80% of both girls and women ticked favourable categories. Neither did I find any shopfloor humour, a more subtle indicator, on either site which reflected generational antagonism. Thus, in the work place, amongst the females, I found only workers. At the shopfloor level age was not a criteria on which relationships were based. The girls worked with adults quite happily. In choosing to focus on girls I was, in one

respect, imposing an artificial category which was not recognised by the girls themselves. Differences in attitudes and behaviour between workers were based on personal characteristics rather than age. The only major status recognised by all the female workers was that between married or not married.

These perceptions of different generations of workers of themselves were in marked contrast to those of management - the other category of adult with whom the girls came into contact. My interviews with the managers, in both the factory and the office, showed that they held very stereotyped views of girls as workers, a similar finding to Ashton and Maguire (1980). To management, young girls were seen as a problem to be managed because they lacked motivation and, therefore, special strategies had to be developed to ensure that they worked and their messing about did not distract other workers. Their main strategy, which from my conversations with other companies seemed to be widespread, was to prevent young girls working together. Adults were used to break up groups of girls and to act as pacemakers. These women were seen as workers who must be highly motivated, since they would not otherwise go out to work. Therefore, since money was their motivation and a bonus system was in operation, they could be relied upon to keep the girls in order. In contrast, amongst the girls and women themselves, there were no feelings, either openly or by inuendo, that the girls did not do their share of work and were not equally keen to maintain the pace. Their definitions of themselves as workers seemed to be stronger than their definitions as old or young people.

2. Youth Culture or Work Culture?

As relationships between the different generations were harmonious, it is not, perhaps, surprising that the work culture I have just summarised was not peculiar to the girls. It was the common response of both the girls and the married women. Even such activities as clay throwing or putting rude messages on the computer display which might, out of context, seem architypal of youth, were in fact carried out by both young and old. Many of the stories from the past which I reported seemed, if anything, to concern adults rather than young people. The responses to the questionnaire revealed a division of opinion with 40% seeing joking as mainly by young people and 40% seeing it as by both young and old. The fact that relationships between different age groups were so good, also indicates that those elements of the work culture which are normally associated with youth, were shared by all.

Since all the workers faced the same problems, in relation to the labour process itself, to minimise boredom and effort whilst maintaining a satisfactory output, and the deliberate mixing of the age groups by management, led to their using similar strategies to overcome them. The workers, therefore, as far as I could see, produced common responses. Moreover, new workers, as I experienced myself, regardless of age were quickly socialised into these routines and responses.

This is a similar finding to Willis (1978) but I have given it a different focus. Willis described how the anti-school culture, which the 'lads' developed at school, transferred to the workplace. What I have described is how this same shopfloor response was not exclusive to young people but was something they have in common with adults. In the school, the youth subculture divided youth from teachers; in work it united generations of workers.

3. A feminine response to work?

Having shown there was a work rather than a youth culture, it is also necessary to consider the extent to which this was a specifically feminine culture. This implies a comparison to the male work culture which was not directly possible in this study. However, from the data I gathered, it was possible to isolate a number of features of the work culture which did appear to be specifically feminine responses. In the first place, most responses, such as singing, joking and horseplay, which they made to the work situation were mild in form. They were 'mild' in the sense that the jokes were not taken to extremes, the playing around was neither very noisy nor dangerous and the time involved was not extensive or threat to management productivity norms. The activities of the girls contrasted very sharply with the noisy outbursts of the adult card group at lunchtime or the incessant swearing and ribbing of the

trolley boys. These few examples indicate that the male response to work might be more aggressive and extensive as it is in other spheres of social life and in the youth culture outside work. This suggests that the girls' youthful culture and their other responses to work were conditioned partly by the conditions of work and partly by the expectations and self-definitions they had of themselves as girls and women which originated outside the factory.

In other words, it was partly a product of their latent identity, in the sense used by Gouldner (1959, p.412) when he defines it as "identities which are not culturally prescribed or relevant to or within rational organisations". Curiously enough, the adults had more opportunities to initiate responses to the work situation than young girls. Though management tried to control youth by using women as pacemakers, there was less control over the adults themselves. Similarly, the supervisors found it easier to exert their authority over girls than they did over people of their own age. However, although adult women may have had more opportunity to initiate a youthful response, their experience outside the factory could be seen as a constraint; since as wives, mothers and adults, they were expected to behave 'in a responsible manner' then this socialisation could be expected to inhibit their responses in work when, to some extent, these responsibilities were absent. Stories from some factories may, of course, suggest very little constraint. Therefore, the activities which could be described as

youthful could be seen as the joint reaction of both adult women and girls to the work situation and to some extent the actual activities were a reflection of their experience and socialization as women.

Another commonly held belief, and one certainly held by management, was that women enjoy most the relationships side of their work, that they come to work partly for its companionship. By implication this was also extended to girls. I did not find this. Most of the girls worked for money, the companionship was one way of accomplishing this goal in a more convivial way. However, given that they had chosen to come to work, the ways in which they responded to their situation reflected their concerns as women. Baker and Downing (1976) in their article on the modern office, describe how the typists by their talk, activities, such as knitting, and even their forms of industrial sabbotage, made their work situation what they, as women, wanted. I found a similar situation. The girls and women rarely talked about work. They talked about their concerns as females outside the factory, about boyfriends, night clubs, discos, or central heating. The work tasks themselves, although they were massively present, were surprisingly ignored as most of the tasks, except the litho work, could be done without thinking, even the data inputting. Therefore, there was little to interrupt the flow of chat, gossip and activities. Breaks provided the opportunity for other forms of time passing, such as shopping or playing cards.

The girls and women were also using their femininity in relation to men in order to enliven the work situation. The young girls acted as an attraction to men of all ages who could be induced to stop and talk or joke. In the same way Lili, in her maternal role, would accost passing workers, ask them about their family and, in this way, produce a new input into the topics of conversation. In Chapter 5 I recounted how Steve claimed that he got the girls to "love" him as a control technique. What he did not realise was that this relationship was a two-way affair. The girls also used it to manipulate him. He would be encouraged to linger and talk, not to comment if the afternoon break went on longer than it should, and generally to allow the various work practices I have described, such as early cleaning-up and getting ready to leave. In the same way, in the office the typists used their friendly relationships with male members of management to try and ensure that the fairly relaxed regime of the office was continued. In these ways the girls used their femininity to counteract the alienation of work.

Though my findings indicated that the work culture was common to both girls and women, it should be remembered that there was a virtual absence of males. Although in the factory the girls were adjacent to male workers and, in the office, there were men in other departments, I have only been able to report on females in work because of the sexual division of labour in both locations. Since there were very few instances where boys and girls, men and women

worked side by side or interacted socially at non-work times. Therefore, the shopfloor culture I have described was a feminine one because there were few situations which could generate a worker response, ie a common response of males and females. It would be interesting to investigate how the mixing of sexes in the workplace affected the work culture. However, as far as this study is concerned, the sexual division of labour in both locations resulted in responses which appeared to be almost exclusively feminine ones.

4. The Construction of "youthful" workers

In my review of the previous research on women and work, in the first Chapter I referred to the dual labour market as one framework which had been suggested for examining women's employment. A comment on this approach which I reported was one by Beechey (1978) who suggested that women's employment could also be analysed in terms of horizontal and vertical segregation. This approach can be used to describe the position of young girls as workers, compared to that of their older companions. First, there was a differentiation of the workforces on the basis of gender with women occupying lower status jobs. Then, there was a further segmentation of the labour force, at least in terms of status, as a result of the young girls being seen by management as workers who had to be carefully watched and who had a lower priority for overtime or better tasks. As a result of these perceptions, management used various strategies

such as using married women as pacemakers, to ensure that the youthful qualities of the girls were not allowed to break out.

My own research did not provide any evidence to support management's views of girls. They seemed equally as involved as the married women in what they were doing and their responses to the questionnaire confirmed this. However, one obvious explanation of my findings were that they showed how effective management's strategies had been. My research does not provide confirmation as I did not get a before-and-after picture. It was possible, however, from my interviews with several managers to identify the basis on which they classified the girls as problems and so justified their own actions.

The essential feature of management's views was that they saw their young female workers as girls who, as such, were thought to lack a commitment to their work, to have a high turnover, and to be always looking for the opportunity to mess around. They believed the girls' attitude resulted from their having a great deal of surplus money as a consequence of being comparatively well paid and living cheaply at home. This was in contrast to the married women whom it was assumed only went to work because they were desperate and who were, therefore, anxious to make as much money as they could whilst they were there.

Management's ability to operate on these definitions was aided by the fact that the girls could be distinguished from the married women by their dress and appearance. Such differences were not great to my

eyes but they were sufficient for young girls to be pointed out to me and their potential behaviour discussed. When I asked managers about this behaviour it was always discussed in a most general way. It seemed as if a few incidents, vaguely recalled, added to some sort of general impression of all youth and was enough to confirm it. Yet I did not record a single incident which exclusively involved young girls. Interestingly this process of identification and labelling of young girls as workers reflected what are claimed to be the characteristics of a secondary labour market, the dispensibility, social difference, low economism, lack of interest in training. However, in this case they were characteristics associated with young girls specifically. They were used, in both companies, as justification for the special treatment of young female employees.

5. A workplace fit for women - creating a 'scene' for female labour

Management's perceptions of young girls led them not only to separate the girls by mixing in married women, but also to try to create working conditions which would contain their youthful tendencies. The clearest example of this was the Litho lines where the 'battery hen' conditions were designed to aid the girls' concentration and reduce their chatter. The computer manager, too, would have liked to create similar spacings for his girls but he hadn't the room to do it. There were other more general ways in which the conditions

of work were modified to meet either the problems, or the needs, of female workers as a whole. The office, for example, after it had been restructured into two rooms was furnished in such a way as to be attractive to young girls and women. One wall had been papered in a contrasting contemporary paper and a carpet had been put on the floor; all designed, so I was told, to improve the girls' feeling about their workplace and thereby to reduce absenteeism. Here, too, the hours of work had been adjusted to meet the needs of the married women. Work did not begin until 8.30 am so that children could be dropped off at school first and, in the evening, it stopped at 4.45 pm so that they could beat the five o'clock city rush and so get home to their family quicker. The factory did not have such adjustments and there, work was tied to the working hours of men, 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. The work tasks themselves, on both sites, were supposedly especially suitable for girls and women, being light, easily learned and requiring a delicate touch. I say 'supposedly' because although there was a clear distinction in most cases between the jobs done by girls and those done by men, there were no clear objective criteria. Indeed, even the companies' own definition of women's work could be changed when it suited them, as was the case when the Tablewear Company tried to recruit boys for the litho lines. However, in spite of some inconsistencies, there were strong ideologies which defined tasks as specially suitable for girls and women, the most common of which, after the lightness of the work, was the belief that women and girls preferred simple repetitive tasks

so that they could do them without thinking and thus get on with their conversations, the real reason why they came to work. These conditions, which were illustrated in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, serve to show how management's perceptions of the girls as employees and of women in general influenced the physical and social conditions which they created for their employment.

6. The boundaries of youth culture - is work a critical case?

This study is one of the few to examine youth in this context. It has produced results which have indicated a similarity of response by women and girls to their work situation. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether this location differed from those of previous studies of youth and then whether location has to be allowed for when making theoretical statements. In comparing the work location with other locations of youth, it is necessary to distinguish two aspects of it, first is physical and organisational arrangements and, second, the status of workers.

Work as a physical location

Most other studies of youth have examined them in either a leisure or school context. The places where youth can be found can be placed on a continuum which ranges from the street corner, where youth has most control over its activities, though the family and school and work settings, where there are increasing constraints, to

total institutions such as borstals, where there are very strong constraints. Previous studies have been largely based on the contrasting situations of school and leisure, which are at one end of this continuum. This study looks at a situation towards the constrained end of the continuum. I would suggest that it is the differences in the physical and organisational properties of school, leisure areas and work which account for the contrasts between my findings and previous studies and which, also, makes the work location a critical case for the testing of theories.

A brief comparison of school and work will readily reveal these differences. Though young people freely accept the constraints of work imposed by their employers, they know, nevertheless, that breaking them will result in dismissal. Pupils, on the other hand, must attend school and, though there is no specific contract, they know that there is no expulsion from the educational system. Hence there is more room for negotiation between pupil and teacher. Furthermore, whereas effort can be measured in terms of output or services performed and financially rewarded in work, there is no satisfactory method of measuring ability in school if a child is not motivated to make an effort. This was part of the "partial penetration" of Willis's lads. They saw that school was unlikely to benefit them and that there was little the teachers could do to make them work and so they devoted their time to thwarting the demands of the school.

In many work situations, the availability and organisation of space constrains the choice of action. Space is organised to facilitate production, to ensure the complete commitment of labour and to maxi-

mise profits. In schools, though space is organised to facilitate a variety of educational activities, it is less clearly defined. Many teachers in their organisation of space and choice of teaching methods, allow for a variety of responses, albeit not completely unrestricted, from their pupils. Space is deliberately provided for the pupils' recreation and pleasure. In primary schools, Wendy Houses and playground apparatus are common while in secondary schools, drama studios, art rooms and gymnasia are consciously intended to provide pleasure as well as education.

Technology further restricts the form and amount of irregular activities in many workplaces. For example, continuous process technology ensures that workers must work steadily to avert bottle-necks and to allow others along the line to achieve their norms. In schools, there is little technology of the kind found in factories and so, not only have the teachers to resort to a greater variety of, and more subtle, strategies, but also the pupils have more discretion for a variety of responses.

Employees, too, receive their rewards relatively quickly; wages are paid weekly or monthly and these rewards are calculable and certain. In school, although grades are given for work submitted, all the important rewards, CSEs, 'O' Levels, are long term, particularly for primary and lower secondary pupils. Hence, the appeal of the reward is reduced more especially for those who, as a result of their culture, have a short term value orientation. In education there is no absolute guarantee that hard work will be rewarded and the percentage pass rate is known to also produce a guaranteed failure rate.

Again, in work, sanctions are stronger and more clearly defined. Though workers, as the kilnmen showed, try to keep their effort as low as possible, the rate in most jobs has been fixed to ensure a full day's work. Failure can result in a reduction in wages and, ultimately, the loss of a job; such sanctions are both obvious and strong. Whereas in schools, the threat of caning, extra work and detention does not deter to the same degree all children from untoward behaviour. Indeed, there are some who see these constraints as trivial compared to those at home.
These are what might be called the physical and organisational differences between work and school. A similar comparison could be made with other locations where youth is found. The differences between the work situation and other locations of youth are very considerable and, therefore, one explanation for the findings of this study could be that the constraints of work, "the technological imperative" and management strategies, were so dominant that they eliminated or suppressed a youth culture. Such an explanation is inadequate because the constraints and strategies were not sufficient to eliminate a potential youth response because technology was not supreme (witness the computer breakdowns) since the workers had negotiated time with management so that targets could be met comfortably. Katz (1965) made a similar point when he said that a large part of the worker's life in an organisation was undefined and workers use this autonomy to bring aspects of the wider working class culture

into the factory. Indeed, the technology itself was utilized for non-work responses (see Vivien's use of the monitor, page 146). Certainly there were many differences between the factory and other locations but space and time had been won from the production process which could have given rise to a youth-specific response. Instead, what I observed was a worker response; it is to account for this that it is necessary to consider work in another way - as a location of statuses.

Work as a status location

Work is distinguished from other locations in that these young people may find themselves with a similar, though not identical, status to adults. Previous research has been based mainly on locations where adults were either absent, as in the study of gangs, or in a dominant position, as in schools. Existing theories of youth culture, since they were derived from situations where differentiation was on the basis of age, have not unsurprisingly predicted an age based response to a social situation.

Yet, work may be distinguished from other locations in that, in particular circumstances, young people may find themselves with a similar, but not identical, status to adults. For example, in both the factory and the office, women and girls were treated equally in terms of tasks and wage rates, even though management had a lower opinion of young girls. This reduced, if not eliminated, their status differences as workers. Since age was not an important

criterion for status at work, it was not seen as relevant to their interaction. Though management expected to see a manifestation of youth culture in the work situation, I did not find it. Instead, the demands of the work was such that they appeared to produce a similar and common response by both women and girls.

My choice of these locations was partially fortuitous for, though I had deliberately sought girls and women working together, I had not anticipated the significance of their having similar status. However, I think that this situation might be typical of other semi-skilled and unskilled jobs which are easy to learn and where, therefore, age with its implication of experience is not a specific criteria for the task.

These two factors, the physical and organisational qualities of work and the equal status of adults and youth, are what make this study a critical case. Any theory of youth culture which predicts a youth response has to explain the age element of this response in relation to adults. This would appear, from this study, to occur only when youth is in a subordinate position to adults. This, I think, raises questions about the meaning of youth and "youthful" as socially maintained categories.

7. Youth as a social construct

I want to suggest that instead of those activities which are characterised as "youthful" being seen as in some way deriving from the psychological and physical changes of adolescence, they should be seen as deriving from the social and spatial locations in society of a particular group.

Brigid Berger (1963) has extended the idea of youthfulness to include the activities of adults. She mentioned actors and book-sellers as adults who continued to display youthful qualities.

It would seem that this would be a useful way of describing some of the activities I saw in the factory which were initiated by and participated in by adults and young people, male and female. In other words, rather than there being a youth culture - a set of values and behaviours which were largely confined to those of a certain age and status, there was in the factory a culture of youthfulness - the holding of certain values and the display of certain activities by both adults and youth which were normally attributable to youth alone. The data from both participant observation and questionnaire provided examples of this.

Berger's concept of "youthfulness" is quite useful at a descriptive level, but it seems to me that the results of this study have implications at a theoretical level for the study of youth culture. Essentially the data suggests that there was in the work situation a response partly in the form of youthful activities, and that this

response was not confined to those of the youth age group as would be predicted by existing youth culture theories. If there had been an absence of any activities which could be characterised as youthful then the explanation would have been simple - that constraints were such that they could not develop. However, the activities were there, and they were as much part of adult behaviour as youth. Therefore, it would seem, that this data extends the concepts of youthful to a new theoretical level.

Youth, because of its social and spatial location, produced a particular response which has previously been attributed mainly to age. This study would suggest that the youthful responses were a product of structure and status. Musgrove (1968) has made the point, very convincingly, about the social construction of adolescence and even gives a specific date for the first mention of the term. Essentially a period of "youth" or adolescence has been given a defined status, since changes in the economy resulted in young people who are sexually mature not being employed in production. Schooling was also part of this development.

Youth, is an inbetween period in the sense that, although sexually mature and potentially able to start a family and physically mature enough to undertake employment, young people are not given economic maturity because the production process no longer requires them. In this sense young people fall between childhood, which is a period of necessary dependance on adults (though this too is socially conditioned) and adulthood when they are given the economic opportunity to be

independent. Because they lack the status of adulthood, and because they have limited responsibilities until they are married and separated from their parents, this group in society has a position which is not experienced by any other group except under the special circumstances which will be discussed later. These circumstances are firstly that they are physically mature enough to be allowed away from the immediate supervision of adults. Secondly, they have limited responsibilities in the sense that, by living with their parents, they are assured of a place to sleep and food to eat. Thirdly, they have been given or have won "space" (in the sense it is used by Clarke (1976)) in which to express themselves.

The nature of this expression, or response, will be conditioned by social class, age and gender, as well as their status within each of these categories. In other words, the response of young girls will be conditioned by the fact that they are young and, therefore, have only certain activities open to them, by the fact that they are working class and, therefore, have a certain economic status, and geographical location, and by the fact that they are female and, as such, have only certain opportunities. This is very close to the explanation developed by Hall et al (1976).

However, I do not think that Hall and his colleagues have paid sufficient attention to the question of status and age and the resulting "maps of meaning". The response of young people -

ie the youth cultures - is not so much the response of a particular age group with its implicit assumptions of psychological and physiological development, but a response of a group in a particular social location. In other words, it suggests that if any group of people, regardless of age, found themselves in a similar social location to those who age happens to be 12-20, then they would react in the same way, ie display 'youthful' tendencies. So, in the factory, all of the women (and other workers as well) found themselves in conditions which to some extent paralelled that of young people in general. They lacked responsibility, in the sense it was the duty of management to provide the materials and machinery and to "make" them work. Their part was limited to the supply of physical effort. They all had the fairly low status of "semi-skilled" worker, of whom not a great deal was expected and for whom conditions were laid down to ensure that they did work. Any activities within these conditions were fair if not always acceptable to management. There was some time and space, both heavily constrained by management, for the expression of non-work interests.

It would be an interesting development of this hypothesis to examine other areas where this situation exists or might exist. For example, adult males in Rugby football or other sporting clubs often exhibit behaviiour which contains what might be called the more extreme forms of youthfulness - irresponsibility and sociability, and this appears as a temporary phenomena.

Young executives are madcap rugby japsters on Saturday night away from home, and 'respectable' middle class professionals the rest of the week. This sort of phenomena can be encompassed within this approach. Other examples could be suggested, but what would be interesting would be to conduct a study into the opposite end of the age continuum to youth - old age pensioners. In several ways they are in a similar position to young people in relation to production and family, especially if they are not living in their own home, but in an institution of some sort. There are important differences as well - their physical condition and their status as old people. However, if this thesis is correct, they could display elements of 'youthful' responses. Some allowance would have to be made for the fact that many old people's homes take the form of total institutions, but where there was the opportunity for response it should be as predicted. My own experience is limited to brief contacts with old age pensioners' Christmas parties but, at this time, the expression "acting like a two year old" seemed very apt. This sense of irresponsibility could also be reflected in grandparents interaction with grandchildren and the relationships which can be built up in those situation, for example, grandfather as "clown" or "fellow naughty boy". If this hypothesis was confirmed by empirical studies it would explain why behaviour normally characterised as 'youthful' was exhibited by age groups not normally considered as youth, even though this behaviour were only temporary. Indeed, the youthful behaviour of youth itself is

usually only temporary, being confined to that period between the beginning of sexual maturity and the achievement of economic and social maturity, to draw on Buhler's definition.

However, this is only part of the explanation which arises from this research. Even if it can be shown that the form of behaviour as 'youthful' can be seen as a result of status and location, this only partly explains why it has been characterised as being a product of this particular age group. Musgrove's historical summary may offer some guidelines. With the development of youth as a group who were most able, because of their status and location, to exhibit this behaviour, it became associated with that age group. In this sense 'youthful' was that characteristic most commonly found in youth and then this was underwritten in the late 19th century and 20th century with notions of physical development (Stanley Hall) and personality development (Freud, Erikson). Musgrove not only saw youth as socially produced by changes in the economic, social and legal position of that group who were not children nor allowed to be adults, but also saw it as a status maintained by adults. He tried in his research to examine the attitude of adults to young people - the converse of many studies of youth, and he concluded that although adults were prepared to give their children independence in some activities, particularly in the leisure sphere, they were not prepared to give them discretion in the adult sphere, eg the right to marry earlier. He concluded

that the weakened power base of the young was caused by demographic change reinforced by the strategies of the mature.

8. Youth culture as an 'ideology'

One way of bringing these findings together is through the concept of ideology. A general definition of which is "a pattern of ideas, both factual and evaluative which purport to explain and legitimise the social structure and culture of a particular social group or society, and which serves to justify social actions which are in accordance with that pattern of ideas". This is a concept that is usually used in sociology as part of a Marxist framework to examine the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups. More recently it has been used by feminist writers in relation to male hegemony. It would seem possible that this would be a useful approach to youth culture.

The theories of Parsons and Eisenstadt gave some attention to the relationship between adults and youth, seeing the disagreements as functional, either to facilitate exit from the family (Parsons) or to meet the needs of social change (Eisenstadt). Subcultural and Marxist theories have tended to underplay this dimension and concentrate instead on youth culture as an age response to class position. The concept of ideology would seem to strengthen the age dimension of this model. In other words, youth culture, defined specifically as that behaviour exhibited commonly by youth

is a response not just to the position of this age group with their comparative lack of power and status, not just to their class location, but also to their relationship to the attempted dominance of adults, and its definition in these terms is partly maintained by adults.

My findings that both young girls and adult women both initiate youthful responses also suggests very clearly that the quality of 'being youthful' is not confined to a particular age group. It can be seen as a temporary rejection of the values and much of the behaviour usually associated with adult institutional roles and as demonstration of self expression and leisure. Musgrove (1974) in his study of the counter culture describes something similar as a quest for ecstacy. It might be too strong to say this about the girls. However, a more suitable term is that of Illich (1973) who describes it as 'conviviality'. He regards this as a basic human quality which has become changed or thwarted in modern industrialized society.

> "I choose the term 'conviviality' to designate the opposite of industrial productivity. I intend it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and intercourse of persons with their environment; and this is in contrast with the conditioned response of persons to the demands made upon them by others, and by a man-made environment". (Illich, 1973, p.1)

I think that what I have reported in the factory are moments of conviviality which have been wrestled from the demands of the industrial enterprise. Because such a quality, conviviality, is a human one, it is common to all generations, but more likely to be displayed by youth because of their location in the social structure.

8. Class or Generation - the dimensions of youth culture

The work of those sociologists concerned with subcultures and more recently the research coming from the centre for Contemporary Studies in Birmingham University has begun to chart the social class dimension of youth response and, in accordance with their approach, see class as the main variable. The weakness of this for a comprehensive theory of youth culture, was that it did not easily explain the responses of middle class youth which Hall et al characterise at the 'counter culture'. My study of youth in work draws attention to the age dimension in the sense that, given certain conditions, all age groups may exhibit youthful behaviour and, therefore, this makes problematic why it is called youthful in the first place. By seeing the attempted definition of this sort of behaviour as youthful in the context of an attempt by adults to achieve hegemonic control, it is possible to develop a theory of youth culture which can embrace all youth though the dimensions of the model could vary according to social class.

In other words, youth culture is not just young people's response to their class location, but also their response to adults of their own class. In every social class there is a potential clash of interests between adults and youth, not just in the Freudian sense of the relationships to the parent of the same sex but also in terms of economic and power positions. Parsons'(1967) model of the family is one of the few to discuss the relationship of parents and

children in terms of this dimension of power, although ultimately he explains it in terms of function. He also offers some explanation of the different status and power of sons and daughters in the family. Children present a threat to parents which is only removed when they leave the family and form a new unit. Economically, too, youth can be seen as competitors for power and status. from an early age, children have the physical potential to do the same work as adults as they always did in agriculture and the early stages of the industrial revolution. Until they leave the family young people present a potential source of dissention. Therefore, institutions have been devised to encompass the period between sexual-physical maturity and social-economic independence. One such mechanism, according to Musgrove, was the development of mass schooling. Another institution could be the youth culture. Adults have an investment in the ideology that adolescence is a period of irresponsibility and, therefore, that young people should only have limited access to certain positions, or only a limited wage for their labour. In this sense, youth culture as an ideology can be seen as an attempt to provide young people with status and limited power both within and outside the family, which enables adults to retain a dominant position in all structure.

Parsons saw this as functional. It can also be viewed as a conflict of interests. To revert back to Clarke's idea that the entelechies of the youth culture as "magical" solutions to youth's

class location, they could also be seen as similar responses to their age/status location. In other words, youth creates its own organisations and culture, not just in response to its class position but also in its response to the attempted exclusion of them from areas where adults dominate, remembering, of course, that this domination is not unproblematic.

In conclusion, I would suggest that this study of working class female youth in work has drawn attention to the importance of location for the study of youth culture, location both as a spatial concept and a status one. The location of this study, work, was a critical one for the study of youth culture because it provided different physical and organisational conditions to most of the previous work and because it occasioned a unique situation where adults and youth enjoyed similar status as workers. It therefore provided an opportunity to hold constant the status dimension and see whether other factors conditioned an age-specific youth response which they did not. My findings have given rise to many questions, some of which are considered in the next chapter when I suggest some areas for future research.

CHAPTER 8

FUTURE RESEARCH

It is to be expected that any piece of research will generate more questions than it answers and this study is no exception. It is proposed, therefore, to discuss some of the issues which arise from my findings which need to be explored further and which could add to the sociology of youth culture.

The most interesting finding of this study is that it has established, if only in a tentative way, one boundary of youth culture - a location where it is not. This seems to me to be equally as important as studies which locate youth cultures because any general theory has to both predict the conditions under which such a response will, and will not, be manifested. Having found an empirical situation, where there did not appear to be an age-specific youth response, this could lead to a further exploration of those conditions, both spatial and social, which are necessary to generate a youth culture. I have suggested that one key variable in the generation of a youth culture is that a particular age group, designated by society and themselves as youth, should exist in a situation where it has been given a different status to adults as neither child nor adult. The special status, attached to this age group, has to be one key feature of any theory of youth. What needs to be done is to explore the way in which such definitions are arrived at, maintained and negotiated.

The historical development of the term adolescence, used in a similar way to the term youth, has been partly chartered by Musgrove (1968) for Britain, in terms of the emergence of a category of non-adults in legislation and in the law. In a different way, Platt (1971) has offered an interesting study in America of the way the characteristics of so-called 'delinquent youth' were constructed out of the needs of American women to do "good work". There is a need in Britain to use both of these approaches to trace, not only the emergence under the law of this group, who were neither adults nor children, but also to trace it through literature, the media and oral culture. This could reveal the process by which the characteristics of this new group were created and imposed. This needs to be done, not only for youth as a group, but also with social class and gender dimensions kept in mind. The changing definitions also need to be related to social change.

Such an analysis of the social construction of youth, might best be undertaken in terms of changing ideologies. If youth, as a group in society, is being maintained at least in part, for all social classes by the dominant age group, then it would be useful to examine these changing explanations as age-ideologies in the same way that class ideologies have been studied. Again, class needs to be another important dimension of this analysis, as does gender. As this was a study of young girls, I think the gender element, still largely ignored, is particularly important. Ideologies of youth are largely propagated on the basis of a male stereotype, yet

irresponsibility or hedonism are responses more available to boys. There is a need to examine as well, specific ideologies concerning female youth, such as glamour and promiscuity, and to relate these not only to adults but also to male peers. Patriarchy is a feature which transcends age; both fathers and sons have investments in ideologies both of promiscuity and virginity.

This raises the second area of future research - the need for further investigation of the relationships in the family between parents and youth. The findings of this study are that in a situation where adults and youth have a common status and face common problems, there was not a specific youth response. However, the sample used was not adults and youth, but women and girls. There has always been an acknowledgement in the sociological literature that the daughter-mother relationship was different from that of the father-son. One proposition being that mother and daughter identify with each other because the latter trains her in the home to be a wife and mother. The son, on the other hand, is more independent of the family under industrialisation because the most important part of the male role is performed at work where it is not visible to the son. A variation on this sort of analysis of family relationships was provided by Parsons and Bales (1967) who analysed them in terms of power. More research needs to be done at both an interactionist and structural level, on the dynamics of male and female youth in the family and in the wider society.

Such findings could have implications for the further study of youth in work. It could be argued that the common responses of women and girls, which I have described, were a product of the closer relations which all females have. My account in Chapter 3 page 86 showed that they did have a great deal in common as girls who helped their mothers and as future wives. Would boys and men doing the same job have similar interests? This needs to be investigated. In other words, would the common status of men and boys produce a common response to work, or would the latent culture of boys, which appears to emphasise greater antagonism into adults, be reflected in responses to work as well?

Willis (1978) offered something in this direction when he suggested that the anti-school culture of the "lads" facilitated their entry into the shopfloor culture of the factory. However, his data on the "lads" at work was very sketchy and there is a need for further investigation of boys in work.

My study was based on two locations where the females were largely undifferentiated on the basis of age. There is a need, now, to make a comparison with a work situation where there is a division of tasks by age, such as under an apprenticeship scheme, to see whether, for boys and girls, this continuation of the non-adult category influences their responses to work and whether it generates an age-antagonistic based culture. Again, this needs to be done in different work situations, blue and white collar, and the results related to social class and gender dimensions.

Finally, this research has drawn attention to the idea that those characteristics said to be those of youth are also displayed by adults. It would be useful, through comparative studies, to investigate the conditions which either allow or generate a youthful response by adults. In the previous chapter I suggested that some old people may display "youthful" behaviour because they find themselves in a similar position to youth; they are the "aged", not adults, they have few responsibilities, they have opportunities for "youthful" responses. Youthful culture in an old people's home would be a fascinating contrast to existing studies of youth. Other areas which could be looked at are conditions for temporary youthful behaviour, such as Rugby Clubs away from home, the work's outing or the office party.

This idea of youthfulness, as a response to certain conditions, raises one final, more philosophical point. If, under conditions such as lack of responsibilities, freedom of expression and flexible relationships, people exhibit "youthful" qualities, does this say something about the nature of man? Is "youthful" the true nature of man which is suppressed by all societies and is only given expressions by some youth groups under special circumstances? Perhaps only "youthful" youth are truly human!

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 2.1

NOTES ON RESEARCH STRATEGIES

1. The Problems of Acceptance

The major problem facing any researcher attempting participant observation is to ensure that he is accepted by the goup in whichever role he chooses to take. As the complete-participant role was not available to me because there were few men in either location who came into close and regular contacts with girls, I had to take a role which was open. Therefore I had to develop strategies which would ensure that I participated in a situation which was as near to the situation, without my presence, as possible. This meant being accepted as a researcher who was nothing to do with management and who, being completely ignorant of a female viewpoint, was anxious to know as much about it as possible. The most difficult part of this task was separating myself in the eyes of the workers from management. In order to get permission to undertake my research, I had to 'present' myself to them as someone who would not disturb the work situation. I was first introduced to each work group by management and I found them very helpful and interested in my research. This had been very useful before I began my field work proper but was liable to be a problem later. My task was to retain the friendship of individuals at management level but, at the same time, 'distance' myself from them so as to make it clear to the people I was working with that I had only been introduced by them, I was not one of them.

My relationship was inevitably tested out in the first few days in each location. In both cases supervisors or floor managers would stop near to where I was working to try to talk to me. To avoid this contact when I saw it about to happen, I kept away from the gangways. I also refused to accept eye contact from managers. I felt this was important because none of the girls had this sort of relationship. After a few days they ceased to come near me and did not approach me again, except in a work capacity, during the rest of my stay. The same strategy was used in the office location where the situation was easier because the section head rarely left his office.

My relationship with foremen and supervisors was closer because they normally interacted with workers. They were responsible for instructing me about the job and for seeing that others instructed me. However, even at this level, I only responded when directly addressed and I never allowed myself to be involved in a long conversation with them by myself in case the subject of my research and findings came up. This was comparatively easy to achieve as the workers were always fairly close together and there were few places where I could be spoken to out of the hearing of others. To some extent, I damaged my relationships with management and supervisors by these tactics but I explained myself later to them, when I had left the field. I felt they were successful because I was rapidly accepted into the work groups.

Having decided that the establishment of good relationships with my target groups would be my first priority, I knew both from the

literature and from my intuition as a person, that the early encounters would be very important, especially as I only had a few months in which to carry out my research. In terms of the first location, the dipping line, I knew that the reception I received there would determine how I was received in the rest of the factory both because of the informal lines of communication and because I was very visible.

It was impossible not to present myself as what I was - a 38 year old lecturer doing research, but I attempted to reduce the barriers between myself and the group as much as possible. I wore the same clothes as the other men in the factory, bought the 'Sun' or the 'Mirror', took my meals in the same place as my group, played cards at lunchtime and I bought a round of drinks from the machine when it was my turn. I also, at my first meeting, gave each group the choice of whether to accept me. No group refused - possibly because of the situation, although I think I was accepted because of the explanation I gave for being there. This came about by accident. When I spoke to the first group in the factory, the dippers, I gave two reasons for being there:

1) I was at the University of Aston making a study of women's work - what women do in factories and how they feel about their work;

2) I was a lecturer in a college and I had never done anything but go from school to University, to schools, to College, and, therefore, I had never worked in a factory. Therefore, I

had been given a year off by my College to get experience of work in different locations because I would have to teach young people on day-release in the future.

This second reason was given almost as an after-though though I had given it in my application to the companies in the first place. It was this reason which was remembered most clearly by all of the groups. Whenever I was introduced by one of the girls to another worker who was not one of the group, I was always 'explained' as a lecturer who was trying to get work experience. I realised as this went on that this was the more easily understood reason for my being there. Just doing research was beyond their experience but for a teacher to want to understand the real world of work seemed to be a very commendable activity. This explanation also caused them to be particularly concerned to explain to me how they, as women or young girls, felt about the work situation so that I could pass it on to my students. It also meant that the fact that I might be studying them tended to be forgotten.

I was fortunate that in both locations I was able to establish close relations with a 'key informant' from the very beginning. In the case of the factory this was Lili, the unofficial leader of the dipping line. It turned out that she knew most of the people in the factory and was liked by them in as much as if she approved of someone then that person had a good chance of being accepted by others. She had a very good idea of how the factory was run and she also provided me with introductions to other groups. After the first day she took me under her wing. She let me share her

locker, showed me where to go and even offered to buy things for me at the employee's discount from the factory shop. In the second week, during a breakdown, she gave me a conducted tour of the plant. At each stage she introduced me to whoever happened to be there so that by that week everyone knew "Tony who is a lecturer come to get work experience".

In the office situation, my access to the work group was eased immediately by the fact that I was taken under the wing of the shop steward and her friend. They were only in their early 20s and therefore were a useful bridge between the old and the young age group. Again, by means of my clothes - a jacket instead of an open necked shirt, newspaper, eating arrangements, I fitted in with the routine of the group I was working with. Because I was taken up by the shop steward, who had explained my position before I arrived, I had less explaining to do in my second location, even though there had never been a man working as a computer input operator before.

To reinforce the seriousness with which I was taking my experience, I tried to work as hard as the girls did at every job I was given. I also did <u>exactly</u> the same work as they did. This I felt was important. I took the same breaks as the group and clocked in and clocked out. Being 'on the clock' was another sign of worker status and it also meant that I was very visible to other workers as I waited in the line to clock off at 4.59 pm.

Obviously no stranger can claim to be fully accepted by a group until he is no longer a stranger. It was not possible, in the time I spent there, for me to get anywhere near that situation. However, I did feel that I was accepted by the groups and this was confirmed in two ways:

The first was my own intuition. As a social actor myself I had automatically an awareness of whether I was being accepted. In addition, as someone involved in the training of teachers, I was particularly sensitive to matters of interprersonal relationships. The result was that I 'felt' I was accepted. The groups were friendly towards me in very positive ways; offering me drinks, talking to me and approaching me, explaining the work situation to me, gossiping about people in the factory.

The second check I made was by asking about this point specifically when I interviewed management and supervisors. I asked first whether the period I had spent with the work group in their area had been normal both in terms of the work situation and the group behaviour. Secondly, I asked them to assess the extent to which I had been accepted by the group and to what extent my presence had modified the group's behaviour and activities. It should be remembered that in directing my questions at this group in the factory structure I was addressing people who were very sensitive to the 'atmosphere' of their workforce. They were essentially managers of people - the technology took care of itself. It was their job to sort out the implications of production for their people. They

also observed the work groups from a priviledged position. Their glass-fronted offices were sited above the plant and they were always watching, half consciously, the workforce and any unusual occurence quickly stood out. In the case of the supervisors, although they had access to the office, their usual territory was the shop floor where they patrolled the work area ready to deal with problems. The replies I had to my questions from all the managers and supervisors confirmed my own feelings. I was told that, in all areas, after the excitement of the first few days, the groups returned to normal and I was indistinguishable from the girls. In the office situation it was reported that other staff walking through had looked twice on seeing a man working there.

The degree of my acceptance was indicated to me in the packing department where the call "back to work girls and you Tony" changed to "back to work all you girls" after a few days. With each group I would also try to find an opportunity to make a joke about "us girls" which tended to be taken up and used as a catch phrase while I was there. It was interesting also, that because of my identification with the girls and women, I was never approached in conversation by male workers at either location, except at management level. When I was approached by people outside my contact groups it was always by women. The result was that I feel satisfied that in my own terms, that of a "stranger" who wanted to get to know women's work, I was successful in my strategies.

2. The Recording of Data

Because I was proposing to work in a full-time capacity in each work situation I realised that the recording of data would be difficult, both for technical reasons, how could I record and work, and for methodological reasons, I didn't want to interfere with the relationships I hoped to build up. There were two ways in which data could have been retained, either by recording it or by writing it down. This could have been done either as it happened, or immediately afterwards, or at some time after the event.

My main concern was to gain acceptance. Therefore I had to choose a method which would not interfere with that process, particularly as I was a man working with women and girls who had never been the subject of a research project before. In anticipation of this I decided not to do any recording during the working periods. I felt that the presence of a tape-recorder would be too inhibiting even if I could overcome the technical problems of recording a group in a noisy factory or a 'clicking' office. In the same way I felt that the writing of field notes would continually remind the group that I was studying them. This writing could not have been concealed because, in the factory, the only writing which took place was to fill in the crossword puzzle of the 'Sun' or 'Mirror' during breaks. At that time we all sat closely together so there was little opportunity to write anything in a notebook. I had planned to write brief notes during my 'toilet breaks' and at lunchtime but again there was not enough time to do this as I didn't

want to leave my work groups at these key leisure periods. Also, in the factory location, it would have been difficult to conceal a notebook because it was so hot that only a shirt and trousers were worn. A notebook would have easily been seen. Trips to the locker to collect and return a notebook would also have been commented upon, especially as I always shared a locker with one of the group I was studying.

For these reasons I decided to keep a field notebook which was written up each evening. This strategy was continued in the office location even though it would have been easier there to write brief memos. I found that my short term memory was good enough to hold all the events of the day, although it was not always possible to recall the exact words of some incidents. Also by not keeping a notebook at all at work I removed the possibility of it ever being seen by one of my subjects. There was never an occasion when I could not recall something which I knew to be relevant.

The benefit of this method was that the research location was not disturbed at all by the process of data gathering but it did have some disadvantages. As I have already mentioned, there was the possibility that an event or insight may not have been recalled. As far as I am aware, thid did not happen. Recall was facilitated by the writing up of my field diary immediately after work so that events were fresh in my mind and I almost re-lived the day again. However, this did involve the possibility that the recollection of

an event might be rationalised or interpreted with the hindsight produced by the delay. I was sensitive to this possibility and I tried to record the events as factually as I could but I have to acknowledge that, as an actor in the situation, they were seen through my eyes.

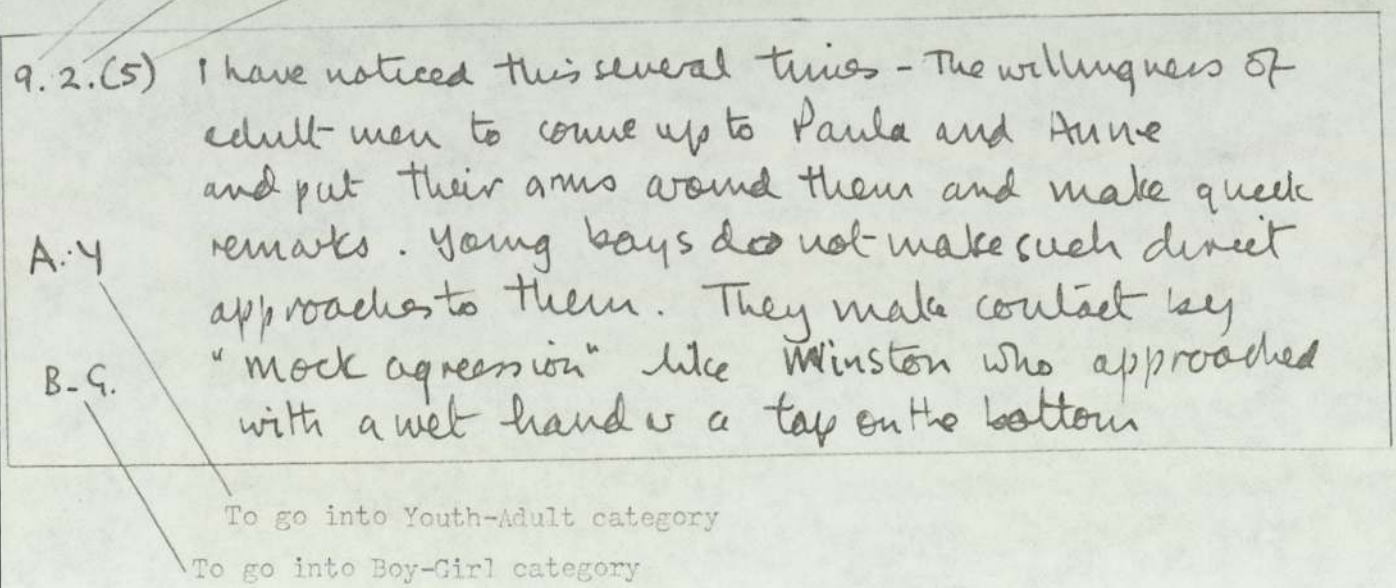
3. The Ordering of Data

I entered the field after a period of reading the existing literature of women, youth and work and therefore could hardly claim to be "naive" as Glaser and Strauss (1968) would recommend. To some extent I was sensitive to the need to see whether the phenomena, I was participating in, could be encompassed within existing theories. On the other hand, as I have shown in Chapter 1 I did not feel that any one approach had adequately covered adolescent girls. Therefore, I felt it was important for me to develop a scheme for ordering my data as I recorded it, that would both reflect on existing theories and at the same time provide the opportunity for generating new ideas or offer modifications to those theories.

In order to gather data which might test existing theories, I decided to code the data into a number of categories which had been extracted from these theories. These categories could then be added to as the incoming data provided new insights. At the same time it was necessary to have the data in a form that could be reprocessed to support ideas which emerged after the field work had been completed. To meet these different needs the data was processed

in two ways. Each evening after work I wrote a field diary in which I recorded incidents and conversations which seemed relevant to my study. Each incident was given a basic reference number which included the data of the observation and the place. Then each incident was coded according to which of several categories it might fit into. The purpose of these categories was to provide an initial ordering of the data and to provide evidence for hypotheses which might be derived from youth culture theories. At the end of the week each page in the field notebook was photo-copied. The number of copies being determined by the maximum number of categories any one entry had been put in. Then the photocopies were cut up and sorted separately into the categories.

EXAMPLE



This particular method of working was suggested by McCall (1969 p76). It seemed to have the advantage that the field notebook remained intact as a chronological record of the observations and could therefore be re-processed by a re-reading and, at the same time, it enabled material on similar areas to be gathered in one place and easily compared.

4. Research Dilemmas and Problems

Some of the problems I anticipated and encountered have already been discussed in the section on research strategies but there were other problems which derived from two sources; my relations with management and the choice of participant observation as my main research method.

Several researchers who have used participant observation have reported on the moral dilemmas which faced them because they were part of the on-going interaction of the group they were studying. For Whyte (1955) the dilemma was whether to take part in the illegal electioneering practices of the corner boys, for Willis (1972) it was whether to take LSD. Both reached an accommodation with their group; Whyte by participating in illegal practices, Willis by explaining that he could not. The dilemma I faced was not that presented by the differences between the wider society and a subculture but that of being someone caught between management and shopfloor.

My presence in both work situations was due entirely to the goodwill and co-operation of the management of the two companies, although the trade unions had been consulted as well. In particular I was very grateful for the help given me by the two Personnel Managers because it was through them that I had approached the companies and without their support I would not have obtained access. This was not an easy case for them to argue, to allow a man to do research among young female workers by actually working with them. In spite of Equal Opportunities Legislation, work in both companies was still segregated. Trade Unions, too, might have raised objections. Once I had been given permission to do my research I then needed the co-operation of the work's managers to ensure that I was placed in the most appropriate situation and that I was moved about as unobtrusively as I required. Therefore I had to build up a relationship of trust and confidence with several levels of management before I could begin my field work.

However, once I had actually started my field work I had to distance myself as far as possible from the very group who had allowed me to be there in the first place. The way this was done has already been described but I did feel in a difficult position as if I was ignoring friends. At the time, I did not feel I could explain my strategies to them, in case they in some way leaked to my target groups. I knew though that, eventually, I would have to re-establish my relations with them in order to carry out the interviews and administer the questionnaire.

The dilemma of being in a relationship to management and shop floor became most acute over the drawing-up of a petition. In the ceramics factory there was an agreement that employees, who had worked for the company for more than three years, should be allowed time off with pay for such things as funerals of close relatives or dental appointments. Employees who had worked there for less than three years could be given time off with pay at the discretion of the management. When I was working in the litho section one of the married women, who had worked there for only two years and eight months, asked for time off to go to the funeral of a relative. She was refused paid leave by the personnel manager, the man who had been so helpful to me. The women decided that they wanted to draw up a petition asking management to allow everyone who had two years of service to have paid leave for funerals of this sort. I was asked to draw up the words for the petition and to write it out ready for them all to sign. I felt flattered that I had divorced myself sufficiently from management to be asked to draw up this petition "because you know how to write things down properly", but I also felt guilty at participating in an activity which in some ways implied criticism of a person who had been so helpful to me. The request to word the petition was put to me in such a way that I could not have refused without prejudicing my relationships, so I did help them to draft a form of words which met their needs. I also suggested that they took the matter first to the Union, so that they could get official backing for their request. This they did and I did not hear anything more about the matter.

The second dilemma was the other way around, when I felt I had a responsibility towards my friends on the shop floor in opposition to my obligations towards management. This concerned the confidentiality of my data. I had, as part of my proposal to the two companies, agreed to provide them with a copy of my research when it was written up. This I anticipated would take at least two years so that the situation I described and the people I mentioned, using pseudonyms, would be less recognisable. However, the management at both companies were very interested in what I was doing and wanted to discuss my findings when I was there. This was particularly true of one of the companies where I was stopped twice by section managers and asked how I was getting on. It was interesting that just as the work force had made sense of my presence by taking over the work experience explanation, the management, other than those who knew of my project in detail, all saw it as a study of motivation. Both of the outsiders who stopped me asked me what I was finding out about the motivation of young girls.

It was easy enought to parry the questions of casual enquirers with non-commital remarks, but the questioning became more direct at the end of the observation period in one location. I was asked by the Personnel Manager to go and see him before I left and it was clear at the meeting that he not only wanted to talk about my research findings, but also other matters, such as the morale of the workforce and how they felt about particular supervisors. Although I had information which might have been useful to him, I did not feel

I could reveal it, because it would have been breaking the confidentiality I had established with the work groups. I felt this particularly acutely with the supervisor who was suspected by personnel of being unpopular. Even though she was unpopular, I felt a certain loyalty to someone who had allowed me to work under her. The same thing nearly happened with the Factory Manager. He wanted to arrange a meeting with myself and his section managers so that I could answer questions about their labour force. I was very reluctant to agree to such a meeting, particularly as I hoped to return and interview this same group of people. Fortunately, this problem was solved for me by the fact that the meeting had to be cancelled because the factory manager had another appointment.

The second set of research problems derived from the main methods I used and its limitations. The advantages of participant observation for this study have already been presented but, as has just been discussed, the very relationships which are essential for this method can produce dilemmas and problems. In this case the problem was that it proved difficult to use it to gather information on out of work activities. My strategies had been directed towards getting accepted by the groups I was studying so that I could witness and understand the culture which they developed in response to themselves as girls in a work situation. In the time I had available for my research I think I was successful in doing this. However, although I was part of the conversations, activities and interactions of the work location, this did not give me access to the culture of my groups

outside the factory. It is always dangerous to treat any organisation as if it is a closed system and no more so than a factory. The girls had a social location outside the factory which certainly affected their interpretations and reactions to the social interaction inside the factory.

Dianna Leonard Barker (1972), for example, reported how young girls' attitude to overtime changed when they moved from a system where they handed over their whole wage packet to 'mum' and received in return fixed pocket money, to where they handed over payment for board and lodging and kept what was left. I did not gather very much information on the life of my groups outside the factory. This was because the factory was my primary concern and I wanted to be in a position to observe this. To this end I deliberately restrained from asking questions about non-factory events and attitudes, because I did not want to be seen as the probing sociologist. For most of the time I just chatted away about the topics they raised and got on with my work. I did not ask questions about such things as leisure activities, or family relations, although to some extent information on these areas came from conversations. I felt that to press for answers to these sort of questions would make the girls more aware than they were of who I was, and what I was doing. If I had been able to stay with any one group for a longer period, I think I would have obtained more data on the relationship between work, home and community, first by building up information indirectly and secondly by having the chance to build up close enough relationships to be invited to participate in these activities.

Finally, I was not able to gather data on the girls when they went to the ladies cloakroom. Everyday sociology folklaw suggests that this is an important area of interaction, though not a great deal has been published. As participant observer I could not get access to this area although I could gather information indirectly on what happened there. At the ceramics factory this was probably very little as the girls only stayed in the toilets for very short periods. On the other hand, in the office locations, toilet breaks lasted from five to ten minutes. The reasons for this difference lay in the nature of the work and the working conditions. In the factory the jobs allowed the girls to walk around, eat, drink and smoke and talk. Therefore there was no need to escape to the toilets to do this. But in the computer input department, smoking was not allowed, there was no movement and, in theory, talking was forbidden. The result was that the girls made regular visits to the toilets when they could smoke and talk. I did not find out in any other details of these activities. This was one of the few situations where being a female would have been an advantage.

APPENDIX 2.2 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions raised with management and supervisors at Tableware and Co and Forbes.

1. To what extent had my presence affected the behaviour of their workers?

2. Had my presence produced more 'refined' behaviour?

3. What differences did they see between women and girls as workers and employees?

4. What special techniques did they adopt towards women as workers which they would not adopt towards men?

5. What special techniques did they adopt towards young girls?

6. What was the unofficial and official procedures for dealing with a girl who was not working satisfactorily?

7. Why did they keep moving workers about?

8. What sort of girls did they prefer to employ?

1. Which age group are you in ?

- 16 - 18 ☐
- 19 - 20 ☐
- 21 - 25 ☐
- 26 - 30 ☐
- over 31 ☐

2. How long have you worked for this Company ?

- less than one month ☐
- 1 - 3 months ☐
- 4 - 6 months ☐
- 7 - 12 months ☐
- 1 - 2 years ☐
- Over 2 years ☐

3. How did you get the job ?

- Arranged it yourself ☐
- Parents arranged it ☐
- Teacher arranged it ☐
- A relative arranged it ☐
- A friend arranged it ☐
- Employment Office arranged it ☐

4. How many full time jobs have you had since leaving school ?

- Only this one ☐
- two ☐
- three ☐
- four ☐
- More than four ☐

5. When you left school, did you want to leave:

- Very much ☐
- Quite a lot ☐
- Did not mind ☐
- Not very much ☐
- Not at all ☐

6. If you were leaving school at 15/16 again today, would you look for the same sort of job as you have now ?

YES ☐
NO ☐

7. If you would look for another job what sort would you look for ?

---

8. Here are a list of things which you might have taken into consideration when accepting a job. Will you put them in order of their importance to you ? Put 1 against the most important, then 2 against the next and so on. If any are not important at all put a cross against these.

A secure steady job ☐
A job with good prospects of promotion ☐
A job you enjoy doing ☐
A job which pays well ☐
A job where other workers are friendly ☐

9. How settled do you feel in your present job? Very settled ☐
Fairly settled ☐
Not at all settled ☐

10. If you had a chance to move to another job in the Company which you felt you could do, would you move ?

YES ☐
NO ☐

11. If you were prepared to move to another job, which would you choose ?

---

12. What is your present job in this Company ? _____

---

13. Taking everything into account, how would you describe your feelings about your present job ?

I love it ☐
I like it very much ☐
On the whole I like it ☐
I am not very keen on it ☐
I hate it ☐

14. When you started working for this Company who helped you most to learn the job ?

- Other people of your own age ☐
- Younger women ☐
- Some young people, some older women ☐

15. If you had to learn a new job in this Company, who would you prefer to teach you ?

- Someone your own age ☐
- Younger women ☐
- It wouldn't matter ☐

16. How would you feel if you had to leave your present job and find another in Worcester ?

- Very upset ☐
- Quite upset ☐
- Wouldn't mind all that much ☐
- Wouldn't mind at all ☐
- Would be pleased ☐

17. Among the group of your own age at work which of the things below are important to be popular at work ? (You may tick as many or as few as you like)

- Working hard ☐
- Doing your share of work ☐
- Being funny ☐
- Standing up to the supervisor ☐
- Not working too fast ☐
- Going to the canteen for meals ☐
- Buying other people tea or drinks ☐

18. If you are offered the chance to work overtime do you ..

- Always accept ☐
- Accept most times ☐
- Rarely accept ☐
- Never accept ☐

19. How friendly are the young girls who work near you ?

- Extremely friendly ☐
- Quite friendly ☐
- Indifferent ☐
- Not very friendly ☐
- Don't know each other ☐

20. How friendly are the women of your own age who work near you ?

- Extremely friendly ☐
- Quite friendly ☐
- Indifferent ☐
- Not very friendly ☐
- Don't know each other ☐

21. How friendly is your supervisor ?

- Extremely friendly ☐
- Quite friendly ☐
- Indifferent ☐
- Not very friendly ☐
- Don't know each other ☐

22. How do the young girls here react to married women like yourself ?

- Friendly all the time ☐
- Friendly most of the time ☐
- Sometimes friendly, sometimes not ☐
- Not very friendly at all ☐
- They dislike young people ☐

23. Who tends to play jokes and fool around here ?

- Mainly young people ☐
- Mainly the older women ☐
- Sometimes the young girls, sometimes the older women ☐

24. How many close friends would you say you have apart from your husband and relatives ?

- 1 - 3 ☐
- 4 - 6 ☐
- More than 6 ☐

24a) How many of these friends are in the same age groups as yourself ? ____

24b) How many of these friends are younger than you ? ____

25. How many of your friends work here or have worked here ? ____

26. When you go out with your friends, what do you do ?

---

27. Where did you meet your husband ?

- School ☐
- Work ☐
- Dance ☐
- Holiday ☐
- Street ☐
- Another place ☐

32. About how many evenings a week do you see your friends or go out with them ?

- One ☐
- Two ☐
- Three ☐
- Four ☐
- Five ☐
- Six ☐
- Seven ☐

36. What do you like best ?

- The work you do here ☐
- The things you do in your spare time ☐
- Both equally ☐

37. When you have paid your necessary expenses, what do you do with your surplus money ?

- Spend all of it ☐
- Spend most of it but save a little ☐
- Spend half and save half ☐
- Save most of it and spend a little ☐
- Save all of it ☐

38. Could you tell me what you have done in the evenings, after tea, of the past seven days ?

Monday ----------

Tuesday ----------

Wednesday ----------

Thursday ----------

---

38. (Continued ...)

Friday ----------

Saturday ----------

Sunday ----------

---

39. Can you give me some idea of how you spend your income each week. I realise that these figures will only be rough estimates:

Household expenses	£ :
Transport	£ :
Savings	£ :
Records	£ :
Children and relatives	£ :
Entertainments, Clubs, Discos	£ :
Gambling - pools, Bingo	£ :
Hire Purchase	£ :
Clothes for yourself	£ :
Cosmetics	£ :
Magazines	£ :
Cinema	£ :
Drinks, snacks	£ :

Any other things you spend your money on that I haven't listed.

----------	£ :
----------	£ :
----------	£ :

40. Do you think there is anything else about your work that you think I should have asked you in this survey ? YES ☐

NO ☐

41. If there are any points which I have missed out, please list them:

Thank you for your help and co-operation in helping me in my study.

APPENDIX 6

Table 6.3 Who the girls would prefer to teach them the job

	Someone your own age	An older woman	It wouldn't matter	No response	No.
No.	13	14	39	1	67
%	19%	21%	58%	2%	100%

Table 6.7 Women's perceptions of young girls

	Not very friendly	Indifferent	Quite friendly	Extremely friendly	No response	No.
No.	1	1	28	20	1	51
%	2%	2%	55%	39%	2%	100%

Table 6.9 Women's choice of jobs if leaving school again

		Similar to present job	Different from present job	No response	No.
Women	No.	21	29	1	51
	%	41%	57%	2%	100%

Table 6.11(a) Girls' feelings about present job analysed by site

		I hate it	I am not very keen on it	On the whole I like it	I like it very much	I love it	No response	No.
OFFICE	No.	1	16	18	0	0	1	36
	%	3%	44%	50%	0	0	3%	100%
FACTORY	No.	4	11	12	3	0	1	31
	%	13%	36%	39%	10%	0	3%	100%

Table 6.11(b) Women's feelings about present job analysed by site

		I hate it	I am not very keen on it	On the whole I like it	I like it very much	I love it	No response	No.
OFFICE	No.	2	7	14	2	0	0	25
	%	8%	28%	56%	8%	0	0	100%
FACTORY	No.	0	4	17	5	0	0	26
	%	0	15%	65%	19%	0	0	100%

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