

YOUTH AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE 1990s: AN ETHNOGRAPHY  
OF LIFE IN WESTHILL.

by

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For my granddaughter, Ruth Elizabeth Green. Born the 25th  
of July 1994.

## Acknowledgements

Setting out on the pathways towards a Phd is an unknown trail. In the beginning it is unclear what lies ahead. Five years later it is easier to reflect on the experience and realise what it has meant. In many ways 'doing a Phd' becomes a way of life, an obsession that remains until the end. Since this project began my life has gone through a variety of changes, my children have left home and formed relationships of their own, I have become a grandfather and I am now working full-time as a lecturer and researcher at the University of Sheffield but through-out all of this the Phd has remained a central part of my life.

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**SUMMARY**

This thesis examines the meanings and experiences of citizenship for a particular group of working class young people. By using an ethnographic methodology it identifies the different social processes that influence how they experience citizenship and how they perceive themselves as present and future citizens.

Ideas proposed by T.H. Marshall have dominated post war discourses on citizenship, but these have failed to explain what it means to the young working class to be a citizen. The meaning of youth has historically and culturally undergone change. What it means to be young and working class is greatly influenced by factors such as, the cultural context of community life, the structural relationships of production and consumption, and the wider ideological meanings and policies of political movements such as those of the New Right. It is within this context that citizenship in the 1990s, as a way of life for the young working class, needs to be understood.

Sites such as community, work, and leisure and consumption remain central to young people's experience of citizenship. It is in these sites where they gain support and status towards moving into the adult world. Yet changes, especially in work and leisure, are making life increasingly difficult for the young. Opportunities to undertake transitions into adulthood are being affected by the lack of opportunities for full employment, the growth of social divisions and increased generational conflict. These can then undermine young people's feelings of responsibility and obligations.

Young women's experience and meanings of citizenship differ from those of young men. Expectations of others around sexuality and gender are influential in 'shaping' young women's choices and opportunities. Young working class

women are clearly aware of this and attempt to develop strategies within relationships and the job market which help them resist the inevitability of the 'motherhood trap'.

Young people's responses to their experiences of citizenship are to reject the system that claims to represent their interests, that of Parliamentary democracy. But this is not to say that the young are non political, as they construct and act upon their own 'political theories' of the world. It may also be the case that if a wider definition of the 'political' is constructed, then certain actions around 'resistance', 'defence' and 'survival' could also be deemed as possible political responses to their experiences of citizenship.

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## Introduction

There is little doubt that citizenship has become a major issue on political and sociological agendas. From the middle of the 1980s there has been a 'sudden interest' in the concept and meaning of citizenship. Academic discourses are dominated by its language, while analysis and theoretical discussions have attempted to explain its meaning. This interest can be explained in a variety of ways. For example, King (1987) argues it has arisen due to the impact of the New Right, with their attempts to redefine citizenship in terms of the individual's relationship with the market. Alternatively, Hall and Jacques ed. (1989) want to discuss its rise in relation to the effects of 'late Capitalism', and the fragmentation of identities. Why this 'sudden interest' is not of concern here. The central focus of this project is on the restructuring of citizenship and the impact it has had on the everyday experiences of working class young people.

The discussion that follows concentrates on how a particular group of working class young people experience and deal with challenges and changes of the 1990s. By using an ethnography within a traditional working class community called Westhill, I have set about to discover the meanings and experiences young people have of citizenship. To undertake this task the chapters that follow have been divided into two parts. Part one (chapters one, two and three) is concerned with constructing a theoretical framework for understanding youth and citizenship in the 1990s. It also discusses previous literature on youth and the theoretical approach and justification of the method used to investigate young people's meanings and experiences.

Chapter one is divided into two sections. Section one focuses on the writings of T.H. Marshall, outlining his ideas on citizenship and showing how they have dominated both the thinking and practice of post war governments up until the late 70s. Since the early 1980s, this approach has been challenged on both political and academic fronts because of numerous practical and ideological problems. One

such issue that is relevant for this project is Marshall's definition of class. This relies upon the assumption that the gaining of status will 'abate' class differences yet what this fails to recognize is the complexity and entrenchment of class in British society. Class has to be understood as both a cultural and structural experience which is influential in 'shaping' the lives and citizenship of the working class. This idea or what Giddens (1987) calls 'the duality of structure' then underpins the discussions in the field work chapters that follow in part two. Continually, questions of structure, agency and culture arise in how citizenship, as a way of life in Westhill, is lived on a day to day basis.

A second problem with Marshall's approach which is also discussed in this chapter, arises from his focus on citizenship as an adult concept. Within his writings little attention was given to what citizenship means for the young. 'Being young' is generally understood as a transitional stage that is biologically structured between childhood and adulthood. Citizenship for the young is seen as being achieved when they have passed through certain stages of development, but this phase, known as 'adolescence', is a form of citizenship which differs from that of adulthood. Evidence suggests that while biology may be an influence to how being young is experienced, cultural, economic and social meanings of youth are greatly influential in determining how the young experience citizenship. For example writers such as Springhall (1986) have identified the changing meanings of youth that are located in history thus showing how citizenship is greatly influenced by cultural, economic and social definitions.

Section two of chapter one takes this alternative approach as central to explaining what it means, in the 1990's to be a young citizen. Changes have been taking place in a variety of spheres and settings that have been influential in 'redefining' citizenship for the young. These changes exist as a result of and in terms of political ideology, policy and practice and wider structural

influences. The connections between these changes are complex, with them existing neither in a vacuum or separate but in a series of interconnected relationships. The consequences of these changes have been detrimental to young people's opportunities of becoming independent adults. Influences such as political ideology and policy of the New Right and the changing structural context are discussed showing how in the 1990's young people's experience of citizenship has changed and how young people's opportunities to move out of the family home and to live independently have been limited. Transitions into adult citizenship are being either broken, extended or changed leaving the young little option or choice concerning leaving home and living independently. The changes therefore have been influential in 'restructuring' what it means for the young, in the 1990's, to be a citizen. It is within this context that the discussions in the field work chapters will take place.

Chapter two focuses on what we already know about the young working class's experience of citizenship. Section one highlights how our understanding of young people's activities has been dominated by the concentration and attention of the academic community on 'youth as a social problem'. Historically, research in Britain has been interested in either groups of young people who are visible and spectacular in their cultural activities, for example, Mods and Rockers or groups that are defined as criminal and deviant. This has resulted in a bias in our knowledge about the young working class and the image that is commonly held in political and academic discourses reflects this focus. This approach can be identified in most areas of Youth Studies be it in Criminology, Youth Cultural Studies or the Sociology of Youth. Little is known about the everyday way of life of large sections of 'ordinary' working class young people. It is within this context that this research can be historically situated. The participants of the field work are 'ordinary working class young people' who are trying to get on and better themselves, struggling with the 'new' environment of expectations and opportunities identified in

chapter one.

The second section of this chapter concentrates on what we know about the important sites of citizenship for these ordinary working class young people while also identifying the major works in relation to each specific site and activity. Three main areas are identified in the literature; community, leisure and consumption, and work. Research has suggested that it is within these sites and activities that the young working class experience their citizenship on a day to day basis although little is known about the inter-relationships and connections between the different sites.

Chapter three turns the focus on to the methodology used to identify the meanings and experiences of young people in Westhill. The approach used in writing this up is not so much descriptive but theoretical. As an account of method it identifies theoretical concerns and issues related to 'doing an ethnography', rather than producing a descriptive and sanitised version of being 'in the field'. The research was conducted over an eighteen month period around a Youth Centre in a working class area I have called Westhill. The majority of participants were young working class men aged between 16 and 25 years old who were either unemployed or employed. Young women were involved in the research but due to structural problems of the site investigated and problems of access their involvement was more problematic leading to a less than satisfactory position in the research focus.

Section one of this chapter discusses the problems of 'doing ethnography' and raises the issue of the perspective and influence of the researcher on both the research focus and 'reading' of the 'discoveries' made in the field. It is argued that to understand 'findings' the reader also needs to be aware of the 'position' of the researcher and what histories may be at work in 'shaping' the meanings of the the researched. The second section, discusses why an ethnographic methodology was chosen and what it means to 'do an ethnography'. Attempting to understanding meanings requires a qualitative method in which the voices of the

participants are made central. Ethnography has a long historical tradition of this therefore as a method it seemed the most reliable approach. But once such a decision is made, the complexities and difficulties of 'doing an ethnography' still have to be resolved. One final issue that is discussed here is the influence of traditions within research methodology. Historically, positivism and naturalism have dominated our approach within the social sciences towards understanding social phenomenon. The discussion here is on how these influences are evident at different levels and at different stages of the research, making 'doing ethnography' a difficult task.

In section two of this chapter I introduce the reader to how the field work was undertaken, identifying the reflexive nature of the research methodology. By approaching the fieldwork through a variety of important aspects of the method I show the reader how the methodology evolved and developed. This section also aims to identify how the theory in section one unfolded in reflective engagement with the field work 'findings' or, as writers such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) would argue, how development of 'grounded theory' took place.

Part two of this project introduces, in five chapters, the findings from the fieldwork. The first three chapters of this section are organised around the concepts of community, leisure and consumption, and work. These arose from interaction between the fieldwork process and the theoretical understanding identified in section one. As suggested in chapter two and three these organising concepts or 'sites' are of central importance to our understanding of what citizenship means to the young working class. For example, it is in their community where young people gain status from others who identify them as adults and it is having a job and income which helps the young participate in adult society, while owning consumption goods and being active in leisure pursuits is becoming more important by giving the young an opportunity to create new identities. The point is that these 'sites' are the main arenas where citizenship is

experienced on a day to day basis. But two issues need clarifying.

Firstly, although the discussion is separated under different headings, inter-connections and links are made between and within the different sections. For example what happens in a young person's community can be influenced by whether they are working or whether they practice their leisure outside of the local area or in the local streets. Each section exists in its own right showing one particular aspect of citizenship but links exist between the different chapters that help build up a wider picture of what citizenship means to the young working class. The complete picture can only be gained from reading the chapters as 'parts of a jig saw' that need relating to each other.

The second issue relates to one part of this 'jig saw', that of paid employment. As writers such as Lister (1991), Pixley (1992) and Roche (1992) have suggested, having a well paid job with security and opportunities for advancement is essential to citizenship. Although I would not want to refute these claims this project approaches the notion of citizenship from a wider perspective. It aims to also highlight 'other factors' that are involved in influencing the experiences and meanings of citizenship for the young working class. This is not to reject or devalue the importance of work, only to show that citizenship is not determined alone by work and that other complex issues exist which structure the young's everyday experience of being a citizen.

The final two chapters concentrate on two specific issues related to citizenship. Chapter seven focuses attention on young women's experience of being a citizen in Westhill. Within academic debates the gendered notion of citizenship has been identified (Lister 1992) suggesting that being a citizen for a women differs from the experiences of men. This issue was also important in the field work with young women explaining how their lives were structured, both in the private and public spheres of social life. Chapter eight turns attention to the question of

politics and citizenship. Within the fieldwork and academic discourses 'being political' is seen as an important aspect of citizenship. This chapter examines what the young people of Westhill think of politics and why they seem to reject it as unimportant. Alternative definitions of 'the political' are then considered to see if some of their actions can be defined as political.

In the final section I draw together the main argument raised in the fieldwork chapters showing how citizenship, for the young working class is being experienced. I then draw attention to recent and future proposals to show how maybe the future, for the next generation looks just as bleak even though unemployment is being reduced. In the final section I highlight interests for future research that the fieldwork presented here indicates as important if more is to be discovered about the young's experience of citizenship.

PART ONE

TOWARDS A THEORY OF CITIZENSHIP FOR THE YOUNG WORKING CLASS

## Chapter One

Marshall, citizenship and youth

Any discussion on citizenship has to recognize the importance of the work of T.H. Marshall (Barbalet, 1988, Roche, 1992, Turner, 1986). There can be little doubt about the influence of Marshall's work on the political and sociological understanding of citizenship in modern 20th century western democracies. As Roche (1992) points out;

Citizenship was not a strong theme in modern Social Theory until the British Sociologist T.H. Marshall put it on the map, in his classic discussion of 'Citizenship and Social Class' contained in some of his lectures given in 1949 and first published the following year. His relatively brief discussion provided one of the earliest and most suggestive accounts of the historical and social reasons for the emergence of the post war 'welfare state' and of moral and political justification for it.

Roche 1992, p.17

Marshall's Citizenship and Social Class (1950) was both innovative and enlightening at its time, setting the agenda and framework for future discussions on the meaning of citizenship. Throughout the 50s, 60s and early 70s Marshall's ideas dominated, with only attempts by writers to strengthen and expand on his ideas (1). Marshall also attempted to build on his own theory with further writings such as, Sociology at the Crossroads and other Essays (1963) and Social Policy in the 20th Century (1965). Roche (1992), in his discussion on Marshall calls this the 'dominant paradigm of citizenship' because in historical and present day debates the study of citizenship has been undertaken within Marshall's theoretical framework. What then were his ideas and how were they to be implemented ?

### Section One

#### Marshall and the dominant paradigm of citizenship.

For Marshall, citizenship was a status attached to full membership of a community. People who possessed this status were equal with respect to the rights and duties associated with it. He saw the historical evolution of universal rights as being a means by which citizens could gain full

membership to British society. The central elements of citizenship for Marshall, in respect of the obligations of the state, surrounded the creation of civil, political and social rights and the institutions through which they were to be exercised. He saw rights as, 'meaningful in particular institutional contexts and (they) are thus only realizable under specified material conditions' (Barbalet 1988. p.6). In pre-industrial society these elements were '...wound into the same thread. Rights were blended because the institutions were amalgamated' (Marshall 1950 p11). With the introduction of industrial capitalism '...the institutions on which these three elements of citizenship depended parted company...each going its own way, travelling at its own speed under its own particular principles' (Marshall 1950 p.13). Each set of rights, civil, political and social therefore had their own history. It was not until the 20th century that these independent histories came back together to form the modern day shape of citizenship (2).

Arguably, the most significant feature of Marshall's work was his discussion of citizenship and social class. His central contention was that with the expansion of universal civil, political and social rights, social class as a system that excluded groups from possessing certain public goods had been reduced. More people had gained an equality of access to public services even though material differentials remained. Marshall argues that the rise of modern capitalism and modern citizenship was not just coincidental, there was in fact a relationship between the two. On first reflections it would seem that the two systems should be in conflict. Capitalism is built upon class inequalities while citizenship proposes a form of political and social organisation which advocates, '...that it is a status in which its members share equal rights and duties...' (Marshall 1950 p.84). Marshall explained how this relationship between capitalism and citizenship developed. With the shift from feudal to capitalist society there was a problem of changing from a 'class system' that was '...encrusted with hereditary privilege, customs and legal

rights which derived from the earlier system of feudal estates' (Marshall 1950 p.84-5). But with the introduction of modern citizenship and a process of legal equality, the old system was challenged and finally destroyed. What replaced it was civil rights and these '...were indispensable to a competitive market economy' (Marshall 1950 p.87). Capitalists and workers were treated, in some respects, the same, each having the same right to enter into contracts which were beneficial to class inequality and capitalism. So in the early stages of capitalism the development of citizenship rights were an advantage to the growth of capitalism.

When it came to the evolution and incorporation of political and social rights there was clearly a more conflicting situation than with civil rights. The rise of political rights in the late 19th century was full of potential danger to capitalism yet this was deflected because the newly enfranchised working class were inexperienced in using their new found political power. Instead of being able to threaten the capitalist system they transferred their political power into trade unionism, thus creating '... a secondary system of industrial citizenship parallel with and supplementary to the system of political citizenship' (Marshall 1950 p.94). This new found power was therefore a stepping stone to collective bargaining with employers in claiming social rights. The addition of social rights to the status of citizenship meant for Marshall, that '...citizenship and the capitalist system (are) at war...(Marshall 1950 p.84). Marshall does not suggest that the rise of social citizenship had destroyed class differences only that it tended to reduce the impact of certain social inequalities;

...especially those associated with the operations of the market, so that the market value of individuals is no longer determinant of their real income because of the provision through state administration of economic goods and services as a right.

Barbalet, 1988 p.9

To Marshall class inequality exists '...by virtue of the

social perceptions and relations internal to it' (Barbalet 1988 p.54). He acknowledged that economic forces may underpin social classes but he believed essentially that it was an awareness or experience people shared or fail to share with each other that determined an identity as a class. Thus in Marshall's view class was ultimately a 'culturally constructed phenomenon' (Barbalet 1988 p.55). Marshall therefore argued that the provision of universal social services would promote 'a Class fusion' that would cut across class. He stated that citizenship and social class will always be in conflict but the evolution of a 'common culture' would act as an abatement to class inequality. Marshall therefore argued that with the introduction of social rights that were universal, citizenship became a form of equalization in which individuals gained a common identity that cut across class (3). In effect Marshall argued that historically the expansion of rights had given the status of citizenship to more individuals which had increased the extent of social and political integration.

These ideas underpinned a continued commitment to welfare through-out the 50s, 60s and into the 1970s. Conflict and controversy over what shape the welfare state should take, how it should be paid for and what type of policies were needed to eradicate poverty continued, yet underpinning these debates was a consensus commitment to social justice through state provided welfare (4). Even in the mid 1960s when it became evident that social welfare was failing to produce its intended results, the response from the state was to 're-adjust' or 'fine tune' the provision through the use of professional experts and new technology (5). Marshall's notion of citizenship then was a rights based approach which took the form of claims against the state, implying that the state had a duty to service its citizens. But what are the duties, responsibilities and obligations of the citizen to the society that they live in?

Marshall was not very clear on this issue. In his book,

Citizenship and Social Class (1950), he identifies two major areas in which individuals could fulfil their obligations. Firstly, he argued that the central feature of citizen obligations was to undertake the payment of taxes and insurances which were compulsory;

... the duty whose discharge is most obviously and immediately necessary for the fulfilment of the right, is the duty to pay taxes and insurance contributions. Since these are compulsory, no act of will is involved, and no keen sentiment of loyalty.

Marshall, 1950, p.78

Other obligations such as the duty of citizens to gain an education and to protect the state (6) were also, according to Marshall compulsory and important responsibilities of citizenship. He argued they were obligations that the individual must accept in return for the privileges and protection given by the state.

Marshall's description of duties also includes civil responsibilities which link closely to Fabian ideals of fraternity and fellowship. He argues;

...other duties are vague, and are included in the general obligation to live the life of a good citizen, giving such service as one can to promote the welfare of the community.

Marshall, 1950 p.78

Marshall acknowledges the difficulty with the term community, especially as society has developed around the concept of nation, seeing that this may be seen as, 'too remote and unreal' (Marshall 1950 p.78). He therefore argued that '... the solution lies in the development of more limited loyalties, to the local community...' (Marshall 1950 p.80). But what Marshall meant by 'serving the good of the community' is not entirely clear although maybe the works of Tawney (1921) were influential;

...men and women should be encouraged to use the power and skills with which they have been endowed, not solely for their own profit, but also for the good of their fellow human beings as well...

Tawney, 1931, p.48

The second area of obligation identifiable in the works of Marshall was in the area of a citizens' responsibility to undertake paid work. Marshall saw two main features. Firstly, he argued that;

...man has a duty to work for the good of the society he lives in ...of paramount importance is the duty to work... (even though)... it is hard for him to believe that he can do much harm by withholding or curtailing it.

Marshall, 1950, p.78

With the growth of social rights, the individual in society could decide, because of the provision of minimal standards through national insurance, not to work. This was not the case in the 19th century because the Poor Laws did not aim to provide minimal standards only a safety net for the destitute poor. The importance of this for Marshall is that individuals needed to realise that it was their duty to work and not to abuse the system although ultimately the choice remained with individual citizens.

The second point related to what Marshall called '...the growth of trade unionism and secondary industrial citizenship...' (Marshall 1950 p.68). This has given workers collective power to bargain for a living wage as a social right, leading to the growth of government intervention over industrial disputes and a growth of trade unions involvement in government. Marshall did not see this as detrimental, as long as it was handled with responsibility;

...These [duties of citizenship] do not require a man to sacrifice his individual liberty or to submit without question to the state. But they do require that these acts should be inspired by a lively sense of responsibility towards the welfare of the community.'

Marshall, 1950, p.70

He went on to argue that this was a position that many trade union leaders had accepted but not all rank and file members. What Marshall was suggesting was that a claim to citizenship status without accepting the responsibilities of duties was detrimental to the welfare of the community. Marshall and the Fabians therefore had a view of obligations that were about undertaking legal and social

responsibilities but these were not to be enforced by state through sanctions, individuals could choose not to participate.

It has been this form of citizenship which has dominated the consensus behind the role of the welfare state. The state was seen as having a moral obligation to its citizens in providing them with the rights of citizenship while the individual had the obligation to participate in society through paying taxes, working and acting responsibly. This type of citizenship, Marshall believed, was about 'active' participation yet he also suggested that individuals could be 'passive' if they so wished. Citizenship rights are made available by the state yet citizens are not forced to claim them. Obligations are also required but the extent to which people have to take part or fulfil obligations to the community are, on the whole, determined by individual choice. Marshall's form of citizenship was generally accepted as the way forward in giving access to public goods and encouraging participation. Citizenship, by virtue of being taken for granted was therefore largely absent from the political agenda and sociological discussions throughout the post-war period.

Throughout the 1980s, Marshall has come under much criticism on numerous fronts. For example, writers such as Barbalet (1988), Giddens (1982), Held (1989), and Mann (1987) have raised concerns with Marshall's notion of evolutionary citizenship, suggesting that rights have arisen, not as a result of evolutionary progress but as a result of struggles and conflicts. They are therefore, as a result of struggle, bourgeois rights, reflecting the interest of the ruling elites at the expense of other, less powerful groups. Others, such as Alcock (1989), Beresford and Croft (1989), LeGrand (1982), Lister (1989), Mishra (1984), and Taylor (1989) have wanted to focus on the failure of social rights to abate either class, gender or racial inequality, suggesting that in some cases the welfare state has in fact increased social divisions with its concentration on technical expertise. A more recent debate

has focussed on the weakness of Marshall to tackle the issue of duties, obligations and responsibilities of citizenship. For example, Roche (1992) argues that Marshall's approach fails to deal with how active participation should be encouraged. He goes on to suggest that history has shown that state-led welfare provision has not only discouraged participation but in some cases stifled it. The development of social rights which were to be handed down or provided by the state led to the creation of bureaucratic welfarism in which active participation by recipients, other than claims from the state, was discouraged. Under this approach no mechanisms of accountability and consultation existed, which would have encouraged active participation (7). In fact evidence suggests that the exclusion of citizen participation was actively encouraged due to the interests of bureaucrats to defend their positions of authority and power;

It is no accident that the citizenship ideal of post war liberals and social democrats stressed the passive quality of entitlement at the expense of the active quality of participation. The entitled were never empowered because the empowerment would have infringed the prerogatives of the managers of the welfare state. Housing estates were run 'in the name' of the citizens by councils housing departments who had no desire to surrender any of their delegated powers. Tower blocks were run up 'in the name of' working communities whose wishes, if they had been consulted, would have been for the repair and refurbishment of their existing low rise housing.  
Ignatieff 1991 p.31

Roche (1992) has suggested, that these issues have been influential in the development of what he calls a demoralization among citizens and their communities. This, he suggests, has since been exploited by the politics of the New Right (Roche 1992 p.32).

The issues, mentioned above, are important, but for the purpose of this project I want to highlight two particular problems with Marshall's dominant paradigm that have been influential in the construction and focus of the argument that follows.

## Marshall and the problem of social class

The first major problem with Marshall's paradigm of citizenship which is relevant for this project, is his concept of class. Not only is Marshall unclear about his definition of class (8) but he also fails to recognize its complexity and its persistence, as a concept, in shaping the individual's experience of citizenship. Marshall does not acknowledge how important class is to the working class, in that it is, in many ways, a source of cohesion and strength, especially in times of hardship and struggle. Neither does he recognize the diversity that exists within working class life which can create different experiences for different groups within the same class.

As mentioned earlier, Marshall saw class as a 'culturally constructed phenomenon' and that the extension of universal citizenship rights would promote a 'class fusion,' creating a common culture for all that would then abate class inequalities. Barbalet (1988) argues that although Marshall recognizes the economic forces that underpin social classes, he sees these forces as differences between economic levels, for example income differentials, rather than class differences, suggesting therefore that they are inevitable in a capitalist system (Barbalet, 1988 p.55). For Marshall, class is related more to the shared and common interests of a particular group than a structural experience. Since Marshall's work other writers have been more specific about the meaning of class, giving a more refined understanding of both the cultural and structural context underpinning the notion of working class life.

One major definition that focussed on the cultural context of class, was developed in the 1960's by E.P.Thompson. In the preface to the 1984 edition of The Making of the English Working Class, he writes;

I do not see class as a 'structure,' nor even as a 'category,' but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to happen in human relations). More than this, the notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship. Like any other relationship, it is a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop it dead at any given moment and anatomize its structure. The

finest meshed sociological net cannot give us a pure specimen of class anymore than it can give us one of deference or of love. The relationship must always be embodied in real people and in real contexts. Moreover, we cannot have two distinct classes, each with an independent being, and then bring them into relationship with each other. We cannot have love without lovers, nor deference without squires and labourers. And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared) feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and against other men whose experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which they are born--or enter involuntarily. Class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms; embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms. Class is defined by men as they live their history, and in the end, this is its only definition.

Thompson, 1984, p.8-9

This long quotation from Thompson provides a view of class that is important in three senses. Firstly, it has an active usage, in that it makes allowances for 'real people' in 'real contexts' to define class as their lived experiences. Secondly, it is critical of the rigid ways in which class has been defined, problematising the categorization system that has structured much of the thinking of sociologists. It is this form of classification, in terms of occupation, attitudes and income that has, in many ways, marginalised the experience of class out of the argument of what class means in our society. Thirdly, it suggests that class is embodied in the traditions, values, ideas and institutional forms' of a community, proposing that history is an important aspect of 'being working class'.

My own personal experience of being working class, suggests that such a way of life exists and this is also confirmed by the writings of Raymond Williams, who has argued that the term culture is a useful analytical concept to set along side the idea of class. For example;

There is a distinct working class way of life, which I for one value - not only because I was bred in it, for I now, in certain respects, live differently. I think this way of life with its emphasis of neighbourhood, mutual obligation, and common betterment, as expressed in the great

working-class political and industrial institutions, is in fact the best basis for any future society.

Williams, 1989, p.4

According to Williams a culture represents the ordinary processes of human minds, how people think, value and attribute meaning, the traditions which inform these processes and the way in which they are creatively interpreted and applied in new settings;

A culture has two aspects; the known meanings and directions, which its members are trained to; the new observations and meanings which are offered and tested. These are the ordinary processes of human societies and human minds, and we see through them the nature of a culture; that is always traditional and creative; that it is both the more ordinary common meanings and the finest individual meanings. We use the word culture in these two senses; to mean a whole way of life...

Williams, 1989, p.4

To define culture as a way of life is not to say that there is one all-embracing working class way of life, culture is not, any more than class, homogeneous. In fact Williams' definition is particularly useful in this context because it tolerates, and celebrates, different interpretations and different forms of expression. Culture is in no sense a rigid term, it emphasises process and change. People can live differently within a culture and yet still be part of it.

Another important aspect of Williams notion of culture is his explanation of what it is. For him it is the basic collectivist idea that is central. This does not mean that when we speak of a working class idea that all working class people possess it or agree with it, only that it is a dominant idea that exists in the organisations and institutions which that class creates;

We may now see what is properly meant by 'working class culture'. It is not proletarian art, or council houses or a particular language; it is, rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought and intentions which precede this.

Williams, 1958. p.313-4

Williams, goes on to develop, in his work, how community is an important aspect of this way of life for working class people and an important site where citizenship is experienced on a day to day basis. In his writings, Williams continually draws upon the importance of community to the everyday lives of the urban working class, showing how, in both his own experience and that of the people around him, community is an essential aspect of the quality of life. One aspect he wants to emphasis is how 'community' is a central source of strength and support, through the idea of 'neighbour'. He makes this point in his article, The Importance of Community, (1989) by explaining how local people have a sense of social obligation towards each other which arises from living together in the same place and having a sense of common identity. It is this common identity, usually born out of struggles, which acts as a form of cohesive system to help create feelings of 'community'. The example he gives, to make this point, is how, when he had won his scholarship to Cambridge, local people had wanted to rally round and offer some form of financial help, not just because of kindness, although this was important, but because of feelings of mutual obligation to 'one of their own'. Community therefore for Williams was and is a central aspect of working class life which, as he goes on to argue was an important site for influencing his own ideas about the world and his feelings of what society should be about;

I happened to grow up on a very small rural community right on the Welsh-English boarder. I didn't realise until many years later that many of the ideas that I had absorbed in that particular situation, and had later expressed, were in a sense common property throughout a very wide area of Welsh social thought.

Williams, 1989. p.113

Williams goes on to suggest that community is also important because of what it means to working class people in terms of history, tradition and the future. Williams raises this point in his article on the miners' strike (1989), suggesting that the actions of the miners were more

than just about protecting jobs, they were also clearly about a desire to protect their way of life and their community, for generations to come;

what the miners, like most of us, mean by communities is the places where they have lived and want to go on living, where generations not only of economic but of social effort and human care have been invested, and which new generations will inherit.

Williams, 1989, p.124

Williams is not alone in these views, Young and Willmott, in their book, Family and Kinship in East London, (1957) raised similar points about the importance of community to everyday life. In their study of working class life, they argued that community was a collective and shared experience that was lived on the streets, in the public houses and community centres. It was built around traditions of the past and involved networks of families that had lived in and around the East End of London for many generations. These relationships were an important source of strength and support for local people, who were having to deal with the struggles and harshness of everyday life. Community therefore was an essential aspect of their 'lived experience of citizenship'.

Of course, there is a danger of over romanticizing the notion of community, ignoring the conflict and disagreements that may exist. As Lee and Newby in their book, The Problems of Sociology (1983) suggest, much of the literature on 'community' is idealistic and romantic, having both ideological and utopian undertones (p.56). They argue that studies into 'community life' focus on what communities should be like rather than what they are in reality. In many ways these criticisms can be levelled at the works of Williams.

Although Williams wants to suggest that the working class way of life tolerates and celebrates difference, he fails to recognize that although there may be a particular way of life, which dominates, within a local community, other collective identities may be oppressed or excluded, being relegated to unimportant or deviant. Although he

recognizes that this has to be avoided, his work does clearly over romanticise working class life, ignoring both conflicts and questions of difference within working class communities. Two examples are relevant here. Firstly, working class youth may have some form of collective identity that arises from either being of a similar age or economic situation. From this, may evolve a particular set of experiences which while having similarities to the dominant way of life, may differ in context. Yet their way of life has no platform of recognition, being either marginalised and excluded or defined as deviant (Parker 1974). The second example is related to the question of gender. Swindells and Jardine, in their book, What's Left ? Women in Culture and the Labour Movement, (1990) want to suggest that while Williams made a major contribution to our understanding of working class life, he idealized male experiences and left unexamined the experiences of women;

We have argued that the very late 19th century culture, which Williams identified as such a potentially positive source of values for a specifically working class consciousness, confines women to the domestic, the family- uses women to give value to the working man, via the family and the home.

Swindells and Jardine, 1990. p151

What they argue is that Williams' studies of working class life, are constructed around experiences of production, ignoring or relegating to unimportant, the oppressed experiences of women. As Writers such as Campbell (1984) have shown, in her graphic study of working class women's experiences in the North of England, life in working class communities, for women, in many cases is hard and unrecognized, being built upon patriarchal relationships, a point clearly ignored by Williams (9).

What the writings of Thompson and Williams want to do, is emphasis the importance of agency and the subject into our understanding of being working class, suggesting that, 'history is not a process without a subject' (Thompson p.295). While this would seem to me to be an important edition to our understanding of class, I also believe that

questions of structure should not be ignored. This issue has been raised by writers such as Anderson. In his book, Arguments Within English Marxism (1980), Anderson takes Thompson to task over two of his main propositions (10). Firstly, he criticises The Making of the English Working Class, for its assumptions regarding the term agency. Thompson, according to Anderson uses the concept as though individuals have 'will or aspiration' (p.23) and therefore control or power to make their 'own history', such a view exists because Thompson fails to acknowledge the different ways and situations in which individuals may have choice and influence. Anderson accepts that in certain areas people may have the ability to participate in 'goal-directed activities' (p. 19) (11) but this fails to recognize that this ability is restricted to narrow confines of every day activities. When it comes to more public ambitions such as public associations then their influence and ability to act as 'free agents' is clearly constrained by the institutional practices of capitalist relations.

This takes us to the second part of Anderson's argument in that he claims Thompson fails to acknowledge and make links with the main institutional processes of transformation involved in the development of industrial capitalism;

the jagged temporal rhythms and breaks, and the uneven spatial distributions and displacements, of capital accumulation between 1790 and 1830 inevitably marked the composition and character of the nascent English proletariat.

Anderson, 1980, p.33-4

Anderson suggests therefore that Thompson, in his discussion on class, wants to assert the role of resistance and protest of the individual, in a bottom up approach, towards the shaping of a class identity yet in doing this Thompson fails to recognize the wider context of structural relationships. This is most evident in Thompson's dealings with the questions surrounding social order in which he fails to recognize the importance of the mode of production in shaping the form that relationships will take. For example,

Thompson suggests that class is built around 'common interests and identities,' but as Anderson argues this fails to recognize how these are structured by the economic order of industrial capitalism. The point that Anderson makes then, is that Thompson's focus on agency or the subject fails to recognize the importance of structure in determining the class experience. Anderson then goes on to argue, that in understanding class we need to return to a more objective and structural recognition of how it is socially reproduced.

So what is the solution to these different notions of class, which definition should we accept ? One writer who has attempted to tackle this polarity of positions over the nature of class is Giddens in his book, Social Theory and Modern Sociology (1987). Giddens wants to suggest that the basic shortcomings of most discussions of agency and structure are that they presuppose either the primacy of their positions over those of their opponents and ignoring the possibility that the two may be closely related;

Thompson's inclination is to plump for the reality of individuals, or at least of individual experience. He does not avoid statements involving larger totalities, but he makes it plain enough that he is uncomfortable with them. Anderson's view is closer to the orthodox sociological canon: societies, or social formations, are prior to the existence of individuals and shape their characteristic attitudes and modes of conduct.

Giddens 1987, p.220

Giddens goes on to suggest that we should resist this dualism and instead think about class in terms of a 'duality of structure' (p.220). Giddens recognizes that the idea of agency presupposes a notion of, 'could have done otherwise' which indicates some form of 'free will'. But he goes on to argue that while individuals may know what they are doing and why they are doing it at any given time, they may not be aware of the consequences of their actions for themselves or others. Also they are not assured of knowing about the conditions or wider context of their actions. Giddens raises the issue of constraints, linking this to the notion of structure, suggesting that all activities occur within

institutional contexts which can therefore either mobilize or limit human capabilities. He argues that an interrelationship exists between both structure and agency so that class cannot be understood as one or the other alone;

Understood as rules and resources implicated in the 'form' of collectives of social systems, reproduced across time and space, structure is the very medium of the 'human' element of human agency. At the same time, agency is the medium of structure, which individuals routinely reproduce in the course of their activities.

Giddens, 1987. p.221

To return then to Marshall and his definition of class. The above discussion has been useful because it highlights the problems that his definition fails to tackle and raises issues that need to be considered if citizenship, for working class youth, is to be understood. Firstly, Marshall is clearly vague and general about what he means by saying that, 'class is a culturally constructed phenomenon', failing to understand both the complexities and workings of such an idea. What I have suggested is that writers, such as Thompson and Williams have developed this notion more substantively, highlighting both the persistence of working class culture and its importance, within local communities, to how citizenship is experienced. Secondly, Marshall also fails to recognize the importance, as does Thompson, of structural inequalities. Marshall has a tendency in his writings, to relegate class to questions associated with equal opportunities, failing to accept that class relationships may well be related to other factors. Thirdly, not only does Marshall ignore the importance of structural inequalities but he also fails to realise that the two aspects of class, agency (and therefore culture) and structure are closely related; there being, as Giddens suggests, a 'duality of structure'.

#### Marshall and the problem of youth

The second major problem with Marshall's paradigm of citizenship evolves around the concept of youth. It is

indisputable that Marshall's writings on citizenship were framed around the notion of adulthood. In discussing the meaning of citizenship and how it could be expanded, Marshall was clearly talking about adult citizens. But what about youth and citizenship, how do young people experience it and how do they become citizens ?

Part of the problem of understanding what citizenship means for young people is the complexity of meanings that underpin the concept of youth and how these discourses have influenced the experience of 'growing up' in modern society. Generally youth is claimed to be a transitional time phase which exists between childhood and adulthood. This is usually explained as period of the life cycle when a person undergoes rapid psychological and physiological changes which in many cases cause young people 'storm and stress' thus explaining much of the rebellious aspects of their behaviour. Such a view is how youth is generally understood in commonsensical meanings, yet in reality how does it match with how young people experience their youthful years ?

Cohen (1986), in his paper on the 'Rethinking the Youth Question' argues that such a commonsense view of youth has little to do with the realities of being young, suggesting that its construction has resulted from how the meaning of youth has been explained and researched historically. Central to our understanding of the youth phases has been the influence of biology. Writers such as Cohen (1986), Griffin (1993) and Springhall (1986) argue that the discourses on adolescence have been dominated by the traditions of psychology and physiology. Up until the end of the 19th century the concept of adolescence did not exist in scientific language (12). It first came to light through the classic works of Stanley Hall (1904) who, writing on the moral decline of youth in the newly growing urban industrial America, suggested that adolescence was a life stage that was clearly linked to psychological and physiological changes. Cohen, Griffin and Springhall, argue that it has been these ideas that have dominated, not only academic discourses but also our commonsense understanding of the

youth phase, (13) linking explanations of what it means to be young to biological changes.

Springhall, in his book, Coming of Age (1986) wants to challenge this dominance of biology, suggesting that we need to recognize that, firstly, much of the evidence writers such as Hall draw upon is incorrect, and secondly, that the meaning of youth has historically and cross culturally changed. In his book, Springhall produces a collection of papers which draw a picture of adolescence that has different definitions at different historical periods. For example, he refers to the 15th and 16th centuries and indicates that the period between childhood and adulthood took a different form from today. In this time period youth were identified in a broader span being seen not only as the teen years but also into the mid twenties. Both in England and France young people remained youths until they held positions of independence, such as farm occupancy or head of household. This might not have happened until they were in their mid-twenties and had undergone a period of apprenticeship, but they were still identified as youth therefore adulthood was not determined by chronological age but by their state of dependency.

Springhall wants to develop his argument to suggest that by examining the notion of adolescence historically and cross-culturally it can be seen that any understanding of youth has to consider social and cultural explanations. Other writers have also raised this issue suggesting that the 'creation of adolescence' has more to do with social and economic change than biologism (14). One such example has come from the works of Musgrove (1964) in his book, Youth and the Social Order. He argues that the myth of adolescence was manufactured by adults with the coming of the industrial revolution, to repress the young and keep them in a subordinate economic and power position;

The segregation of the young from the world of their seniors has given them a special position in society. In some respects it is a position of diminished rather than enhanced social status... The position of youth in contemporary society is only intelligible in terms of the rise since the late 18th century of the psychology of adolescence which has helped to create what it describes.

Musgrove, 1964 p. 2

Yet as Springhall suggests it is difficult to claim that the creation of adolescence was a deliberate conspiracy by older generations (Springhall 1986 p.225). Gillis, in his book, Youth and History (1974) while not seeing the creation of adolescence as a conspiracy makes a similar claim to Musgrove, suggesting that the 'invention' of adolescence came about as a by product of the upper and middle classes sending young people to boarding school in Victorian Britain. Even though Musgrove and Gillis have their problems, (15) the central claim that adolescence is socially constructed and that it has historically undergone change has much to commend it and explains why young people's citizenship is difficult to define, both in general and in any historical period.

Springhall (1986) and others have four main ideas to offer to the debates over youth and citizenship. Firstly, youth can be historically and culturally located as being a period of transition in which young people move from childhood to adulthood. Secondly, the transition process, while involving physiological and psychological changes, is not reducible to biology alone, other factors have to be considered. Thirdly, the forms and shape of these transitions have historically changed, through the construction of different social and cultural meanings. Fourthly, the central feature of these transitions are social, economic and political definitions of how young people move from dependent children to independent adults. Citizenship, therefore, for young people, unlike adults, is experienced as a transition status that is socially and culturally defined as the movement from dependent childhood to independent adulthood.

The impact of the changing notion of youth has major

implications on young people's rights, making Marshall's dominant paradigm problematic as a framework for understanding young people's experiences of citizenship. For example, James (1986) and Jones and Wallace (1992), highlight that it is generally assumed that legally becoming an adult, through gaining rights, takes place at the age of majority. But the access to rights is not consistent, they have become claimable at different ages, ranging from 16 to 26. For example, the following chart highlights some of these inconsistencies;

age	legislation
16	leave school age of consent (heterosexual) drive motor scooter
17	marry with parents consent adult jurisdiction drive car
18	age of majority sign tenancy (16 in Scotland) drink alcohol claim unemployment benefit claim social security
21	previous age of majority legal homosexuality
25	adult levels of income support
26	adult in housing benefit rules

(taken from Jones and Wallace 1992 p.103)

Many of the rights that young people do have are inconsistent with the notion of the age of majority, seeming to have little relationship to a formal legal definition of when youth ends and adulthood begins. Jones and Wallace (1992) suggest that there seems little logical reasoning behind this inconsistency (p.102) but as Gills (1974), Musgrove (1964) and Springhall, (1986) suggested, the reason for inconsistent and contradictory legal rights is the defining and re-defining of childhood, youth and adulthood

within a political and legal context.

The issue here, then, is that in terms of a legal definition it is unclear when youth ends and adulthood begins. As Hutson and Jenkins (1989) point out youth is a stage when young people gain gradual access to adult rights (p.95). Of course, even when young people reach an age when they gain a specific right it does not necessarily signal a shift into adulthood. Some rights have more status than others, for example, reaching the age of 18 and being entitled to drink legally in a pub. In terms of status this indicates more about adulthood than, say, having the right to vote. This suggests that a more important aspect of transitions into adulthood for young people is the issue of status.

Adulthood is then not just a legal definition it is also defined by status. Gaining adult status is of central importance to being adult. This process is complex and similar to the transition from childhood to youth in that it is socially and culturally defined and not gained through rights alone. To be identified as an adult requires young people to have accomplished certain relevant achievements. For example, Jones (1988) highlights what some of these are;

There is no one process of becoming adult, though there may be relevant accomplishments, such as, settling into steady employment, having one's own accommodation and getting married or starting a family.

Jones 1988, p.707

Being an adult member of society therefore requires young people to gain status through their achievements. Willis (1984) is more specific in his definition, in that he wants to suggest four particular sites where adulthood is achieved, these are; employment and the wage, independent living, relationships and parenthood, and independence as a consumer in the market. It is in these sites where young people, firstly, gain adult status and, secondly where their adult identities are culturally reproduced and formed.

These processes are not necessarily experienced

simplistically; young people move from one stage to another. Parenthood may precede marriage or young people may return to live with parents after leaving home. In practice not all young people follow 'mapped out' stages, some are missed out and others reversed (Jones and Wallace 1992 p. 101). It is also the case that these forms of adult status differ by class. The traditions of working and middle class communities may give higher status to different achievements such as getting a job or staying in further education. Divisions and differences may also exist in terms of gender, in that getting married and having a family may be given a higher status for young women in adulthood while for young men having a job or leaving home and living independently may be what is of most important for their adult status.

Jones and Wallace try to clarify the complexity of this process by suggesting that instead of 'rites of passage', which are identifiable in some cultures (Turnbull, 1976), Western societies have 'markers of status'. These are determined and ratified in three specific areas. Firstly, adult status can be attained in the private sphere of young people's lives through engaging in activities like, having their first sexual experience or drinking alcohol. Secondly, 'markers of status' can be identified in public activities which are recognized by the local community or family, such as, getting engaged, married or having children. The third and final category is what she calls official markers. These are legal benefits and rights that accompany adulthood, for example, certificates of qualification, the right to draw unemployment benefit or to have a mortgage.

The point of this discussion has been to show how Marshall's concept is inadequate in explaining young people's experience of citizenship. Biological definitions dominate our commonsense explanations yet these clearly fail to take into account how the notion of youth has undergone change and redefinition. Other factors are seemingly more important to how the young experience the processes of growing up. Youth is a complex term that is continually being re-defined both legally and culturally at all levels

of society. Any kind of understanding of young people's citizenship has therefore to recognize the fluidity of its meaning and the ways it is continually being defined. To understand what it means to be a young citizen therefore requires a recognition of the social, cultural, political and economic context of the particular time period under investigation. It is to this issue that I now want to turn.

## Section Two

### Being young in the 1990s

What it means to be young, both at the level of ideas and as an every day experience, has throughout the 1980s undergone radical changes. There seems little doubt that the 1980's was a period in which rapid changes in the social, economic and political spheres of British society were taking place. How far these changes are structural, permanent and irreversible is the focus of much discussion (Allen and Massey, eds. 1988, Hammet, McDowell and Sarre, eds., 1989.). The debates on change have, over the post war period, been conducted under a variety of headings in numerous disciplines. For example, 'post-industrialism', (Bell, 1973) 'Post-Fordism', (Aglietta, 1979, Piore and Sabel, 1984) 'New Times', (Hall and Jacques 1989) 'disorganised capitalism' (Lash and Urry, 1987) and 'Post-Modernism' (Berman, 1984, Lyotard, 1984) to name but a few. My intention here is not to refute or accept one theoretical approach over another, that is not within the scope of this project, but rather to draw out various changes or trends that have taken place which have affected the everyday lives of young people.

Change or trends can be identified in a variety of settings and are usually the result of a complex juxtaposition between structure, policy and ideology. Many of these have roots in the late 60's and to isolate one sphere over another is to ignore the complexity and interrelationship of the different influences. For example, it has been argued that Britain has been undergoing deindustrialisation due to structural changes in the economy

(Harris, 1989). Yet to see the impact of this without being aware of the ideological and policy responses, is to ignore the complex way it has affected the everyday lives of young people.

### Youth, citizenship and the New Right

One area where what it means to be young has seemingly undergone a 'restructuring' is at the level of political discourse. Throughout the 1980s what was expected of the young and what they could expect from the state radically changed. This has come about as a result of the introduction of 'new ideas' from the political right. One of the central aspects of New Right thinking has been a change in attitude towards the role of the state, especially in the economy and the provision of social rights benefits. This approach has challenged Keynesian state intervention, the commitment to full employment and the distribution of welfarism (King, 1987). In its place there have been introduced policies which have attempted to 'roll back the frontiers of the state', to challenge and change the relationship between central and local government and to break what has been termed the 'dependency culture' of Welfarism (Roche, 1992). All of this has brought about massive changes in the relationship between the individual citizen and the local and national state. Central to this approach is the idea that individuals should have as much control over their lives as possible without interference from others, taking full responsibility for their actions. This idea is influenced by the works of Adam Smith (1759) in that individuals are seen as self-interested, rational beings who are capable of making judgements and assessments about their own needs and desires (King, 1987, p.10) (16). The 1980s then can be identified as the decade when the values of post war welfarism were challenged and replaced by new social and economic values of 'popular capitalism'.

When it comes to the young, the New Right have a different approach which sees intervention as essential. For them youth is a biological stage of development in which

individuals are prone to act 'irrationally'. This leads them to believe that young people are in need of help in their development, requiring either the family or the state to intervene. For example, in his speech to the third Ministerial Conference for the Youth Service, the participating Minister stated his belief in the need for intervention into the lives of young people;

However, I come to this area of work with an abiding belief in the enormous scope for influencing the attitudes and decisions of individuals through helpful and positive action at an early stage...

Forman, 1992

But the type and scope of state intervention which the New Right advocates reflects their political ideology. The result of this is that specific policy is constructed which aims to encourage young people to be independent and 'good' citizens by undertaking their responsibilities and obligations. Yet as I shall show this approach does have contradictory problems and consequences for how far young people can be autonomous independent adults.

Intervention towards independence has involved the development of a specific policy approach which attempts to discourage young people from being dependent on the state. The main thrust of this has been the removal of state benefits and rights for 16 and 25 year old. For example, Jones and Wallace (1992) show how young people's rights and benefits have been reduced in areas such as social security benefits, housing legislation, student grants and minimum wage protection. Since 1979, benefits have either shifted towards means testing or been removed altogether, leaving young people in a situation in which economic independence cannot be gained through the assistance of the state (p.60-67).

A second form of intervention has been in the area of paid work. It is here where a major contradiction exists within New Right philosophy and their approach to young people. In the wider context they advocate non-intervention and the 'rolling back of the state', yet in the area of

youth employment there has been a growth of state intervention with the setting up and development of various work schemes. Since the early 1980s central government has undertaken specific policies towards dealing with unemployment and the lack of employment opportunity which has had a major impact on young people's experience of work (or lack of it). This has seen the development of special employment measures for youth.

Training young people in the skills necessary for the industrial needs of the country has always been a major responsibility of the state (Davies, 1986) yet throughout the 1980s there was a massive increase in Youth Training Schemes the likes of which has never been seen before. Not only have these schemes increased, but it also, become evident that central government has seen this approach as teaching the young skills of the workplace and re-skilling through the introduction of vocational training. Bates et al. (1984) suggest that the emphasis of this approach to providing employment for the young has been to push responsibility onto the unemployed, blaming them for their failure to find work (17).

By the mid 80's central government, in line with its economic policies, set about shifting the responsibility of running these schemes to the private sector in the form of Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC's);

It is in the interests of both employers and young people that, through the new Training and Enterprise Councils, employers should progressively take over from government the ownership and development of youth training...

Department of Employment, 1988, p.47

In 1988 Central Government extended the length of training schemes, from one to two years while also guaranteeing that all 16 year old's leaving school would be able to get a place on a YT scheme (18).

A third area of intervention has been in the 'moral economy' of citizenship. By the mid 1980's, Concerns were being voiced about the 'moral order' of an individualist based society built upon competition and 'market forces'.

With the values of Hobbs 'war of all against all' awakened, fears were being raised about the weakening of the social fabric of society and local communities. With tensions heightened by the 1988 budget which seemed to reinforce economic individualism, the New Right 'discovered' the concept of the active citizen and the need to 'remoralize society' (19);

...this paragon has been invented in response to the argument that the free market, as promoted by Thatcher's government, is 'hard and uncaring'... the call to active citizenship is also an attempt to engender social cohesion...(and) to counter the damaging assertion by the Prime Minister that 'there is no such thing as society'.

Lister 1990a p.14

This was seen as a concept that could help to 'bind' society together yet sit comfortably within the government's ideas of economic individualism. Active citizenship was an extension of individual responsibility in which the New Right argued that individuals were not only responsible for themselves and their families, but also had a responsibility for their own communities;

The sense of being self-reliant, of playing a role within the family, of owning one's property, of paying one's way are all part of the spiritual ballast which maintains responsible citizenship and a solid foundation from which people look around to see what they can do for others and for themselves.'

Thatcher, 1977. p.97 (20)

With this in mind, the government have proposed that individuals should undertake voluntary work within their own communities, looking after the environment, the welfare of the most vulnerable, and making it a secure and safe place to live. In the past this may have been seen as the duty of the rich through giving money, but today the government proposes that it should be extended to every active citizen not just through the giving of money but through the giving of their free time;

The idea of the active citizenship is a necessary complement to that of the enterprise culture. Public service may once have been the duty of an elite, but today it is the responsibility of all who have time and money to spare.

Hurd 1988.

Much of this discussion on active citizenship has been aimed at youth. Concerns about the moral education of youth and the effects of social change on their behaviour has a long history (21). In the early 1980s one particular response to the high levels of unemployment was the call for a return to a form of National Service. This was proposed by Youth Call who claimed that young people without work were a danger to society. Government therefore had a responsibility to develop a national army of community volunteers (Marsland, 1984). It was argued that monies spent on providing unemployment benefit could be better spent in paying young people to undertake work in the community which would help reduce government spending and provide useful employment for the young unemployed. This idea, while much discussed and supported in principle by the government, was eventually rejected. Their main concerns and reasons for rejecting it came over costs not principle. They argued that such a scheme should be set up and run by the voluntary sector, not central government (France 1990).

But these ideas did not disappear. By the mid 80s they reappeared in the guise of Prince Charles's Young Volunteer scheme and the recommendations of the Speaker's Commission on Citizenship (France, 1990). Both argued that the values of the active citizen should be an important part of young people's educational experience both in and out of school. Learning the values of moral responsibility to their family and community are therefore seen as a central feature of the New Right's vision of citizenship for youth;

We also argue that the experience within the community is important for young people, as an encouragement to make a voluntary contribution in later life. Social responsibility, and an awareness of our obligations to consider the impact of our actions and lifestyles on others, helps to create an environment in which we can reinforce social cohesion.

Speaker's Commission on Citizenship 1990 p.38

The end result of this discourse over the morality of citizenship has been a 'restructuring' of its meaning. It is a rejection of the notion that the state is responsible for providing rights and benefits for the citizen to claim as proposed by Marshall (1950). In its place the New Right have tried to assert a form of citizenship that has its basis in economic individualism and the responsibility of the citizen. Individuals or families are seen as acting rationally in the market place as buyers or consumers of services, taking responsibility for their own welfare and their communities, with a limited assistance from the state. Citizenship in this context is grounded in the private world of individuals or civil society and not within the relationship between the individual and the state;

...in this discourse, citizenship is detached from its modern roots in institutional reform, in the welfare state and community struggles and re-articulated with the more Victorian concepts of charity, philanthropy and self-help.'

Hall 1990 p. 174

So not only has the New Right reduced the rights of young people, as mentioned earlier, they have also attempted to shift the debate of youth and citizenship towards the notion of responsibilities and duties.

### Youth, citizenship and structural change

Of course the experience of being young in the 1990s has also been clearly influenced by structural changes in the youth labour market. Unemployment has become a central feature of young people's lives. Throughout the 1980's youth unemployment amongst school leavers increased from 7% to 12%, while amongst the 16 to 19 age group this figure rose to 20%. In comparison to other groups this age group were

more prone to unemployment. For example, unemployment amongst 25-34 year olds averaged at 11% and the 35-49 age group averaged at 8% (General Household Survey 1991). Levels of unemployment also have a class base in that the groups with higher rates of unemployment are amongst the semi- and unskilled workforce. For example, Jeffs and Smith (1990) argue that male employers and managers account for 19% of the workforce yet their unemployment rate was only 6%, unlike unskilled workers, who accounted for 5% of the workforce and had an unemployment rate of over 14%. Unemployment has also had a spatial and regional context in that some areas have been affected more than others. Evidence suggests that unemployment in the inner cities has been higher than elsewhere. For example, Hasluck (1987) has argued that unemployment in these areas has been 50% higher than the national average and more than 66% greater than the rate in towns and the rural areas. What this evidence indicates is that unemployment, while fluctuating throughout the 1980s between two and three million, has an age, class and regional context in which the groups most affected are the most vulnerable, being unskilled and unqualified, living in the poorest areas of the country (Jones and Wallace, 1992).

Not only does it seem that unemployment is becoming inevitable, especially for the young, but changes in work are also affecting the youth labour market. Employment opportunities and types of work available, for youth, have undergone change. With the decline of manufacturing and subsequent deindustrialisation, traditional jobs and apprenticeships in industry have been greatly reduced (Allen & Massey et al., 1989). New forms of employment, specifically in the service sector, have increased, providing jobs which are of a different nature, usually with less security and income (Allen et al., 1988). Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury (1990) have suggested that changes are taking place in the youth labour market as a result of 'deep seated and fundamental social and economic processes' (p.1) which have then been accelerated by the New Right in their shift away

from a commitment to full employment to the expansion of market forces (p219). Results from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 16-19 initiative have illustrated how this has had a regional impact. In its study it examined four different local labour markets concluding that opportunities for young people to gain full employment was differentiated by regions. For example, getting work was easier in Swindon than either Sheffield or Liverpool (Roberts, 1987).

This restructuring of the youth labour market has then been influenced by government responses to high unemployment through the creation of training schemes and changes to social benefits which were mentioned in the previous section, leading to three specific trends in employment experiences for young people. Firstly, figures from the Household Survey show that the numbers of young people getting a 'proper' job has fallen dramatically from 60% to 17% for 16 year olds and from 71% to 47% for 17 year olds (General Household Survey 1991). Secondly and simultaneously, young people have been expanding their participation levels in both higher and further education, resulting in more young people either staying on at school for longer or carrying on their education into post school education establishments (37% in 1975 to 52% in 1990 Department of Education, 1992). This, it has been argued, is a direct result of government policies and a consequence of high unemployment (Jeffs and Smith 1990). For example in 1988, 16 to 18 year olds were disqualified from claiming benefit therefore many, rather than entering a government training scheme, opted to continue their education (Banks et al 1992). Thirdly, there has been a massive expansion of young people entering government training schemes. In the early 1970's such measures did not exist yet by 1990 over 27% (Department of Education, 1992) of the youth population are employed in this way.

These changes are clearly differentiated by class and sex. For example, Banks et al argue, along with Jeffs and Smith (1990) argue that training schemes are class specific

in that large sections of young working class youth are the main users of this form of option, while continuation of education tends to be a method young middle class people use to avoid unemployment. A similar argument exists in terms of sex, in that 58% of 16 year old women either stayed on at school or continued in education in 1990 compared to 48% of young men (Department of Education, 1992). Government schemes also seemed to be sex specific in that in 1990 18% of young women were on schemes compared to 27% of young men (Department of Education, 1992) (22). The implications of this expansion of training schemes for young people as a means to providing employment opportunities and autonomous independence has been questionable. For example, Banks et al (1992), using evidence from the Youth Cohort Studies, suggest that in terms of gaining full-time jobs young trainees are more liable to unemployment, after being on a scheme, than any other group (p.53).

#### Transitions; extended, changing and broken

As the previous discussions have shown being young has throughout the 1980s taken on a new meaning. Previously, leaving school and entering work was seen as the major step towards adulthood offering economic and social independence. But as expectations from the state and opportunities in the labour market have changed, young people's transitions into adulthood have been either extended, broken, or restructured. The implication of this is that for working class youth autonomous independence has become increasingly difficult;

As a result of all these developments, young people are also increasingly living in an intermediate status between economic dependence and independence.

Jones and Wallace, 1992, p.150

This creates a situation in which many young working class people are unable to leave the family home and move into the adult world of independence;

...Young people within all these intermediate economic statuses have thus been forced into increased economic dependence on their family home.

Jones and Wallace, 1992, p.150

Extended, changing and broken transitions have therefore reduced young people's ability to gain independence and have forced them to be more reliant, for longer periods, on the family home. This situation has also been reinforced by the rhetoric and policy developments of the New Right which see the family as central to policy developments. For them the family is the main institution that should be responsible for the young. Young people are not eligible to be free individuals who can make rational choices in the market place. They are seen to be irrational and incapable of knowing what their own needs are. It is the family that acts on behalf of all its members including its children. Responsibility therefore for both the welfare and discipline of youth is based in the family unit and not the state, as Fitzgerald points out;

...the family is no longer to have the status of being a passive client; it is now to enjoy the 'freedoms' of the market and become consumer of welfare. The state is no longer to be the agent which calculates the social needs of the nation, this is now the function of the family--- the family must now take on the role of policing its members and the community.

Fitzgerald 1983 p.46

The consequences of this emphasis is that responsibility for young people's needs, desires and control is undertaken by the family. Freedom or independence therefore is determined and dependent on the family unit. This contradiction between 'independence' and 'dependence' has throughout the 1980s been evident in policies towards youth. Ideologically they may advocate and encourage economic independence but their policies have succeeded in forcing young people to be more dependent on the family. Jones and Wallace (1992) have raised this issue in their book, Youth, the Family and Citizenship, arguing that government policy in the 1980s, while advocating

independence, has in effect forced young people to be more dependent on the family for their freedom. Two cases can be used as examples. Firstly, an important aspect of economic independence for young people is the gaining of a wage which would sustain them in living independently; yet throughout the 1980s there has been a clear policy of reducing the youth wage as it is seen as an economic barrier to job creation and economic growth. This has also been compounded by changes in the benefit system: the eradication of benefits for 16-18 year olds in 1988 has led young people to be more dependent on their families (Jones and Wallace, 1992, p.27). Secondly, leaving home is acknowledged as an important aspect of moving into adulthood. For many young people leaving home is not a matter of choice but necessity (23). Yet government policy towards independent living and homelessness has been dominated by reducing Housing Benefit and encouraging young people to return home (Jones and Wallace 1992, p.112-114). So not only is there a contradiction in ideology towards youth but also in terms of social policy: on the one hand this advocates independence but in reality forces dependency.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested that Marshall's citizenship paradigm is problematic for understanding the experiences the young working class have of citizenship. In section one of this chapter I argued that Marshall's concept of class was problematic. In its place I suggested that if we are to understand the citizenship of the young working class we need to recognize both its structural and cultural context. Section one also raised the failure of Marshall's paradigm to have anything to say about youth. Commonsense arguments rely upon biological explanations, but it has to be recognized that what it means to be young is socially, economically and culturally defined. Therefore any explanation of what it means to be a young citizen needs to recognise the context of the particular time period under investigation.

Section two of this chapter took this idea as central to the discussions of youth and citizenship, highlighting how, in the 1990s, the meaning, policies and structural context of citizenship has undergone changes. Being working class and young over the first years of the 1990's has clearly been difficult, leading to increasing pressures which have either seen transitions broken, extended or changed. How the young have responded to this is the focus of the fieldwork chapters that follow in Part two.

## Chapter Two

Youth as a way of life

In chapter one I discussed the idea of citizenship as a way of life that exists within working class communities. But little was said concerning what this way of life is for working class youth. Our understanding of what it means to be working class and young has, in many ways, been greatly influenced by academic and political discourses on youth (Cohen, 1986, Davies, 1990, Griffin, 1993 and Muncie, 1984). In the first part of this chapter I intend to examine what these discourses have been, showing how our understanding of youth has been constructed around the notion of 'youth as a social problem'. Historically there has been major problems with the studies of youth, resulting in a distorted and overtheorized view of working class young people's way of life. This has seen academic interest concentrate on certain actions and actors at the expenses of the majority of ordinary youth, thus providing us with a partial picture of working class life.

In the second part of this chapter the discussion will turn to examining the important issues concerning 'ordinary young people's way of life. By drawing upon recent research I will highlight how and why community, work and consumption are essential to the processes of growing up for the majority of ordinary working class young people. This section will then identify the weaknesses of studies in these areas, suggesting that a more holistic approach needs to be taken which shows the inter-relationship between the different sites and experiences of citizenship.

### Section One

#### Youth as a social problem

Academic discourses are of central importance to our understanding of the social world in that they research it, write about it, discuss it, theorize it and inform both political and 'commonsense' discourses concerning young people (Cohen, 1986, Griffin, 1993). In other words the interest and research focus of academics are influential in constructing our knowledge and understanding of what it

means to be young and working class. This point is clearly made by Griffin in her book, The Representations of Youth (1993);

The relationship between young people's experiences and academic 'common sense' about 'youth' is not straightforward. Youth research does not simply reflect aspects of young people's lives, nor does it merely misrepresent their experiences, as though the latter were sitting around like the truth waiting to be discovered- or misunderstood. Youth research is more complex than this, given the ideological role it plays in constructing the very categories of 'youth' and 'adolescence' and in presenting stories about the origins of specific forms of youthful deviance or resistance.

Griffin 1993, p2

As Griffin quite rightly points out, this is not to say that academic discourses are total misrepresentations of young people's way of life, rather that we must be aware of their failings, their ideological undertones and the issues or areas they do not represent or deal with. Griffin suggests that the history of youth studies can be categorized into two main paradigms: mainstream and radical. Mainstream approaches can be identified by their attempt to justify hegemonic discourses while also being positivist, empiricist and conservative. Such approaches tend to focus on the source and causes of 'social problems', adopting a victim-blaming thesis as central. On the other hand radical traditions have evolved as a critique of the mainstream approach, adopting structuralist and post-structuralist analyses. Central to their focus are questions concerning the association between 'social problems', young people and the politics of resistance. Griffin goes on to suggest that these two traditions are not easy to separate in that various studies contain elements of both, being a series of discourses rather than distinct theoretical and methodological approaches (Griffin, 1993, p.3).

#### Youth, deviancy and non conformity.

One area where these influences can be identified is in the study of young people's deviant activities and non-

conformity in and around their own communities. Deviancy studies are a major area of youth research, attempting to inform us about the activities of the young. Much of the early research into youth and deviancy had its origins in American criminology, attempting to 'discover' causes for either deviant behaviour or non-conformity. One of the major influences of this approach, at the turn of the century, was the work of Robert Parks and the Chicago School, with their theory of the 'social ecology of the city'. Parks and his fellow academics were concerned with the impact of urbanisation and the mass movement of populations on working class neighbourhoods in Chicago. They argued that human beings, rather like plants, lived together in the city in close harmony and that industrialism and the changes it imposed created a situation of 'social disorganisation' (1). It was in this environment that writers such as Thrasher (1927), Shaw and McKay (1927) and Whyte (1943) undertook ethnographic studies, showing how the delinquent behaviour of young people was linked to changes in the decline of the local neighbourhood. For example, the following is an abstract from the works of Thrasher on the development of the urban street gang;

The central tripartite area of the gang occupies what is often called the 'Poverty belt' - a region characterised by deteriorating neighbourhoods, shifting populations and the mobility and disorganisation of the slum...As better residential districts recede before encroachments of business and industry, the gang develops as one manifestation of the economic, moral and cultural frontier, which marks the interstice.

Thrasher, 1927, p.20

Another example of this focus on youth as a 'social problem' is identifiable in the work that was undertaken in the late 50s and early 60s American writers, such as Berger (1963) Cloward and Ohlin (1960), and Cohen (1955) and Merton (1938). Their focus attempted to show how and why young people in local communities became delinquent (2). For example, using an ethnographic case study methodology, Merton (1938), highlighted the inconsistency between the 'American Dream' and social reality. Young people, it was

argued, created subcultural groups as a form of response to their inability to gain financial success. Again, similar to the Chicago School, the research focused on one particular aspect of young people's behaviour, that of delinquency and attempting to theorize why they failed to participate in American society.

Although these approaches failed to have the same impact on the research agendas in this country (3), these traditions in Youth Studies run deep and much research in Britain also attempts to discover causes of deviance and non-conformity. For example, Micheal Brake, in his book Comparative Youth Culture, (1985) identifies four major trends in the study of youth from the post-war period which were linked to developments in America;

There are four approaches; firstly, the early social ecology of the late 50's and early 60's; secondly, the development of studies related to the sociology of education. This examines the relationship between youth, leisure and youth culture as an alternative to academic achievement. Thirdly, there are contemporary neighbourhood studies looking at local youth groups in the context of social reaction and labelling. Lastly there is the work of the centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies...

Brake, 1985, p.58

The idea of a delinquent neighbourhood or the ecology of the city has a long tradition in British youth research. Briefly, these studies tended to emphasise poverty and the absence of fathers as the root causes of delinquent behaviour. Writers such as Mays, in his book, Juvenile delinquency (1954), suggested that there was an overtly delinquent tradition of toughness, daring and a rejection of authority which offered emotional solidarity. Other studies had similar conclusions in that the culture of working class communities was to reject the idea of bettering yourself, giving status instead to involvement in theft, thus suggesting that there was a rejection of middle class values and a celebration of the working class way of life (4). This tradition has been continued into the 1980's within the works of writers such as Foster (1990) Harrison (1983), and

Hobbs (1988). They undertake studies into the working class cultural life of particular inner city areas and its influence on criminal or deviant behaviour.

In education studies much of the focus has again been on the problems of working class youth and their academic failings. Downes in his book The Delinquent Solution (1966) suggested that school for working class young people was a meaningless activity and that they developed alternative forms of youth cultures to counteract such experiences. Hargreaves, (1967) in his book Social Relations in a Secondary School, took this argument further by suggesting that youth culture, for working class youth, was not a homogeneous experience and that two subcultures arose within the context of schooling which reflected streaming. Firstly, there was the academic stream, containing young people who were involved in hard work and conformity and, secondly, for the others, who were not academically minded, there was a culture of 'messaging about', truancy, and generally rejecting the school system. This focus on the polarised school culture was continued by Willis in his book, Learning to labour; How working class kids get working class jobs (1977). He suggested the counter culture of the 'lads' was influential in preparing them for the shop floor culture of traditional working class workplaces. 'Being tough', 'having a laugh' and 'skiving', which are central to the counter school culture, are used to cope with working in manual labouring jobs.

The third tradition of Youth Studies has its roots in what Brake calls 'Societal reaction and labelling theory' (p.63) Again the focus tends to be on the issue of deviancy and law breaking but unlike previous work in this area it seeks to emphasis how young people become labelled as deviant and how they resist or reject it. Probably the most influential work in this area was Stanley Cohen's Folk Devils and Moral Panics (1972). He focused on how two particular youth subcultures, the 'mods and rockers', became visible due to the attention of the mass media. He discussed how small scale incidents in a British seaside town were

amplified by the media, creating 'folk devils' and eventually a 'moral panic'. This in turn led to two reactions. Firstly, the creation of 'folk devils', in the form of 'mods and rockers', came to be embraced by large sections of the youth population and, secondly, the societal reaction was punitive and out of proportion to the minimal damage done by the events reported.

A development in this tradition which seeks to examine the effects of labelling, was the neighbourhood ethnographic studies undertaken in the mid 70s and although their focus was not on the role of the media they wanted to concentrate on how young people developed a 'from below' culture in dealing with institutional power. One of the major works in this tradition was undertaken by Robins and Cohen in their book, Knuckle Sandwich (1978). They undertook a study of young people who attempted to combat their poverty, their lack of opportunities and life chances, by challenging the processes of power and powerlessness within their local community. Howard Parker's View from the Boys (1974) undertakes a similar form of approach. In this study, Parker used an ethnographic methodology to investigate the life styles of a small group of working class young people in Liverpool, highlighting the social world of urban adolescents and their delinquent activities. He argued that the urban environment left young people with little option but to move into deviant behaviour as a means of dealing with their poverty and powerlessness. Corrigan's study, Schooling the Bash Street kids (1979), is similar in that by focussing on how a particular group of working class young people experienced school he was able to identify how they were left feeling powerless by the education system. He then went on to show how this led to behaviour, such as vandalism, soccer violence and truancy, and how it became an expression of their disaffection.

The research focus of these studies has been on the issue of delinquency, giving little attention to the conforming activities of the majority of working class youth. Writers such as Cohen, (1986), Davies, (1990)

Griffin, (1993) and Muncie (1984) have suggested this concentration on delinquency has dominated the research agendas of Youth Studies. But it is also the case that many of these studies have, underpinning their method, psychological assumptions about the behaviour of young people. For example, Muncie in his discussion on ecological and cultural processes argues that;

A considerable degree of determinism remained implicit in the Chicago studies. Delinquents were viewed as having little free will and were propelled into a life of crime by factors outside of their control. In this way 'social disorganisation' theory retained some of the positivist assumptions that underlay those earlier psychological theories of juvenile delinquency.

Muncie, 1984, p.50

Of course the history of juvenile delinquency shows that certain approaches, such as those by societal reaction theorists, have attempted to develop an approach that rejects determinism or psychological assumptions (Griffin, 1993). But even alternative approaches have their problems (Muncie 1984).

One major development in Youth Studies that attempted to move away from previous approaches evolved out of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the late 70s. As McGuigan (1992) suggests the approach of American subcultural theory was a major influence on the Birmingham CCCS School, but its grounding came out of a critique of developments that were taking place in Youth Studies at that particular time and a desire to return class to centre stage using the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' (McGuigan 1992, p.92). It was argued that in the 1960's British society had created affluence for all and that the working class was being emancipated by their ability to participate as consumers. Youth was seen as being 'freed' from class and developing a 'generational' consciousness and identities. Writers such as Murdock (1975) and the Birmingham group disputed the 'myth of classlessness' (5) and argued for;

...returning youth to class and therefore to social relations of production without, however, denying the increasing importance of commercial leisure in the formation of identity.

McGuigan 1992, p.92

Probably the most influential work which was developed in the early stages was Phil Cohen's 'Subcultural conflict and working class community (1972), which was a study of life in the East End of London. Using a method influenced by the Chicago school of Ecology, he examined the impact of structural change on youth identities. In the 1950s and 60s major changes were taking place in East London; communities became dispersed, familial ties were broken, and economic restructuring took place with the decline of the docks. Old traditions of transitions and methods of formulating identities were broken, new roots were emerging which were creating different experiences for young people. According to Cohen, the 'respectable' working class were caught between two dominant ideologies, that of mass consumption and that of production (p.21). It was in the tensions of old and new that youth subcultures emerged in that the parent culture emphasised the importance of production (through work) while the ideology of consumption offered different identity-building resources;

the latent function of subculture is this- to express and resolve, albeit 'magically' the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture. The succession of subcultures which this parent culture generated can all be seen as so many variations on a central theme- the contradiction, at an ideological level, between traditional working class puritanism and the new hedonism of consumption.

Cohen 1972, p.23

From these early beginnings, the CCCS school developed a more complex set of arguments which, similar to studies in America, suggested that youth subcultures developed as a form of 'problem solving' phenomenon (Brake, 1985). Unlike their U.S. colleagues, class was a dominant factor for the CCCS school as contradictions existed in both structural and ideological conditions which lead young people to develop 'counter cultures'. For example, in their book, Resistance

through Rituals, Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1975) rely on Williams' concept of culture, suggesting that;

culture is the way, the forms in which groups 'handle' the raw material of their social and material existence.

Clarke et al. 1975, p.10

This indicated that class was an essential concept for understanding cultural experiences. Class relations were ranked in terms of wealth and power and so was cultural domination and subordination. Consent to the dominant hegemony, which is never total, was contested and struggled for. It was in these struggles that young people attempted to 'win space' and resist the dominant ideology, creating their own subculture which was distinctive and symbolised by certain values, behaviour and dress.

The Birmingham approach focussed on the use of consumption as a form of symbolic resistance to the dominant culture (6). Consumption goods therefore became a central commodity in the process of working class youth constructing their own identities, as McGuigan suggests;

It [the Birmingham position on subcultural analysis] recognized and valued rather than denounced youth cultural consumption: subcultures and their 'focal concerns were thus seen as formed by the creative appropriation of commodities, specifically those of youth-orientated fashion and music industries.'

McGuigan 1992, p.96

By the early 1980's the Birmingham CCCS school had disbanded with its main writers diversifying and moving into new areas (7). Studies into the way of life of working class youth declined, as the research focus and funding shifted towards what was seen as a more pressing problem; that of unemployment and the transition from school to work (8).

The example of the Birmingham CCCS school raises other important issues about the focus on youth as a social problem. Although they did not concentrate directly on criminal behaviour their approach had major problems which affected how young people's way of life was to be understood. Firstly, CCCS attempted to overtheorize and

romanticize the activities of a small group of working class youth. Brake (1985), for example, suggests that the sympathetic 'reading' of delinquent subcultures tend to over romanticise the 'resistance' of disadvantaged and oppressed working class youth, ignoring how young people themselves account for their actions and their use of 'style'. MacDonald and Coffield (1991) discuss this issue in terms of methodology. They suggest that although the Birmingham school's approach claimed to differ from the traditions of positivism, the end result is similar. Like positivistic research it failed to give centre stage to the voices of young people. In concentrating on participant observation as a method the Birmingham School tended not to incorporate or allow for what young people had to say about their own actions. In reality they failed to grasp the complexities of youth culture and the importance of what young people had to say. Woods (1977) suggests that not only did the CCCS school use a method which romanticised the behaviour of working class youth they also overlooked the negative elements of such youth cultures. McGuigan (1992) expands on this point by suggesting that the Birmingham approach fails to recognize the long history of 'troublesome youth' and the realities of how this has been experienced in working class communities (p.91).

This problem of overtheorizing and romanticising young people's way of life is most relevant to the work of CCCS, but in many ways, it is also endemic to much of the research that has been undertaken in the Youth Studies field. As Davis (1990) observes;

The obvious point to make, then, is quite simply that many of the major fundamental theoretical assumptions concerning the problematic nature of adolescence are just that; a set of interrelated hypotheses deriving from more general theoretical models dealing with the socialisation process, developmental stages, the social-psychological problems of advanced industrial/late capitalism, etc.

Davis 1990, p.12

A second theme that has dominated the work of CCCS, and

which is also relevant to other fields of research, has been the tendency to focus on specific activities of a small section of working class youth. CCCS's approach to working class culture concentrates on the most glamorous, visible and media sensationalized groups within working class youth. As Coffield suggests, CCCS did not take into account the mass of 'ordinary youth';

...even if the sub-cultural tradition managed adequately to capture the politics of punks, mods and other spectacular youth cults of the post war period, it still ignored the mass of ordinary young people.

MacDonald and Coffield 1991, p.222

The majority of working class youth are therefore relegated to either dull, conforming or 'cultural dopes' (MacDonald and Coffield 1991, p.222). This concentration on a single cultural approach also failed to recognize the importance of other identities and the variety of experiences that working class youth encounter. This criticism has been raised by numerous writers for its failure to recognize the differences that exist within working class youth culture (9). For example, Hollands in his book, The Long Transition (1989), raises this question when examining Willis' Learning to Labour. He suggests that Willis' concentration on 'single cultural transitions' plays down the significance of other groups and experiences. A similar argument is put forward by Ferchhoff (1990) who argues that the CCCS approach resulted in excluding large sections of youth from its analysis thus failing to recognize how young people explore and experiment with cultural styles;

In Britain, the concentration of CCCS research interests upon 'authentic,' and class specific youth sub-cultural style resulted in the exclusion of large sections of contemporary youth from its analysis. It could not register the tentative exploration of, and experimentation with, cultural styles which is characteristic for so many young people.

Ferchhoff 1990, p.231

Large sections of working class youth are therefore ignored giving little focus to everyday activities, especially

within the private spheres of their lives and how they live out their everyday citizenship. Little attention is given to why and how large sections of young people conform rather than rebel. For example, a substantial amount of empirical research, over the previous 20 years has suggested that the majority of the young working class are 'conservative' and 'conformist' being neither confrontational or rebellious. Survey research evidence by NOP in 1992 suggests that the majority of young people still lived at home in their late teens with over 95% saying they got on well with their mothers and 85% with their fathers. They argued that in general young people do not approve of drug taking or drinking too much alcohol believing themselves to be responsible and if they do run into trouble the majority of them claimed they would turn to their mothers for advice (Rutter NOP 1992 p.84). Other studies have supported this view, for example, the National Youth Survey (DES 1983) showed that many of young people's attitudes were conservative reflecting adult values. They were not therefore rebellious or in conflict with the society they lived in.

This criticism of youth research, that it focuses on specific groups at the expense of others has probably been most forcibly criticized by feminist writers. Griffin (1985a) McRobbie & Garber (1975), McRobbie (1991) and Siltanen & Stanworth (1984) for example have clearly argued that social research into the lives of young women has been generally neglected. Women writers are critical of mainstream research because it assumes a 'male is norm' (Griffin 1985a). The impact of this, has been that studies into various youth activities have focussed on the behaviour of young men, while using a framework which 'fits' young women's experiences into male lives. The implications of this, according to Griffin (1985a), is that previous studies have been gender specific presenting the 'male norm' as universal while ignoring the influence of gender relations (p104).

## Section Two

### Sites of Citizenship for ordinary youth

So far I have argued that our knowledge and understanding of young people's 'way of life' has been dominated by attempts to theorize and explain young people's everyday life in the community by concentrating on youth as a social problem. This has led to academic research focussing on the behaviour of a minority section of working class youth, usually young men, who are engaged in either deviant or resistant activities. What is missing from this approach is an understanding and awareness of the sites and activities that are central in terms of the lived experience of citizenship for the majority of ordinary working class young people. In this section I want to focus on community, work and consumption as sites of importance to the experience of being young, highlighting the complex relationship they play in the processes of growing up. At the same time I shall identify some of the main findings of recent studies that have been undertaken in these areas.

#### The importance of community

As the discussion in the introduction on Thompson and Williams showed, community is important to a working class way of life. But it is also a major setting and site for ordinary working class young people, having an important role to play in their lives. Not only does my own experience suggest this is the case, but other studies have confirmed it. One such work is Brown's study, Schooling Ordinary Kids (1987).

Brown's central focus is on the contradictions between the education system and the changing employment market for young people. He develops a method which rejects Willis's 'biopolar' view of youth suggesting instead that divisions exist between working class young people about what they want to achieve after leaving school. The question for him is not how working class young people get working class jobs, but why the majority of working class youth, which Willis ignores, conform within the school setting. What he

suggests is that the majority desire to either 'get in' to the local culture and gain acceptance from the community, or to 'get on' in working class terms. For Brown, it is only the minority or 'swots' who want to 'get out' of the locality and move up the social ladder. The point he makes which is relevant here is that for the majority of young people their community remains central to their way of life and their future aspirations. However what Brown fails to discuss is why community is so important to the majority of these 'ordinary kids'. Two studies that attempt to overcome Brown's limitations are studies by Hutson and Jenkins, (1989) and Gillespie, Lovett and Garner (1992).

Hutson and Jenkins (1989) in their book Taking the Strain focus on the cultural and economic resources of the community in aiding young people to move into adulthood. Community in this context is a resource of strength, encouragement, acceptance and support. Although their study focuses on the impact of unemployment to the lives of 'ordinary kids', they clearly raise important issues concerning how young people move into adulthood, highlighting the role of the community in this process. Not only do young people spend a large proportion of their time in the community, either 'hanging about on the streets' or using local facilities, but they also gain financial and emotional support and social status from family and friends.

Gillespie, Lovett and Garner (1992) in their book Youth Work and Working Class Culture (1992) focus on the processes of social reproduction of working class identities in Belfast. Although Gillespie et al's central focus is on the role and importance of Youth Work to a group of young people in Northern Ireland, they acknowledge the importance of the local community in shaping young people's way of life. What they seek to argue is that the traditions and history embedded in working class life are major influences on how young people experience growing up. Starting from a critique of subcultural theory, they suggest that although subcultural groups are an important aspect of working class life they are only a part of the experience of being working

class. Another and more forceful influence is the local way of life or 'how things are done'. For Gillespie et al, this takes shape through the traditions and history of two particular institutions; the family and the neighbourhood. Young people's choices and opportunities are structured by the informal culture of both the past and present (10);

Working class youth inhabit, like their parents, a distinctive structural and cultural milieu defined by territory, objects and things, relations institutional and social practices. In terms of kinship, friendship networks, the informal culture of the neighbourhood and the practices articulate around them, the young are already located in and by the parent culture.

Gillespie, Lovett and Garner, 1992, p.9

Community therefore according to Hutson and Jenkins and Gillespie, Lovett and Garner has a variety of roles to play in the lives of young working class people. A second and no less important site for the young is work.

#### The importance of work and paid employment

There is little doubt that work, as paid employment, is a central feature of modern Western societies. It has been identified as a major aspect of citizenship in that to be in employment is to be an active participant of society. Kearne and Owens (1986), in their book, After Full Employment, identify how work and specifically paid employment has developed in western societies. They argue that all modern societies are in fact employment societies in which certain tasks are bought and sold, similar to other commodities in a market economy, thus having a major impact on shaping our whole way of life. Kearne and Owens go on to argue that, since 1945, there has been not only a commitment by western governments to provide full employment but a general acceptance that work should be central to any notion of citizenship (11).

In terms of youth and citizenship work remains just as important being a major stepping stone into adulthood. This process is complex and diverse but three particular issues are of central importance for young people; status and

obligation, the forming of adult identities, and the wage. Firstly, to be employed in paid work is to be identified as being an adult, bringing with it status in the community and amongst peers. Work is usually perceived, in modern Western societies, as an important goal in itself. Keane and Owens (1986) suggest that what separates modern societies from others is the development of employment and a labour market as central to the lives of citizens;

The official celebration of paid work as the goal not merely the means of life, distinguishes modern employment societies from all others.

Keane and Owens 1986 p.14

Work is therefore concerned with more than just creating an income for sustaining the means of life. Weber (1930) in his work The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism suggested that in modern capitalist societies ideas on work were influenced by the Protestant Ethic. Individuals were encouraged to see work, by the christian middle classes, as an obligation and duty of citizenship. Work became viewed as a means to future religious salvation and a worthwhile activity in itself. Weber points out this is an essential ingredient in the 'spirit of Capitalism' and Keane and Owens (1986) suggest that it remains central to modern societies. Historically modern capitalist societies have, through the use of state policies, seen full employment become a central goal. Not just for the economic benefits of sustaining living standards or economic growth but also because of its connection to an informally assured citizen to be employed (12). For young people, moving towards adulthood requires them to be seen to undertake this central obligation. To be in employment shows they are active and willing participants in adult society. It is not a duty or obligation that young people reluctantly take on; it is a central desire of most school leavers to have a job (Furnham and Gunter 1989).

The second issue of importance is the issue of identities. This is raised by Hutson and Jenkins (1989) who suggest that work is also important because it is a site where young people learn to be adults. Relationships with work peers are a totally different experience of adulthood

to those which most young people have hitherto encountered. Workmates have different expectations and young people encounter relationships with adults, some of which are of a more equal footing;

... the company of adults- as colleagues and superiors- provides a context within which adult behaviour can be learnt and an adult identity reinforced and validated. Workmates are not like parents: they have a different set of expectations, more tolerant of some things, less of others.

Hutson and Jenkins 1989, p.105

Gender and particularly masculine identities are also constructed and reinforced within the work place. Willis highlights the relationship of the physical aspects of work to the forming of male identities in that issues such as toughness and strength of traditional manual labour alongside other aspects such as heaviness, difficulty and dirtiness are seen as prerequisites of masculine identities. They are a requirement of being able to 'do the job' (p.21). He suggests that this provides a sense of dignity and collective identity amongst men which can obscure economic exploitation.

It is in the area of work and its relationship to social reproduction that we start to get an understanding of the importance of work to young women's way of life. Bates and Riseborough in Youth and Inequality, (1993) outline the processes involved in young women taking traditional women's work in caring, and showing how there is a link between the patriarchal family structure, women's role in the family and the reproduction of their identities on vocational training courses. Work therefore for many working class young women, according to Bates et al, has an active part to play in the forming of gender identities.

While these issues discussed above are of central importance to the young working class it is essential to recognize that probably the most important aspect of work is the wage. To move into other adult activities or to engage in adult forms of lifestyle and leisure requires a regular income which provides for more than basic needs. An

important aspect of being an independent adult relates to having an income, which in modern Western societies is mainly achieved through having paid work. Having a wage has been identified by numerous writers as essential to full citizenship (13). Without work, participation in economic life is difficult (Hutson and Jenkins 1989). Other forms of gaining an income for economic participation exist, for example Income Support and Unemployment Benefit but these are only aimed to provide minimum income levels. This is usually just enough to sustain basic living but not full economic participation (Jones and Wallace 1992, Lister 1991). The arguments about work as a 'site of adulthood', where young people are engaged in making transitions to the adult world thus needs to include a consideration of economic independence. For example, as Jones and Wallace (1992) highlight, one area that is of central importance is leaving home and living independently. Although such processes are not simplistic, involving a complex interaction between young people, the family and the state (p.104-114), the central issue for young people is that they need a stable and reasonable income which will help them move from the family home. This point is also highlighted by Willis;

Most importantly, perhaps, the wage is still the golden key (mortgage, rent, household bills) to a personal household separate from parents and separate from work, from production.

Willis 1984 p.19

Willis expands on this point by suggesting that the lack of a wage and the inability to set up their own home also affects young people's opportunities to get married and create their own nuclear family (p.19). It is also the case that without a wage young people find it difficult to engage in the world of consumption and leisure. Participating in adult activities where transitions and identities are formed, such as, going to the pub are increasingly difficult for young people without a regular wage. Willis (1984) goes on to suggest that without a wage young people are in a

'state of suspended animation' between adolescence and adulthood (p.19).

The importance of leisure and consumption.

A third important site for young people is to be found in consumption. Being a consumer is an essential component of adulthood for the young. This has two specific aspects. Firstly, it is argued that consumption has attached to it a certain status which is a statement of social and economic standing. To own or indulge in certain forms of consumption is to be identified as a specific person. Ownership of privatized consumption goods is understood as measuring levels of success in society and of classifying people in terms of social class. For example, not only is it seen as desirable to own property or to drive a new and expensive car but it is also a measure of social standing. Some commentators such as, Saunders (1984) have gone on to suggest that consumption has become more important to cultural identities than social class. In the late 20th century individuals have developed an identification with privatized forms of consumption which cut across class divisions and lead to political and social identification with specific political parties or social groups that are less class related. Privatized consumption has therefore major significance in modern Western societies.

Secondly, it is argued that consuming goods and especially privatized forms of consumption, involves a process where individuals can create and express their identities and sense of selfhood. Williamson highlights the importance of consumption in modern western societies for the development of identities through taste and choice while recognizing the power of the media industry to set the context of choice;

The conscious, chosen meaning in most people's lives comes much more from what they consume than what they produce. Clothes, interiors, furniture,

records, knick-knacks. all the things that we buy involve decisions and the exercise of 'choice', 'taste'. Consuming seems to offer a certain scope for creativity, rather like a toy where all parts are pre-chosen but the combinations are multiple.

Williamson 1986, p.230

One example of this approach can be seen in the work of Lash (1990), who has argued that in the late 20th century we have seen the development of a consumer culture which is available to us all through the mass media. Within this process, we are encouraged to develop our own individual tastes and identities, re-interpreting the signs and symbols of consumption. Lash suggests that we all may watch Eastenders or the 6 'o' clock News at some time but we still have our own tastes and choices of programmes which are central to us in creating our own identities. Individuals, therefore, do not accept the consumer culture at face value, they engage also in a process of redefining meanings and giving different value and status to certain products. Jones and Wallace (1992) highlight this process by using the example of the Reebok trainer which, although produced as a sport shoe, has been redefined and given a different meaning and status to its original use by its consumers (14). So as Gardner and Sheppard suggest;

...consumption has ceased to be purely material or narrowly functional-the satisfaction of basic bodily needs. Today consumption is both symbolic and material. It expresses, in a real sense, a person's place in the world and his or her core identity.

Gardner and Sheppard 1989, p.3

Consumption, in the 1990's, is therefore seen as a central aspect of gaining adult status and the creation of personal identities. But of course one need not be an adult to be a consumer. Since the early 50's there has been a growing awareness of the development of the 'teenage consumer'. Abrams (1961) was the first to draw attention to the growth of importance of the young consumer. He suggested that the affluence of the 1950's and the growth of disposable incomes of the young working class made them a prime target of the consumption industries as a new consumer

market. Debates over the impact of the 'new' teenage consumer have since highlighted either the negative or positive aspects of this expanding activity, but central to all these discussions has been the importance of consumption as a means and method of creating identities.

One major study on youth consumption is to be found in the work of Willis in his book, Common Culture (1990). Willis seeks to propose that a 'common culture' exists in the consuming practices of the young. Using the works of Goffman (1969), he suggests that our identities are formed in our everyday activities and practices. People produce themselves as social actors, observing rules of symbolic exchange and role playing. It is from these processes that our identities are formed and affirmed. According to Willis up until the early 80s the dominant site for the construction of identities was the work place. But with the restructuring of the labour market and especially the youth labour market, work has become less important. In its place new sites have evolved in the area of consumption and leisure. Willis suggests that identities are formed and created in 'defining the object'. Consumption goods are not taken at face value. How they are used is defined by the consumer, re-locating their meaning and producing new forms of identities. The examples Willis uses of this process are many, ranging from young people's involvement in watching T.V., video's, music, computers, fashion, sport, magazines, drinking and fighting. It is in these sites where young people consume and transform the object, giving them new meanings and using them to create their own identities. For example, Willis focuses on the purchase of technology in the music industry, suggesting that young people not only purchase records but they have also developed methods of being creative through activities such as rapping and scratching.

Willis's approach is interesting, in that it raises to the forefront the creativeness of youth, especially in times of high unemployment and poverty. In this sense it successfully adds to our understanding of some of the

practices of ordinary young people. Yet its weakness, similar to those of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies is that it has a tendency to overemphasise certain practices at the expense of other more important consuming activities, ignoring some of the more conforming activities of consumption. Three specific examples can highlight these difficulties.

Firstly, for working class young people, the most desirable aspect of adult leisure is going to the pub. As an activity amongst young people it is of central importance. Willis suggests that three-quarters of 16-24 year old's visit pubs four times a week, making it one of the most popular leisure activities of British society. This is confirmed by other studies such as the ESRC's 16-19 Youth Initiative. Their findings are similar, in that they found over 89% of young people, by the age of 19, were regular attenders at the local pub (15). Being old enough to drink in pubs therefore is an important aspect of youth leisure. Yet even with this being the case Willis (1990) gives only three pages out of 160 to discussing this aspect of youth leisure, reducing it to an area of marginal interest. But this is not the only problem. Willis's focus and analysis is on 'symbolic creativity' highlighting the importance of alcohol consumption for the confirming or re-affirming of masculine identities;

It is (drinking) a competitive activity. The amount consumed is related to how much of a 'man' you are, and the 'men' encourage each other in 'manliness'.

Willis 1990, p. 101

Willis seeks therefore to highlight the unique and romantic meanings to pub life, drawing out the importance of expression to identity forming. This is done at the expense of other aspects of going to the pub, because his interest is only with the 'creativity' of young people in this context. What Willis does not do is to recognize the ordinariness of this activity, or the important role it has to play in the process of transition to adulthood (16). For example, Coffield et al. (1986) suggest that going to the

pub is seen by family, friends and other adults as an important stage towards being grown up. As an activity it is normalised and encouraged by both fathers and mothers from an early age. They suggest that young people are first introduced to alcohol by their parents or relatives who see it as a form of celebration of adulthood and an important status marker (1986. p.132). Acceptance as an adult is gained through participation in conventions and traditions of the pub culture. Buying rounds, behaving sensibly with the amounts that are drunk and engaging in adult talk are all important aspects of being accepted as an adult person in your own right. This is not to deny that Willis has an important point to make about some of the activities involved in going to the pub. However he makes it a central issue, while in fact the type of behaviours he analyses are not the norm but the exception to the norm in the pub culture. For example Hutson and Jenkins (1989) suggest that activities such as heavy and competitive drinking are usually undertaken at the weekend or when young people have money available, they are not everyday events in which all young people participate. Much of going to the pub is, for the young unemployed, about finding a social setting which avoids isolation. Hutson and Jenkins also suggest that the pub is an important site for the confirming and conformity of gender identities. In terms of sexual relationships the community pub is not specifically a site of meeting members of the opposite sex. This activity is undertaken in other sites such as nightclubs or town centre leisure pubs which are specifically identifiable as 'pick up places'. The community pub is used by couples more as a place to visit once a relationship is established and is about the normalisation of behaviour (1989, p.70).

A second example which highlights the difficulties of works such as Willis's is the issue of consumption spending as a method of creating identities. While it is important to acknowledge that this is an important part of consumption,

other aspects of are as important, if not more so to large sections of the youth population. For example, Jones and Wallace (1992) want to raise the issue of consumption of basic goods that provide for young people's needs as more important than consumer durables for identity forming. This suggests that a more relevant aspect of consumption for youth, than privatised consumerism, is the ability of young people to undertake independent living.

For young people to show that they are capable of being independent, separate from both the state and parents, and to be able to provide for their own basic needs is an essential status marker to becoming grown up. Achieving this requires the consumption of goods which can be associated with basic needs. Jones and Wallace (1992), for example, identify these as having accommodation, purchasing basic foodstuffs, clothes, and necessities needed for setting up home. For many young people then, the issue is not about using consumption as a means to creating identities, it is about consumption as a method of gaining independence and the status of being adult.

Finally a third problem with Willis's approach is his failure to recognize the importance of the consumption industry to young people's consumption practices. Stewart raises this issue in her discussion of what she calls the 'Jesuit School of Marketing' (1993, p.204). What she means by this is that it is advantageous to the consumption industries to 'get them young' to keep them as future consumers. Research has shown (Stewart 1993 p. 205) that once a decision is made in terms of a product and brand, young consumers are likely to be loyal to that brand into adulthood. Similar arguments exist regarding the more fashion-led areas. Once we pass through the 'life-stage' of youth we remain what Stewart calls 'prisoners of our youth'. In other words 'old habits die hard', attitudes and values developed in youth remain substantially stable over time (p.204). Consumption therefore is transitional in that young people learn 'good habits' of consumption which they will

take into adult life.

Willis's work is important and valid in that it investigates how young people use consumption to create a sense of self. But as the previous examples show, the consuming practices of the young are complex, involving a consideration of both the transitional aspects and identity forming processes of 'ordinary consuming activities'.

So far I have identified the importance of community, work and consumption in the everyday lives of the majority of ordinary working class youth. Within these discussions I have highlighted some of the major studies which have been influential in constructing our understanding of working class young people's way of life. One of the major failings of these studies has been their focus on specific aspects of young working class lives at the expense of a more holistic picture. For example, Hutson and Jenkins (1989) discuss the impact of unemployment on young people's relationships in the community and with their families. The focus here is on unemployment thus having little to say about the employed or many activities outside the scope of the study. A similar criticism was made of Willis's discussion on the consumption practices of the young in that many of the every day consumption practices were ignored. Research on 'ordinary young people' then has tended to be specific, few have attempted to cover the variety of aspects, or the inter-relationship between them all. Two studies that have come close to this approach were undertaken in the mid and late 80s by Hollands (1989) and Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986).

Hollands (1989) approach focuses on young people's social reproduction of identities. Using a framework taken from Cohen (1986) he suggests that work is an important 'site' for the cultural reproduction of working class youth identities (p.14). For him working class transitions to adulthood are organised around two codes, 'apprenticeship' and 'inheritance'. In other words, the transition to adulthood takes the form of a cultural apprenticeship which has its roots in the historical dimensions of 'what has gone

before'. This is then transmitted through the work place, shop floor and local community. For Cohen and Hollands, this form of identity formation is related to 'the embracing of techniques of manual labour (skill) and politicalisation through a masculine shop floor culture' (13). This process is not one which is deterministic in which each new generation embraces previous historical roles. Each generation experiences the material context of class differently. As Giddens suggests, class is not a homogeneous category, nor is class experienced the same for every generation. Instead it has to be understood as a dynamic set of conditions and identities which are formed in specific historical circumstances (Giddens 1973). Hollands then goes on to argue that 'while the weight of traditional patterns persist under the surface', youth transitions can be experienced differently dependent on the material circumstances.

Although Hollands develops an approach that not only examines the lives of working class young men but also the lives of young women and a method that focuses on more than one aspect of their lives, he still has the major problem of putting work at the centre of the discussion. Work, as mentioned earlier is important yet this kind of approach becomes too deterministic in that it suggests that all other experiences flow from young people's experience in the workplace.

An alternative approach that focuses on community and work is Coffield, Borrill and Marshall's Growing up on the Margins (1986). This study, undertaken in the North East of England, focuses on the everyday lives of a small group of young adults in their local community. Its central attention is to what it means to be young and working class in a time of limited opportunities and insecure labour market. Their approach attempts to highlight community life for a mixed sex group of young working class adults. Similar to the previous discussions on community and work, Coffield et al, identify some of the processes involved in young people's way of life. By focussing on this, Coffield et al's. study

draws graphic attention to the central role community and paid employment plays in their everyday lives. Community was important because of its influence on the shaping of their identities, of offering them support and acceptance and for being a major site of their leisure. Work, on the other hand, provided them with an income, offered them status and played an important role in creating their identities. Coffield et al acknowledges that community should not be viewed with rose tinted glasses, young people were very much aware of the hierarchy of the local area in which they were marginalised and powerless. Conflicts existed which created difficulties for young people, making them feel either threatened or alienated (p.142-143). Growing up in their community, was in many ways a good experience but not one that was perfect or without its problems.

Coffield et al's study of 'ordinary young people' has a lot to offer to our understanding of how large sections of the young working class live out their citizenship. It attempts, through the voices of the young, to construct a picture of the complexity of relationships that exist within local working class communities and the importance of community living, paid employment and consumption to the processes of growing up. Its main weakness is its failure to highlight some of the more exciting and creative aspects of young people's lives. It is in this context that ideas such as Willis 'symbolic creativity' have something to offer to the debates on young people's way of life.

### Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to undertake two central tasks. Firstly, I have outlined how historically Youth Studies has been focussed on 'youth as a social problem'. The result of this has given us a picture which over represents certain groups and activities thus suggesting that delinquency is a major component of young people's lives. While delinquency may have a role to play in the process of growing up, it is important that we recognize a focus on these issues alone creates an unrealistic picture

of what it means to be young. As I suggested little attention has been given to the everyday, conforming and ordinary activities of working class youth and how they live out, on a day to day basis, their citizenship.

The second task of this chapter has therefore been to redress this imbalance by tackling two issues. Firstly, part two of this chapter set about showing what sites and experiences were important to ordinary young people's citizenship. Although, as other writers have suggested (Hollands 1989, Pixely 1992, Roche 1992), paid employment is a central site of citizenship, the previous discussion has shown that other sites and experiences in areas such as community and consumption are also important for young people's citizenship. Opportunities for the young to create their own identities and make their moves into the adult world are also evident within these other sites.

A second aspect of this discussion has been to recognize that research findings of previous studies in areas such as community, consumption and work tend to focus on one specific issue at the expense of a more holistic approach. Our understanding of the complexities and inter-relationships within these different sites and experiences is unknown. Research has given us only a partial picture of what citizenship means for the young working class. It is these issues that the following study attempts to redress, aiming to integrate and illuminate all aspects of the everyday lives of young people in the working class community of Westhill and not just focus on one site at the expense of another.

### Chapter Three

'Doing research'; Ethnography and the study of youth.

This project is concerned with examining the meanings and experiences of citizenship of a particular group of young people. It attempts to identify the different social processes which affect both how they experience citizenship and how they perceive themselves as present and future citizens. The method of investigation was ethnographic and the research was conducted over an 18 month period in and around a local Youth Centre in a community which can be historically identified as working class. Through-out the research process a variety of methods, ranging from questionnaires, interviewing, group discussions and observations were used in a reflexive manner. This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the methods of analysis and interpretation which have been used showing how 'sense' has been made of the field work 'discoveries'.

Discussing the methods of analysis and interpretation within a methodology chapter has three major benefits. Firstly, it creates the opportunity for the perceived research community to investigate and evaluate the validity of the final product in more depth. I believe that this is of central importance to any social research. We should not be afraid to open ourselves to constructive criticism in all areas of our method. Not just in how we did the research but also how we 'made sense' of the information and data we collected. Secondly, discussing our methods of analysis shows how the research gained its focus or what Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) call 'what the research is really about'. The notion of focus is of central importance because as the research gains momentum it can and does undergo changes. This process takes place not only while the research is being conducted but also towards the final stages of analysis and writing up (Warren, 1990). We should therefore discuss these processes from start to finish. Thirdly, in terms of 'grounded theory' it is essential that we examine how the data guided the development of theory and how theory was tested against the data and to recognise that this process is not completed until the final draft is

finished.

In discussing the method of analysis and interpretation I have divided this chapter into two sections. In section one I discuss the problems of 'doing ethnography' raising the issue of the perspective and influence of the researcher on both the research process and the 'discoveries'. This section also examines what ethnography is, why it was chosen as a method and how my own approach developed. In the final part of this section I raise the issue of traditions in social science research and show how these can impose and influence the methods used in fieldwork. In section two of this chapter I concentrate on showing how the research was conducted identifying the reflective method used in both the development of the methodology and in constructing the theory or as Glaser and Strauss (1967) would argue, how development of 'grounded theory' took place. The discussion in this chapter aims to avoid a sanitized version of events while highlighting how the method was constructed in a rigorous manner.

### Section One

#### Influences in 'doing research'.

Over the previous five years I have dedicated a large part of my life to this project. While it is not a difficult task to describe what this study is about it is more complex to explain why it has developed in the way it has and why it has focussed on specific areas and issues at the expense of others. As we have seen in chapter one the meanings associated with the concept of citizenship and the different frameworks that have been used to discuss it are complex and open to debate (1). These meanings and debates are valuable in their own right, yet none can explain how my argument has been constructed or why I have focussed on the areas I have. To do this I feel it is necessary for me to discuss how my approach has evolved and what influences both personal and academic have affected the structure of the research and writing. As Woods (1986) argues, when discussing how to begin ethnographic work;

Since so much of the ethnographer is involved within the research, it is as well to subject the person, including one's motives, to scrutiny.  
Woods. 1986 p. 20

Understanding one's motives is a difficult process and one that only becomes possible in the final stages of the work. At the beginning of a project such as this, motives seem of little importance. It is only when completion is near and reflection is necessary to explain why the project has taken the shape it has, that it becomes clear how much the research is influenced by the personality and experience of the researcher.

These important influences were hidden to me initially, the work, and the research process itself unearthed them in the sense that Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Willis (1980) have discussed. I feel it is therefore important to identify them from the outset as they represent the 'making' of the design of this work and the conceptualisation behind it. This kind of approach has been reinforced by Feminist arguments concerning the importance of the idea that the 'personal is political' (2). These arguments suggest that leaving out the 'personal' from the process of traditional qualitative projects has seriously hindered and distorted the alleged 'discoveries' of such work, rendering the supposed new and surprising insights not at all surprising. This argument has been a major influence in my approach, that is that 'personal' is very much a part of the conceptual framework and intellectual resource for any research. I feel therefore it is important that my field work and ethnographic study is read with my position clear from the outset so that my theoretical as well as my methodological biases may be recognized (Woods, 1986, p.43).

#### The 'position' of the researcher

Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) suggest all research, be it in the traditions of positivism or naturalism, is affected by the researcher;

The first and most important step towards a resolution of the problems raised by positivism and naturalism is to recognize the reflexive character of social research; that is to recognize that we are part of the social world we study.

Hammersley and Atkinson, 1984 p.14

Historically, social research has been seen as having a responsibility to eliminate the 'bias' of the researcher. This idea, influenced by scientific discourses, suggests that the 'researched' and the 'researcher' are unconnected and that data can be collected objectively without being affected by the actions of the researcher. But in reality no research, be it qualitative or quantitative, can be value free. All data is influenced by the 'bias' of the researcher throughout the fieldwork process. This issue is just as important within the scientific community. Here it is claimed that through the use of experimentation, the research process exists in a kind of vacuum, disconnected from the social world, with its outcomes unaffected by the presence and actions of the researcher. But of course even this form of research is influenced by the actors involved. Decisions are made about how to undertake the research and evaluations and interpretations are involved claiming 'findings'. In terms of social research this issue is also of central importance. As Hammersley and Atkinson suggest, 'this is not a matter of methodological commitment, it is an existential fact' (p.15).

This raises an important issue for my work. In 'doing ethnographic research', it is the duty of the researcher to represent the meanings and values which social actors give to their own lives. The ethnographer writes about real people, living real lives. It is therefore important that the readers of the study are equipped to be able to engage reflexively with the work presented so that they can read the words of people they have never met, or interpret accounts of behaviour which they did not see. To be able to do this they must not only be aware of their own frameworks of understanding but they need to have an understanding of the 'narrator'. Understanding the ethnographer is as important, in understanding ethnography, as understanding

the participants. Only then can the reader judge for themselves how the 'picture' has unfolded, asking questions about what has been included, what has been omitted and why.

In much research we 'meet' the 'position' of the researcher through their theoretical perspective. For example, in Willis's 1977 study of how working class lads get working class jobs we are introduced to a clear picture of his subjects but we are not introduced to the position of Willis except through his 'theoretical position'. But 'positions' are many, of which a 'theoretical perspective' is only one. In my own study, understanding my personal position, and the assumptions I had about the everyday lives of young people was very much influenced by my own experience of youth and my work as a youth worker. It became clear as the work progressed that these experiences affected the way that I categorised both the data and, more importantly, the people I met at Westhill. An extract from my field notes highlights this point;

The excitement of motorbikes, again, just like the 'lads'. Paul and Stewart are just like Mort and Sam, taking bikes and enjoying the thrill of the chase.

November 26th 1991

The danger of this is that we can fall into the trap of categorising young people, unchallenged, producing accounts of what groups or individuals 'are like'. Having an awareness therefore of my autobiography was a useful way of reminding me of the characters, situations and attitudes which may have affected how I observed the 'way of life' in Westhill.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest then, rather than trying to eliminate the influence of the researcher, it is necessary to understand their 'position' and how it shaped the research, not only in its design but also in how theory was generated;

Reflexivity has implications for the 'practice' of social research too. Rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher, we should set about understanding them.

Hammersley and Atkinson 1984, p.17

### Youth as a personal experience

I suppose, at the age of 37, I have now come to the conclusion that I am what can be called an adult. My own experience of youth has become more distant as I have become older yet these years hold strong memories and experiences which helped to shape me as the person I am today. I was born in 1956, in a working class area of Sheffield. The greater part of my teens were undertaken in the late 1960s and early 70s which now, on reflection, were good years to be young.

My memories of youth are dominated by two specific issues. Firstly, I remember wanting to be grown up, an adult in my own right, making decisions and having control over the direction my life was to take. I believed I had left childhood behind and therefore I was ready for adulthood. To achieve this I thought I needed to gain my independence and be seen, by my family, peers and other adults, as acting as a responsible person in my own right. Being an independent adult seemed to require a movement through a complex set of transitions which had status both inside and outside of the local community. These transitions were identifiable by their status being either institutionalised or recognized informally. For example, moving into the world of work and leaving home. It was this that underpinned my reasoning for giving up on school, which eventually resulted in me being asked to leave.

Getting work, in the early 70s, was quite easy. Employment was buoyant and opportunities for school leavers were plenty. Within the first 12 months, I had approximately six jobs, being unsure about what I wanted to do. Leaving home was also quite straightforward even with an insecure income. Getting a flat was easy because of the financial

support available from the state, in the shape of Social Security Benefit. This provided me with a reasonable income both to pay my rent and to live on, while I was choosing my future career.

The second important aspect of living in a working class community was the distinct way of life associated with being young. This was a period of time when access to the adult world was restricted and the main forms of activity revolved around interaction with other young people of the same age in peer groups. Hanging about on the streets or in the local park and seemingly 'doing nothing' was a major part of being young (3). But this way of life was important in that it was a period of time when I started to develop a sense of self, of who I was and what my relationship with the world around me was. It was a period when I developed my own social, economic and political identity in a surrounding of mutual support. Simultaneously questions of individuality were of central importance to my progress towards becoming an autonomous independent adult. The desire to be someone different and not to be one of a crowd was part of the process of growing up. School had seemed to be about the mass education of young working class people. The future of becoming a part of the mass, without individuality, was something to be avoided. I wanted to be someone, to be different, to stand-out from everyone else.

Youth was therefore a way of life different from being an adult. Growing up was an exciting time in which transitions and the forming of my own identity in different forms of cultural expression were of central importance. But to describe it as 'a golden period of one's life' is to ignore the dangers, difficulties and fears that underpinned this way of life. Two specific issues highlight this point. Firstly, life on the streets or in the school setting was a dangerous and frightening time. Working class life in the 70s had its bullies and aggressors who were determined to make their mark on the world by the use of violence. Survival was an important aspect of being young and required the development of strategies which would make the world a

safer place. For example, it was important to avoid particular situations and places so as not to encounter the bullies, or if need be it was necessary to befriend the right people so that you were not the bullied. Being young therefore required a delicate balance of conformity and individualism which would not separate you from your peers making you a target for abuse.

Secondly, becoming independent and an autonomous adult was not an easy process. Getting a job and leaving home may have been straightforward but coping with living away from home and being in a work setting instead of school was an experience that took time to adjust to. The work environment was threatening and dangerous in that as a 'new boy' you were the target of others who had undergone initiation into the work place culture and way of life. Work was also the site where you encountered different power relationships in which, unlike school, if you were unwilling to accept the authority of elders you endangered your independence and income.

### A 'return' to youth

It was not until my early thirties that youth became a central issue to my life again. This stems, not from academic life but from working, in the early 80s as a community activist. After rejecting the Labour Party as a means to achieving a better and fairer society, feeling rhetoric and debate was of little value without action, I turned inwards believing my ideals had to have an active base. Simultaneously, the behaviour of the local youth became an important issue for residents of my area in that it was feared they were engaging in 'glue sniffing'. My introduction to youth work came with a bat and ball on the local field in the summer of 1986 and by the time I had completed my undergraduate degree I was running a voluntary Youth Club with my partner, two nights and two days a week, with around 60 local youths aged between eight and twenty one. In the time that followed, I grew close to many youngsters. Our house became a centre of activity and it was

not unusual to have it full of young people, laughing, joking and drinking my coffee.

In these years, which I look back on with great affection, I realised that I had been privileged to enter a world which few of my age have access to. Some of the events and stories of this period of our lives together would (and will) make interesting and entertaining reading in their own right. Other writers like Holman, Wiles and Lewis (1981) and Robins and Cohen (1978) wrote about similar experiences of community involvement and interaction. Unlike them I did not keep a dairy or attempt at the time to understand the processes the young people were going through or the meanings they put to these events. I was left with memories of great times but little else.

On reflection what I discovered through this experience, was that youth was still dominated, twenty years on, by similar concerns and issues. Being young and working class in the 1980s involved a specific way of life which seemed in many ways not far removed from my own experiences of youth. Being able to 'discover' themselves through experimentation and interaction seemed to be of central importance to the development of young people's own sense of self and identity. It also seemed the case that the transition into adulthood was still of major importance. Young people were clearly struggling to move into adulthood through trying to gain adult recognition for their achievements and formal acceptance as adults in their own right. Yet although similarities existed I also became aware that being young in the 1980's was clearly a different experience to my own. Changes had taken place in the wider context. Social, political and economic changes had brought about changes in the opportunities young people had for making the move into the adult world.

So far I have drawn out, from my own personal reflections of youth, what I see as important aspects of this period of time, but I am not alone in these conclusions, as other studies have suggested (4). These personal reflections of youth explain my own experiences

and the influences that underpinned my approach to the research. My 'position' therefore is clearly highlighted and, as the discussions that follow will show, how I set about 'doing research' was greatly influenced by my own perceptions of what it means to be young. In the methodological account that follows the idea of my 'position' is drawn out, making explicit the rationale behind the decisions I made. The account shows how at times I 'got lost' but also how the work gained focus and a theoretical understanding of the issues involved as it progressed.

### 'Doing Research'

Throughout this project whenever I have been asked, by friends or members of my family, 'what are you doing' ? I have responded by claiming I am 'doing research'. This is usually enough to close the topic of conversation and provide an adequate answer to their enquiry. But if the truth was known and I was interrogated in more depth, I would have had to admit that I was unsure what I meant by 'doing research'.

From its conception to its completion the research process has been a struggle. One can set off with clear aims and objectives of what the study is about, and you can declare aims and purposes at its end, showing what the study adds to our knowledge of the social world. But the long haul between these two landmarks is a different matter. In the methods text books 'doing research' may seem to be a straightforward process; set out hypotheses to be tested and develop a rigorous method that is suitable for the needs of your study and produce knowledge in the form of findings. Yet the reality is a different matter.

Setting off on the path of 'discovery' as a social researcher seemed uncomplicated; just follow the rules. But of course it is not this simple or straightforward. What rules should I follow ? As a novice to field work I undertook the customary reading of the research textbooks and soon realized that the methods available were almost

endless, ranging across the spectrum of quantitative and qualitative traditions. And as other researchers have suggested clear lines of distinction between these approaches are undefined, sometimes overlapping or complementing each other (Douglas 1976 and Burgess 1984a, Stacey 1969). 'Doing research' therefore required a choice of which method was best suited to the needs of the project.

As I have outlined elsewhere, the main focus has been the examination of social change and its impact on the everyday lives of young people. Its concern is with the daily routines and the ordinary lifestyles in both the public and private spheres of young people's lives, giving central focus to their meanings and understanding of citizenship. In a sense, this made the choice of method reasonably straightforward. What I was trying to 'discover' was a particular way of life, or in other words a form of 'cultural living'. I had no hypothesis or theory to test, only a desire to uncover the everyday meanings and experiences of citizenship for young people. These requirements therefore seemed best suited by the traditions of qualitative methodology and specifically ethnography. As Hammersley (1990) points out ethnography is best suited to social research that attempts to study people's behaviour in the everyday context and which does not have a hypothesis to test but aims to 'uncover' meanings and human action (p.1-2). This is a point also raised by Burgess (1984a);

It would appear that field research (5) involves observing and analysing real-life situations, studying actions and activities as they occur. The field researcher, therefore, relies upon learning first hand about a people, and a culture.

Burgess 1984a, p.1

This approach to research has a long and illustrious history especially towards understanding the 'local cultural activities of young people' (6) and therefore seemed the most appropriate approach for my project.

Ethnography seemed also to have other strengths that would be beneficial to the project. Firstly, I had no clearly defined theory of citizenship, only an awareness of

the various discourses associated with its meanings. These attempts to theorize citizenship focussed on adult (and mainly male) membership. No attempt had been made in the citizenship literature to create a theory of citizenship for young people (7). It was also the case that little research had previously been undertaken around these developments, that is theory and practice remained unattached. As writers such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) have argued, a major strength of ethnography is its capacity to develop theory;

The value of ethnography is perhaps most obvious in relation to the development of theory. Its capacity to depict the activities and perspectives of actors in ways that challenge the dangerously misleading preconceptions that social scientists often bring to research...

Hammersley and Atkinson 1984, p.23 (8)

A second aspect of ethnography that drew me towards it as a method was its flexibility for developing the research focus. At its conception the project was vague and its parameters were ill defined. All that I had was what Malinowski (1922 p.8-9) called 'foreshadowed problems', or preconceived ideas about the issues involved. I felt this was a major stumbling block to 'discovering' young people's understanding of citizenship in that my influence might be pro-active in creating their meanings. Ethnography seemed to offer me a method of tackling these issues with its focus on reflexivity and the role of the researcher. Firstly, it promised to be a useful means of developing the research process around the issues young people saw as important, allowing me the flexibility to change and develop the research as required. Secondly it promised to provide me with a framework in which my preconceptions could be brought out and discussed in relation to the 'findings', a point I shall return to later.

Of course this was only the beginning of my problems, having chosen an approach all I needed to do was 'learn the ropes', but what ropes to learn? Ethnography may have been a partial solution to the problems of a lack of theory and focus, but it also created other hurdles that had to be

overcome around 'doing research'. Firstly, I had to untangle what is meant by 'doing ethnographic research' and what were 'the ropes' associated with this method. As other writers have suggested, the answer to this question is not at all straightforward in that all ethnographies are different (9). Yet as Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) note, the fact that 'ethnographic research cannot be programmed is one of its greatest strengths' (p.16) although not having a clear plan of action, hypothesis or structure can also create a feeling of unease and uncertainty which can be intimidating to the novice researcher, a point I shall return to later.

So what is ethnography? As I reflect back over my field notes and reports on methodology it seems to me that a central premise of 'doing ethnography' is concerned with observing, asking questions and interpreting meanings. In many ways this may seem strange in that asking questions and interpreting responses is something we do every day. Yet a historical review of my methodology suggests that 'doing ethnography' is about learning how to ask questions that will illuminate the meanings of the research participants. But while this issue is something that continually seemed important in the context of my own work it was also a perpetual struggle to 'ask the right questions'. Whyte (1943) writing on his approach to ethnography raised this very issue;

As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to the questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask.

Whyte 1943, p.344

Benjamin (1939) suggests that to ask questions demands, 'confidence, humility, interest, love and anger and more than all this the willingness to take a 'risk' and experience hurt and surprise'. Writers such as Willis (1980), Ball (1984) and Burgess (1984a) have argued, that the capacity of the ethnographic project to 'surprise us' is its greatest strength. This conviction is greatly influenced by the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) who suggested that in the early stages of research it is necessary to receive

data in a raw, experimental and relatively untheorised manner;

...allowing substantive concepts and hypothesis to emerge first on their own.

Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p. 23

Of course the difficulty arises in that being 'surprised' while in the field makes it hard to think and theorise about the questions being asked and it also becomes even more difficult when the research is completed. To do this is the challenge of my methodological disclosure and should be considered when I discuss the processes involved. But before I outline how I practised my methodology there is one other important issue that had implications on how my research developed.

#### The influence of traditions

Social research in the social sciences, similarly to the natural sciences, has to continually engage and deal with its own traditions and history. Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) suggest that two main influences have underpinned the development of methods of research; 'positivism' and 'naturalism' (10). Although Hammersley and Atkinson recognize that these paradigms are not exclusively separate or clearly defined, they do suggest that their influences can be identified in the action of all forms of social research. I would not want to dispute this claim yet my experience of 'doing research' suggests that the balance between these two paradigms is not equally weighted. My experience of attempting to undertake social research suggests that positivism is central to 'mainstream' research and therefore has a greater influence on our understanding of the social world.

In reflecting back over this project I became aware of two specific areas where this influence was at its strongest. Firstly, the expectations of the mainstream academic community continually has a heavy influence on how research should be conducted and presented. For example, in their introduction to Inside the Whale, Bell and Encel argue that the conventions of scientific exposition;

...dictate that the results of research be presented in an impersonal style; a hypothesis is stated and the steps involved in testing are laid out in logical order.

Bell and Encel eds. 1978. p.2

This idea still dominates our understanding of how to do and present research. Burgess (1984a) for example, has noted that research council funds for researchers wishing to undertake qualitative work are increasingly limited and more than this, they are attached to requests for research designs which demand that grant applications should be able to specify in advance 'concepts, theories and methods of research together with practical application of their particular circumstances' (Burgess, 1984, p.390). ESRC studentship forms and departmental yearly reports continually request that students should provide information on the 'hypothesis being tested'. Agar (1986) has documented the problems of writing an ethnographic research proposal around the model of 'hypothesis testing' noting that;

you can't specify the questions you are going to ask when you move into the community; you don't know what the range of social types is and which ones are relevant to the topics you are interested in. None of this goes over well with the hypothesis-testing fanatics.

Agar 1986, p.70

The implications of this have been two fold. Firstly, there has been a continual struggle, in my own work, between the use of positivist and naturalist methods and secondly, on reflecting back, over the previous four years I am aware that I have spent some of my time having to justify my methods of research, not least to myself.

A second area where I believe the positivist tradition has been influential in this project, is in how I dealt with the experience of being a researcher. Being a novice in the area of social research, and undertaking fieldwork of this size for the first time, I can now reflect back and 'make sense' of some of the decisions that I made in the field. Since the resurgence of ethnography and the naturalist tradition, writers who undertake research in this area have raised the issue of the researcher's experience of being in

the field (11). These personalized accounts raise many different issues associated with 'doing research' but one theme that comes up time and time again is the problems posed by feelings of inadequacy researchers have throughout the research project. How should researcher's deal with this problem ? Bottomley for example, suggests that in attempting to develop his research focus he experienced a variety of feelings;

While I was going through these preliminary stages of sorting out a viable topic I felt inadequate, a bit flighty and scatterbrained even, because I kept changing my topic.

Bottomley 1979 p.218

Kelly (1988) also discusses this in terms of the feelings that are aroused in undertaking research into sexual violence and how it affected her methodology. Although my own experience could not be bracketed in the same mould as Kelly's, I want to suggest that 'doing research' for the first time brings to the forefront unexpected emotions and feelings that the researcher has to tackle. How he or she deals with these then have implications for the methods used.

In terms of my own work many feelings arose on entering the field, on 'asking questions', on observing and analysing, which I had to deal with. My most frequent concern, which arose, perhaps because of my inexperience, related to doing the research 'right' or following the rules to ensure 'methodological correctness'. Of course what I did not realise at the time, was that these feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy led to a desire to structure my method in scientific terms. Positivism therefore offered me a sense of structure and feelings of security that I was a 'true researcher'. My own way of understanding what research is continually pulled me towards the tradition of positivist methods. For example, the following is a quote from my own field notes;

What am I doing ? I feel so lost and uncertain about all of this. Why am I using questionnaires and things ? It seems as though I want to hide behind them and that I'm scared to talk to people without something in front of me.

June 25th 1991

Positivism therefore offered me a sense of security and control which is lacking in the methods associated with naturalism.

These two issues then suggest to me that 'doing research' in the ethnographic tradition is not simply constructing a methodology or learning the ropes, it also requires an awareness of how positivism 'invades' our own commonsense understanding and influences the research process. As Bottomley suggests;

To borrow an image from Koestler, the unexamined assumptions of positivist/empiricist orthodoxy "are diffused through all the strata of the social sciences like the invisible bubbles of air are diffused in the waters of a lake, and we are the fish who breathe them in all the time through the gills of intuition".

Bottomley 1979, p.216

Of course the use of methods that are identifiable with the traditions of positivism is not alien to qualitative methodology and there is no reason why they cannot be used either alongside or integrated into the field work. For example, Walker (1985) suggests that both methods can be used in field work dependent on the needs of the study. They are not exclusive thus highlighting the fact that the different techniques make them 'uniquely appropriate in certain circumstances' (p20). Burgess (1984b) calls this 'multiple strategies in field research', suggesting that it is not uncommon for researchers to use a variety of techniques in investigating the social world. Strict adherence to one form of data collection can be restrictive, what is sometimes required is a more flexible approach that tackles a particular theoretical or empirical problem (p.143) (12).

What I want to suggest is that the continual 'pull' of positivism within my work, while creating problems, also

provided benefits that helped me in tackling major issues of 'doing research' and uncovering young people's meanings. This was evident in four particular areas. Firstly, using questionnaires and structured interviews generated interest and discussion within the research setting about what I was doing and why. This helped me to tackle issues such as suspicion and confidentiality. Secondly, it was useful as a method of constructing the role of the researcher. Thirdly, it was effective in generating a focus on young people's concept of citizenship, and fourthly, it produced data that could be used reflexively. I was thus able to utilise it in the processes of 'discovery' and 'surprise'.

## Section Two

### Methodological disclosure

In the account that follows I intend to show how issues raised in the previous discussion effected the day to day processes of field work while also highlighting the reflexivity processes that I used to focus my research and make sense of my findings. Approaching the question of methodology in this manner means that the writing up process reflects the real experiences of 'doing research' rather than a sanitized, chronologically ordered outline of method.

### Questions of Access

Most accounts of fieldwork start their presentation with the question of gaining access into the field. For example, Burgess (1984b) in his book In the Field, opens his discussion on how to do research with a chapter on 'Starting Research and Gaining Access,' linking the concept of access to the question of starting fieldwork. My approach differs, in that although questions of access are predominantly related to when and how the research started, I want to discuss the notion of access as an ongoing problem that exists at all stages of the project. This is a continuous problem for the researcher, at a variety of different levels (13).

Of course the question of access is a major issue in the initial introduction stage of the research. Gaining access to the field of study has to be negotiated before any fieldwork can be undertaken. In most text books this is dealt with as unproblematic yet if the research focus and questions to be asked are undefined, this stage is of central importance in developing the structure of the research project.

In reading back over my annual progress reports and field notes, it is interesting to see how this process affected the overall focus of the research. Comparing initial aims with final outcomes is interesting, in that it can illuminate some of my 'good intentions', unseen problems and solutions taken and how I developed a method that while being messy was systematic in its construction.

My rationale for choosing to undertake the field work within and around a Youth Centre, evolved because I felt that in this setting I could develop a research role that was non-threatening while also giving me access to a cross section of young people from different ages, genders and if possible ethnic backgrounds. As I reflect over my research findings and chapters of field work I feel reasonably satisfied that these objectives were achieved, although as the following discussion shows, as a result of questions of access, changes had to be made and alternative strategies developed to ensure involvement of specific groups. It is also the case that selecting to undertake research in a Youth Centre created its own problems in terms of who the participants were and my role as researcher.

#### Access to the macro

Writers such as Taylor and Brogden (1984) have suggested that gaining access to settings is controlled by 'gatekeepers' who have the power to grant or withhold access to situations and people. Of course in reality it is unusual for the researcher to have to negotiate with single gatekeepers. In most research settings researchers have to negotiate with multiple gatekeepers at different levels and

for access to different groups or individuals (14). But not only is this the case, my own experience also suggests that these negotiations can also greatly influence the research focus.

My first point of contact for gaining access was at the managerial level of the Youth Service. This, in many ways, was unproblematic in that the Head of the Service was pleased to encourage research that may be of value to workers, young people or the service. It was also free of cost, which in a time of economic 'belt tightening' was greatly received. Once agreement was made with the Head of Service I then had to decide in which geographical area I wanted my research to be conducted.

Having worked in the Youth Service for the past four years and being a resident of Sheffield most of my life, I was aware of the histories and structure of the different areas of Sheffield. In many ways I could have chosen numerous areas which would have fulfilled my simple criteria of being a working class area which was encountering social change. Making this choice was finally decided by other factors related to how I could maintain a balance between researcher and Youth Worker. Over my years of working in the Service (15) I had become well known by many of the workers and regular users of Youth Centre's. This I saw as a possible problem, as I thought I could be identified as a Youth Worker first rather than researcher. This may have lead to pressure for me to conform to a role of Youth Worker. With this in mind I decided to conduct the research in an area of the city where I was relatively unknown. Of course the notion of research identity is not quite as simplistic as this, as I soon discovered there is a continual need to switch between different roles as the research progresses, a point I shall return to.

Having decided on an area, I then needed to select a particular Centre and get managerial approval from the Area Officer responsible. This selection process was undertaken through discussing my aims and objectives with the Officer concerned. Yet what I did not realise at the time was that

he had an hidden agenda that I was unaware of which was eventually to affect my access to certain groups. For example, the following quote is taken from my field notes;

Meeting with Adam today over where to do my research. He suggested Westhill because it is not one of the big centres like Easthill Club and it would benefit from having some research done on it. He also thinks I could be a useful extra member of staff. It seems pretty good to me, he said that there is a mixed usage, a strong girls group, day time unemployed group and black/Asian users. It's also near Meadowhall [new leisure development in Sheffield] and the young people at Westhill have been involved in a campaign against some of the changes taking place which is affecting their community.

March 23rd 1991

In my search for a suitable venue I did not see the underlying objectives of the Area Officer. This did not come clear to me until later in discussions with the staff at the Centre. Again, I return to my field notes;

They [the staff] really dislike Adam, they think he does nothing for them in that whenever they ask for support or resources he has nothing to offer...

June 19th 1991

The point here then, is that Adam seemed to see advantages in me going to Westhill as I could be a resource either in terms of 'an extra pair of hands' or helping the Youth Workers evaluate their work. This, as I clearly stated was not my objective yet it resulted in limiting my access to specific groups. The Area Officer had given me a selective picture of the Centre and of the groups using the facilities. The reality was that although young women and black/asian groups did use the Centre, their participation was limited and on a peripheral basis. This resulted in having to develop strategies which ensured the participation of young women in my research while also having to accept that I would not be able to involve black and Asian youth. The framework therefore of who was to participate in my research was greatly influenced by the Area Officer.

A second issue arose when attempting to gain entry into the Centre itself and access to young people. Getting

agreement from the Leader-in-Charge was not a problem. He was both interested and sympathetic to my aims, but getting his support did not guarantee access either to the staff or the young people. For example, in the following quote from my field notes I raise the issue of the relationship between staff, young people and the Leader-in-Charge;

It's interesting that Kevin seems to be disliked or rather distrusted by both the staff and some of the young people of the Centre. Staff and kids have made that clear to me more than once, I don't know why they feel they have to confide in me ? It becomes a problem when I'm talking to kids because they shut up when he is around.

November 11th 1991

As I suggest then in this quote getting agreement from the Leader-in-Charge did not necessarily help. In fact as I indicate, being seen too much on 'his side' was a distinct disadvantage as young people would withdraw if he became too involved. One good example of this arose in a group interview session. The session had been in progress for nearly an hour and young people had been very vocal in their participation yet when Kevin entered, the discussions became subdued, leading eventually to the session coming to an end. This, as I indicate in my notes, did become a continuous problem;

the question is how do I tell Kevin to stay away when I am interviewing without offending him or causing a scene ? He can be a pain in the arse !

April 20th 1992

To overcome this problem I attempted to reduce my contact with Kevin and conduct interviews either when he was not about or otherwise engaged. It was difficult to regulate and control but Kevin's influence became less as the research progressed. One area where I could undertake this was around the coffee bar in that I could wait until Kevin was absent to engage young people about specific issues.

#### Access to the micro

Once I had gained access to the field of study, the central issue was how to get young people involved. Access to participants was essential and an issue that remained

throughout the project. From its conception to completion it was necessary to continually monitor who the respondents were to ensure the variety of groups and individuals were incorporated. These issues became of central importance as I became sensitized to the demographic structure of the centre.

It is worth discussing at this point, the issue of what kind of role I created for myself in the centre. How I was perceived by the staff and young people greatly affected the type of access I achieved and who the participants were. Much has been written about 'role creation' (16) and its importance to access and the research findings. For example, Gold (1958) in his article 'Roles in sociological observation', suggests that in undertaking research in the ethnographic tradition a choice of role is required, what he called a master status. Four possible options are open to the researcher ranging from covert or overt observation, to active participation of the researcher.

In terms of my own work it is reasonable to say that I had no intention of undertaking covert research or non participant observation. To encourage young people to take part I believed they needed to be fully aware of my motives and objectives from the beginning. Trust seemed of central importance if I was to gain both verbal and physical access to their social space and meanings. To achieve this I entered the field with a generalized notion of what my role would be and how I would present myself. This I formulated as 'a Youth Worker doing research'. What I did not realise at the time is that the role of the researcher does not remain static. As Coffield and Borrill (1983) have suggested, depending on the situation it can move on a continuum, with the two extremes being, total researcher to total youth worker. This flexibility is of central importance in terms of building up relationships, trust, encouraging participation and getting access to young people's meanings.

Identifying myself as a researcher to staff and young people of the centre was interesting in that having to

clarify its meaning only seemed to confuse or create suspicion. Such a problem is not uncommon. Jenkins (1984) suggests, in his review of his own methodology, that he had similar problems of undertaking research in a Youth Centre. 'Doing participant observation' does not correlate with people's perception of research. The expectation is that you will turn up with clip board, questionnaires and interview schedules and conduct data gathering. To overcome some of these problems I developed two specific strategies. Firstly, in conversation, when I was asked 'what I was doing' I initially responded by claiming, 'I was doing a PhD at Sheffield University which involved writing a thesis resulting from doing research'. This had little impact from the questioner except blank looks and comments such as 'oh.' Such an approach offered little help in getting people involved, in fact I felt it was intimidating, reinforcing the gap between researcher and researched. I eventually 'stumbled' upon an alternative that eventually generated a great deal of interest, as the following quote in my field notes suggests;

I was really surprised at the reaction I got today from James and Andrew. I have never been happy with my introduction so today I just said, I'm writing a book about life in Westhill and all of a sudden everyone wanted to be in it !

May 22nd 1991

Such a statement seemed to offer young people something they could relate to, giving them an opportunity to be famous. Of course this approach also had its problems in that young people's perception of 'writing a book' did not match the type of 'book' I shall be writing. I therefore took time to explain to them in more detail the processes involved. It also generated a useful discussion around questions of confidentiality and why it was important. Initially young people wanted their own names to be used (how can you be famous if no-one knows who you are ?). But after lengthy discussions they became aware of some of the important issues relating to using pseudo-names.

A second strategy I used to encourage participation was

the use of traditional methods of research which they could relate to. This included the development of questionnaires, the use of technology such as tape recordings and organising small and large group discussion sessions. Although these methods had their problems (17) they were useful for getting young people to see me as 'a researcher' and not just a Youth Worker. In many ways I acknowledge that both these strategies involved a certain amount of deception, for example, questionnaires were a device to generate further discussion rather than a rigid framework of quantifiable data. Yet, as Homan (1991) suggests, techniques of relaxing subjects and putting them into a cooperative mood are defensible on ethical as well as utilitarian grounds (p.126). These techniques I developed were therefore valuable in getting people involved, building trust and putting people at ease. It resulted in many of the regular members identifying with me as 'a researcher' who was writing about their lives. One example of the positive outcomes of this approach was an invitation from senior members to go on their training week-end and 'do some research on them'. Clearly such an opportunity arose because they had a notion of what research was and they were willing participants to it. For example, the following quote is taken from the tape recorded group interview that was undertaken on this week-end;

AF just say something so that I can test that the tapes working.

Bob my name is Robert Jones, spelt R-o-b-e-r-t J-o-n-e-s, just so that you spell it right in your book that you are writing about me.  
[laughter from rest of the group]

The second aspect of my role in the centre was that of Youth Worker. This also had positive and negative aspects which both helped and hindered my attempts to gain access. This role helped me build up a good working relationship with the centre Staff which then encouraged them to help me gain access to groups and individuals who were either suspicious of me or uncertain about what I was doing. Centre staff, similar to the young people were unclear about what I

was doing but many of their fears and concerns were broken down by the fact they could identify me as a Youth Worker who had a genuine concern for young people. For example, over the months of going to the day sessions I had been attempting to get John involved in my research. To do this I had identified his main activity in the Centre was playing snooker. I therefore attempted to build a relationship with John by offering to give him a game, this then become a regular activity. Despite many hours and games of snooker I never managed to get John involved, he continually refused to participate. One of the unforeseen benefits was how other workers perceived what I was doing, this is what Margaret had to say to me;

Margaret You know he's been coming in here for months, and all he wants to do is play snooker. I don't think he's ever said more than two words to anyone in that time. It's really good that you've managed to get him to open up.

I also undertook a helping role which involved getting equipment out and tidying up, organising game sessions for the juniors and discussion sessions for the seniors. All which made their jobs a little easier.

One of the benefits of getting the support from Centre staff became evident as the research progressed. After the summer break I was aware that my study had been dominated by the involvement of young men. Young women had participated but only in a peripheral sense. Part of the problem arose because the Centre was not regularly used by young women although a group did attend infrequently. In my time there I had been unable to make any contact with them, mainly because of my own feelings of uncertainty about approaching young women as a male researcher. After discussing this with two of the female staff, they agreed to 'have a word' and 'sound them out' to see if they would be willing to talk to me about their lives in Westhill. The result was that the female members of staff acted as mediators on my behalf. Once this had been done and the Staff had reassured them that I was 'OK' they approached me and started questioning my motives. After a while of general discussion, they said

that they would be willing to come, over a period of four weeks, and undertake discussion sessions with me about 'anything I wanted to know'. Without the support from the staff the research would not have been able to give as much focus to issues of gender as I would have liked.

Having a role of Youth Worker was also beneficial in other ways. For example, similar to Jenkins (1984), it made me feel more at ease, especially when I was uncertain about what I was doing. At these times I could fall back into a Youth Worker role and give myself time to reorganise and evaluate what I was doing. 'Doing research' of this nature can create times when 'nothing was happening' and I would be sat around waiting either for someone to come into the centre or for a situation to arise that seemed interesting. Taking on Youth Work responsibilities helped me at these particular times, feel active and useful. It was also useful in that the perception young people have of a Youth Worker is someone who is sympathetic, who is on their side and someone they can confide in. Being identified in these terms was an advantage in that young people seemed to feel at ease with me, showing a willingness to open up and discuss a wide range of issues about their private and public lives.

Of course being perceived as a Youth Worker also had its problems. Firstly, there was the issue, of what the literature calls 'going native' and becoming too involved in the lives of the young people, losing sight of the research focus (Coffield and Borrill 1983). In many ways this became evident through my continual struggles to maintain a balance between 'being a youth worker and a researcher'. The ambiguity of the roles and the different objectives became inter-meshed. For example, a quote from my field notes;

I've spent the best part of today's session talking to Hazel about how she gets into University. Part of the issue is her confidence (Don't I know how she feels !) we talked about all sorts, ranging from how and when to apply, what University is like and how she felt about leaving home. All good Youth Work but I sometimes feel as though that's all I'm doing, what about the research ?!

January 1992

Drifting into the Youth Work role tended to happen either when I was feeling unsure about what I was doing or, as the above quote shows, when young people approached me as a Youth Worker. Keeping a balance between the two roles and being able to switch from one to the other was difficult and was a major influence in the construction of a structured research programme of quantifiable research methods which seemed a good solution to how I overcome these problems.

A second issue related to how being perceived as a Youth Worker alienated certain groups. Some young people's perceptions of youth workers were more negative, seeing them as either 'liberal push-overs' or someone who serviced their needs. The dangers of portraying myself as a Youth Worker, was that I became identified as 'one of them,' a member of staff in the Centre and not someone you would be willing to discuss your way of life with. This created a major problem in that certain sections of the youth in Westhill were not accessible and I was limiting who took part by the role I was constructing.

A good example of this was in the case of Andrew, Mark, Paul and their friends. Their usage of the Centre was limited, having a poor relationship with the workers and only using the Centre as it suited them. This group were identified by the workers as 'a problem' not only for the Centre but also to the rest of the local community. They were seen as 'trouble makers' who were continually in conflict with either other members of the community or the police. I identified them as a group that I would like to talk too, at an early stage in the research yet getting near them or engaging them in more than general conversation was difficult. As the following quote suggests part of the difficulty was my own fear of how I should tackle them;

I'm sure the 'rebels' were smoking dope in the hall today, I could smell it. I must confess I just didn't know what to do. If I was working here I would step in and say something but its not really my place and I'm sure other workers must have smelled it? I think they would be an interesting group to get involved in the research

but how ? I just can't go up to them and say, 'Hi how would you like to tell me about yourself ?' I suppose I fear rejection but also they scare the shit out of me.

Sept. 10th 1991

The 'rebels' were how I categorized these young people as this was how they made me feel. Eventually, I did manage to get them involved, discovering that not only did they have an interesting perception of life in Westhill but also that they were a 'just a bunch of lads' who played at being tough as a form of defence. The method I employed to gain access was similar to that of used by Whyte in his Street Corner Society (1943). The classic example is of Doc, who Whyte used as a method of gaining access to the unaccessible world of the Street Corner Society. Doc introduced him to others and gave him credibility when people were suspicious about his motives (14). In terms of my own research a similar situation arose in that Peter, who was involved with both the young volunteers and the 'rebels' became a link, by introducing me to other members of the 'rebels'. I had, over a space of three months, built a good relationship with Peter. We had been on the senior member week-end together and had grown to like each other. I had talked to him quite intensely about his life- style and his opinions of life in Westhill. One evening I engaged him in discussing his friends, explaining how I would like to meet them and talk about some of the things we had discussed. He suggested that he could organise this but it would have to be away from the Centre. The following week he returned and suggested that I pick him up the following Wednesday and 'the lads' would be at Mark's house. From this introduction I managed to bring their perspectives into the project.

#### Asking questions in the field

Before entering the field, one of the central issues the researcher has to tackle is, what type of method they are going to use as a way of generating meanings and information from the research community. As Douglas (1976) suggests, in terms of qualitative methods, researchers

should begin with as little control of their methods as possible and with as much natural interaction as they can. Yet such an approach fails to recognize the anxieties of the researcher and the continual pressures to produce a structured methodological procedure, either for internal reviews or external funding bodies. My own approach initially developed as a compromise to these two issues by setting down a clear set of procedures which I intended to use that also recognized the need to be flexible and to respond to complexity of situations. The result of this approach was the creation of a methodology that consisted of a multiple set of strategies using quantitative and qualitative forms of information gathering.

As Burgess (1982, 1984b) suggests, such an approach recognizes that single strategies are problematic, using narrow methods of data collection. These may be relevant for discovering answers to specific questions or descriptive accounts but single strategies have a limited use in generating theory or 'discovery'. They may also tend to be inflexible, unable to respond to the events and situations a researcher may find themselves. Doing research therefore requires a method that is appropriate for 'discovery' and flexible to a possibly changing situation. As Burgess suggests;

Accordingly researchers need to take the situation into account and to approach substantive and theoretical problems with a range of methods that are appropriate for their problems.

Burgess 1984b, p.143

Strict and rigid adherence to one particular method therefore may be restrictive, limiting the scope of the research and the extent of 'discovery'. As Schatzman and Strauss argue the researchers role should be that of a 'methodological pragmatist' who;

...sees any method of inquiry as a system of strategies and operations designed-at any time-for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him.

Schatzman and Strauss 1955, p.7

Burgess also raises the issue of validity in single strategy

approaches, arguing that they are open to criticism for being subjective, having no mechanism of reflection or testing. Questions of validity are a continual source of discourse within field research and remain a central issue to all methodology, be it quantitative or qualitative. How to achieve this is viewed differently dependent on the researcher's own perspective and methodological interests. But the issue here is that a methodology which is restricted to a particular approach has to acknowledge its specific weaknesses and find a method that can either reduce or overcome them. Within single strategies this is problematic whereas the use of multiple strategies can cut across the mythological divide of quantitative and qualitative distinctions, being productive in aiding validity.

The method of 'multiple strategies' has received much attention in the literature under the heading of 'triangulation', although, as Burgess has suggested such a term has been defined differently by different writers (p. 144-6). Triangulation is generally identified as combining methods of investigation to overcome inflexibility and issues of validity, yet it can also be defined in a wider sense. Douglas (1976) for example, refers to 'mixed strategies' in which different methods of investigation are used in relation to a particular problem. He suggests this consists of three principles. Firstly, researchers need to keep their options open at the start of a project; secondly, flexibility should be central; and thirdly, uncontrolled methods should be used to determine how controlled methods should be used (18). Burgess (1984b) has concerns over this way of defining multiple strategies as it indicates three points of view only, while Douglas's terms offer interesting definitions they do little more than suggest a flexibility of method. This, according to Burgess is a narrow perspective on how problems in fieldwork can be overcome. Alternatively he wants to propose that any approach should include not only a flexibility of method but also of theories, data and investigators. These should be used not along side each other but in an integrated fashion. This is

what Burgess means by 'multiple strategies'.

In terms of my research project the concept of 'multiple strategies' was of central importance. Allowing me an opportunity to develop the framework for asking questions dependent on the situation rather than having to follow rigid procedures of a single approach. This flexibility was invaluable because it allowed young people an opportunity to construct their own theories of the world in a framework that provided me the opportunity to be reflective.

The main methods utilised in my research project were; observation, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, semi-structured group discussions and unstructured informal discussions. Table one outlines how these different approaches were used, what collection methods they had, what weaknesses each approach had and how, in terms of strengths, each added to the research process. The choice of these methods evolved as the research progressed, dependent on the situation and circumstances. For example, the decision to use group interviews evolved from a growing awareness that getting some young people involved and willing to articulate their views needed a format in which discussion and debate could be conducted. In the semi-structured questionnaire sessions young people had been responsive to the questions but gave little extra information.

Table two introduces, through a time scale plan, how these different methods interacted and informed the different stages of the research. As can be seen, processes such as observation and informal discussions were on going, being used as a continual source of information gathering, relationship building and checking out different ideas. The more structured method of collecting data through questionnaires were used in the early stage, partly as an aid to collecting some necessary empirical data but also to highlight themes for further investigation. The use of group discussion evolved, as mentioned above, partly as a result of the problems of getting young people more actively involved but also as a mechanism for discussing some of the earlier issues that had been evident from the sessions prior

to the summer break. Evaluation and analysis was an on going process. The summer break was an opportunity to spend nearly two full months on evaluation and assessment of the first stages of the research, continually examining what I was doing and how I was doing it.

### Gender and interviewing

One final issue that I feel needs to be discussed is the issue of gender and asking questions. In the previous sections I outlined how problems of access greatly affected the 'good intentions' of involving young women in the research process (19). Having set myself the aim of including them, I soon discovered that as the research evolved their involvement had been limited. I therefore decided to focus my attention specifically on redressing this imbalance.

As a male interviewer I was concerned what effect my gender would have on the group discussions with young women and how much access they would be willing to give me to their own worlds and meanings. But what I discovered, much to my surprise, was that not only were they willing to discuss public issues concerning life in Westhill but also more private aspects of their day to day lives. This evolved almost accidentally as a result of my interviewing technique. Having discovered in the larger group sessions that silence was as productive as intervention (20), I approached the young women's sessions with the intention of letting them take the discussions where they wanted to and that I would try to keep a low profile and intervene as little as possible.

Firstly, this had a major impact not only on the discussion agenda's I had constructed but also on the structure of the writing up process. I became aware, as these sessions unfolded, that the agendas and frameworks used were very much male biased or what Griffin (1985a) calls 'the male is norm' reasoning of traditional research approaches. In many ways this was inevitable, given that the structure of the project had evolved from interaction

between myself and young men. Yet it was not until I attempted to implant these structures onto the group interview sessions of young women that I discovered they were not adequate for analysing young women's meanings and experiences of citizenship.

Secondly, once I had recognized this and encouraged the young women to construct their own agendas they took control of the group sessions and forged their own agendas around issues that they saw as important. This then saw discussions evolving around more privatized issues of sexuality, family relations and public experiences of control and conflict (see chapter Seven). As these discussions progressed I took less and less involvement in the sessions, allowing the young women to discuss life in Westhill using their terms and frameworks of reference rather than mine. This did create problems in the writing up process as they had different issues or ideas from the young men therefore requiring a reorganisation of my writing up plan. In reviewing this experience I now believe that this development was of central importance. It not only highlighted young women's different views on many of the issues young men had around life in Westhill, it also brought to the forefront the different experiences and problems young women had concerning the meanings of citizenship.

#### Making sense of the fieldwork

In this final section I want to discuss the issue of analysis, interpretation and the writing up process. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1984) have suggested, these issues are generally given little attention in discussions on methodology and yet they are of central importance in terms of assessing the claims research findings make. I have already shown how the issues of analysis and interpretation are ongoing and essential for developing the research focus and the construction of theory. What I want to suggest, in this section is that these processes not only continue throughout the final stages of the project but become

central in the production of the final product.

Having completed the fieldwork, and ready to undertake the final stages of analysis and writing up, I was confronted by a mass of information in a variety of forms. Pages of field notes, individual and group tape recordings, some which had been transcribed and others that had not, and questionnaire details all littered my working space at home. The question then was how to 'make sense' of my findings. Of course, this process was not about starting 'from scratch' in that much had been 'discovered' in the earlier stages of the research through the method of evaluation and reflection, a point I shall return to.

Many writers in this area have introduced a variety of techniques that the researchers can consider (Burgess 1984 and Walker 1985, Hammersley and Atkinson 1984, and Jones, 1985). Such text book discussions, while being a valuable source of reference, are problematic in that they tend to be methods developed by authors to tackle specific individual projects. In other words turning theory into practice is complex because each research project has its own focus and needs which makes transference to another project difficult. It is also the case that selecting one specific method over another does not recognize the distinctiveness of the research data that is collected by different researchers or the different external requirements on specific projects. For example, is the final product to be a research report or a PhD. thesis ? Whatever the answer is to be, the methods of analysis are bound to differ (Walker 1985). What I want to suggest therefore is that in many ways the process of analysis is very much a personal activity which is determined by a variety of internal and external pressures. It is in this sense that I developed my method of analysis, constructing an approach that was suitable to my specific research project yet still holding as central the importance of being 'critical, rigorous and accurate' or, as C. Wright Mills (1959) would propose, the need to be systematic in developing the 'sociological imagination'.

As already mentioned, certain areas of focus had

developed throughout the research as a process of negotiation between my own understanding and experiences, academic debates and young people's perspective. These were, community, leisure, work, politics, and the issue of gender. In terms of my project and especially regarding the requirements of writing up, these concepts seemed to useful as a possible chapter structure for discussing young people's meanings of citizenship. Hammersley and Atkinson identify this as thematic or topical organisation (p.223). This they suggest is not an uncommon approach, having both a long history in the social sciences and a general acceptance by the academic community as a variable means of organising and writing up ethnography;

It [a thematic approach] can be an excellent way of encapsulating a great deal of information, drawn from a range of settings, in terms that may be broadly comparable with other published accounts.

Hammersley and Atkinson, 1984, p.224

But constructing my approach in this manner did also create its own set of distinctive problems. Firstly, there was a danger that setting up and categorizing a way of life which produced a picture of young people's life styles as neatly ordered and structured. Secondly, such a method could, if undeveloped, fail to highlight the inter-relationships between different areas of focus. For example, to discuss the notion of leisure without recognizing it has both a relationship to the concepts of work and community fails to represent the complexity of young people's experiences. These two issues then were important struggles that I had to contend with, not only in the processes of analysis but also within the writing up aspect of the research. The success of this can only be judged by the reading and evaluation of the final draft.

Once I had made the decision to focus my analysis under these headings I then had to set about 'making sense' of what young people had to say about these concepts. My first task therefore was to transcribe and examine all the data I had and separate them out under the different headings. This

carried with it some important problems. Firstly, in practical terms transcribing is time and energy consuming. Secondly, in methodological terms, it can also be subjective. When a researcher is transcribing and listening for key words and concepts a selection process can be allowed to develop in which important features of the talk are missed, and an undue priority is given to the researchers pre-judgements about what is important and worth full transcription. To avoid this happening I transcribed everything word for word, leaving the final analysis until it was completed. Once the transcribing was finished I separated certain discussions from the interviews and field notes under the different headings. However as mentioned earlier, putting discussions and notes under different headings was difficult because of the inter-relationship between the different headings.

Although this approach created problems, it also helped the analysis to develop. In terms of transcribing, one of the main advantages of 'doing it yourself' is that you become immersed in the data. Having to listen to it over and over again helps you to become an 'expert' in what has been said. From this emerges sub-themes, questions and contradictions that need to be tackled in the writing up process. A similar advantage is gained from attempting to categorize discussions under different headings. Although this process was a struggle, it was productive in that it started to highlight the complexities of the issues involved and the inter-relationship between different themes (and subsequently different chapters).

Having identified different sub-themes, questions and contradictions I then needed to construct a chapter structure which would accommodate the ideas that had been generated from the fieldwork. This required me to ask a series of questions of the data, some which had been asked directly while others were more concerned with searching out why young people thought what they did.

## Conclusion

I have not tried to present a sanitized version of methodology in this chapter, rather I have tried to reveal how I went about 'doing research'. I have argued that research is not a simplistic process which can be constructed using text-books alone, and that fieldwork and its construction is an on-going process that is affected by both internal and external influences. In writing up my methodology, therefore, I have attempted to bring these issues to the fore so that they are made explicit from the beginning. I have tried to make as clear as possible how the research was constructed from start to finish.

## Postscript

As I sit and re-write the final draft, it is worth recognising that this process of inter-action between the field work and theoretical discourses identified in chapters one and two continues to the end. Once the project has found its focus, the writing process and the development of theory continues until the last draft is made. Ideas are being tested, even at this late stage although the final production is at last being produced.

Table One; Multiple Strategies in Methodology.

Method used	data produced	collection method	strengths	weaknesses
questionnaire / semi-structured interview *	hard and soft	factual/ numbers correlation. tape recording.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to compare.</li> <li>• creates hard 'facts'.</li> <li>• useful for setting context of research.</li> <li>• able to identify similarities and differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of depth.</li> <li>• descriptive not analytical or evaluative.</li> <li>• limited data.</li> <li>• not a sample. Small numbers may be unrepresentative.</li> </ul>
Group discussions semi-structured interview	soft	tape recording. field notes. discussion notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexible formate in which young people able to control agenda.</li> <li>• Young people able to raise own issues.</li> <li>• method raises competing views of events.</li> <li>• provides social context of events.</li> <li>• stimulating forum generates ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only produces 'public world of young.</li> <li>• difficult to compare.</li> <li>• less detailed personal or depth insight.</li> <li>• dominant and articulate influence.</li> <li>• can constrain 'shy' people.</li> <li>• people 'tidy' presentation of self.</li> </ul>
Informal discussions and observations	soft	field notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good for relationship building.</li> <li>• access to data researcher did not witness.</li> <li>• rich/depth data.</li> <li>• observations and participants accounts.</li> <li>• able to 'check' and test thories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of focus difficult to compare and analysis.</li> <li>• dependent on access to situations and sites.</li> <li>• problems of recording and keeping notes.</li> <li>• problems of 'going native'</li> </ul>

\* The terms semi-structured/ unstructured/informal interviews are ambiguous concepts in that all interviews are structured. The differences here relate to the extent of structure imposed on discussions. For a further discussion see Jones (1985).

Table Two; Time Plan of Reseach

1991										1992						
March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov.	Dec.	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to staff. Gaining their trust</li> <li>• Relationship building with young people.</li> <li>• Identifying demographic structure of Centre.</li> <li>• observation and general introductions.</li> </ul>					club on holiday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued usage of observation and informal discussions.</li> <li>• building relationships</li> <li>• responding to demographic problems.</li> </ul>										
					Questionnaire introduced and completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• group interviews introduced (July 1991). Continued through-out Research process</li> <li>• introduction of 'girls group'.</li> <li>• Introduction of group work with 'rebels'</li> </ul>										
					Questionnaire analysis. Feed back into group interviews and informal discussions. Checking out findings.	Analysis of group interviews. Process of reflective analysis with feedback into observations, informal discussions and group discussions. Period of checking out ideas, and developing theory. **										

\*\* the period of analysis progressed after this date. The objective of identifying analysis here is to show the interrelationship between the different methods.

PART TWO

LIFE IN WESTHILL

## Chapter Four

Living on the edge; The role of community life

As a working class community Westhill has a long history reaching back into the 17th century, existing as a village separate from Sheffield. With the coming of the industrial revolution and the massive expansion of urban populations it was integrated into the city of Sheffield through the setting of city boundaries. Although it was legally defined as being a part of Sheffield it kept its sense of independence, still seeing itself as an autonomous village and community with its own specific way of life. As urban developments and industrialism expanded, Westhill also changed, being affected by the massive growth of the steel industries and the development of services provided by the Local Council. Initially this saw new steel industries being sited within the community boundaries bringing with them jobs and new housing. At the same time Sheffield Council was also embarking on a public house building programme creating new Council estates. These developments therefore saw a increase of population in which people were drawn towards Westhill because of the availability of housing and work (Wilson, 1982).

After the Second World War this process expanded. Steel was still in great demand and workers were needed locally. Simultaneously, Sheffield City Council undertook a massive house building programme in Westhill. Aiming to clear slum tenements, to replace bombed housing and to make accommodation available for the new workers (Wilson, 1982). Westhill then has a strong historical relationship to industrial production as its development corresponded with the expansion of the steel industry and manufacturing production. This also resulted in the creation of Westhill's main source of employment, jobs in steel.

From these forms of developments Westhill was created, not only spatially but also as a lived experience which local people identified as community. Living in Westhill was a shared experience of industrial and territorial relationships creating a common interest amongst local people. Members of Westhill shared similar experiences of

work, hardship and struggles thus creating a sense of belonging amongst its population. But not only has the notion of community grown out of common interests and shared experiences, it has also been strengthened by its sense of continuity in which generations remain in the locality. This issue was highlighted by the local Youth Workers who managed the local Community centre. All the workers had lived locally for the best part of their lives having strong family links to either the steel works or other local industrial manufacturing occupations. In the following quote, Kevin, the Leader-in-charge at the the local Youth Centre, raises the issue of family networks and continuity of membership as central features to Westhill's community life;

**KEVIN** Its got a long history of families in this area, certain family names keep re-occurring in Westhill. You know, you left home and stayed in Westhill, some families can trace their relatives back into the early parts of the 19th century. Its got more of a village atmosphere, stuck on the end of Sheffield, not belonging to Sheffield or Rotherham. Its got its own way of life, its own culture and traditions and if you are an outsider, 'getting in' takes quite a while.

As Kevin suggests belonging to Westhill has its own distinctive culture, traditions and way of life which separates it from other areas of Sheffield. In the extract that follows, Kevin goes on to suggest that underpinning this way of life exists certain values and acceptable codes of behaviour which are quite distinctively working class. These are similar to what Williams and Young and Willmott identify as being central to their understanding of working class community life;

**KEVIN** Its (Westhill) always had strong working class community values, you know, you don't 'do' your own and you look after each other. Another thing is, if there is a crisis people will pull together, doesn't matter if they've fallen out in the past, people help each other, what I'd call the 'war scenario'.

What Kevin means by 'you don't do each other' is that if people are involved in burglary or other forms of theft it

is 'done' against other people who live outside the community not to members of Westhill. Being a part of Westhill, then not only has benefits but also responsibilities. Looking after each other and helping others in a crisis suggests a clear relationship between benefits and responsibilities. Dependent on the situation members of the local community are either receivers of help or the helpers. Expectations and actions are therefore greatly influenced by events yet being accepted as part of the community is in many cases determined by participation in these perceived responsibilities.

### The importance of Community

The meaning of community is complex and although the term is used in everyday language without controversy, it is important to recognize that its meaning is open to much interpretation and debate. For example in Hillery's paper; 'Definitions of Community; areas of agreement' (1955) it is argued that within the literature on community, there are over 94 different definitions of what it means. Lee and Newby (1983) therefore argue that '...the problem has been one of too many definitions rather than too few' (p.57). Although this may be the case they go on to suggest that the definition of community can be divided into three spheres. Firstly, there is a geographical definition which tends to be used by developers, civil servants and politicians that sets down the parameters and spatial context of community. Secondly, living in a community is seen as having a social system in which 'everyone knows each other' and thirdly, community is seen as a type of relationship being defined by a 'sense of identity' (Lee and Newby, 1983, p.57).

It is these three definitions that explain young people's understanding of community. In terms of geography it was generally assumed that there was a clear line of division between Westhill and other areas. In a political and legal context this is the case. Westhill is defined by a boundary drawn up by the Boundary Commission as an electoral area in local and national elections. It is also the

boundary used by the City Council for the distribution of resources and the collection of the Council Tax. But using such a definition is inadequate when it comes to understanding young people's meanings. Their identification is with the spaces they occupy within their locality. In many cases this will not include areas that a legal document proposes as being Westhill. Local people can also identify areas that are legally defined as outside Westhill's boundaries as being a part of their community. People are usually unaware of legal definitions and have their own maps of what belongs and what does not belong to their community. These maps will differ between ages and genders. Spaces individuals identify as, 'being the community of Westhill' will be dependent on common usage and symbolic identification by different groups. So for example, older people of the area may produce a spatial map of Westhill around facilities that they use regularly, such as the local shops and pensioners club. These will not necessarily be the same for younger people, although there is bound to be an overlap as certain areas have common usage by all groups. Young people were more likely to identify public spaces which they used regularly such as the streets, the Youth Centre and the local pub as geographical centres to the community.

Young people also clearly saw Westhill existing as a community through a social system and a set of identity forming relationships. A community, for these young people, consisted of a network of recognizable individuals who know each other and get on together. For example, in the following extract Jane explains what this means;

**AF**           What do you think about living in Westhill ?

**JANE**       I like it, I wouldn't so much call it a small community just everyone knows everybody. I suppose it's not always a good thing in a way because everyone knows everyone's business but everyone talk's to everyone. We're all friends helping each other. If someone's got a problem then we all muck in and try to help, it's like a close family, a close community.

But it is more than just a set of social relationships it is

about 'having roots' in the area of family and friends. In the following discussion Brian raises this issue and its importance and relationship to the concept of citizenship;

**BRIAN** It would be more for me like saying your roots and everything. I'm a citizen of Westhill really, it's where I'm from. Where ever I go I'm always coming back to Westhill. If I go and live in London for three years or if I go away for two weeks, I'd always see this as home, this is where my friends and family live, where my roots are.

**JOHN** I could go and live in London for ten years but I still would be a citizen of Westhill.

**BRIAN** The place you were raised in and know more of you feel right in.

**JOHN** I could live in London till I die but I'd still be from Westhill.

As Brian points out roots are important in that they give a sense of belonging and identification with a particular area. Even if he leaves the area there is still that sense of having come from a particular community, that still exists and is accessible when he returns. What makes this possible is the links he has with certain people, especially family and friends. These links are of central importance in that they offer a network of support and help. It is having these roots that make Westhill special to the lives of these young people in that they made them feel secure within the geographical setting of Westhill. Being young made them feel at risk or vulnerable in situations they were unaccustomed to yet community offered them some sense of protection. A point Brian highlights;

**BRIAN** I think one thing you do find is that you're more comfortable from when you move away from the area and start new things. In Westhill we know Westhill, every knook and cranny, and we feel safe and secure in and around Westhill. It's like a village where everybody knows everybody and that makes you feel safe.

Familiarity with the area and its people offered a sense of safety and security which is not available outside of the area. For young people, moving into the adult world can be a dangerous and risky experience but their community provided a safe and secure environment for them to make transitions and movements into other social worlds. For example,

attending the Youth Centre gave young people social interaction with their peers (1) and adults who they have gradually, over the years, got to know and trust. The benefits for young people of these relationships is that they have friends and peers who are making the transition into adulthood thus offering them a common identity with others and feelings of security. For example going into the local pub for the first time was easier with others than on their own. But these processes were less tense because they also knew local adults who were willing to welcome them into such settings as the pub when the time was right. Such transitions would have been difficult in unknown areas for example, town centre pubs. But once a young person was at ease in their locality going down town became less of a problem as they had made their first steps into the adult world of pubs in a safe environment.

It is therefore more than just belonging to Westhill, it is also about being a part of the community that makes it important. A good example of the difference between these two terms can be identified in the following discussion;

**AF** So you see it as about belonging to somewhere then ?  
**PETER** Being a part of.  
**AF** Right, being a part of something, anyone else ?  
(silence)  
**AF** Ok, so it's about belonging to something and you said Westhill and Sheffield, so what do you think...(John interrupts)  
**JOHN** not so much belonging to Westhill and Sheffield but being a part of Westhill and Sheffield.  
**PETER, LORNA, BRIAN, RODGER** Yea  
**AF** So you're saying very clearly to me then that it's about your local community, your neighbourhood. So what makes you feel you belong to it ? Is this sense of belonging only about Westhill or do you get it with regard to Sheffield ? Do you feel as though you belong to Sheffield ?  
**BRIAN** Not entirely...  
**JOHN** No, I don't belong anywhere, I just feel a part of Westhill I've been raised here.  
**AF** Sorry it's about feeling a part of...

The discussion above is interesting because of the struggle between myself and the young people over the use of the

words 'belonging' and 'being a part'. It is clear that I was not listening, transferring and using the notions of 'being a part' and 'belonging' as interchangeable concepts. For the young people this was unacceptable. A difference between the two phrases does exist. 'Being a part' suggests a notion of being active within the community as opposed to 'belonging' which is a passive term. You can belong to a community while not living there or you can belong to it while not participating in it but you can not be part of it unless you are active and participating in everyday life.

Having such positive views of their community may arise from the simple fact that the majority had lived in the locality for either all or a large part of their lives. The experience of growing up then was very much coloured by the fact that they had little experience of living elsewhere, meaning that they had nothing to compare it with. A point raised by Jane;

**AF** Is there anything you don't like about living in Westhill ?

**JANE** I've never really thought of it, I've never lived anywhere else, I wouldn't. I can't really answer that question 'cause I've nothing to compare it with, it's home to me, Westhill, me home so.

### Responsibility to the community

It is common in political and sociological discourses for the concept of responsibility to be ill defined or generalised, leaving our understanding of its meaning and relevance as problematic. In the 1980's and 90's the concepts of responsibilities and duties have become a major issues in the debates surrounding the concept of citizenship (2). For example, the Report by the Commission on Citizenship suggested;

The voluntary contribution by individual citizens to the common good through the participation in and exercise of civic duty and the encouragement of such activities by public and private institutions is a part of citizenship.

Speakers Commission on Citizenship, p.8 1990

But these debates are not limited to official discourses and political rhetoric. These discussions have also taken place within Feminist and Green movements. Roche (1992), for example suggests that these movements have argued that while rights are of central importance, it is also necessary to recognize that responsibilities are also central to the concept of citizenship.

In terms of community, responsibility has always had a central role to play. As far back as Ancient Greece, notions of civic responsibility and duty were seen as important aspects of belonging to the city of Athens. Similar claims can also be found in more recent writers such as Williams and Thompson who clearly acknowledge the importance of responsibility and the active implementation of this in working class communities. To gain or benefit from your community requires people to act not as self interested individuals but as a collective group, acting on altruism, knowing that giving is as important as receiving. Jordan, in his book The Common Good, (1989) shows how cooperation and reciprocity are important aspects of this, providing the 'glue' that strengthens the notion of community and adding to the the common good. Of course duties and responsibilities are multi-layered, existing in different contexts and social situations. For example, feeling and acting responsible can exist individually, towards your own behaviour or it can exist in terms of feelings towards friends, family or the community itself. This needs therefore to be considered when asking the extent and type of young people's involvement in duties and responsibilities.

One area in which the young felt a strong sense of responsibility was towards the protection of their community. As mentioned above many of the young felt that community life was essential to their growing up, believing that they had a duty to protect both the name and space of Westhill. Protecting its name related to the young feeling a responsibility to protect the image of their local community by giving outsiders a positive image of life in Westhill. Many of these young people felt that the area received a

negative image which arose from Westhill being seen as suffering from high unemployment, poverty and crime. They felt that they had a responsibility to try and challenge or change these stereotype images that undermined or ignored the importance and strengths of Westhill. Young people therefore argued that they had to respond to this form of labelling by attempting to redress the 'poor image' it received. In the following abstract Brian raises the issue of their responsibility for Westhill reputation and how they should not allow it to deteriorate;

**BRIAN** We're responsible generally for reputation of the place, keeping it in a working order, keeping it ticking over and going and not letting it dissolve like other places are.

The second issue related to their responsibility to protect the physical space of Westhill from outsiders. Outsiders, it was argued were seen as trouble makers and the young felt a duty to protect Westhill from 'invasion' by people from other areas. For example, Peter outlined how young people from Westhill responded to people coming down from Easthill which is an area of close proximity;

**PETER** There's always been a bit of rivalry, its always been a bit of fighting between Easthill and Westhill. Young people they come down looking for trouble which is a normal thing over the last ten or fifteen years.

They did not just see this as being achieved through physical or illegal methods they also believed strongly in the use of formal methods such as neighbourhood watch schemes. When they were asked if these were important means of keeping crime down their response was favourable with well over half agreeing. These factors relating to protection of the reputation and physical space seemed therefore to be important in what young people of Westhill saw as 'duties towards the community'.

But their sense or feelings of duties and responsibilities were stronger when it came to issues related to people. When they were asked, if they felt that they and the community had a responsibility to look after

the old, disabled and mentally ill the overwhelming response was 'yes'. From all these interviewed everyone supported the idea that the vulnerable needed taking care of by the community. These view's were confirmed in the discussion sessions. For example when Lisa was asked if she thought she had a responsibility to the community she responded by arguing that her involvement at the Youth Centre was a consequence of these feelings;

**LISA** Yea, definitely. If you can help out it is nice to think you will help someone who needs help. That's what I hope I'm doing down at the Youth Centre.

Another young man, John, confirmed this by arguing in the language of citizenship;

**JOHN** We've got responsibilities as citizens of Westhill towards the young people of Westhill. It's what we are doing in the role we are undertaking as workers in the Junior Youth Club. At the age I am if I can't help somebody now I don't think I will be able to. Children need help, elderly and infirm need help, people with disabilities need help. I'm 25 reasonably fit, if I can't help some body else it's a waste of time being here.

Undertaking these responsibilities took place at a variety of levels. One important aspect of this was young people being involved in informal activities such as, 'good neighbourly deeds' or family responsibilities. The extent of involvement in this varied but the majority of young people had within their daily routines some form of caring role, be it going to the shops for their parents, dropping in to see their grandparents or running errands for neighbours. This form of participation was important because they felt that being a member of the community required active participation in responsibility, although they did not see this as anything unusual. This kind of activity was central to the Westhill way of life in that parents and grandparents before them had taken these forms of responsibilities as a normal aspect of living in a community.

Of course in comparison to older members the extent and type of activities young people were involved in, around

helping others, were limited. Firstly, they suggested that the expectation from adults for their active role in these informal tasks were not necessarily demanding and secondly, being young and wanting to be mixing with their friends in their spare time limited the time they would spend on helping others. Although it is important to recognize and acknowledge that there was a clear gender difference. Not only were expectations higher on young women but also their desire to fulfil some of these responsibilities were of more importance to them than to young men. This issue will be discussed in more depth in chapter seven.

### Responsibility; Voluntary or compulsory ?

But not only was there an informal method of undertaking responsibilities, there was also an opportunity for young people to work as volunteers, running the local Junior Youth club, formalizing actively the undertaking of responsibilities. According to Sheard (1986) (3) voluntary work can be defined as;

Activities that people undertake of their own free will, without payment and for the benefit of the community, other than family and friends.

Sheard, 1986, p.1

The use of voluntary work within the Youth Service has a long history. Part of this evolves from the very nature and structure of Youth Service provision. For example, the early influences that helped generate the Youth Service came from voluntary organisations such as the church (4). As Jeffs and Smith (1990) suggest this relationship, while changing after the first World War remains a central aspect of present day Youth Work;

Voluntary organisations still sponsor the bulk of Youth Service provision and they still seek to establish and maintain a separate identity.

Jeffs and Smith, 1990, p.58

The Youth Service has always had a strong link with voluntary work in that over 65% of the work-force in Youth Clubs and projects are unpaid voluntary workers (Harper, 1985). This close link to voluntarism is also reinforced

within much of Youth Work practice. Firstly, the relationships that young people and Youth Workers engage in is one that is voluntary. Young people choose to go to a Youth Centres or engage in relationships with Youth Workers of their own accord, using the resources and facilities as they wish. Participation in Youth Work activities is not compulsory, young people can decide the extent of their involvement. Secondly, and related to the previous point is the dominance of the notion of participation as a form of social education. For example, within the core curriculum debates in the early 1990s a central feature of the 'mission statement' was the importance of participation as a core principle of Youth Work (NYA, 1990). Methods of achieving this differ across services and within areas but one approach that has historically dominated Youth Work practice is the method of encouraging young people to take responsibility for organising and running Junior Youth Clubs for younger members of the local community.

As a form of active participation it has two specific strands. Firstly, getting young people involved in organising and running Junior Clubs can be instrumental in character building and personal development. Being given responsibility and an opportunity to participate can be beneficial to young people by encouraging self esteem, confidence and feelings of being trusted. Secondly, as an activity it can be seen to be influential in fostering notions of responsibility and thus helping towards integration into the local community. In terms of the Junior Youth club at Westhill, these ideas were central to how it was perceived by the local workers. For example, one of the workers who supported the young people in the running of the Junior Youth Club suggested;

**JACK**           The Junior Club is important because it gets young people involved in an activity that local people see as a good thing but its more than this because the young people themselves get something out of it.

Working in the voluntary club was very popular with over half the interviewees participating in its running and

organisation. Well over half of these were young women but it was not just a gendered activity, approximately a third of the young men interviewed were also at that time volunteers in the Youth Centre. In fact from the non volunteers over half had undertaken some form of voluntary Youth Work previously while the remainder suggested that if they were asked they would be willing to be involved.

For the young volunteers this form of work was perceived in a similar manner to that of the adult Youth Workers. Not only did they feel it was beneficial to their own personal development but it was also an opportunity for them to 'put something back' and contribute to the good of the community. For example, in the following quote Hazel explains her involvement partly because of the personal pleasure she receives from working in the Junior Club but also because she sees it as an opportunity to give younger people in the area something she had not had herself when she was younger;

**HAZEL** It's some thing I like doing. It's our community and I suppose I'd like to have thought that these opportunities had been about when I was younger. I didn't get that opportunity when I was younger. I'd like to think kids would get that opportunity I didn't have and it's just fun.

Others suggested that they could offer young children advice and a good role model because many of young children respected them and were willing to listen to what they had to say. The majority of the young volunteers then perceived this activity as an opportunity to enact some form of feelings of responsibility to the community in which they were able to make a valuable contribution to community life while also getting something out of it themselves. For example as John says their contribution is 'chipping in and clubbing together', helping the community care for its weaker members;

**JOHN** It's people like us volunteers chipping in and clubbing together like we have. Helping others not so fortunate as ourselves, it's

important for the community. The young are the next generation and we can help them 'cause we've been through it. It also makes me feel as though I'm doing something useful.

While it may be the case that participants benefited from being involved in this sort of work it is also important to recognize that working in the Junior Youth Club was for many young people about 'something to do'. Voluntary work was not always seen as a responsibility but as an opportunity to use the Centre on nights when others were not allowed in. Being a volunteer brought with it benefits that had little to do with duty or responsibility. Part of this arose because of the historical nature of the Junior Youth Club. It was a major part of the Youth Centre curriculum and was perceived by many as a chance to meet their friends and 'mess about' in a place that was warmer than the streets. Running the Junior Youth Club clearly was hard work but it also had opportunities for the young volunteers to 'skive off' or construct their own activities outside the curriculum of the Junior Youth Club. This in many ways created conflict between staff. Looking after over 30 junior members required good organisation and commitment from all volunteers but if some of the young volunteers were not 'pulling their weight' then keeping control of the junior members became difficult thus leading to arguments amongst the staff.

This problem of commitment was reflected in the turn over of staff. Getting continuity of volunteers who were willing to take a major role in running the Junior Youth Club was problematic. In the time I was there the staff of young volunteers was continually in flux. The staff team of volunteers had six core members while the rest tended to turn up infrequently. This was partly explained as immaturity of age but it also suggested that their commitment to the Junior Club was not strong. Voluntary work, from this example, as a means to expressing or developing notions of responsibility seemed to be inconsistent in its success.

Although the success of volunteering was spasmodic the

young people involved insisted that it could only be successful if it was undertaken voluntarily. If it was an enforced activity then any value that it did have to the volunteers was lost. Undertaking responsibility such as caring for others who were less fortunate than themselves had to be a personal choice. Something that people had to engage in because they desired to enact their feelings of responsibility.

This notion of enforced responsibility has become central to many of the debates concerning how citizenship can be encouraged in the young (Speaker's Commission on Citizenship, 1990). Firstly, the notion of community service for the young has a long history (Oldfield, 1987) one that has its roots in the post war ideas of enforced national service. These ideas have ebbed and flowed, being influenced by a variety of factors such as the high levels of unemployment (Marsland, 1984) and the importance of paternalism in a morally just society (Prince's Trust, 1990). They have also varied in how they should be implemented especially around the notion of volunteering and compulsion and their relationship to the notion of citizenship (Marsland, 1984, Prince's Trust 1990). The idea of Community service has clearly been linked with the Youth Service. Not only is it seen that much of the work they do is similar to that proposed by such projects, but also the Youth Service is seen as an organisation, on the ground, that is able to organise and develop such schemes (Marsland, 1984).

When this issue was raised in the research young people's response was strongly opposed. They argued that although they saw these responsibilities as important and something that was 'morally' correct they should be voluntary and determined by individuals choice. These issues were raised in the discussion session and the evidence supported this strong reaction. For example, Brian responded by saying;

**BRIAN** No, you should volunteer, you shouldn't have to volunteer. You shouldn't be forced into doing something. We're supposed to live in a democratic country, so this means that if you don't want to do this community service you don't have to, that's your right as a citizen of a democratic country. Any country it should be a right.

This idea of Community service has also been linked to political ideology and policy. Discussions have taken place within political discourses on the value of workfare as a means to enforce young people to undertake their duties and responsibilities (Mead, 1986). As Lister (1990) suggests such programmes have not been fully introduced in this country, but shifts in policy, especially social and economic policy have seen more young people having to undertake community service through employment training schemes due to the removal of their right to unemployment benefit. When these issues were discussed with the young volunteers their reaction was of anger and disgust;

**JOHN** I think it stinks. I'm entitled to my dole money I've worked, paid tax, paid national insurance contributions. I'm out of work through no fault of my own so what am I going to live on if my dole is stopped I'm not going to be able to live at all. Maybe they want me to live in cardboard city but they're crying out about the numbers of people of homelessness all the time, they don't want it but they're doing everything to increase it.

The thought of linking his dole money to community service clearly angered John. He claims that the rights he has towards welfare benefits should not be directly connected to community service. He goes on to argue that 'doing socially useful work' should be through choice because people want to do it. Forcing people is seen by John as counter-productive as it will not foster feelings of responsibility but feelings of being coerced. An example of this is evident in the following statement. Brian raises the issue of a hidden agenda in which such ideas clearly link to his experiences of working on government schemes. He is sceptical of the government intentions, suggesting that they are just another

form of altering the unemployment figures and not about citizenship;

**BRIAN** These YT schemes and YTS and everything else there just ploys to keep numbers down, keep unemployment figures down. So it's a political drive ain't it.

These views were very much supported in the discussions with an overwhelming number of young people seeing government measures around community service as a means of controlling the young.

### Problems of community life

Of course living in Westhill has its problems. For some of the young people the thought of spending the rest of their life in Westhill was a depressing idea. For example in the following quote Martin clearly expresses his feelings about living in Westhill, suggesting that he does not care where he goes as long as he gets out of the area;

**AF** What do you think about Westhill then ?

**MARTIN** If I had a chance to go I'd be off like a shot I would be somewhere else.

**AF** So why don't you like living here ?

**MARTIN** It's just a dump, it's boring.

**AF** Where would you like to live ?

**MARTIN** I don't know and I don't care. I just want to get out of here.

This type of response was not uncommon. So what influenced such a negative perspective ? Why did they want to get away from Westhill ? Two main issues arose from the discussions which seemed to have implications for how young people experienced the processes of growing up and the attitudes they had towards community life.

One explanation for this rejection of Westhill and its way of life related to generational conflict. One important aspect of 'community' was the expectation, from local adults, that young people would and should conform to the 'way things were done'. This in a sense related to historical processes identifiable in the past which give local adults beliefs about what behaviour is acceptable and expected from the young. Being young in the 1980s and 90's

was, as identified in chapter one a different experience to what has gone before therefore generational conflict is almost inevitable. One clear example arises from young people's cultural activities such as the way they dress, what music they like and how they found entertainment. Many of the young had a clear desire to express themselves through these activities. For example at the time of the research raves and acid house music were the 'in thing' amongst many. This involved some of them using drugs such as cannabis and 'E' or ecstasy (when they could afford it) for pleasure and going to all night parties. One of the main reasons why this alternative lifestyle was popular and a draw to the young was the excitement it brought with it. Many of the young people were either in boring jobs, on training schemes or out of work. Hanging around the locality or going to the pub day after day was not very exciting;

**STEWART** Life used to be so boring until I started hanging about with this lot. I used to go down to the pub or hang about on the street but nothing ever happened. Now we go to raves and have a good time, getting smashed and that.

What this alternative lifestyle offered for youngsters such as Stewart was excitement, adventure and risk which livened up his usually uneventful life. To many of the adults this form of behaviour was unacceptable or confusing, being seen as undermining the cohesion of the local community. This led to conflict between the generations in that the older members of the community held misconceptions about what young people's life style was about;

**JOHN** It's like when we used to go down the pub, everyone use to ignore us, thinking we were crazy or something.

**STEWART** I think they used to be scared of us, you know, thought we were druggies. shooting up all the time.

**JOHN** Yea, but it totally pissed me off...

They suggest that the older people made assumptions about what they were doing in their leisure time. For example many of the young people suggested that local people thought they were all into drugs offering a threat to the social cohesion

of Westhill. Drugs were a part of some young people's lifestyle but only the smoking of cannabis and the occasional taking of 'E'. Hard drugs, which required the use of 'shooting up' was, as far as I was aware, non-existent. Not only did they reject them as harmful and undesirable but, even if they had wanted to take them, they were in no financial position to pay for regular usage. Older members of the community had a misconception about what these young people were doing which then fuelled rumours about young people's lifestyles.

The fact that their lifestyle was not accepted by many of the older adults in the locality created problems between the generations and feelings amongst the young that they were misunderstood. But this experience went further in that older people acted upon their attitudes by attempting to police the behaviour of the young. This created conflict which usually took the form, not of direct physical contact with local adults, but of increased surveillance and contact with the local police. Being watched continually by adults was something that young people were clearly aware of and led to them feeling quite negative about Westhill. This surveillance usually led to local adults being quick to report the activities of the young to the police leading to an increase in contact. In the following abstract Alex and Paul recount two specific incidents, using the police as examples of how their lifestyles on the streets are policed;

**ALEX**           What about me then. They said that I was drug dealing and I got pulled three times. They searched me on the streets going through all me things. They showed me their cards and like told me what they wanted me for. I was outside the corner shop and they searched me on the spot. They said, 'You can either do it here or come down to the station'. They searched everything I was wearing even a little pouch I had around me neck.

**PAUL**           There was two of them and they were only young. Everyone used to stand outside the chippy, about 40 of us and like no one knew who they were.

**ALEX**           I knew straight away, and they just sat there for ages watching everyone and then on the second night I saw them and that's when I told your lot.

**PAUL**           They do it right sniddy like sitting there having a listen like to what we were on

about.

ALEX Undercover like.

Young people are clearly aware of the hierarchical nature of community and that they are powerless to redress this imbalance of power. Complaining about this treatment was seen as a pointless process in that nobody would listen to their side of the story. They argued therefore that they are continually identified both by some of the adults in the community and the police as a 'social problem'.

This is not to say that young people accepted their situation as inevitable. Many of them did find ways of 'fighting back' or 'resisting' this notion of being 'a social problem'. In fact as the following discussion will show not only were these actions an important method of expressing their frustration, they were also seen as 'good fun' and offered the young an opportunity to have some form of excitement in their lives. Being able to break up the monotony of day to day boredom was important because Westhill offered them little in the form of entertainment. Encounters with the police could become a source of fun especially if they knew they had not done anything wrong. For example in the quote that follows, Paul and Stewart found themselves being stopped after walking home late at night. Their reaction is to turn the situation around by putting the police on the spot and making them feel defensive about their actions. As they explain this is only possible because they feel safe that they have nothing to hide;

PAUL We'd once got two CID blokes they didn't know what to do with themselves. We were in Easthill and we saw this CID car come down with two plain clothes in it. You could tell they were CID straight away. So me and him started running and they shot after us and anyway we stopped and they come to us and said, 'What's your names? So we says 'why?' He say's 'Tell me your names?' So we says 'who are you like, what do you want to know our names for?' 'Oh.'he says, 'we're police.' 'You're not police, you're definitely not police (laughter). Where's your blue light and thinks like that? They're going, 'we are honest look we've got walkie talkies'. (more laughter) 'I know loads of kids who have got them mate'. He

goes, 'I've got me truncheon in the car' and he gets it out and I says, 'have you got a warrant card?' 'Oh, yea,' and he bothers to get out of car and show me his warrant card (laughter). 'Oh yea you are police, what do you want ? and he says 'what are your names' and we say Paul and Stewart. 'Oh alright' and he say's, 'I'm Tom and he's Bill' and they got back in the car and drove off (laughter). Brilliant like they just didn't know what to do with us because they'd pulled us for no reason so they couldn't do owt.

**STEWART** We totally fucked their brains up.

**PAUL** It was right funny that, they didn't know what to do.

'Winding up' these police officers then became a game which made for a good story to account to their friends at a later time, offering an opportunity to have a 'good laugh' at their expense. But this form of excitement could also be pre-planned. In the following discussion Paul and Stewart recount a situation when they deliberately went about 'winding up' the police, creating an incident when they knew that even if they got 'pulled' they were innocent because nothing had happened. They then used their expected labels and the police assumptions as a means of having a laugh;

**STEWART** What about that what we did. We use to invite trouble by messing about. We used to mess coppers about right, it was great fun weren't it ?

**PAUL** It was sound, we use to send them to a pub, send coppers to a pub.

**STEWART** You know pub on corner, the Flag

**PAUL** Tell'em that we'd seen a black kid and white kid burgling it. Going in through windows and that and bringing stuff out. Then we'd wait to they'd come and then walk passed. We'd get round the corner then sprint to top of the road. They'd shoot up after us and like, get us and that into the car and then we could piss'em off we actually done that.

'Winding up' clearly becomes an important means of 'getting back' at the police for continually harassing them but it is also a good laugh which can add some form of entertainment to their lives by breaking up the monotony of living in Westhill.

### Marginalisation and feelings of responsibility

The implications of these negative experiences that the

young have with adults in the community is that they have an impact on how they feel about undertaking obligations and responsibilities. These young people felt that the community did not respect them or recognize them as individuals. Therefore, they argued that they felt no real sense of obligation or responsibility to the community that they felt was oppressing them As Paul suggests;

**PAUL** Why the fuck should we care about the community they don't give a fuck about us. All they want us to do is accept things as they are, well its shit. They won't leave us alone.

Being marginalised by the community lead to a situation where many young people had little time for the needs of the community. Conforming or as they saw it, accepting the Westhill way of life, was not the best method of encouraging responsibility. This is not just a question of young people feeling excluded, as many of them do not want to be part of the community in the first place. The issue is of recognition and the right of young people to have control over shaping their own lives in a way of their own choosing.

Arguments concerning the active participation of young people as citizens, such as those proposed by the Speakers Commission on Citizenship (1990), are generally framed around the notion of encouraging young people to participate in either the liberal democratic process or the local community. Yet what is being suggesting is that participation is related to the conformity of societies goals. To be a 'good citizen' it is seen as necessary to accept the status quo and learn the responsibilities associated with it. These young people argue that such a process is oppressive and leaves little room for questions of difference to be considered. Without this responsibility towards the community will not be forthcoming. Writers such as Taylor (1989) recognizes this contradiction by suggesting that citizenship is more than just about rights and responsibilities. He suggests that in any conception of citizenship it is necessary to recognize and consider the workings of social power and how this excludes and includes certain groups;

The 'liberal' history of citizenship, then, must be viewed in the context of a set of inclusionary and exclusionary practices, aimed at consolidating a particular set of social relations and of rights and entitlements.

Taylor, 1989, p.20

Although Taylor's main focus is on how this process takes place around issues of race, the point is also valid in terms of these young people. Being included or excluded relates very closely to how far young people accept the dominant social relations of the local community in which questions of difference are ignored.

### Poverty and Westhill

A second problem for some of the young people living in Westhill arose over the issue of poverty. Westhill, belongs to the polling area of Ambleton. According to the Local Council and national data it is defined as an area of poverty (Sheffield City Council, 1993, OPCS, 1991). For example evidence suggests that in 1991, over 21.4% of residents were living on Income Support and eligible for claiming Housing Benefit. Specific figures for the area of Westhill are difficult to obtain, yet evidence is available which suggests that certain areas of Westhill have even higher levels of poverty. One such area is the local council housing estate where the number of residents claiming Income Support and eligible for Housing Benefit is 41.7% (Sheffield City Council, 1993) This is not to say that all residents suffer from poverty only that divisions exist within the locality which, as I shall show, have implications for young people's feelings towards their community. These divisions tend to be identifiable through housing tenure. For example, in 1991 over 70% of residents lived in owner-occupied housing with the remainder living in Council, Housing Association and private rented accommodation (Sheffield City Council, 1993). Of course being an owner-occupier does not necessarily protect them from poverty or provide them with good quality amenities. In many cases unemployment and the loss of incomes can have major implications for owner-occupiers because they receive limited assistance from the

state towards their housing costs.

Young people were clearly aware that their own community suffered from poverty. This was identified not in terms of wealth ownership and income differentials, although they did recognize these issues, but in terms of housing and living conditions. In the following discussion young people highlighted this issue through the lack of improvement that has taken place in Westhill, suggesting that if it was improved then life would be better;

**AF** Is it that bad round here then ?

**JIM** It's fucking lippy, you go round here and its just full of houses that are slums.

**ALEX** It's only because they've not been done up by the council. If you look at Easthill, they've had their houses done up and now they've got something to look after. Before that they were like pig-styes and people lived like pigs, now they've got something to look after they respect it.

Poverty was therefore clearly identified through housing conditions and the local environment. This distinction was made through the categories of 'bad' and 'good' places to live of which Westhill was seen as 'bad'. Not only was it the case that the housing stock was in a poor state of repair but young people felt that the local environment was 'run down'. Of course, the extent of physical care of community space can be determined by many factors. For example, general road-cleaning and removal of rubbish is mainly the responsibility of the Local Council. Over the previous 15 years these services have been very much restructured, being either withdrawn or reduced (5). This feeling of Westhill as being 'run down', according to the young, was also evident through the lack of facilities in the area. Westhill was deprived of facilities or events that provided for their particular interests. Life in Westhill was boring, nothing exciting ever happened and nothing was taking place which they found of any interest. Going to the Youth Centre or local pub was the extent of leisure activity, offering little more than traditional youthful type of entertainment (see chapter Five).

These experiences of poverty were seen by the young not

only as making life boring but also as influencing their opportunities. Poverty seemed both an inevitable consequence of living in Westhill and culturally transmitted from generation to generation. What they suggested is that because poverty is a way of life in Westhill, their own hopes for the future are limited. Young people clearly desired to participate in the consumer world of fast cars, material goods and high cultural living but they felt that to achieve this they needed to get out of Westhill as the 'culture of poverty' (6) was a disadvantage to their hopes and dreams. In many ways this was how they explained their own experiences of being poor, it was not their fault but the fault of Westhill (7). Their claims about the impact of this process were made through examples of outsiders coming to live in the area from 'better' parts of the city;

**JOE** When-ever people are moving into that posh area they are following everybody else of how to live. It's the same in Westhill even if they are posh and move here, it will not be long before they are fucking changed because of the environment they are in.

What they are suggesting is that the way of life in Westhill is one of poverty and regardless of their economic situation, newcomers will have to conform and change their style of life. This 'culture of poverty' is then seen as a major obstacle to them 'getting on' in life and being able to have the type of lifestyle they wanted. For example, in the following discussion I ask them about their own relationship to this particular way of life and they responded by suggesting that they continually struggle against it, resisting participation in the area and attempting to forge alternative activities;

**AF** You are saying that the local culture of poverty is restrictive because you have little option but to conform. How then do you deal with it ?

**JOE** Everyone's still got their own personality, we just hang about together and be ourselves. We refuse to get drawn into it, we just do what we want to.

Joe and the others are suggesting that because they see

poverty as endemic to the locality the best solution was to have as little contact with the local community as possible and form their own way of life.

Poverty and social divisions were also blamed for crime in the local area. Engaging in crime was not uncommon amongst many of the young in Westhill. The extent of this varied between participants. For some, being involved in activities that were illegal was a part of their normal way of life, while for others breaking the law was a spasmodic activity. Of course not all young people were involved in crime but it was clear that acting illegally was common amongst many of the young people involved in the research. One explanation of this had clear links to the issue of poverty, being justified in terms of jealousy. For example in the following abstract the issue of involvement in crime is raised within a discussion on living conditions;

**PAUL** People think why should they in Dore and Totley have it all. That's why they don't like them.

**MARK** Boils down to jealousy, doesn't it ?

**PAUL** It does in a way. That's why we nick stuff sometimes.

**ALEX** Yea, that's why if they had something I hadn't got I use to nick. I didn't have it so I use to nick the bastard.

**STEWART** What about me I use to be right mad on bikes. We were at school and all our mates had these right nice flashy bikes. We couldn't afford stuff like that. That's when we went and did that burglary. We went into this shop and nicked thousands of pounds worth of bike gear. We got caught for it but we did it because we wanted right good stuff like the other kids.

Alex and Stewart explain their involvement in crime as being related to feelings of deprivation in that having certain items could only be gained by 'nicking them'. The issue is explained by the divisions within their own area. Some people seem to be doing well in a material sense and others are not which is then causing conflict. These visual divisions and distinctions between the 'have not's' and the 'have's' are then used to explain why some people steal from people in their own community. Involvement in crime, as explained by these young people, does then, in some cases,

arise from deprivation. Of course this is not the only explanation of criminal activity. In the chapters that follow I shall return to this issue focussing on other explanations. The point here that is important in terms of responsibility to the community is that these young people claim that material divisions in the locality are detrimental to them feeling any sort of responsibility, creating instead desires such as envy and jealousy.

These actions are also interesting because they indicate that a change has taken place in how some of the young working class see the importance of community. As suggested in the introduction to this chapter, historically and traditionally values such as, 'you don't do your own' were central to the working class way of life. What the previous discussion suggests is, that these ideas are under threat as some of the young people of Westhill reject community life and their obligations to others. Why this is happening is unclear as historically poverty has always been a central aspect of working class life, yet such values were seen as having a strong base in the local community. One possible explanation is that the strong value base of working class life is somewhat a myth. Writers such as Pearson (1983) have shown how a 'return to a golden age' of community has been used as a method of bringing about change. Crime in working class communities has always been evident and in many cases these involved have been the young. For example writing in the 1970's Parker's (1974) study showed how the young were involved, in their local community, in petty crime. Further studies of other decades highlight similar situations. Crime therefore has always been an aspect of working class communities and 'doing one's own', while being seen as unacceptable by local people has always existed. Perceptions of social divisions may therefore be important as a cause of crime in local communities as well as undermining notions of responsibility although further investigation is need.

## Poverty, obligations and responsibilities

The impact of poverty as a process that undermines feelings of responsibility is central to Jordan's argument in his book, The Common Good, (1989). He suggests that the expansion of the market as a means to creating a 'good society' has increased social divisions and self interest which in turn undermines feelings of obligations and responsibility. Social exclusion of the poor therefore is detrimental to the development of a 'good society'. Other writers, such as Lister (1990) have added weight to Jordan's conclusions suggesting that if full citizenship is about participation then the exclusion of the poor from civil, political and social rights has undermined both legal participation through the use of legal rights and the poor's ability to undertake obligations.

Poverty spells exclusion from the full rights of citizenship in each of these spheres and undermines people's ability to fulfil the private and public obligations of citizenship.

Lister, 1990, p.68

Of course, what Lister is suggesting is that poverty undermines people's ability to undertake obligations. This clearly is an issue but as the discussions on the importance of community highlighted, even in adverse situations the young working class still see the fulfilment of obligations as important. This is not to deny what Lister has to say is right. Being poor is hard work and fulfilling obligations is difficult when you or your family lacks the basics. But we also need to recognise that the notions of responsibility and obligations are complex actions that exist at different levels of social relations, and that many working class people and the young do undertake them on a regular basis.

The point being made above by some of the young people of Westhill is not that poverty affects their ability to participate in obligations or responsibilities, but that they feel that they do not want to undertake these at the level of community. This is different to Lister's point in that what they are suggesting is that they are choosing not to undertake obligations and responsibilities. They explain

this choice by arguing that poverty effects their social futures, and that their community is responsible for their feelings of hopelessness which is then re-enforced by the feelings of marginalisation evident in social interaction with adults and the police. Poverty and generational conflict therefore undermines young people's belief in their community as a place where they get support and help to 'get on'. Their local community is seen, because of the levels of poverty, as a cause to their failure to move up the 'ladder of success'.

But what this discussion does fail to explain is why some young people have strong feelings of obligations and responsibilities to their community and others do not ? As the previous discussion has suggested clear distinctions between the two positions are difficult to make as active participation in obligations and responsibilities can and do take place at a variety of levels and in different settings. But the question still remains unanswered of why for example some young people are willing to be involved in crime against their own community and others are not ? An issue that would be interesting for further investigation.

### Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on one main aspect of young people's lives, that of community. For many of the young in Westhill, community was still an important site in their lives. It offered safety and support while they were making their transitions into adulthood. This also had an impact on their feelings towards duties and responsibilities, clearly seeing advantages of 'putting something back'.

Writers on the political right such as Davies (1987), Hayek (1944) and Murray (1989) want to suggest that it is the state that undermines people's sense of responsibility and respect by protecting them from the consequences of their own actions;

Beside the influence of ideas and beliefs is the effect of economic and social policy. The policies followed in both these areas over the last forty years or longer have worked to insidiously undermine crucial notions of responsibility and respect for others. The main aim of public policy in both areas has frequently been to protect individuals and groups from the consequences of their own actions. This undermines any idea of responsibility.

Davies, 1987, p.181

Such a view is clearly narrow in its perception of causes that undermine responsibility, failing to consider other possibilities. For example, the previous discussions suggest that for many young people it is the failure of the community to recognize the question of difference, the exclusionary practices of social relations and the extent of poverty that influences how they feel towards their locality. For these young people attempts to foster feelings of responsibility towards their community has its problems. It is within the social relations of community that they experience and perceive the source of exclusion. This experience tends to undermine the positive feelings they may have towards their locality.

Sense of community and feelings of responsibility can and are fostered within the matrix of social relations. As I have suggested voluntary work within the Youth Service does and will have an element of success with some young people, in encouraging and supporting feelings of responsibility. Many young people committed much time and energy towards 'helping others' and protecting their community from external threats. Yet for some of the young people this is not enough as at one level it fails to offer them anything worthwhile in return. All that is on offer is the possibility of remaining in poverty and an extension of generational conflict.

Attempts to foster feelings of responsibility by compulsion, such as those proposed by workfare schemes, are seen as a possible solution to the 'demoralisation' of the young. Yet such an approach fails to recognize what the problems are that influence young people's feelings of

responsibility. Forcing them onto schemes may well help reduce unemployment, as proposed by Marsland (1984) and others, but as a means of re-moralising the young they are bound to fail because the majority of young people perceive them as an extension of state controls on how they should live their lives.

## Chapter Five

'Doing nothing re-visited': The importance of leisure  
and consumption.

Through-out the 1980s and 90s consumption and leisure have ideologically gained prominence in debates surrounding the meaning of citizenship. On the one hand the political right argue that participation as consumers is seen as the best method of increasing personal liberty and the fulfilment of needs (Hayek, 1944) (King, 1987). Central government can be seen to have responded to these ideas by putting consumption and markets as central to their policies. But also there has been a resurgence of the debates surrounding the importance of leisure in modern society (1). Commentators argue that as manufacturing declines and services become more prominent to our economy, leisure instead of work is becoming more important to our daily activities and therefore our experience as citizens. For example, writers such as Kearne and Owens (1986), Offe (1984) and Gorz (1980) have suggested that unemployment and the restructuring of work are permanent features of society and that the notion of leisure is becoming more central to our form of participation in 'post-industrial society' (2).

In the field of Youth Studies these issues have also been seen as important. Writers such as Willis (1990) have shown how the issues of consumption and leisure are becoming central to the everyday lives of young people. In his book, Common Culture, he argues that with the decline of work young people are seeking out and using different consumer goods and leisure activities as methods of constructing their identities (3).

### Leisure and Youth Studies

Up until the late 1970s Leisure Studies and Youth Studies developed in virtual isolation, despite the fact that they obviously overlap and cover much of the same sociological terrain (Roberts, 1983). Leisure studies as identified by writers such as Parker (1983), focussed and highlighted the close relationship between paid work and leisure activities. These debates focussed on the decline of

work and the growth of leisure and the impact that was having on society at large;

We hear a lot these days about the promise (or threat) of more leisure. We hear less about the problem of work- except in the context of growing unemployment. Yet both leisure and work are really part of the same problem, and a careful consideration of all the issues shows we are unlikely to go far in solving one without tackling the other.

Parker, 1983, p.ix

Alternatively, as mentioned in chapter two, research into the leisure activities of the young has focussed on questions of delinquency (Brake, 1985). While this approach recognized the importance of the dichotomy between work and leisure its main interest was on the type of deviant activities young people engaged in within their 'spare time' outside of the work setting.

Writing in the early 1980s Roberts (1983) in his book, Youth and Leisure, suggested that there needed to be a 'cross fertilization' of these disciplines which recognized the expansion of leisure and its growth in importance to the young. Leisure was not just about delinquency. Young people were, since the 1950s becoming more important as consumers. Studies into the lives of young people therefore had to examine what this meant for their everyday experiences.

Both these positions have been criticized for their failings to tackle the complexity of issues involved. Firstly, criticism has come from the feminist movement over the traditional distinction of leisure as time outside paid work. Writers such as Deem (1986) and Green, Hebdron and Woodward, (1990) have argued that such an approach fails to recognize the importance of the domestic sphere in structuring women's leisure time. This traditional approach has also been challenged by the growth of unemployment. Focus on the links between paid work and leisure has little to offer in explaining the leisure activities of the unemployed;

Mainstream approaches to leisure prior to the mid 70's operated according to the distinction between 'work' as epitomized by full-time employment, and 'leisure', defined as time outside that waged labour. In many cases, analysis adopted an explicit focus on adult men in full-time jobs as their normative category: all those outside this pattern posed something as a problem for mainstream leisure studies.

Griffin, 1993 p. 133

A second issue is raised by Hollands (1985) in his article, 'Working class youth, leisure and the search for work' (4). While Roberts desires a more focussed approach on the impact of leisure in society, Hollands suggests that this is not enough. Examining expansion and its effects on 'who does what and when' is a necessary development to understanding leisure but he goes on to argue that we also have to examine the meaning of leisure to the young;

The simple concept of 'expansion', however, does not in itself adequately explain the adoption, refusal or indeed appropriation of particular trends and styles by the youth themselves.

Hollands 1985, p.4

Hollands then suggests that we should not focus our analysis totally upon the commercial leisure sphere but recognize that other social relations may also be affecting the social construction of working class youth life styles. These other relations include, for example, institutional structures and relationships with schools, Youth Clubs, the police and their families. Young people's leisure then, can only be understood if recognition is given to the social context of their lives in general.

### Working class youth and leisure

As an introduction to the field work it is important to say something about the historical nature of the young working class's experience of leisure. Two particular issues are of importance for the discussion that follows.

Traditionally much of the forms and shape of their leisure takes place within the context of the public space (5). This is usually related to settings and spaces in and around the local community that young people identify with

(6). Two particular reasons for this dominate the literature. Firstly, evidence shows that many working class young people do not use organised or institutionalized forms of leisure because of cost (Banks et al. 1992, D.E.S. 1983 and Hollands, 1985). Not only are many commercialized forms of leisure out of the financial reach of young people but as the state has imposed more cash limits on Local Councils, subsidies for public leisure facilities are being removed, thus rising the charges for usage of facilities that use to be free or of low cost (Jeffs and Smith, 1989). The second issue is the perceived lack of controls and regulation that exist in the public sphere. For many young people 'free time' is time that is free from interference from supervising adults. For example, in every day activities young people encounter a variety of institutions and social relations, such as those at school and at home. Within these settings certain formal and informal rules and regulations exist that determine the type of behaviour that is accepted. Of course, these relationships exist for adults too but for young people who are in the process of discovery, these rules and regulations can be imposing and oppressive. Writers in this area have also shown how these rules and regulations may be related to the dominant value system or hegemony (7). Public space therefore is one area in which young people feel they have an opportunity to be 'free' from supervision and control (8).

A second theme that is important is the concept of 'doing nothing'. Studies, such as those instigated by the Chicago School were amongst the first to highlight that 'hanging about on the streets' and 'doing nothing' was an important cultural activity of working class young people (Whyte, 1943). In the British tradition, focus on 'doing nothing' was highlighted by writers such as Parker (1974), Corrigan (1979) and Willis (1977). For example, Corrigan in his book, Schooling the Bash Street Kids, suggested that 'doing nothing' was in fact a meaningful activity;

All other activities in their (young people of his study) spare time took place in relationship to the vast amount of time spent hanging about on the street. The difficult thing for all of us 'outsiders' to appreciate is that such activity is, in fact, activity, that it forms a series of actions which all of us feel are of no consequence. Indeed, one of the paradoxes of my research was my discovery that the main activity that the kids took part in was 'doing nothing', a phrase I had to learn to translate from its commonsense meaning.

Corrigan 1979, p.119

Corrigan goes on to argue that in reality 'doing nothing' consisted of activities such as talk and the waiting for something to happen. In his study young people were continually searching for some form of excitement to break the boredom of their every day lives. This led them to engage in activities such as minor vandalism and street fights which then gave them something to talk about while waiting for other opportunities to occur. Willis (1977) also acknowledged the importance of 'doing nothing' for the young people of his study. Such activity while seen by him as a part of the counter school culture also had wider implications, being a form of resistance to 'the lads' structural position and controls imposed on their everyday lives. One issue that is raised by Willis's work is the question of masculinity and how resistance to the dominant and counter culture is based upon adult symbols and codes of behaviour. Wallace (1987) develops this issue in her book For Richer for Poor, suggesting that masculine identities are fragile and that unemployment has undermined one of the main sites, that of the workplace. It is then within the context of 'hanging about on the streets' and 'doing nothing' that young men attempt to re-assert their masculinity through both leisure time activities and talk;

For boys, masculinity was lost, won, or redeemed through their status in the peer group. Consequently, the male peer group was bounded through the celebration of wild behaviour. This

included embellished stories of fighting, or more commonly, excessive bouts of drinking or drug taking that could perhaps be described as self-immolating heroism.

Wallace 1987, p.88-9 (9)

Of course interest in working class leisure activities has also been given much attention by the middle class, politicians and the media which has led to the increase of controls and regulation of 'doing nothing'. For example, Jeffs and Smith (1989) and Smith (1988), in their discussions on the development of the Youth Service, highlight the relationship between middle class philanthropic concerns over working class leisure activities and the growth of intervention. Others such as Cohen (1972) and Pearson (1983) focus on the role of the media in the construction of 'moral panics' about the leisure activities of the young working class, leading to responses that increase the methods of policing the young (10). The issue here is that 'doing nothing' is seen as a deviant activity and one that must be regulated and controlled, leading to an increase in attention to the leisure activities of the young working class.

#### 'Doing nothing and fucking about'

From the field work it became clear that the dominant leisure activity in Westhill for the young working class men was 'doing nothing'. Involvement in organised or institutionalized leisure was either spasmodic or non-existent. Westhill had very few leisure facilities apart from what was provided by the local Youth Centre and a local boxing club. The nearest centre or facility existed at Easthill Sports Centre which was approximately two miles away. Other facilities such as Swimming Pools and Cinemas were only available in the town centre. In asking young people how often in the previous month they had been to the different venues which provide organised leisure, the responses were as follows. Firstly, visiting the Cinema was the most popular activity with over half of the young people claiming to have visited either the centres in town or

Crystal Peaks (Mosborough). Out of this group, one had been five times, one, three times, one, twice and the others only once. Visits to the nearest Sports Centre were the next most popular with just over a third claiming to have visited them over the last month. Nearly all of these were young women. Out of these, one young women, who was working at the centre, used it everyday, three had been three times, one, twice and the others once. The only other activity that was undertaken by more than one person was swimming. This was again dominated by young women with one young woman having been seven times, one, twice and two, once. Other activities that were mentioned included, Airobotic club, Athletic Club, Weight Training and Gym. Involvement in organised leisure was spread across nearly two thirds of the respondents with the others not being involved in any form of organised leisure activities. Out of these non participants the majority were male and unemployed. Participation therefore in organised leisure was spasmodic, with the young women having the most involvement while older unemployed young men had either little involvement or non at all.

Young people suggested that involvement in organised leisure or institutional leisure activities was either too expensive, too far to travel or too boring, offering little excitement and risk. This was seen as an important component of leisure. Life had to be exciting offering different types of experiences rather than a mundane repetition of playing pool or going to the Youth Centre. Institutionalized leisure therefore had little to offer them and like Corrigan and Willis's lads 'doing nothing' was a more common form of activity.

This form of leisure came under the heading of 'fucking about' or 'having a laugh'. This took place in a variety of settings, although it usually happened on the streets of their own community, entailing various types of behaviour. These young people explained it as a type of cultural phenomenon which had an historical and traditional base. This kind of activity, it was argued, was how young people of the area had always behaved. Its shape and form however

was affected by the present situation young people found themselves in. For example, in the following abstract, Paul talks about how 'messing about' and 'hanging about' in gangs has been a major part of life for young people in Westhill, giving the example of past generations;

**PAUL** You know you get a load of older people fucking about like when they were at school. They also used to mess about like us in the streets, its like what our parents also used to do, you know.

Paul then goes on to explain how this has changed because of high unemployment. He suggests that historically young people would move out of this form of life style through getting a job. But as he states, some of the young adults of the area are still 'messing about' because they have nothing to do, being unemployed for long periods of time;

**PAUL** Mind you some of the older guys who are about 25 are still messing about because they haven't been able to get a job. They're still in the same environment, still in the same gang and still fucking about. They've got nothing to do.

Moving on to older or adult forms of leisure is usually seen as being related to getting a job and entering the adult world. For example, in the the following discussion young people draw upon an example of how one of their friends stopped joining in this form of messing about because he was able to get employment and move up the social ladder;

**ALEX** He's one of our mates who used to go to school with us. We've known him since we were kids, he used to be one of us, right bad doing burglaries, everything like. Going and wrecking shop windows and setting rubbish chutes on fire.  
**STEWART** Everything, the lot. But now he's got a job we never see him.

So what shape and form does this 'fucking about' take ? One example, was identified in chapter two in the processes of 'wind ups'. This was not only a way of getting back at the police but also a 'good laugh' which broke up the mundane routines of having little to do. This form of generating 'a good laugh' was also central to their involvement in criminal activity. In some cases it was related to feelings

of deprivation but in others it had a major role to play in creating 'fun' and 'risk' and making life exciting by breaking up the mundane daily routines. The following discussion by Paul and his mates highlights this process by outlining a particular incident related to the joyriding of motorbikes. The discussion arose in the context of why they got involved in crime;

**AF** So what about crime then ? I've picked up that you do get involved or have been involved in crime: why do you get involved ?

**JIM** I think it is partly going along with everybody and partly 'cause there's nothing else to do, it's a laugh.

**STEWART** Plus if you 'ant got it you get it.

**PAUL** About five year ago like, I used to pinch motorbikes, not just for money because even if you had money you'd do it anyway. You'd be walking down and you'd see a bike and it was pretty easy to get. You wouldn't waste your opportunity, you'd just get it. It was like 'Oh, great, a bike, here lets go and pinch it ' and you'd do it straight away because you wouldn't want to miss it. It wasn't just money, it was there so it just had to be pinched.

Jim and Paul both suggest that much of their involvement in stealing is related to boredom and excitement although Jim and Stewart recognize other possible explanations; that of involvement with peers and deprivation. As the discussion continues Paul recounts a particular incident which offered both excitement and risk.

**PAUL** You could have it [stolen bike] on the hill for a few days and then flog it. Used to get chased all over, it was scary, it was well scary when you where chased on roads. You knew if you got caught you were in right shit but you used to love it, it was a right laugh.

**BOB** Something to do.

**PAUL** It was a brand new bike, an F reg just come out the day before. It was right hard to get because we didn't have crash helmets on or anything. It was one case where we'd just seen it so instead of coming back another day we couldn't lose the opportunity, we just had to take it.

**AF** Was it bolted up or chained ?

**PAUL** No, it weren't. It was up this gennel behind this supermarket. It was dark, about 9 o'clock. We haven't got any helmets or owt but we just couldn't resist the temptation. We cut the wires on it and pushed it down the road. We got to

the back of Northhill and like we're kicking it up and were going 'come on,' and it won't start. Eventually it started and we said, 'yea, right giddy man', and shot off. As soon as we shot off, this big jam sandwich [police car] arrived. We hid down like in this. You know here MF motorbike shop is there's like a banking behind it. The coppers were on Pearl Road and they went past us and didn't see us. So we started off up Parkwood over the top down Southhill and Emdale road and then you know where Easthill chip shop is?

AF No, but carry on.

PAUL Well it goes into Union Street and it's a private road. It hasn't been maintained at all, it's Victorian and it's cobbled. We were going down there and there was another jam sandwich, big Jaguar just parked there. The coppers just stood there like that and we were just looking straight at their faces, from here to Jim away from us and he's looking at us. They're like right startled because we've no helmets on or nowt.

STEWART No lights.

PAUL We shot up the road. Oh god, that was heaven that was, ecstatic that was right good.

STEWART Brill, that was right good.

PAUL That were.

The fun of this adventure is clear to see in the language they use to explain it, words like, 'ecstatic', 'brill' and 'heaven' are descriptive of how they felt at the time. The pleasure seemed to come from both stealing the bike and from out-maneuvering the police, avoiding capture and showing off their riding skills or in other words what can be seen as the excitement of the chase. Pleasure also came from the act of stealing a motorbike which was brand new. For most of these young people the opportunity to ride let alone own such a bike was limited. Much of the fun of this type of activity then related to trying out different sorts of bikes and comparing them as good or bad.

Another important element of this activity is the issue of taking risks. Stealing motorbikes and riding them illegally has the risk of being caught and as Paul points out, 'it was scary, right scary when you were chased on the roads 'cause you knew if you got caught you were in right shit'. So they were aware of the risk they were taking which then was an important part of the event. Risk taking also involved riding dangerously. Riding without helmets and

lights or taking risks in their driving added to the excitement while also making detection or capture more difficult. Such activities are then important methods of 'fucking about' and 'having a laugh' because they offer excitement and adventure through risk taking.

Involvement in crime then was a major form of pleasure to these young people but much of this had lost its edge as they had got older. Being involved in crime had a third connotation which was linked to their experiences of poverty but was also linked to entering the adult world of independence and responsibility. In the discussion that follows young people talk about their feelings, reasoning and motivation in the present. All of them confessed to still being involved in some form of criminal activity but its motivation was not related to 'fucking about' but to supplementing their low incomes. Skills that they had developed when they were younger were now useful for helping them to survive financially;

AF            So that was when you where a bit younger, what about now ?  
PAUL          I don't think I could do it now.  
ALEX          We were talking about this the other day weren't we ?  
PAUL          I just don't think I could do it now.  
AF            I mean if you get involved in crime now would it be for the same reasons ?  
ALEX          I just do it for money.  
Paul          Yea.  
ALEX          For things that I haven't got that I want.  
AF            So you're using that skill that you had then to help you financially survive ?  
ALEX          Yea, but I'd be more aware of what I was doing.  
PAUL          You start to realise what will happen if you do get caught. From experience you know you can only get done so many times before they'll start locking you up, so you have to give over really.  
AF            Is that also about what you were saying earlier about being independent and having to survive on your own ?  
PAUL          Yea, definitely.

So being involved in crime had, as they got older, become too risky. Part of this was related to the punitive measures of the criminal justice system and could have a relationship

to their awareness of the different measures handed out by the courts for the over 18s. But it was also seen in terms of taking risks and weighing the consequences. If they were going to risk imprisonment then the rewards of criminal activity had to be more than pleasure. Crime and criminal activity therefore was only worth risking if they gained financial rewards.

### Consumption and youth

'Doing nothing', may have been a major activity for the young in Westhill but this does not mean that they did not want to be involved in other forms of activities. 'Doing nothing', especially for the older young people, was a central aspect of their lives not through choice but through lack of choice. Buying into the new leisure and consumption society was difficult when they were living on low incomes or unemployment benefit. What became obvious from the discussions was that even after eight years some of these young people did not feel as though they had gained the opportunity to participate in the world of leisure and consumption spending. Money was a central issue in giving them choice and control over their lives, especially in terms of being an active consumer. Many of the young people had reached the legal age of being an adult (some over seven years previously) yet because of the financial restrictions of low incomes they found it difficult to have access to certain forms of activities that they thought were important in being an adult. This effected the type of social life they could have. Going out in the evening, leaving Westhill and visiting other pubs and clubs was clearly restricted and determined by the level of income they had. For example, in the following discussion Brian and John are discussing life in Westhill and the opportunities open to them. Both admit the type of choices they can make are only available to them because of the income they have from full-time paid work;

**BRIAN** Westhill is OK if you've got money.

**JOHN** Na, I don't think there's much to do even if you've got money, only go in the boozier.

**BRIAN** Yea, but that's what I like see, I've been doing that for the last five or six years.

It's coming home from work, going to the pub, being normal all the time. I'd get me self around the clubs, the pub up the road and go out in me car.

JOHN That's going out of Westhill though.

BRIAN Yea, but I'm saying I can do that. That's what living in Westhill has taught me but that's about having money. There's no way you can do these things without money.

Having money is seen as a means of having some form of social life. The type of social life was partly dependent on what they enjoyed doing. Others discussed visiting 'raves' or 'going down town for a night out'. But a major factor about being able to participate in any of these activities was the question of money.

Young people's participation as consumers was also greatly influenced by the incomes they had. One of the most important goods was the car. It was this, or the thought of this, that made earning money worthwhile. For example, in the next extract Martin justifies working in terms of money, even though he hates work it gives him the ability to be able to run a car. If he did not have his own car then he would seriously consider leaving his job;

MARTIN I've got to go there to get me money, otherwise I don't get nowt. I'd prefer it if it was like a steady hourly rate. It's better money on piece work and that, but on hourly rate you know that you've got that coming in. I'm only doing it for the money.

AF So your only working for money ?

MARTIN Oh yea, if I didn't have a car well I wouldn't be able to live without one. If I wasn't bothered about cars and things like that I'd chuck me job in straight away and live on the dole but it's because there is things I want that I'm aiming for.

Having a car was important because it gave young people the access to other types of entertainment and leisure, such as travel and holidays or just going for a ride with their mates on summer evenings. These were usually not expensive nights out as they would club together and pay for the petrol then go out into the country or just drive around, not going anywhere in particular but at least getting out of the area. Cars were mentioned regularly as important

consumer goods, other goods such as videos and T.Vs seemed less important. This may have resulted from many of them living in the family home where these were already provided. Other important goods were clothes. 'Looking cool' or 'being hip' was important for their 'street cred'. Buying records was also important. It was usually the case that clothes and music were inter-related, being associated with a particular fashion trend. Having money then was a central feature of being a consumer. Without it opportunities for the young to participate in the new fashion's and music trends was denied them.

### 'New forms' of leisure and consumption

At the time the research was undertaken major re-developments were taking place within the boundaries of Sheffield. Under the regeneration programme Sheffield had supported the building of the new Meadowhall Shopping Complex in the Lower Don Valley. Previously this land had housed the traditional steel industries which had been the bedrock of Sheffield's employment policy (Gibbon 1989). These developments were within walking distance of Westhill and ironically Meadowhall had replaced the job sites where many of the youngsters would have traditionally found employment. Instead Meadowhall offered employment opportunities only in the retail trade with jobs that were generally part-time and temporary.

Meadowhall was instigated in 1986 by Paul Sykes Development Limited when it had purchased land, which had become derelict with the decline of the steel industry, for a cost of £34 million. With the aid of the Sheffield Development Corporation it was completed and opened to the public in September 1990 at a cost of nearly £500 million. Covering over 138 acres it has over 230 different shops housed under one roof, employing over 7,000 people while also providing car parking for over 12,000 cars. Its development took place simultaneously with a boom in retail sales which has been reflected in the growth of other centres around Britain. It claims to be the largest shopping

centre in Europe but this is debatable, dependent on how measurement is undertaken. For example, centres such as the Metro Centre (Tyneside), Merry Hill (Brierly Hill), and the Lakeside (East London) can match Meadowhall, and in some cases improve on both its size and shopping facilities. Although it must be said that Meadowhall shopping complex is only the first stage of re-development in Sheffield's Lower Don Valley. Future proposals include the adding of 250,000 square feet of shopping facilities, the opening of a new Retail Park, the building of an 8 screen Cinema Complex and the development of a theme park extension called Tivoli Gardens. When these buildings are completed it may be the case that claims of Europe's largest centre will be irrefutable.

Its development was influenced by the success of both American and Canadian Shopping malls which expanded in North America in the late 1970's. Its central ethos is that shopping is a leisure activity which large sections of the population enjoy. Spending money and consumption is usually combined with any family outing therefore providing large scale shopping facilities under one roof in pleasant surroundings, under the heading of a 'leisure centre' can be beneficial to retail selling;

It (Meadowhall) strives to win friends by making them feel good about their surroundings, themselves and you influence them to spend their money.

Biscoe 1991, p.2

Its facilities are aimed at mass consumption of popular goods while also wishing to provide for individual tastes. But it also needs to attract the more up market consumer of the affluent middle classes to make it a financial success;

To succeed, Meadowhall needs the masses. It must appeal to popular taste. But there is a detectable ambiguity; it wants to be up-market, too, and among the beer bellies, T-Shirts and tattoos is a good smattering of middle class smartness.

Biscoe 1991, p.4

This fact is borne out by the recent studies that have been undertaken which examine who the major customers have been.

Howard and Davis (1990) discovered that the average shopper is aged between 22-44 who visits as a part of a family group. They are usually car owners (90%) from occupational groups A, B, and C1, spending approximately £53.80 a visit. Already Meadowhall seems to be achieving customer loyalty from these groups as they are making more than one visit. It has a wide catchment area in which over two thirds of its visitors travel from outside Sheffield. Its largest proportion of visitors come from over 45 minutes away from areas such as Nottingham, Derby and Manchester although it also draws people from as far afield as Somerset, Wiltshire and Port Talbot (Biscoe 1991).

Meadowhall then both aims and succeeds in attracting the affluent middle class, car owners from outside Sheffield, but what about people from the surrounding communities and especially the young ? They are not part of the desirable consumer groups that Meadowhall is trying to attract yet it has been built on the edge of their communities, with its bright lights, offering mass consumption in pleasant surroundings. This then becomes an inevitable magnetism to young people who see consumption as an important means of participating in society.

With this development has come a whole new set of opportunities around consumption. New stores offering a diversity of goods arrived in Sheffield. Opening up and increasing choice for all who were willing and able to participate as active consumers. But what was the impact of this development on the consuming practices of the young people of Westhill ? How and to what extent were they using Meadowhall?

The research findings suggest that although they were not the most desirable or well catered for group, young people did use it. For example, when they were asked how often they go to Meadowhall, just under half stated they visited it between two and four times a week with a third of these claiming to visit it every day. This figure was highest amongst young women with young men claiming little use. But what form did this participation take ? Young

people used Meadowhall in two specific ways. Firstly, they attempted to be consumers although this had its problems and secondly, young people discovered and devised alternative ways of using it which were in conflict with the centre's aims. Thus creating and offering young people opportunities for 'new' forms of leisure.

### Young People, Meadowhall and consumption

When asked why they went to Meadowhall over half of the young people questioned said it was to shop. This figure was highest amongst young women with only a third of young men claiming this was how they used Meadowhall. This difference reflects research which suggests that shopping is a gendered activity, dominated by women (Scott 1976 quoted in Nava p.166). A closer investigation of this activity showed that the type of shopping done by young people at Meadowhall was not the mass purchase of consumer durables but a concentration on food shopping. As Jane and Peter point out, in the following responses, Meadowhall offers them access to food shopping, which was not available to them in their locality previous to the opening of the centre;

AF           How do you use Meadowhall ?

JANE        I go shopping down there.

AF           What sort of things do you go to buy ?

JANE        Well, I usually do most of me mum's shopping down there, you know in Safeways and that. It's dead convenient for that.

AF           What about you Peter ?

Peter        I go down there pretty regular to see if there's any jobs knocking about and to do me shopping down there. It's made life much easier for doing me food shopping, saves me lugging it back from town, you know.

Being a consumer therefore was for Jane and Peter about shopping for the basics. Meadowhall was convenient in that it was on the 'doorstep' which then cut down on the workload in shopping. But what about young people's active involvement in the consumption of consumer durables ?

Young people suggested that there was two specific problems with them being involved in this type of shopping. Firstly, while Meadowhall offered a greater choice of goods

but most of the items on offer were too expensive to purchase. Many of the young people, as mentioned earlier were willing consumers but not having the income was a major barrier. In the discussion that follows, Gail outlines why she does not shop at Meadowhall for consumer goods, suggesting that they are over-priced;

**AF** Do you shop much at Meadowhall ?

**GAIL** Not really, they were making it out as though we were going to get really good shopping in Westhill with the building of Meadowhall. But Westhill is quite a poor area, you know and people can't afford to use it. The prices go up on Saturday and at Christmas. I went in and bought this (pointing to pen) and it cost me 30 pence and I went in on Saturday and it was being sold for 60 pence, they had put it up 30 pence.

**AF** What about clothes and that ?

**GAIL** It all depends what shop you go to but they're all quite expensive though. Trainers in town which cost you £30, you go to Meadowhall and they'll cost you £40 so it's pretty dear.

The town centre therefore offered better opportunities for consumer shopping than Meadowhall as it sold goods cheaper. This view was quite common in that young people would choose where they spent their money by how cheap they could get goods for. In many cases this meant that young people could not always have the quality goods that they wanted, having to 'make do' with imitations or goods of a lower standard. This can and does have problems for youngsters who see fashion items as essential to their identities. Not to have the 'right gear' leaves young people feeling inadequate or embarrassed with their friends.

A second issue as to why young people did not shop for consumer durables in Meadowhall related to issues of style and taste. Although Meadowhall offers 'alternative' clothing and niche marketing, the choices available are still within certain fashion modes. In the discussion that follows, Phil, who dresses in the style of 'punk', explains how he feels his tastes and style are not met by the shops at Meadowhall;

**AF** So you're not too keen on Meadowhall ?

**PHIL** Er, no, there's not much there for me anyway. It's full of your High Street, boppy shops, you know Man at C.& A., Marks and Sparks. Not me really. When I go shopping I tend to visit

the smaller, back street shops, more than the High street shops for records and clothes I like, I can't get these at Meadowhall.

Meadowhall does not provide this type of shopping although it does attempt to imitate alternative clothing. 'Getting the authentic' is essential to being fashionable. It is also the case that youth styles have been moving away from purchased or produced goods. One example would be the 'para boot' which is available in Army and Navy stores. Big shops such as C&A are unable to copy such goods as the fashion content is in its authenticity which is ex-army.

These experiences did not deter young people from using the centre. Many of them did use it but in ways that did not impress the staff or management at the centre. Although young people rejected Meadowhall's mass consumption ethos, some of them did see it as creating opportunities for them to participate, not as purchasing consumers as such, but as shoplifters. This had two strands. Firstly, some young people, especially young women, engaged in stealing clothes that they could not normally afford. Being fashionable was important yet for the majority of young women affording the clothes they wanted was difficult, especially as many of them were still at school and did not have an income. The arrival of Meadowhall had therefore given them an opportunity to be part of the consuming society by providing shops nearby which were easy to steal from. It was difficult to identify how many of young women were involved in this activity but it was raised within the one-to-one interviews and in group discussions.

A second strand to shoplifting was hinted at within the group discussions and elaborated upon by Alex and Stewart. This involved taking orders for certain consumer goods that were available in Meadowhall. Once orders were taken they were then 'collected' for a price that the person who has ordered them could afford;

**ALEX** Well, if someone sees something they want from Meadowhall, I'll go and nick it 'em, if they're willing to pay a price for it.

AF Do you do that often ?  
STEWART When someone wants something.  
AF Why ?  
ALEX Money, its as simple as that.

As Alex says their motivation is money although status and excitement are part of the activity. Being seen by his friends and peers as someone who was brash enough to walk past the security systems and 'collect' the order was an important issue to Alex. So although he claims it was for money this explanation denies the pleasure he gains from bragging to anyone that wants to hear of this activity.

### 'Bright lights and warm streets'

Meadowhall while defining itself as a leisure centre does not at present provide any traditional forms of leisure activities. It defines leisure in terms of shopping and although young people recognize this they also see Meadowhall as providing them with a setting for creating their own forms of leisure activities.

One of the main effects of Meadowhall is that it has provided a new form of space which is warm, dry and well lit. In its design the centre is set up as a city centre with High streets and markets all under cover. It attempts to re-construct the authentic feeling of shopping but in a clean, safe, warm and dry environment. This has a magnetic pull for many young people. Creating streets undercover provides a different setting for engaging in their normal activities of 'hanging about'. This is more pleasant than the streets of their local community because it is warm and dry (especially in the winter. But it also creates a problem which the young are unaware of. Nobody has told them that unlike the streets this setting is private property. Young people therefore find themselves being policed not by the local police or members of their community but by the private Security Guards. For example in the discussion that follows Jim highlights why he goes to Meadowhall. As he suggests it is not for consuming but for 'hanging about the 'streets' in the centre and 'doing nothing'. This in effect brings him into conflict with the security guards;

AF           Why do you go to Meadowhall ?  
JIM           If I'm bored.  
AF           So what do you do when you're there ?  
JIM           Just hang about with me mates.  
AF           Is it better than hanging about on the  
streets of Westhill ?  
JIM           Yea, it's warmer its better than  
knocking about on the streets up here but the  
security guards are a right pain.  
AF           Do you get a load of hassle off them ?  
Jim           Yea, 'cause you'er young and that,  
they'll say, 'just get out, you can't hang about  
in here'.

The security guards were seen as 'the problem' in that they are insensitive in dealing with young people. As one young person said, 'they're just power mad, you know'. Throughout the discussions young people talked about how they were treated by the staff at Meadowhall. It became clear that they were being 'given messages' by the security guards that unless they (the young people) were not consuming they were not wanted. These messages came across in a variety of manners from being watched from afar, from being followed around the centre or from physical and verbal conflict. How the security guards dealt with the young could be determined by the time of day or evening in that at certain times Meadowhall was busy and the guards had other matters to attend too. At these times the young people were left alone (unless they became too visual and troublesome to the guards) and allowed to use the centre as they wished. At other quite times when the guards had less to do young people were watched closer or expelled at the first sign of 'trouble'. This in effect confirmed their feelings of not being wanted. Many of young people's concerns related to the issue of 'policing' in that unlike the police young people questioned what authority the security guards had to 'police' their activities. The young indicated that they were unclear about the differences between 'private' and 'public' spaces and what authority the private guards had to treat them the way they did. For example;

ALEX           There's some like, because they're  
security guards like they've got uniforms they  
think they're coppers you know what I mean ? They  
stand there and look at you and all this. But

we're just like any other person and it really gets me you know, 'what's he looking at' I just want to hit him, you know what I mean ?

Young men had strategies for dealing with this form of 'policing' which are similar to how they react to being 'policed' in their local community. This was conflictual and physical while also being a source of fun. 'Winding up' the security guards was a means of 'getting back' at the way they were being treated while also offering entertainment. For example, Joe outlines one particular incident that happened in the car park;

**JOE** You know once, when they had come outside and they had been acting clever, we stood in the car park and they're trying to follow us, so we got in our car and start driving about. Fucking hell they couldn't catch us and we're driving about at about 80 miles an hour. We did it just to wind them up. We do it all the time especially when they're acting clever...

The act of 'winding up' the security guards then becomes a form of leisure pursuit in that being chased is fun, offering excitement and risk. In many cases then, young men have transferred the street activity of 'doing nothing' into the setting of Meadowhall, using similar methods of gaining some form of excitement.

One other interesting development that was identified in the research was the gendered use of Meadowhall. Not only was this in terms of shopping but also in the alternative ways it was used. The streets of the local community were usually seen as the male preserve in which young men controlled how the space was used. The arrival of Meadowhall seemed to have started to challenge this structure of 'hanging about'. Unlike young men's usage of the centre young women had a far more positive experience. Like the young men, young women were greatly attracted to the centre because of its 'bright lights and warm interior' but unlike the young men they found it a safe environment to 'hang about'. In the following abstract Lorna discusses her main usage of Meadowhall, highlighting its importance as a safe meeting place;

AF So why do you go to Meadowhall ?  
LORNA Just to meet me friends down there and have a look about.  
AF So it has become important to you and your friends as a meeting point ?  
LORNA Yea, we always meet there and hang about until it closes, it's warmer than up here.  
GAIL We also go there to pull lads.  
(laughter)  
LORNA Although we get hassle from the security guards it's pretty good for having a laugh and messing about, you know at least if there's any bother you can shout and a security guard won't be far away.

For Lorna and her friends Meadowhall offers the opportunity to 'meet lads' and engage in possible sexual encounters. This they claim is easier to do because Meadowhall is a safer environment than the streets of Westhill as it is well lit and policed by the security guards. This is an important issue for young women as the streets are places where they do not always feel safe. As Lorna suggests like the young men they also receive 'hassle' from the security guards but as the following discussion shows young women deal with this in a different way, one that means they can continue to use it. Young men see the 'hassle' with the security guards as conflictual and an opportunity to engage in a 'new' form of entertainment but young women attempt to be more conciliatory, negotiating their alternative form of use. This is outlined by Lisa in the following abstract;

AF Do you get much hassle at Meadowhall ?  
LISA At first we did, they were always coming and telling us to move on, and everything but now they leave us alone.  
AF Why is this ?  
LISA Once a security guard was kicking us out and we started talking to him. We explained to him that the guards were coming on too heavy with us so they've started laying off us now. In fact he's ok 'cause if we have any trouble we ask to speak to him and he lets us stay in.

The young women then have attempted to befriend the security guards and negotiate through reasoned discussion why they should be allowed to use the centre as somewhere to 'hang about'. This has, as Lisa explains, been a successful way of being able to continue using the centre as they want too. As

a strategy this may be successful for the young women because they are not seen as a physical presence in the same way as young men who may be identified, especially when they are in gangs or groups, as a threat to the maintenance of a pleasant environment for shoppers.

### Conclusion

The notion that leisure and consumption should be an important aspect of citizenship for the young people of Westhill clearly was problematic. If being an active citizen is to be re-defined to mean active participation in consumption and leisure then these young people experience marginalization from both traditional and new forms of activities that are especially guided by the market. Participation is clearly influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, as writers such as Willis (1984), Hutson and Jenkins (1989) and Jones and Wallace (1992) have suggested income is a major determining factor, influencing all aspects of participation. As unemployment and low incomes, especially for the over 18s, remains a problem, involvement in the old and new forms of leisure and consumption becomes increasingly difficult (11). A need for a generous youth wage or secure employment with opportunities to develop a career (12) seems a necessity. This is an issue I shall discuss in more depth in the chapter that follows.

Secondly, if choice is to be determined by the market then it would seem that young people's needs and desires are either going to be ignored or given low priority. The traditional, state subsidised services offer little of interest to the majority of young people. Historically, this has been defined in terms of sport which for many is of marginal interest. New and alternative sites, such as Meadowhall while seemingly offering and enticing them towards the citizenship of consumption, are in reality not targeting the young working class as their ideal consuming citizen. Clearly the negative feelings expressed by the young people of Westhill towards these new sites of leisure and pleasure result from personal experience of trying to be

an active participating consumer citizen. The reaction they receive is harsh treatment or negative responses which has lead them to believe they are not wanted.

The implications of this are many. On the one hand young people have little option but to undertake their leisure within the public space of their local community. This of course has a long history, as both other writers and young people themselves have claimed, existing as a main space for the leisure activities of young men, thus creating a major source of conflict between the young and the old. 'Doing nothing' clearly has meaning and value to the lives of young men. Writers from the Birmingham school argued in the mid 70s that such activities were problem solving devices for the young working class (Hall and Jefferson, 1977) yet as the research findings suggest other factors are as important if not more so. Pleasure and fun are expressed and associated with traditional notions of masculinity and 'being a man'. Excitement, risk and hedonism seem to be central to life on the streets, reinforcing and creating opportunities for young men to practice and learn their masculine identities. Crime, petty vandalism and conflict with authority are all sites and areas where masculinity can be practiced, thus continuing a tradition of working class maleness which is aggressive and competitive. This has always been a major problem for other members of the community but with the continuation of unemployment, especially amongst the over 18s with the lack of opportunities for them to undertake other forms of leisure then not only does the conflict remain but also increase. This involvement in crime seems therefore to have links to masculinity but also that of entrepreneurialism, especially in sites such as Meadowhall.

New forms and sites for leisure offer little encouragement for tackling these issues. Writers such as Fiske (1989) want to suggest that many of the ways young people use sites such as Meadowhall is in a form of resistance, using 'guerrilla tactics' against bourgeois society through their shopping practices (p.27). As the

research showed young people's alternative use of these settings, can and are clearly influenced by the traditional street activity of 'doing nothing'. Providing an ideal opportunity for young men to practice their masculinity through the conflictual relationships embedded within the policing processes associated with settings such as Meadowhall. This is not a form of resistance against the wider society but about the policing of their leisure. But it is also the case that young people's usage and 'guerrilla tactics' are more related to the desires to be part of the consuming bourgeois society rather than resisting it.

The transference of these activities may relieve tensions for the local community by removing them from sight, yet in reality it does little to reduce the conflict young people have with adults or people in authority. Exclusion from the privatised space of consumption leaves them nowhere else to go but back to the public spaces of the locality. Not only this, but exclusion from Meadowhall may also increase feelings of disillusionment, by the reinforcement of not being wanted, thus heightening tensions with figures of authority.

Secondly, conflict within privatised space creates problems for young people themselves, unlike public space where the young do have rights (13) which they can make claims to. These include, for example, rights of fair treatment in encounters with the police (14). They can also claim some form of right through residence, in that as they live within the community they have the right to use its public spaces. In the privatized setting of Meadowhall young people do not have such rights. Its usage is clearly defined in the first instance by the managerial ethos, and secondly by the policing methods of the security guards. Young people have no redress for exclusion or claim to rights of fair treatment and justice. Leisure and consumption as a form of social future for citizenship, clearly has its problem for the young people of Westhill.

## Chapter Six

'Shit schemes and proper jobs'; The demoralisation of  
the young.

Throughout the 1980s Sheffield underwent structural and political changes that had a major impact on young people's experience of the local labour market. Traditionally, the steel industry had been the main employer in Sheffield. By the middle of the 1980s there had been a massive decline in employment opportunities in steel, seeing its importance to the local economy decrease. In its place, services were increasing as a percentage of the economy, offering jobs in occupations such as shop work, banking and fast food restaurants. A point highlighted by Gibbon;

Firstly, there was a net loss of 52,000 jobs. A small proportion of this loss is attributable to a change in the boundary of the travel to work area but only a small proportion. Secondly, there was a massive shift from an economy in which manufacturing was the largest employer of labour to one in which there was over twice as many workers employed in services.

Gibbon, 1989, p.6

This saw a net gain of 24,000 service sector jobs created between 1971 and 1984 but a net loss of over 74,000 jobs in manufacturing (Gibbon, 1989). These trends have continued with the expansion of the Lower Don Valley service industry trading centres and the Meadowhall shopping complex (Department of Employment 1994).

As regards unemployment, Sheffield has consistently suffered higher rates than the national average. In July 1990 unemployment in Sheffield stood at 8.1% (1) by July 1993 this figure had risen to 12.2%. In terms of sex, male unemployment rose from 10.3% (July 1990) to 16.6% (July 1993) while the national average at this time had been 5.7% (July 1990) rising to 10.4% (2) (Department of Employment 1994). Two other trends are also noticeable and important. Firstly, although the figure for long term unemployment has fluctuated with national and local trends it has remained consistent, seeing over 33% of the unemployed out of work for over 12 months (Department of Employment 1993). Secondly, throughout this period, July 1990 to July 1993, youth unemployment (3) ranged from 34.9% to 31.8% of the

total unemployed. This gradual decline is related to demographic changes, the increase of youth training and the growing use of further education as alternatives to unemployment. But it is worth recognizing that 31.8% represents over 35,000 young people being unemployed (Department of Employment 1994) (4). In terms of Westhill figures are harder to uncover but unemployment in the local Ward have been continually higher than the Sheffield average. For example in July 1990 unemployment stood at 8.3% by July 1993 this figure had risen to 13.5%, over 1.4% higher than the Sheffield average.

The impact of these changes has led to a restructuring of the local youth labour market. Opportunities for work have become limited, leaving the young little option but to return to the class room, accept life on a youth training scheme or go on the dole (5). So how have young people in Westhill experienced these changes and what impact did they have on their present day attitudes to work ?

#### From school to work; Hope for the future

School, for the majority of interviewees, had not been a pleasant experience. When it had come to the final year many of them had just wanted to leave as soon as possible and get a job. What type of job they wanted or career they intended to follow was uncertain. Originally many of the youngsters had aspirations about getting some form of skilled or semi skilled trade such as joiners or bricklayers, although the majority were unclear about what they wanted to do. It was a time of confusion and uncertainty in which all they wanted was to leave and get a job. Education was not seen as a viable option. School had destroyed their belief in continuing into Further or Higher education (although many of them did not even see this as an option). Getting work was a priority especially as this was an important stepping stone into adulthood. For example, in the following discussion Joe and Mark explain how they felt at the time of leaving school and what their main aims were. Even though both of them had wanted some form of 'skilled

job' neither of them were clear about what career they had wanted. Both were also adamant that further education was not a choice they had been willing to consider;

**AF** So what sort of things did you want to do when you left school ?

**MARK** At school. When I was at school I thought I was going to get a right good job when I left school and that, right loads of money.

**AF** So what sort of job did you think would give you that ?

**MARK** I don't know. I didn't have like a picture in me mind of what I wanted I just thought I'd get a right good job and have loads of money and that. I wanted something to do with art like drawing and that but when I went to careers they said, 'Oh you've got to go to college for stuff like that', but I didn't want to go to college I wanted money straight away.

**JOE** That's what I mean there was that much stuff on offer, that many jobs and that [doesn't mean amount of jobs but choice of careers]. I just wanted to get out and earn some money in a trade.

These kinds of response from working class young people are not uncommon. Other writers have identified young people's aspirations and career choices as being confused or focussed around the idea of getting jobs in traditional trades (Banks et al 1992, Brown 1987, Corrigan 1979, Wallace 1987 and Willis 1977). For example, Corrigan (1977) in his book, Schooling the Bash Street Kids suggested that reasoned career choices amongst many working class youth were difficult to identify. For many of them leaving school and getting a job was a priority rather than attempting to follow a career path. Wallace on the other hand showed, in her study of unemployed youth in the Isle of Sheppey, that over 43% of her respondents were also uncertain about their future careers although they claimed that they were looking for jobs in areas such as carpentry, welding, plumbing and mechanics (1987 p.38). Careers in trades then have always been seen as important to working class youth.

Another major consideration in getting a job was, as Joe and Mark claimed, that it gave them 'right good money'. Many of the young people had believed that the process of earning 'good money' was clearly linked to getting a job with a trade. So as Mark in the previous quote suggested

'good jobs' provide 'good money'. This perception may have arisen as a consequence of living in an area where traditional forms of employment had been in semi skilled and skilled industries. This would have put young people in contact with adults, such as relatives and friends, who had worked in these jobs and were seen to be earning good money. This issue of tradition and the way things were done is raised in the following discussion. Getting a job is linked by the young people to the wider process of transitions into adulthood. For these youngsters the process of getting a job and moving into adulthood was quite straight forward, influenced by seeing how their parents coped with life. Adulthood was therefore seen as a simple process that was gained through status when they entered work;

**PETER** I don't think you think too much about it because like at school you don't have so many worries and that not as many problems so you just like take it day by day like you don't really plan ahead. You just think that you'll end up doing what your parents or others have done.

**MARK** You look at your parents and think I'm going to end up like this you know what I mean with money and stuff like that, house and all that and no worries.

**ANTONY** You don't after go out to look for owt.

**JOE** Put it like this I thought when I was at school it would be a lot easier than what it's turned out to be. That's 'cause you see your parents doing it.

This is not to say that young people did not try at school or that they had come out of the education system without any qualifications. Although the majority of youngsters from Westhill had experienced school as boring, offering them little interest or value, many of them had consciously made an effort to get some qualifications. While at school young people had worked towards a variety of examinations ranging from CSE, GCSEs, and A levels, making a real effort to leave school with something. Even though the majority had left school and moved into the labour market some had even gone to college after they had officially left school to get further qualified. This commitment to getting something out of the education system could cause problems in that

youngsters who took this route were liable to ridicule. For example, Mark discussed his attempts to get qualified, going against what his friends had been doing, suggesting that the risk was worth taking because it might have helped him get a better job;

**AF** What about you Martin, did you get any qualifications ?

**MARK** I got all mine I passed every one I did like but it's like it's not O levels any more it's GCSE but I got through them all, all seven.

**AF** So you stayed on then while a lot of your friends went off ?

**MARK** Oh yeah, they started like with 'fuck school' you know what I mean and they gave me a lot of stick you know calling me a 'swot' and that. But I was thinking in my head that I've got to do it

**AF** So why did you think you had to stay on and do it ?

**MARK** I don't know really, I just thought if I get some qualifications, at least some like, I'll be able to get a better job.

Getting a better job was therefore the major purpose of getting qualifications in that they hoped having something would improve their chances in the labour market.

Parents also had a major influence on young people 'making the effort' to finish school with some form of academic qualifications. Many parents wanted their children to do better than they themselves had. Parents transfer their own feelings of past failure on to their children, seeing the young as having a better opportunity to 'get on' than they had when they were at school. For some parents this meant their children getting a trade while for others it meant getting out of the area and doing better for themselves. A good example of this is raised in the following discussion involving James, Alex and Mark. They recall the pressures they had from their parents to do well, suggesting this could also cause problems and conflicts in the family home;

**AF** Did you get a lot of hassle from your parents about achieving at school about doing something?

**ALEX** I go down to my dads what every Sunday for my Sunday dinner and every time I go down there I get hassle about going back to college to

do Art.

AF You still get that now then ? You were saying, it's James isn't it? Right you got a lot of hassle from your parents, is that hassle because you didn't go to school ?

MARK That's because he didn't get out of bed (laughter).

JAMES It was about qualifications. All me sisters they all went. Me sister was head girl she went to college and University the others they've got a business and like I'm not doing anything

AF So they saw academic success as important ?

JAMES Yeah, they pressured me into that and I wouldn't have it. I just didn't want to know. I wish I had done. I don't suppose any of us here who didn't get our qualifications wish we had them now.

MARK I know like your mum and dad said to you all time going mad with you saying, 'When you leave school you're not going to be able to do nowt 'cause you've got no qualifications'. And you think, it's not like that, you think they've done it, so it's easy to do.

For James's parents, academic qualifications provided a route out of the area and alternative means of making the transition to adulthood. This pressure from parents did not always cause problems for the young. In some cases it reflected the views of the young person concerned. The thought of spending time and effort in school and leaving with nothing was something the majority of young people wanted to avoid.

Three major works that have attempted to explain working class pupil responses to educational experiences have been those of Hargreaves (1967) Willis (1977) and Brown (1987). Hargreaves concentrates on structural accounts. He argues that pupils from similar backgrounds experience school dependent on the scholastic hierarchy of streaming. Differentiation and pupil attitudes to school are reflective of their position in this system. As pupils move through education they begin to evaluate their life chances against those of their peers. Youngsters at the bottom of the hierarchy start to develop an anti school subculture as a solution to educational failure. Working class youths' responses to their education is explained in terms of their inability to succeed in terms of the 'middle class measuring

rod' which requires conformity (Hargreaves p176), as Brown points out;

...in Hargreaves' account differences in educational and occupational aspirations are seen as resulting from differences in school performance, which in turn present pupils in the lower streams with the problem of coming to terms with a future in semi skilled and unskilled employment.

Brown, 1987, p.23

In terms of the response made by the young people of Westhill, Hargreaves' explanation is problematic in explaining their experiences of schooling. Firstly, Hargreaves suggests that young people evaluate and come to terms with their life chances in comparison to their peers yet the youth of Westhill suggested that they actively sought work in semi skilled and unskilled professions. They did not evaluate school in terms of a 'middle class measuring rod' they evaluated it in terms of a 'working class measuring rod' in which 'being successful' was getting a working class job. Secondly, the young people of the research did not necessarily have a anti school subculture in which they rejected the education system. As the findings showed young people still attempted to 'make the best' of their situation.

Willis's (1977) approach attempted to challenge the structural account concentrating not on how school failed young people but on how working class youth 'failed' themselves. Their counter school culture was not a consequence of educational failure but a cause of their failure. Willis suggests, unlike Hargreaves, that the majority of working class young people conform at school until the third year when they make assessments of what the school might offer them in terms of their future in work. It is at this point that divisions arise between what Willis calls the 'lads' (counter school/non conformist) and 'ear'oles' (conformist). He argues that an evaluation for many of the young people relates to how they see themselves as 'being a working class adult' in that school. Its insistence on qualifications and the academic is rejected as

irrelevant for their future lives in their local adult working class culture. Willis then goes on to argue that this rejection of school is expressed in style and behaviour which ensures their social reproduction into the 'adult manual labour shop floor culture' or in other words, it is effective in preparing them for working in working class jobs.

Willis has been criticised for numerous reasons (Coffield, Borrill and Marshall 1986, Brown 1987, Hollands 1989, McRobbie 1991 to name but a few) but in terms of this research the major problem relates to his bi-polar perspective of youth at school. His approach concentrates on the responses of two specific groups of young working class men, the 'lads' and the 'ear'oles'. This suggests that there are only two possible responses for young people to their educational experiences that of conformity or non conformity. In terms of the young people of Westhill, Willis's approach fails to accommodate the fact that many of them were neither similar to 'the lads' or to the 'ear'oles'. Their response were not of conformity and a belief in academic routes to success (the ear'oles') neither were their responses, like the 'lads', a complete rejection of school as irrelevant through an anti school counter culture.

It is this point that inspired Brown (1987) to undertake his research into the schooling of 'ordinary kids'. Brown argues, that both Hargreaves and Willis concentrate on bi-polar perspectives of young working class responses to schooling and both fail to acknowledge that there are large sections of young people, who Brown calls 'ordinary kids', who do not fit into the categories defined. These, for Brown, are working class young people who while not conforming like the 'ear'oles' or rejecting school like the 'lads' are totally neglected in the research process yet their responses are probably a more typical example of how kids responded to the educational system;

The study of ordinary kids also challenges a lot of what sociologists have hitherto told us about education and the working class. Much of previous research on working class responses to school has focussed on either the high flyers or, more typically the school rebels...

Brown 1987, p.3

Brown's study concentrates on why some young people are willing to 'make an effort' at school, even though they are dissatisfied and disillusioned with school life. His main conclusions suggest that the reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, young people make an effort because they wish to have some control over their own lives and success, even limited success, and school can be seen as helping them to achieve this. Secondly, 'making an effort' and coming out with some qualifications will, they hope help them get a better job. Brown argues that the majority of 'ordinary kids' see school in negative terms yet they also 'make an effort' because their motivation is to 'get on'. This notion is based on a working class concept of 'getting on' in that qualifications are a useful way of getting better jobs for example, jobs classified as 'trades';

Yet the majority of ordinary working class pupils neither simply accept nor reject the school, but comply with it. It will be shown that the ordinary kids make an effort in school because they believe that modest levels of endeavour and attainment, usually leading to CSE'S, would help them 'get on' in working class terms. In the working class neighbourhoods of Middleport 'getting on' usually meant boys being able to find apprenticeships and girls entering clerical and personal service jobs.

Brown 1987 p.31

Getting a good working class job was the main priority for the young people from Westhill. Although they saw this as straight forward they still, like Brown's kids, made an attempt to get something out of school, believing that it may have helped them once they were in the labour market.

## Leaving school and into the job market; 'Shit schemes' and 'proper jobs'

From the previous discussion young people clearly left school feeling enthusiastic and hopeful about getting a good job but how successful had they been and what were their experiences of entering the labour market ? Although the youngsters had hoped that they would be able to get a good skilled or semi skilled job with good money, they soon realised that it was virtually impossible to get such jobs. What they discovered on leaving school was that three possibilities existed. Firstly, they could become unemployed. This option did not seem a choice. Young people had worked so hard to get something out of school that choosing to be unemployed was something they wanted to avoid (6). Secondly, young people could choose to go on a government training scheme or YT, hoping that after two years, opportunities for being kept on and becoming a trained member of the work force would exist. This was the least favoured route as young people had little confidence in YT providing them with good jobs. Thirdly, they would be able to get a 'proper job' which would be higher paid and offer immediate security of employment and good wages. These jobs were more desirable because they were seen as closer to their ideal of good jobs while also having more status within their own peers and community. Getting a YT scheme was seen as a failure in working class terms while having a 'proper job' was deemed being a success.

Out of the older respondents only one young person had succeeded in getting an apprenticeship, three had ended up with 'proper jobs' and the rest ended up on YT schemes. Out of these only two managed to get permanent, proper jobs and as I shall show even these where below their expectations.

## 'Shit schemes'

For the young people who entered YT schemes their concerns of not being a good job or a route to a permanent work were born out by their experiences. Discussions on youth training highlighted how the young in Westhill

experienced such programmes as a form of control and exploitation. Many of them clearly saw these developments as a direct result of government policy. Young people saw YT schemes as being set up with the intention of controlling the young and keeping unemployment figures down. For example the following abstract was a common analysis;

**BRIAN** These YT schemes, your YTS and everything with it. They're just ploys to keep unemployment figures down and keep kids of the street.

**CRAIG** Yea and it's about keeping unemployment figures down.

**BRIAN** So it's a political drive isn't it again aimed at us, just a way of controlling us ?

Young people had evaluated schemes such as YT, not as giving them opportunities to good jobs but as a political process of control which was aimed at 'keeping kids of the streets' and keeping unemployment figures down. In many ways such an evaluation is not incorrect. As mention in chapter one, government schemes have throughout the 1980s taken over as the major 'employer' of the young, reducing their levels of unemployment and employment in the private sector.

But these feelings of exploitation and control were grounded in real experiences of working on YT schemes. One important issue that was central to these experiences arose in the discussions on wages. Young people clearly believed that work had to be justly rewarded yet their experiences of YT programmes were of receiving wages well below 'the rate for the job'. This had a major impact on other aspects of their everyday lives. In the following discussion Mark, Alex, Steve and Joe recount their own personal experiences of working on schemes. Two issues of importance are raised. Firstly, they argue that these schemes do not give a fair rate for the job that and secondly, the amount of wages they received were so low that the opportunities of buying anything for their own pleasure was impossible;

**AF** What were your feelings about going on a YT ?

**MARK** Oh I think it's shit, right bad. It's like leaving school at 16 at 17 you can get a car can't you, you can't have nothing on £30 a week well, it's £35 a week now.

**ALEX** I was doing a bloke's job me and I was only getting £29 a week. We complained to the gaffers that we weren't getting enough money. I use to come home, get changed have me tea and go to bed because I couldn't do nothing I was that knacked.

**Steve** I was on a YTS for two years man, hod carrying for a year and a half, doing a bloke's job. I used to come home, I was fifteen and I was fucked. £32, no £35 with me bus fares.

The issue of low wages was raised not just in terms of being unable to own a car but also in terms of having the basics to live on. For example the discussion expanded to raise the issue of affording the basics which was made worse when board was taken off;

**MARK** You know on YTS that money's supposed to be enough for you to live like on your own, get your food your clothes.

**ALEX** I used to give my dad £15 for my board money when he found out I was smoking I had to pay £20 and I had £9.

**MARK** That's what I mean.

But experiences of exploitation on YTs were about more than just poor wages, it was also about how they experienced the concept of 'training'. The growth of these schemes in the 1980s had clearly been developed around the concept of training (Davies, 1986) suggesting that there was a mismatch between the industrial needs of the nation and the skills of the young (7). The young people of Westhill rejected these ideas suggesting that training was not one of the major functions of these schemes. For them these schemes had little to do with training, being more about cheap labour. For example, in the following extract Alex and Joe discuss training in terms of feeling like 'slave labour'. The reality for them, was that they were to be used to undertake 'shit jobs' and to be kept busy by being provided with boring tasks. Their perception of training was cynical in that they felt 'in the way' rather than being trained to do a specific job;

**ALEX** You got all the shit jobs that everyone else was supposed to do that the gaffer told you to do. You were slave labour because they were paying nought for you, You weren't being trained, you being used.

**JOE** You just get the shit jobs, the gaffers aren't bothered, they just want you out of the way and they'll find you anything to do, I never got any training, most of the time I just kept out of the way, skiving. Shit it was so boring, I hated it.

These feelings of 'being treated like slave labour' were reinforced by their relationships with employers and trainers. Young people suggested that schemes were experienced as an extension of school. Many of them felt as though they had little autonomy, being treated more like school children than adult workers. One of the important aspects of getting a job was about being treated as an adult but employers on schemes tended to treat them like school children. Young people therefore felt that YT schemes were an extension of the class room and their relationships with employers were not dissimilar to the relationships they had had with teachers. This point is made in the following abstract;

**PETER** I don't think these training schemes are working very well. It's still like a kind of school with the gaffers being like teachers. Whenever you get a load of young people together in one, you just want to have a laugh with 'em. You don't want to get into it and the gaffers get right annoyed and act just like the teachers.

Not surprisingly, young people's response to this form of treatment was not dissimilar to how some of them had dealt with school when they were bored or when they felt that the curriculum was of little value to their lives. 'Having a laff' and 'messaging about' became a method of resistance to the control function and boredom of the work setting;

**JOHN** That's what it is like EIATV and CITV and that [various training schemes] it's all young people you see 'em in one big training centre. It's just like school again but you're a bit older so you're all still having a laugh and that you're not too bothered about work, you think it'll be alright and that.

These experiences and reactions to YT schemes are not uncommon. Other writers have identified young people's negative feelings about YT which stem from their experiences

of being treated as 'slave labour'. (Banks et al 1992, Finn et al, 1981 and Hollands, 1989). Banks et al, for example want to suggest that a 'folk lore' about YT has developed amongst young people which is then reinforced by their experiences once they start work as a trainee. The scheme may not be as bad as the 'folk lore' suggests but because of the low pay and control function of the training schemes feelings of being exploited is a common outcome (p.44).

### 'Proper jobs'

The third option and one most favoured by youngsters in Westhill was 'getting a proper job'. 'Proper jobs' were seen as a better option than YT because they were seen as possibly giving apprenticeships and better money. These jobs were usually found through local networks or 'who you knew rather than what you knew'. Getting this type of work did not require young people to have specific qualifications, as employment was made on personal recommendation from friends in the family or other local adults. Once young people had got a 'proper job' the reality of what these jobs were like soon became evident. 'Proper jobs' were a part of the adult labour market and they too were differentiated in that not all 'proper jobs' offered apprenticeships or good money. Young people soon discovered that these jobs were not a useful means of 'getting on' and that they could be just as exploitative as YTS schemes.

Two clear examples of these points were raised by Andrew and Lorna in their experiences of 'proper jobs'. Andrew had left school with three 'O' levels and had wanted to get an apprenticeship of some form. He was unsure about what he wanted to do but he wanted to avoid going on a YTS. On leaving school he managed to get a job working for a local subcontractor working in installing fibreglass. The following is how he experienced his first encounter with a 'proper job';

**ANDREW** Listen man, I was working in this job after I left school, it was an apprenticeship but how much money did Tic take out of me ? There was this guy I use to work for, I used to do some hard graft and the work wasn't easy man. I'm telling

you, he must of made a packet out of me. In two years I think he made about six grand out of me, you know. I used to do this installation, you know that stuff, thick stuff you know fibreglass. I used to work with that fire resistant stuff. Now then its the next thing to get banned like asbestos but this stuff itches your body like fuck. I used to have three or four baths a night when I used to come back from work always itchy, it brought me out in tears.

**JOE** Little spikes in your body

**ANDREW** £10 a day for two years working like shit and sometimes from seven in the morning till nine at night and I still used to get £10 working at weekends. Saturday and Sunday and I still used to get £10, know what I mean, bad wages man. I did the two new units they've got at the N.G. Hospital one last year. In between these two big jobs I did double glazing and I still used to get only £10. You know I knew someone who did the same job working with fibreglass and he was getting paid £350 to £400 a week and I was working for £10 or £50 a week, man he was conning me.

Andrew raises three issues about his 'proper job'. Firstly, he thought it was a job that was going to give him an apprenticeship or an opportunity to have a career. He had taken it because although it was not a good job it was better than YTS. But as he suggests it turned out not to be an apprenticeship and in many ways it differed little from YTS. Secondly, he raises the issue of 'good money'. As he states it was a wage of £50 a week which in comparison to YTS was an improvement but when it was compared to someone else working in the same type of job he felt he was being 'conned' and exploited. Thirdly, he raised the issue of working conditions. Working with fibreglass was a dangerous occupation 'second to asbestos' and he received neither wages comparable to working with dangerous materials or any form of protection. This 'proper job' for Andrew was therefore experienced as exploitive and although he stayed with it for two years all he wanted to do was get out of it as soon as possible.

Lorna was a similar case. She had left school and gone to college to continue her education. She wanted to become a Primary school teacher. At college she had got three 'A' levels and a BTEC qualification but she had failed to get

her 'O' level maths which was denying her the possibility of going to Teacher Training College. Throughout the research she was determined to get to college by attempting to re-sit her maths 'O' level for the third time. One of her main reasons for wanting to go to college was to gain her independence by leaving home but as this was proving difficult and she was unsure if she would get a place at college she was attempting to become independent by getting a 'proper job' with the possibility of a career.

An opportunity arose for a 'proper job' while I was undertaking the research which she embraced with great enthusiasm. This was a post working in a city centre Hotel as a bar person. It offered her a good wage and an opportunity to move out of the area by 'living in' at the Hotel. Initially she enjoyed the job getting satisfaction from having the responsibility of running the small bar at the Hotel while also making new friends. She suggested that this was going to be a career move in that there were opportunities for advancement in the industry or in other words a possibility of 'getting on'. After approximately three months Lorna's enthusiasm started to wane. The Hotel had changed management and the industry was feeling the effects of the national and local recession. She was now expected to undertake more responsibility with less pay and be more flexible in helping in other areas of the hotel. Tensions grew with her employers and they threatened her with the sack. Opportunities of advancement had gone and her feelings changed to 'feeling trapped' in a job that offered her little. Eventually after about six weeks of management pressure she walked out of the job even though this resulted in her being stopped from claiming her unemployment benefit.

Andrew and Lorna's experience of a 'proper job' was quite common in that they had set off enthusiastically and hopeful about getting a job that would help them 'get on' but they soon realised that 'proper jobs' were not all they claimed to be. In reality they could be just as exploited in this area of employment as others.

Writers such as Beck (1992) and Heinz (1987) using research from Germany, have claimed that young people are making more individualised career choices. Opportunities are being forged because of the increasing flexibility that is being created under restructuring (8) which is then offering young people the possibility to create their own individualised career biographies. They argue that the young are able to free themselves from former predictors of life chances and construct a career path more of their own choosing;

...it has been argued that young adults are being enabled to free themselves from former predictors of life chances, such as family backgrounds, gender and achievements in secondary education.

Roberts, Clark and Wallace. 1994 p.34

In terms of citizenship, what is being suggested is that the new forms of training programmes and labour market changes are creating opportunities for young people to have more control over how they undertake the social obligation of work. It is also being argued that because young people have more choices about their future and how they will achieve their aims, they are more likely to be active participating citizens, not only in the labour market but also within other aspects of social life.

Changes may be having such consequences in other parts of Europe but as the previous discussion has shown opportunities for the creation of career biographies for the young people of Westhill still seemed to be structured by experiences of class (9). Many of the youngsters left school with hopes of getting a job that would help them 'get on'. Their ideal was employment that would give them an apprenticeship leading to a qualified trade but they soon realised on entering the labour market that what was on offer did not reflect their aspirations and hopes. This left them a choice between YTS schemes or 'proper jobs'. The best option was thought to be 'proper jobs' because they perceived YTS schemes as exploitative and a waste of time, paying poor wages and giving little opportunity to 'get on'.

These pre-conceived ideas were clearly justifiable because when young people had taken this option their experience matched their previous perception. 'Proper jobs' on the other hand exploited them because of their age. Young people's opportunities therefore were clearly limited by the structure of the labour market. Other writers have made similar conclusions in that the labour market experiences of the young are being structured by class, age, gender and race. (Bates et al 1993, Jones and Wallace, 1992, and Roberts, Clark and Wallace 1994).

What are the implications of these experiences for young people's attitudes towards work? Have eight years of 'shit' schemes, 'proper' jobs and unemployment had an impact on the importance of work to the lives of young people in Westhill?

#### Life in the fast lane; looking for work ?

Young people were under no illusions about the difficulty of 'getting on' and finding work which offered them the opportunity for advancement. At the time of the research, only three young men were in full employment ('proper jobs') and out of these only one felt satisfied with his job, suggesting it gave him a good wage and a career opportunity (10). The other two male workers were in jobs that paid a good wage but both raised concerns over working conditions and the satisfaction they got from going to work. Their jobs were both in mass production industries, working on piece-work systems. The two young women in work were both working in the service sector (11) which were low paid and had little opportunities for helping them to 'get on'. The rest of the over 16s were unemployed and had been out of work for between two days and three years.

Young people were clearly aware of the realities of the labour market recognizing that jobs did not come easy. In looking for a job, they saw that the longer they were out of work the less chance they had of being successful in their job seeking. This arose because, according to them, every year there was a growing number of unemployed (especially

new school leavers) and a lack of job vacancies.

This is not to say that the young people were unwilling to look for work, only that they recognized that finding a job, especially one that provided a good wage, was difficult. For example, in a discussion Tony suggested that he was going to the Meadowhall Centre looking for a job in retail. Job searching was a central part of his weekly activities. Tony claimed he visited Meadowhall up to four times a week to look for work. Even though he had been made redundant three times (he was only 25), he remained optimistic and hopeful that his regular visits would eventually get him paid work. The enthusiasm for job hunting differed depending upon how long they had been out of work. For example, Steve who had been unemployed for three years suggested that after a certain length of time looking for a job meant going into the Job Centre when you signed on for your unemployment benefit. There seemed little point in job searching as it had not been very successful. This is not to say that he did not want a job only he had come to accept that unemployment, for him, was here to stay. There was therefore a recognition amongst many of the unemployed young people that the labour market had failed them after leaving school and was still failing them even though they had tried the recognised methods, such as going to college or on schemes. This awareness and experiences of the present day labour market, with the accumulated experiences of 'shit schemes' and 'proper jobs', led them to feel that getting a good job with good money was becoming a remote possibility.

Life without work had its advantages. Being on the dole gave young people more control over their own lives in that they were not exploited by employers. Work, as already identified, had been a series of bad experiences, on 'shit schemes' or in 'proper jobs', being for low wages and usually in bad working conditions. Getting up and working long hours for little pay, in a job that offered them little reward, was no fun and an experience they wanted to avoid. If they could not get work that offered them something

positive, young people were willing to accept life on the dole;

**ANDREW** I go down the dole and there's nothing, all they have to offer is poxy schemes and ET's, but I've done them and look where its got me, man, fuck all, I tell you man I'm better off on the dole.

But life on the dole had its problems which had to be overcome if life was to be bearable. One of the most important issues of being unemployed and one that caused them the biggest problem was the lack of money. Being on the dole meant having to live on low incomes. For example the weekly rate of income support for young people under the age of twenty five was approximately £31 a week (12). This caused them considerable difficulties, especially if they had their own house and responsibilities that went with it. These problems became more acute the longer they were unemployed. For example, Steve who had been out of work for over three years and lived with his brother in a council property, explains how he has difficulties managing on his dole money because of debts that have accumulated over time;

**AF** How much do you get on the dole ?  
**STEVE** Right now I get £42 every two weeks and that's because they take some out to pay off me bills. I got some arrears in gas and water and stuff like that so they took some off and its been like that for, what a long time. Before that I was receiving £38 a week and I'd been receiving that for the best part of a year but I've not received that for a long time. I eat that in food alone don't I, it's just no way. I've got to pay, even after they've stopped me debt, me electric and what else ? Oh, supposedly me Poll Tax, that's why I don't pay it. There is no way I can afford it anyway, I have to pay to go to the gym 'cause that's all I do when I'm not working and food and cigarettes, plus I've got to cloth me self.

As Steve suggests life on the dole meant having to face up to life on low incomes and all the financial constraints this brought with it. But many of the young people developed strategies which aimed to make life on the dole more bearable. One such approach was to take on 'fiddle work'. This was usually work that was paid 'under the table' or

'cash in hand' that Social Security did not know about. There were always risks involved in doing this sort of work but it was usually seen as worthwhile as it was a good supplement to the low incomes of Income Support and Unemployment Benefit. This type of employment was usually temporary, being work such as general labouring, vegetable picking or working behind a bar. Although it offered them little job satisfaction it brought them much needed extra cash to pay for some of the luxuries of life.

Out of the unemployed youngsters three had found such employment. Others acknowledged that they were always on the look out for it and some had undertaken it at times when it was available. Tony managed to get a part-time job at the local pub working behind the bar. For him this was ideal in that it helped pay for his social life and drinking while also giving him a working environment that he really enjoyed. Lorna also worked in a local bar but for her it was about paying for the basics in life, for example board. She had left her Hotel job and been suspended from claiming unemployment benefit, meaning she had no other source of income. Working at the local bar therefore was her main income but it was only bearable because she did not have to pay tax or national insurance. Another example was George. He had a wife and child and was using his initiative in getting 'fiddle' work by knocking on doors of the area, offering to do odd jobs such as gardening. This helped pay for some of the extras that his family required. All of these jobs were low paid, ranging between £1 and £2 hour but because they were 'fiddle' and they did not have to pay tax or lose any of their unemployment benefit, the risks were worthwhile.

A second method of surviving on the dole and supplementing incomes was involvement in crime. This is not to say that all young people saw this as an option or that they all took part in such activities. At least two out of the unemployed group put this forward as an alternative to living on low incomes. The following is a transcript of a discussion I had with Steve when talking to him about life on the dole;

AF Do you have any other form of income ?  
STEVE (laughter) Illegal ways, yeah.  
AF It's alright you're safe, this discussion is confidential and won't go any further, so what is it, a bit of fiddle work ?  
STEVE Er, well I used to sell a bit of draw [marijuana] to some of the locals but now I just go and nick clothes and stuff and sell 'em, like.  
AF Why do you do that ?  
STEVE There's no way I can manage on me dole.

As Steve states raising extra income could be undertaken by illegal means such as selling marijuana or 'nicking cloths'. 'Nicking' as mentioned in the last chapter was not only undertaken as a part of street life and a form of fun, it also has a role in supplementing his income.

These two methods of dealing with being on the dole were strategies that young people considered but not all of them were either able to find 'fiddle' work or willing to get involved in 'nicking'. For the majority, life was a struggle and surviving on the dole was not easy, but as Danny suggests in some cases it was worth putting up with;

AF Are you working ?  
DANNY I'm unemployed.  
AF How long have you been unemployed ?  
DANNY Oh just about a year now.  
AF Do you want to get a job ?  
DANNY Er no [laughter], I'd rather work voluntary than in a paid job because the paid jobs that are about are pretty mundane and pay shit wages.  
AF Don't you find it hard living on the dole ?  
DANNY Yea, but I manage it's better than working in shitty jobs for crap money.  
AF Don't you have any other income, you know fiddle jobs or owt like that ?  
DANNY I wish (laughter) chance would be a fine thing.

Danny then is choosing not to take work because of the only jobs available are low paid and 'shitty'. Making this choice is not easy especially as he is unable to find any other form of work that might supplement his dole money but as he states it is worth the hardship.

The second issue that young people have to deal with if they are to avoid 'shit schemes' and jobs that are low paid is pressure from the state. One area where young people came

into conflict with the state over being unemployed is with the Restart Programme. This programme was introduced under the MSC initiative Restart in 1986 in a response to high levels of youth unemployment. Initially it was aimed at young people who had been out of work for over twelve months but has since been made available to the young unemployed who have been without a job for six months. The programme is claimed to be voluntary in that young people are 'invited' to an interview to discuss what actions they have taken towards finding a job. They are also offered advice and 'counselling' which then can direct young people towards attending Job Clubs, setting up their own businesses or going on ET schemes.

Much debate has raged over the introduction of Restart and its role in helping young people find work. One major criticism has been levelled at the question of voluntary participation in that the Employment Agency (13) have the power to stop the benefit of claimants if they do not turn up for their interviews. For example, it was discovered that in Liverpool over twenty five people a day were being denied their benefit for non-attendance at Restart interviews (Guardian 27/2/87).

For many young people in Westhill this was an area where they came into direct contact with the institutions of the state. Young people were clearly cynical and suspicious of the state's intentions. For example, the following extract is from a discussion with Tony and how he felt about being 'invited' to attend a Restart interview;

TONY            I've got to go on Thursday after I've signed on to a Restart interview so they can tell me how to look for a job. I know how to look for a job I've been left school nine years to the day I know how to look for a job. I've looked for enough jobs, literally hundreds of jobs I've applied for so I know how to look for one. I've got to go and listen to some prat who's got a job about how to get a job. I could probably piss on him for brains but he's got his job I haven't. I could probably do his job five times better than him, and do you know all they're going to say is 'why don't you go on an ET', I'd rather not bother thank you.

Anger and annoyance were common responses to the threat of

the state using its power to force young people into 'shit schemes' or Jobclubs through the use of Restart.

Similar reactions were given when the issue of workfare was discussed. The idea of workfare, originated in the USA, and has been the subject of much public debate there. (Mead, 1986, Roche, 1992). What is suggested is that people who are unemployed become dependent on the benefit system, leaving the state to take care of all their needs. This dependency then needs to be broken, encouraging people to take more personal responsibility for themselves and their families. Workfare, it is claimed is one possible approach which can be used to break this 'dependency'. One such approach was being discussed while the research was in progress. This proposed the claimants of benefit should have to undertake some form of socially useful work for their unemployment benefit plus £10 (14). Young people's reaction to this idea was anger. They felt basic citizen's rights were under attack. For example, John argues how he thinks that because he has contributed through tax and insurance while in work he has a basic right to unemployment benefit;

**AF** What do you think then of this idea of workfare ?

**JOHN** I think it stinks, I'm entitled to my dole money, I've worked, I've paid tax, I've paid National Insurance contributions, I'm out of work through no fault of my own. So what am I going to live on ? If I can't have my dole money then I can't live at home, I'll end up in cardboard city but they're crying out about the numbers of people in cardboard city. It's increasing all the time. They don't want it but they're doing everything to increase it. Stopping your dole money because we'll not go on their pathetic little schemes is fucking disgusting.

If the only work that was being offered was 'shit schemes' or stop gap measures such as workfare schemes, then young people were not interested in participating. Their responses to this form of pressure from the state was to develop strategies of avoidance. In the next extract the issue of avoiding 'shit schemes' is discussed in conjunction with the possible introduction of workfare-type systems which were in the news at the time of the research;

**AF** Did you hear about the new proposals about setting up a new scheme for the unemployed ?  
**PETER** Oh Yeah, I heard something about that on the news.  
**ANDREW** Just like ET an't it but compulsory ?  
**AF** Sort of, it'll mean working in the community. Some would say that at least the unemployed would be doing something. Would you do it if you were told you would not get any money unless you did ?  
**ANDREW** They've just about said that anyway, well I was supposed to have gone on an ET twice and about two or three weeks ago I was supposed to start a job club down at Meadowhall. They're still giving me my money, like if you don't go you're not supposed to get your benefit but I've not heard of anyone having their benefit stopped.  
**Peter** yeah but haven't you had the letters that say if you don't come to Restart you'll have your benefit stopped ?  
**ANDREW** Yeah, but they haven't done it.  
**PETER** Yet, they'll fuck you up.  
**Andrew** I just don't go to them stupid interviews.  
**JAMES** They used to send me them letters, thousands of 'um saying they'll see you at the next signing on date, but you can still get away with it by saying you've got an interview which just happens to be at the time you're supposed to see them, I do it all the time.  
**AF** If they took your benefit away then would you go on a scheme ?  
**ANDREW** If they took me money away man I'd probably try and get a job for a week or so and if I didn't I'd turn to crime or sell draw full time man or something like that.

Three possible strategies are being discussed in the above extract. Firstly, young people are suggesting that they can ignore the demands to attend Restart interviews or to go onto ET. Up until this point they have not lost their benefit therefore this strategy has so far been quite successful. Secondly, they can lie to the Restart Department by stating that they have a job interview that just happens to coincide with their Restart interview time and thirdly, if they were pushed onto a scheme by the fear of losing their dole then they would be willing to look at alternative ways of surviving and raising money. The point is that young people are developing strategies which are aimed at avoiding the state's attempts to push them into 'shit schemes' or

jobs that they do not want even at the risk of losing their dole money.

### Conclusion

By investigating young people's experiences of the transition from school to work it is clear that employment, if only for the wage, is still an essential aspect of citizenship for the young people of Westhill. The value and meaning of work may have changed and young people's belief's in work as a social obligation may have been eroded but well paid employment is still something young people desire. The previous discussion clearly shows how the labour market has influenced young people's feelings of social obligation. 'Shit Schemes,' poor quality 'proper jobs,' and periods of unemployment have undermined the positive ambitions which these young people had on leaving school. It is little wonder that after seven years of being exploited in various work sites that these young people have lost some of the desire to keep trying to get a job. In fact maybe, considering the hardship that poverty brings, we should be admiring their resilience to continue. This is not to condone their actions but maybe go some way to recognizing why it happens.

Although work remains important, the lack of paid employment has given it a less central role to play. If jobs were plentiful and pay differentials reasonable, maybe work would become a major aspect of citizenship again. Until (or if) this situation arises we must be aware that how young people make the transition into adulthood and full citizenship is taking place in a variety of different sites such as those mentioned in the previous chapters. Evidence from the research in this chapter also highlights the growing use of other sites and forms of transitions. One area is the growing 'grey economy' where work can be found. This increases young people's personal income although there may be risks involved such as being found out or poor working conditions, that may be dangerous to their welfare. Another site is associated with their involvement with

crime. Again, while not wanting to condone it, young people have a clear rationale behind their actions of stealing. Poverty may be a poor excuse and one condemned by politicians but with the experience of being poor come feelings of hopelessness and inevitability. Risk then becomes less important to young people because little seems to be lost if they are caught.

Writers on the Right and Left (15) would maybe see many of the young people of Westhill as members of the newly emerging 'underclass'. Debates surrounding young people, work and citizenship have, over recent years, concentrated on the creation of an 'underclass' of workshy or welfare dependent recipients who are choosing not to undertake the social obligation of work (Lister 1991, Roche 1992). These debates have taken place on both the political right (Murray 1989) and left (Field 1989) and although their claims differ concerning causes both accept that such a group exists. Murray, for example, suggests that many unemployed young people have become dependent on state welfare, choosing to abstain from work because life on the dole is better. Not only does Murray see this group as being workshy but also they are morally dangerous, having little respect for others or the society they live in;

...it is characterised by drugs, casual violence, petty crime, illegitimate children, homelessness, work avoidance and a contempt for conventional values. The underclass spawns illegitimate children without a care for tomorrow and feeds on a crime rate which rivals the United States.

Murray 1989

Field (1989), while remaining aloft from the value-laden usage of the term 'underclass' argues that government policy is excluding people from society's benefits. Poverty is clearly a result of structural forces and the impact is a divided society in which the groups at the bottom are becoming more marginalised. But as Lister (1991) suggests even though Fields is careful not to use the term 'underclass';

...the very imprecision of his own definition of the underclass leaves his work open to appropriation by those who do not share his concerns.

Lister 1991, p.25

In many ways then young people in Westhill could be claimed to be a part of this new 'underclass'. Many experimented with drugs and became involved in violence and petty crime. Not all young people acted in this way but it seemed to be a part of everyday life in Westhill. They also had strategies of avoiding work, seeming to have little regard for their obligation or desire to have total financial responsibility for themselves. But what the discussion of this chapter has shown is that firstly, young people are not workshy, lazy or unwilling to take work if it is perceived to be worthwhile. Being on the dole, financially trying to get by, working on 'the fiddle', and searching for work, make the notion of 'dependency' irrelevant. Such activities are hard work and contain high levels of stress. Young people are trying to 'get on' and become more responsible for themselves yet the opportunities to do this are not available. My analysis suggests that generally it is not young people who are at fault but rather government failure to tackle the restructuring and inequalities in the youth labour market.

Writers such as Mead (1986) have proposed workfare type schemes and programmes of enforced obligation to combat the emerging 'underclass' (16). But as the young people of Westhill suggest such programmes are not seen as a remedy but a possible further cause of their increasing feelings of alienation. Already their trust in government intervention is coloured by their previous experiences of training schemes. With the introduction of programmes to encourage them back into the labour market, young people feel an increase in social control and surveillance. Their response is to develop strategies of resistance which in themselves may lead them into activities that are detrimental to their personal welfare and identity.

## Chapter Seven

Constraining and control; Young women's experience of  
citizenship.

In the debates surrounding citizenship, concern has been raised over the failure of mainstream writers to recognize the gender dimension of its meaning. Feminist writers have argued that citizenship is not a neutral term, even though it may be presented as such (1). For example, in the following quote Ruth Lister (1992) responds to the works of David Marquand by suggesting that his arguments are typical of the debates on citizenship;

I quote this passage because it is illuminating and in many ways typical of writings on citizenship by a certain strand of male political and social scientists who, in their gender-blind conceptualisation of citizenship would have us believe that it is also gender-neutral conceptualisation which it is not.

Lister 1992, p.65

Citizenship has been historically defined with a gender bias. Taking for granted or assuming women hold certain roles in society. Jones (1990) has suggested that Marshall's discussions on citizenship failed to recognize the influence of gender. Marshall's claims, surrounding the evolution of civil, political and social rights fails to acknowledge the different histories of women's rights. His belief in the liberating aspect of social rights also has problems as it fails to recognize the underlying assumptions which have forced women into being dependent on both the state and men thus creating a form of second class citizenship.

Lister (1992) has developed this to show how changes made by the politics of the New Right have increased this dependency. Policy changes such as; the freezing of child benefit, the abolition of the maternity grant, and the whittling away of rights to national insurance benefits have greatly increased women's dependency on men. Women's position as autonomous citizens is then also compounded by intra-familial resource distribution in which women lack control and rights within the home affecting how they participate in wider society.

This increased dependency has been reinforced by ideological debates into obligation. For example, Douglas

Hurd when Home Secretary suggested that the 1990s was to be the decade of 'neighbourliness' (1988) in which caring for other family members and people in the locality was going to be the new 'badge' of the active citizen. Yet as Lister (1992) points out, traditionally voluntary work, good neighbourliness and caring for other family members has always been the obligation of women. With an increased ideological and political commitment to these ideals women are finding themselves in a position of heightened dependency, having to take more time looking after others thus having less time for their own desires and needs (p.456);

Whether trapped in the home full time or exhausted by the double shift, women's caring and domestic responsibilities in the private sphere make it very difficult for many of them to participate as citizens in the public sphere.

Lister, 1992, p.457

Part of this arises because the concept of citizenship has, in many ways been theorised and discussed as an issue for the public sphere of social and political life. Little attention has been given to the experiences of women within the 'private' and it is here that women experience most oppression and exploitation (2).

What this debate raises is the issue of ideology and power that underpins women's experiences of citizenship. Pateman (1989) in her book The Disorder of Women suggests that to understand women's citizenship it is necessary to recognize the patriarchal structure of private life and how it influences women's lives. As Taylor argues if citizenship is to be of value to women it needs to consist of more than an abstract set of rights;

a reappropriation of citizenship must not be tied to an abstract set of rights guaranteed by the 'rule of law' but address the deeper bases of social power.

Taylor 1989, p.20

The previous discussion has focussed on citizenship for adult women but what does it mean for young women ? Feminist writers have clearly argued that social research into the

lives of young women has been generally neglected (3). They have been critical of mainstream research because of it assumes a 'male is norm' (Griffin 1985). The impact of this has been that studies into various youth activities have focussed on the behaviour of young men, while using a framework which 'fits' young women's experiences into male lives (4). The implications of this is that previous studies have been gender specific presenting the 'male norm' as universal while ignoring the influence of gender relations (p104).

McRobbie & Garber (1975) were the first to challenge the 'male is norm' assumption, in their critique of the Birmingham CCC school's work into youth culture (5). They argued, that by concentrating on male lives, young women were seen as either of marginal interest, or in terms of their sexual attractiveness. McRobbie (1977) then went on to show, in her study of working class girls in Birmingham, that young women's lives and youth cultures differed, suggesting that their 'invisibility' is partly a result of their involvement in a distinctive culture which are based around private spaces, such as the bedroom, and tight-knit friendship groups; (6)

...girls negotiate a different leisure space and different personal spaces from those inhabited by boys....One aspect of this can be seen in the extremely tight-knit friendship groups formed by girls. A function of the social exclusiveness of such groupings is to gain private, inaccessible space.

McRobbie 1991 p.14

This issue has since been expanded upon and there has been a growth of research into the lives of young women (7). Two major works that have added to our understanding of young women's lives has been Griffin's, Typical Girls ? (1985) and Lees book, Losing Out (1986).

Griffin, focuses on the transition from school to work, setting out her approach as a 'sort of female version of Paul Willis's research on the school to work transition for white working class 'lads'' (P.2). Griffin argued, that young women's lives, in making choices both in school and

the labour market, were greatly effected by assumptions and expectations about their gender and sexuality. A major component of her findings suggested that young women's concerns about issues such as, sexuality, marriage and motherhood were influential in the type of lives they were destined to lead;

My main point here is that young women faced heterosexuality, romance, love and marriage, employment and unemployment through a complex and confusing series of expectations and experiences. I have described their situations as at crucial transition points in the sexual market, the marriage market and the job market.

Griffin 1985 p.101

Lees study (1985) focuses on similar concerns but specifically on the issue of sexuality and how it is social constructed through the discourses of language. Lees, examines the views of young women on issues such as, school, friendship and marriage, showing how sexual relations are structured around the double standard of sexual morality. In this young women can not win. Sleeping with a boy or using contraception evokes the label of 'slag' while refusing young men sex leads to being classified as 'frigid' or 'tight'. The implications of these discourses are influential in structuring the present and future lives of young women;

It soon became clear that the terms on which girls participated in any kind of social life were quite different from the terms which the boys did so. Sexual reputation constantly emerges both as a cause for concern and a target of abuse...The vocabulary of abuse raises many questions about the construction of sexuality, the place of marriage in the girls' lives and the social organisation of gender relations.

Lees 1985 p.25

It is these debates that have dominated questions about citizenship for young women (8) and it is these issues that were of central concern to the young women who participated in the field work.

## School, gender and sexuality

School was a central part of young women's lives (9). Approximately six hours a day was spent at school in and around the classroom. Young women recognized the important of school in the transition into adulthood. Even though young women realised this, they continually expressed their dislike of going to school, arguing that they wanted to get out as quickly as possible. So what made them feel this way, what were the major issues which left them feeling negative about their education ?

School is experienced not just as an educational process, it also involves a series of interactions and relationships between the participants of the school, for example, between teachers and young people, young women and young men. These relationships exist not only in the classroom but also in settings in and around the school such as in the playground or on the bus travelling to and from school. Within these relationships and interactions, power is an issue of central importance. Power exists in all relationships yet questions of age and gender can determine the extent of power a particular person has in a certain situation. Part of this power relationship arises from the very nature of the school setting and the need for teachers to maintain control. As Jeffs states;

All teachers operating in the school system as presently structured know they must always win the battle for control or they can not remain a teacher.

Jeffs 1986 p.57

But power relationships do not just exist over discipline or control alone (although they may also function to control), neither are power relationships between adult teachers and young men the same as those between adult teachers and young women. Power can and is exercised through gender relationships which then effect how young women experience their time at school. For example one area of school life that is influential on how young women progress in life can be identified as the 'hidden curriculum'. The awareness of a 'hidden curriculum' has been well established (10).

Spender (1981), in her research, explained that although she believed she was giving equal treatment to both genders in the classroom, she discovered, after taping her lessons, that boys had more attention given them than girls (11). This process of differential experience has been much debated, and as Clarricoates (1980) suggests, the transition of gender identities through this process is complex and many and can be different dependent on the setting and situation.

Young women in Westhill were undoubtedly aware of the 'hidden agenda' and how it restricted their education. Firstly, how teachers divided their time between young women and men was an important issue. Young women were aware that such divisions existed suggesting that 'disruptive boys' were time consuming and in effect claiming more of their teachers contact time than 'quite' or undisruptive girls. In the following discussion Judy and Anne complain about the lack of attention they receive because of the behaviour of a particular boy in their class. This they go on to explain forces them into action of 'snubbing' their teacher because even when they raise it with him he does not do anything about it;

**JUDY** We snubbed our teacher out the other day didn't we (looks for agreement) because he said we don't sit down and get on with our work. But reason we don't sit down and get on with our work is because he doesn't show no interest in us. He shows interest in people that aren't doing the work.

**ANNE** I was sat there yesterday, I'm in his class, it was yesterday weren't it and I was stuck on something. It wouldn't have take two minutes and I could have got on with it but no, he had to sort out Dempsey first and all I wanted was one word, spelling like.

**JUDY** There's boys that sit down and mess about all the time and they get the attention and they don't pay any attention to us that want to get on with their work. Then he turns round and complains that you're not getting a high enough grade.

**ANNE** And that you're not good enough.

Young women saw this imbalance happening because teachers were frightened to challenge the disruptive young men.

Teachers either lacked the ability to enforce discipline or the system was not allowing them to use enough force to assert discipline. The fear of lads had major consequences for young women, not only in terms of the effect of the time distribution of teachers but also on how teachers responded to young women when there was trouble. For example, Nancy explains, in the following abstract, how when she 'joins in' she is 'picked on' by the teacher because he is frightened to challenge the young men;

**NANCY** This is how sexist Mr. Jack is right  
There was chalk written on the board and 'cause I  
wrote 'a' and I was the only girl that was there  
he gave me a paper towel and said clean all the  
wall. The lads had done it and he was watching  
lads do it but as soon as I put 'a' down. He goes  
right get it wiped off do you know what I mean. He  
didn't get the lads to do it 'cause he's  
frightened of them.

As well as the 'hidden curriculum' young women's experience of school was greatly effected by sexual sexual harassment from both other pupils and teachers. The impact of this was to control and limit the choices young women could make. Lees (1985) raises the issue of language and sexual discourse's as a mechanism of control but this is not the only way that questions of sexuality effect young women's experience of school. Sexual harassment has had little attention in research being seen usually as a problem associated with the work environment. Throughout the 1980's there has been a growing awareness that it is a widespread problem (Hadjipotiou, 1983). Research into sexual harassment in non work settings has received little attention but as Hay (1986) and Wise and Stanley (1981) have suggested it is a problem women face in all aspects of their day to day lives.

Studies by, Halson (1989), Jones (1984), and Mahony (1985) raise this issue in the context of the school, suggesting that young women are continually sexually harassed in the school setting. Young women in Westhill confirmed these conclusions, raising and outlining how they felt under immense pressure because they were continually

experiencing sexual abuse and harassment. Firstly, the issue of sexual harassment was raised in the discussions on relationships with young men at school. In the following abstract Nancy, Helen and Jane raise the issue of what they called, 'the raping season';

AF            So how do lads treat you at school then?  
NANCY        I don't know about anyone else but the  
              lads in our class are right dirty gits.  
HELEN        They're dickheads.  
NANCY        They always are in that year in that  
              year its raping time do you know what I mean ?  
RACHEL      I was doing PE other day and they nearly  
              got my shorts down and the lot.

The 'raping season' was a common term known to all, even though they went to different schools. It was used as a term to explain young men 'trying it on' in the school. This is a similar concept to Halson's (1989) 'being got' in that young men, collectively used their power and strength to physically grab or grope young women against their will. This was not about them trying to have a relationship with young women, it was about sexual harassment or the using of young women's bodies as a 'sexual toy', something to 'play with'. This is explained in more detail in the following discussion;

AF            So what's this 'raping season' then  
              explain this to me ?  
TRACY        All lads go through it the first and  
              third year's at school. At Westhill Comp. they go  
              through a stage where they have to touch girls  
              they can't go through a day without touching  
              someone's fanny or their tits or their arse.  
AF            How do you feel about that ?  
TRACY        I think we should get 'um back and grab  
              hold of theirs (laughter). They want to touch mine  
              I'm going to touch their's.  
RACHEL      The other day, there was these two lads  
              fighting and they got hold of each others bollocks  
              and pulled them (laughter. At this point they  
              scream with a high pitch voice, pulling faces and  
              making jokes about it).

As Tracy suggests, the young women see this 'season' as a form of 'natural' behaviour which young men go through. This then is explained as 'normal' because the young women see it as some form of biological stage of development that

young men go through which they have little choice but to endure. Tracy also raises the issue of resistance, in that her desired response is to 'see how they would like it'. As Rachal highlights they think it would not be a pleasant experience especially as the young women's reasons for doing it would not be for sexual pleasure but for retribution.

This event may have been more complex than discovered and issues of young women's role in this event is unknown yet the general reaction from them suggested that even if they were willing participants, which is doubtful, they were not in a position of control. A similar situation is discussed by Woods (1984), concerning his investigations into what he calls 'the bundle'. This is a craze which some of the young men and women of his research engaged, involving various practices of physical contact. He suggests that although young women may be willing participants the situation is controlled and manipulated by the young men. Halson (1989) suggests that these experiences of 'being got' in fact contribute to, and reinforce young women's sense of powerlessness in that they are unable to challenge young men's behaviour or control how far it goes (p.137).

The question of having to 'put up' with this form of behaviour from young men was reinforced by the teachers response. This came in the shape of two possible forms. One reaction from teachers was to ignore it. This is raised by Tracy and Nancy;

**NANCY** There was about five lads round me in this corner right and they where all trying to get to me. I'm screaming and one of the teachers just walked straight passed me that's what I mean that's what they do.

**AF** Why don't you think the teacher did anything ?

**NANCY** 'Cause they think its a joke.

**TRACY** If you claimed sexual harassment and teacher got brought in they'd turn round and say they saw nothing they'd deny it.

The second reaction from teachers was to blame the young women for their sexual harassment. In the following discussion, Karen explains, how, when she was on a short holiday with the school, a particular teacher saw her

behaviour of meeting with a lad on holiday as reinforcing the perception she had of young women as being 'slags'. Helen then goes on to suggest that this is how teachers normally see experiences of sexual harassment;

**KAREN** We went away with school and we were stood outside these toilets We all use to meet outside these toilets to go down to this disco. We came out and we were stood talking and she walked past and said, 'You girls are nothing but slags'.

**HELEN** It's like that all the time, teachers always see us as 'slags'. When ever boys try it on with us the teachers just think its our fault.

Both of these responses assume a 'willingness' of young women to participate in sexual harassment and active actors in the 'sexual game'. But as they explained this is not the case, young women do have sexual desires and needs but they want to make the choice of when, and when not, to be involved. So, as Halson (1989) suggests school 'normalizes' this kind of behaviour and in not challenging it sanctions sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment had another facet and involved the teaching staff at the local school. Sexual harassment by teachers was raised time and time again in different settings and with different young women. The extent of this experience was difficult to gauge but within our discussions, sexual harassment, was talked about occurring in different schools, with different teachers. In one particular discussion, I had been talking to a small group of young women about a particular teachers form of harassment. Half way through the session, when we had moved on from the subject, another group of girls joined us and with out any prompting from me or the other young women, they raised exactly the same issue, using the same teacher as an example. The 'story' therefore was reiterated and confirmed.

This sexual harassment was, as the following discussion shows, not just verbal or 'being watched'. In many cases it involved physical touching and molesting;

**JACKIE** Mr. Creep, he's a pervert (lots of agreement).

**AF** What's that tell me about that ?

**JACKIE** Mr. Creep, he massages girls shoulders so he can look down their fronts.

**GAIL** We use to have him in the second year right and we thought he'd be all right at first. But he's not. He comes round marking your work and he starts massaging you and like he looks down your top.

**AF** How do you feel when he does that ?

**GAIL** Listen every time he comes near me I use to go and sharpen me pencil even if it had a right sharp point on it. Every time he tried to massage my shoulder I wanted to tell him to piss off.

Being able to react to this form of abuse was, as Gail points out, difficult. Her only possible means of dealing with it was to avoid situations, even if this meant spending parts of the lesson sharpening her pencil. Halson (1989) supports this argument, claiming that young women have little option but to alter their own behaviour to avoid certain situations in which they feel at risk. The consequences are that young women's schooling is greatly effected by being sexual harassed.

### Young women and leisure

So what about other spaces and relationships outside the school setting ? How much choice and control do young women have in areas such as leisure ? One of the main criticisms of leisure and cultural studies has been the lack of interest in young women's activities (12). Writers such as McRobbie & Garber (1975) argued that the invisibility of girls arose because young women organised themselves in different cultural forms than young men. Alternatively Lees (1986) claimed that while this may be the case young women did meet in public spaces either with lads or in girl only 'gangs'. In terms of Westhill Lees claim reflected the major ways young women spent their 'spare time'. When asked how they spent their evenings the majority of young women responded by saying that they hung about on the streets. This seemed to have two distinct characteristics. Firstly, it was not unusual for the young women to hang about around

the Chip Shop within mixed groups. This was a common meeting place being central to young people's community space. It was also a space that was reasonably safe for young women, being well lit and used by local adults. Secondly, young women did also 'hang about' in girl only groups. These usually met outside the local area in Easthill Park and around Meadowhall. Much of what they got up to in this setting consisted of 'larking about' or 'looking for lads'. This is not to suggest that the pursuit of boy's or talking about boy's was their only leisure activity yet it did hold an important position in their lives. The reasons for this were complex and many, but one major explanation was that being a young woman in Westhill had its problems which had to be overcome and having a relationship or boyfriend was one such method of making life 'easier'.

Being a 'girl' in Westhill meant having to continually deal with the pressures of being a 'sexual object' to boy's. According to the young women, young men were only after one thing; sex and specifically having sexual intercourse. This resulted in a power struggle in which young men were continually 'trying it on' while young women were struggling to have control over their own bodies. In the following group discussion young women highlighted, by using young men's common description of relationships, how they were perceived by young men;

RACHEL      That's all lads want you for to try and  
get a fuck out of you.  
NANCY        They fuck you and leave you.  
TRACY        Yea, there's certain people that'll fuck  
you and leave you.  
NANCY        It's a quick fuck and fuck off an't it ?  
TRACY        It's find'em, finger'em, fuck'em no  
there's another one ?  
NANCY        Find 'em.  
RACHEL       Fuck'em.  
TRACY        No, find'em, fancy'em, finger and  
fuck'em and fuck'em off, that's what boy's do.  
RACHEL       What is it, fancy'em ?  
TRACY        You've got to find'em first, it's  
find'em, follow'em, finger'em, fuck'em and fuck'em  
off.

Young women explained this as young men wanting to 'show off'. 'Making a conquest' was a status that young men wanted

to achieve as it showed them to be 'real' men therefore they needed to 'brag' about it. Woods (1984) explains this, in his article on 'boy's sex' talk, as a form of young working class men 'leaning to be masculine'. Being a bit of a lad and being contemptuous of women is seen as 'natural'. This continual pressure to have sex has major consequences for young women in that they can not win what ever choice they make. As Lees (1985) points out young women are continually controlled by the 'double morality'. Young women were well aware of this and were quick to raise this issue as central to their lives. In the following abstract they discuss how having sex puts them at risk of being called a 'slag' while refusing sex gets them labelled 'tight' and as Tracy suggests, if the roles were reversed and they 'bragged' about it then they would not be seen in the same light as the young men;

AF                    Do lads call you slags then ?  
RACHEL            They call you slags when they've done it to some one you know 'I did it to so and so last night'.  
TRACY              Oh yea, I fucked her last night (in deep male voice) (laughter) I'm a right big strong 'un me th'are knows.  
AF                    So you think the lads are showing off then all the time ?  
SANDRA            Yea, all they're trying to do is show off.  
TRACY              If a lass turned round and walked in the class and said 'so and so fucked me last night' she'd be called a slag.  
NANCY              It's like this see, if you do it with 'em then your a slag and if you don't do it then your a tight cunt.

The 'double morality' of sexual reputation had major consequences for young women. Such a label could effect how they were perceived by other young people. Young women therefore continually attempted to avoid it. As Lees points out one possible method was to have a 'steady' boyfriend which would legitimize sexual relations but even this had its problems. Who they could go out with was determined by where they knew the young man from. For example, having a boyfriend at school or in the locality was risky in that they could not be trusted, especially if the relationship

did not last. The fear of gaining a reputation was a strong reason for not going out with young men who they knew.

Having a boyfriend was not the end of their troubles. Relationships with young men were unequal in that young women had to fit into the demands made by young men. This was raised in a discussion about what young women wanted from a relationship. For them, one of the biggest problems was going out with him and his mates. In this situation the young man would normally either ignore his girlfriend, hoping she would go away or join in ridiculing her along with his mates so as not to be seen 'under her thumb';

**NANCY** They could be as nice as pie with you one minute and next minute, as soon as his mates come, he joins in with 'em slagging you off, 'Oh she's only a fucking whore anyway' do you know what I mean ?

**RACHEL** People go out with lads and they say, 'He's an ugly bastard what you going out with him for ?' But it's not what they look like its how they treat you.

**TRACY** Boy's they'll treat you OK as long as they're on their own with you and their mates aren't around. As soon as their mates come round they'll ignore you. They'll do anything to get you out of the way. That's wrong because it's stupid if they've got a bird they've got to treat them same if they're with mates or not.

But young women were treated not only with contempt but also with violence if they did not do as they were told. Young men thought nothing of hitting the young women and using force to get his own way. Nancy raised this in the following discussion outlining how a particular young man used to hit her if she did not do as she was told;

**NANCY** It all depends because I go with lads because I think they're nice and all that shit. I've never been out with a lad, even them that 'I've been told will treat you nice who is nice to me. For example they still treat you like a bastard. I got hit by one lad.

**AF** This lad that hit you why did he hit you?

**NANCY** 'Cause I wouldn't do what he wanted me to. Like all he wanted to do was hang about with his mates.

**AF** Why did you keep going out with him ?

**NANCY** 'Cause I was stupid.

Having a boyfriend, according to the young man she was going out with, meant doing as she was told. Nancy accepted this as 'normal' and blamed herself for letting it happen. She then went on to explain how eventually she got the courage to fight back and give him some of his own treatment resulting in him 'ditching her'.

Underlying the relationship of 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' was the issue of sex. Although young women may have managed to avoid the pressures of the 'double morality' it was still present within a relationship. Young men expected, after they had 'being going out' for a short period of time, to have sex with the young women. If they did not get it, young women were seen as frigid or tight. For example, Tracy talked to me about a particular sexual experience which she admits to engaging in sex against her will;

TRACY I've done it wrong time wrong place with wrong person.

AF So why did that happen ?

TRACY Why ?

AF You're saying on the one hand that you want it to be right but then your saying well I've done it when it's not been right. Why did that happen, was that your choice ?

TRACY No, I was forced into it. It weren't rape or owt like that I was supposed to be going with him and everything but like one thing lead to another and I ended up doing it wrong place, wrong time with wrong person.

AF Was there pressure put on you ?

TRACY Kind of yea.

AF So how was this ?

TRACY It's like, 'oh come on, come on don't be tight, tight cunt come on. I've been with you for two weeks go on. It's not as though I'm going to fuck you off or owt like that'.

Two important issues are raised here. Firstly, young women are seen as 'tight' if they do not allow young men to have sex with them and secondly, Tracy does not believe that she has been raped because it happened in a relationship. The assumption here is that you cannot be raped by the man you are having a relationship with. Of course the problem does not stop there because although young women find being in a relationship a means of avoiding the 'double morality' the

issue does not go away especially if the relationship breaks down. What has happened in a relationship can then be used against that young women. If she had sex, then she will be seen as a 'slag' but also her next boyfriend will also expect her to have sex with him. If she did not have sex then she is likely to be identified as 'tight' or 'frigid'. The choices to young women are therefore continually being limited by the demands and expectations of young men.

### Relationships in the home and leisure

So what about young women's relationships in the home ? What impact do these have on their participation as citizens? Research has shown that relationships and expectations within the home can and are differentiated by gender. For example writers have suggested young women's involvement in leisure activities is greatly effected by either their domestic responsibilities and their relationships with parents (13).

There is little doubt that women's dual role of 'housewife' and 'worker' has had a major impact on how women experience leisure (Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990). Even with changes taking place such as more married women entering the labour market and the growth of male unemployment, women's domestic responsibilities have undergone little change (14). It is generally recognized that even if attitudes to domestic responsibility have changed it is still women who have the main responsibility for housework (Jowell, Witherspoon & Brook, 1990). Similar findings have been made in terms of young people's experience of domestic responsibilities. Young women are expected to have a major role in the house compared to young men (15). According to the young women in Westhill this situation has not changed. There is high expectations on them to undertake various household tasks. For example in the following abstract Sandra compares her situation with her two older brothers;

**SANDRA** You know, my brothers, they're both older than me and one of 'um's unemployed they do nothing in our house but I've got a fucking long list of jobs that I've got to do before I can go out, it's not fair.

Young women experienced expectations differently, usually dependent on relationships with their parents. For example, Tracy and Nancy explained what type of tasks they had to undertake and the level of responsibility they had. As the following discussion shows young women do have different experiences of roles and responsibilities in the house. Nancy has clear duties that are imposed by her parents while Tracy has a more flexible arrangement which gives her more control over her responsibilities;

**NANCY** I have to wash pots, take dog a walk, clean living room and me bedroom, if I don't do these I'm in the shit.

**AF** What about you Tracy ?

**TRACY** Yea, me bedrooms mine and me mum shouldn't go in she should leave it. When I come home from school I might do some ironing or stack dishwasher if I've got nowt else to do but no one has to wash pots because we have a machine to do it. You only have to put stuff in the dishwasher and take them back out but me mum or me does it. She might ask me to Hoover up or something like that but I don't moan they give me loads of things so I've got to do as they ask me now and again.

As Tracy outlines, her relationship with her parents involves a process of negotiation. She sees herself doing household tasks because of the support she receives from her parents. But for the majority of young women household tasks were central to their lives. Doing housework may have been a process of negotiation but there was no women in the research who had no responsibilities in the home. This was not the case for young men in that many of them had no duties or responsibilities imposed on them.

One area where conflict between young women and their parents arose was over how and with who they spent their leisure time. The most conflictual issue was the time young women had to be in the house at night. This issue was central in that they felt their parents were being too hard and restrictive. (although they did also recognize why their

parents felt this way.) For example, Gail did not have a very good relationship with her parents and especially her dad. Getting in on time was an important issue to him because he was worried about his daughters safety. Gail explained this worry as being a result of how he was when he was younger in that she saw him as one of the lads who would, 'fuck'em and fuck'em off'. Her mother on the other hand is frightened for her daughter because of what happened to her with Gail's father. The point Gail is making is that their strictness is a result of their past knowledge about how relations are conducted in the area;

**GAIL** Me dad doesn't want me going with lads or hanging about on the streets because of what he's done to lasses. Me dad was one of these lads who fucked'um and fucked'um off you know what I mean. He jilted me mum at the altar so that's why she doesn't like me going with lads because she doesn't trust lads. Me dad don't trust lads because of what he did. So they're going back on their past you know what I mean and trying to stop me making the same mistakes but I've got to find out me own way.

This understanding of lads that her father had led him to be strict with Gail. This resulted in Gail having to be in as early as eight 'o' clock, creating problems for her in meeting her friends. It also did not help her feel safe. Her father's perspective was that if she was coming home late she was vulnerable to being attacked, but as Gail points out in the following discussions, the fact she had to come home on her own and not with her friends made her more of a target for being attacked;

**GAIL** Because I have to be home early I go out before me mates get out. When I used to go home and complain he'd [father] say, 'well you've been out for a couple of hours. 'Who've you been with?' 'Myself' I'd say 'oh stay in then', he'd say. He doesn't understand it's because of him I goes. Yea, but he don't understand I've got more chance of getting raped walking home on me own early then if I come home later. It's stupid and it nearly

happened right because one night I was on the back of a 93 bus and this man tried to grab hold of me and rape me and I told them, [parents] 'it was because you won't let me come in later'.

Jane was in a different situation in that her parents were far more flexible on how she spent her time, being more open to trusting their daughters judgement. She had a regular time to be in. If she broke this she would be grounded, although as she herself said this could be negotiated. Jane's parents were more worried about where she was at night in that they did not like her being on the streets. They then tried to keep her in more by encouraging her friends around to the house. The assumption here was that she was more likely to be safe in her own house than on the streets.

Young women therefore have their leisure policed differently from young men, depending on their parents attitudes. One of the major reasons it is policed extensively is because parents have a frame of reference linked historically back to their own youth and the way that sexual relations were conducted when they were young. For example, even though Jane's parents are far more liberal and relaxed about her relationships, she sees her parents' concerns arising from the fact they got married young, when her mother was pregnant. Her parents are therefore attempting to stop the same thing happening to Jane. In many ways this is similar to Gail's explanation suggesting that the reason for attempting to control their daughters leisure are the same, it is only the method that seems to differ.

#### Young women's hopes for the future

So what about the future ? How did young women see themselves in a few years time ? What hopes and aspirations did they have ? For the majority of young women, marriage and having a family was seen as an essential aspect of being an adult. For example, in the following abstract Paula is quick to point out that this is clearly a part of her future plans;

**AF** Some people would say that your careers aren't important because you are going to have a family and child care responsibilities ?

**PAULA** I hope so, I want to get married and have kids.

This is not to say that young women had a romantic or idealistic view of marriage and bringing up children. They were aware of the difficulties of married life, seeing the ups and downs of their own parents' relationships as a true picture of the realities of marriage. For example, Jane and Nancy discussed how they saw their parents relationships;

**NANCY** Me mum's a fool right because me dad'll say something to me mum and if me mum doesn't do what he say's he'll blow his top. He doesn't hit her now but he gives her the silent treatment and that hurts me mum more than if he hit her.

**JANE** Me dad hit me mum once, he was drunk and he didn't know what he was doing and they'd had an argument and he turned round and hit her. She packed her bags and took me and me brother with her.

Even with this being the case young women still sought 'marriage and having kids' although it was not something they wanted immediately. Both Lees (1986) and Shaw (1979) argue that 'putting off' marriage was usually a result of the negative perception of young women had of their parent's relationships. This seems to be one process at work within Westhill although not the only one as will become evident later. The majority therefore suggested that family life was something they would do later rather than sooner, other ambitions had to be fulfilled first (16). For example, when young women were asked what they wanted to achieve in the next five years ? Having a job, having more money, owning their own house, having their own business and owning a car were given a higher priority than getting married or having a family. This 'putting off' of marriage seemed to be one aspect of other attitudes developing amongst young women in Westhill. Jeffs (1986) suggests it may be the case that young women are starting to challenge their inevitable path into marriage or the type of relationships they have (17). Hollands (1989) is another writer that wants to suggest changes are taking place. He, for example identifies changes

in the labour market as being influential in creating opportunities for young women to have a different form of future. Although, quite rightly, he is careful to argue that these may only be trends rather than changes;

The thrust of new vocationalism's careerist ideology for young women has shifted perceptions of the traditional domestic apprenticeship and of one's class position in the labour market. New identities formed in relation to lifestyle, and politics, although embryonic, are also beginning to evolve.

Hollands 1989 p.13

Young women from Westhill seemed to want more out of life than what their parents or other generations had had. One area where young women looked for change was in their relationships with young men. When asked about their feelings concerning the sexual division of labour in the home, young women clearly indicated that they hoped to have a relationship which was built upon a more equal footing. As already indicated they felt that young men treated them as sex objects, showing them little respect as individuals. Young women's response was to argue that what they wanted from a relationship with men was a form of equality in which their needs, wants and desires were taken into consideration. For example, in the following discussion Nancy, Jane and Helen responded to the question by raising issues of equality;

**AF** What do you want from a relationship ?

**HELEN** I want someone who'll treat me proper not treat me as though 'I've got a bird I'll get leg over tonight or fuck that'. I want someone that'll treat me right and like me for who I am, treat me with respect and if they do that to me I'll do that to them.

**NANCY** I want a lad that is not a big head, and treats me as an equal.

**JANE** I want a lad that doesn't take me for me money and takes me for who I am. Who's not always (makes kissing noises) 'Oh come here' but won't let you go anywhere, won't let you go to a night club. I don't want a lad that gets jealous when your hanging about with other lads.

**HELEN** I want a lad that won't ignore me.

Being treated with respect, taking them for who they are and

having the independence to do what they want and to make their own decisions are central qualities that young women are looking for in a relationship. These views are reflected in trends that have been identified by Jowell, Witherspoon, and Brook's (1990) British Social Attitudes; The 7th Report. They suggest that there is a growing desire by women for relationships to be built upon principles of equality. How far young women are going to be in a position of demanding this of their relationships is another thing. Clearly, as already identified, young women have little power and control over their relationships with young men and this begs the question of whether their expectations can be achieved ?

One area where young women thought they may be able to gain more control in their lives was in the job market. Writing in the mid 80s Griffin (1985) and Lees (1985) both argued that young women seemed to have little desire for a career, seeing their future as mothers and wives. As mentioned above, this view was confirmed by some young women, yet a minority did see getting 'a good career' as an important part of their future. They were not willing to accept 'motherhood' as an inevitable consequence of being a women;

**NANCY** I want a career, I don't want to be tied down with kids under me feet. I want to be me own boss and do what I want.

Careers were important because they provided opportunities for them to have their own independence. It also offered them the opportunity to get out of Westhill and see more of the world. For example, Ellena suggests her desire to become a hairdresser is related to her ambition to travel and get away;

**ELLENA** Some salons, I think there is two in Sheffield, qualify you as a hairdresser. Well, they've got Salons on big ships and that, you know cruises and everything. If you're good enough they'll put your name forward. That's what I'd like to do, you know get out of Westhill and travel.

To achieve this young women were aware that the

opportunities available to them in the youth labour market were limited. Getting 'a good job' due to high unemployment was going to be difficult. Two possible options seemed to be open to them. Firstly, they could enter the job market through a YT scheme or secondly, they could go to college. Getting a 'proper job' seemed a remote possibility while 'fiddle work' did not seem necessary as a YT was always available.

Young women reacted to going on a scheme similar to young men. It was for them a last option. They did not feel youth training schemes (18) were a successful means of getting a good job or a career believing like the young men that they are exploitative. This view of youth training is gained from heresy and rumour as none of them have yet entered the world of work. For example, Paula claimed schemes to be 'shit' yet she understood this from her sisters' experience not her own. Not only did young women see YT offering them little in terms of income and working conditions but it also failed to offer them the opportunity of 'getting a good job'. For example, in the following discussion Ellena talked about wanting to be a qualified hairdresser but, as she states, her concern with youth training is the failure of schemes to provide her with a guaranteed job at the end of it;

**ELLENA** I want an apprenticeship not a YTS. It pays crap and everything. But if I got an apprenticeship I'd get a proper job.

**AF** so what if you got offered a YTS scheme then for this hairdressing and not an apprenticeship ?

**ELLENA** I don't think I'd take it because their isn't a guaranteed job at the end of it. If you get a job with a Salon where they'll train you and guarantee you a job at the end well fair enough, at least you got a job at end of it.

The only way young women saw themselves avoiding the option of youth training was to get themselves enough qualifications so that they could bypass YT and enter into an occupations with a career structure. School, therefore had an important role to play in young women's lives. It was here that they started on the ladder to future opportunities

yet as highlighted previously school was doing little in terms of helping them 'get on'. Their alternative was to enter college to try and get the qualifications they needed for the job they wanted. For example Nancy discussed how she hoped to become a physiotherapist. She rejected school suggesting that she was unlikely to get the grades she needed. She saw college as a better option, offering her a chance to improve her grades and go onto a relevant course. Going to college for Nancy was not directly related to getting a qualification in physiotherapy but about getting the qualifications that she should have got at school. This trend to go on to college has been identified else where (Banks et.al. 1992, Social Trends 1989) suggesting that the young women of Westhill are not alone in these choices. Part of this has been explained by the growing opportunities made available and the reduction of benefits to 16 to 17 year old's (Jones and Wallace 1992). But as young women have suggested it may be the case that college is becoming more important because it is seen as the only way of getting a career (19).

An alternative influence for these young women on deciding to take a career path rather than become a wife and mother was closer to home. Young women clearly recognized the contradictions of 'motherhood' and paid work through observations of their mothers lives. This was then supported by their mothers, who wanted their daughters to avoid what they saw as their mistakes. For example, in the following discussion Helen raises these points when talking about making career choices;

**HELEN** I was sat talking to me mum the other night about what career I should do when I leave school and she said to me it doesn't bother her one bit what I'm going to do only thing she's bothered about is that I try and get a career. The way me mum sees it, she started off in a pickling factory pickling onions and then she moved on to being a waitress in a restaurant and then she started working in a chip shop. She then went to college and got some like GCSE passes so she could get a job being a home help. From a home help she

went to being a home warden, now she's a home care organiser now. She's going to go back to college to get some more certificates 'cause so she can be a Social Worker. I don't want to go through that you know I want my own career now.

Helen's mother clearly wants to convey to her daughter the nature of the dual role of motherhood and how it has affected her life choices. This in effect influences Helen by encouraging her to have her own career rather than to see it as secondary to becoming a wife and mother. Having a career then was an attempt, for some of the young women, to avoid the 'motherhood trap' Getting a job could be a possible method of gaining their own independence and more control over their own lives.

How far young women can achieve this is to be debated. Firstly, choices and careers have over the last few years been restricted by the nation-wide recession and secondly, getting a career in occupations such as hairdressing will do little for young women like Helen to move up the class structure. Service type jobs and work that is traditionally defined as 'women's work' tends to be lower paid than that of male occupations. Therefore what she may find is that when (and if) she gets married and starts a family her occupation will be secondary to her responsibilities of motherhood. Buying childcare facilities will probably not be an option to Helen meaning that the 'motherhood trap' seems almost inevitable for many of the young women from Westhill.

### Conclusion

This chapter has examined young women's experiences and identities as citizens. Its major focus has been on how young women's choices are limited by a variety of social processes around gender and sexuality. In concentrating on different sites, such as school, leisure and home, it becomes clear that young women's citizenship is in many ways experienced differently to that of young men. Issues such as the expectations and assumptions by others clearly influence how young women experience citizenship on a day to day basis. For example, issues that are understood as 'private'

(ie; sexuality) have a impact on how young women enter the 'public' world of work. A similar conclusion can be made regarding life on the streets. Although this is a site they share with young men the issue for young women is not particularly about public conflict over the use of space but rather about struggles with young men over the 'private' issues of sexuality. The sites of citizenship may be similar but the issues for young women differ from those of young men.

What is clear is that the choices available to young women have changed little since the works of Griffin (1985) and Lees (1985) were published. Identities for young women are greatly affected by both their gender and their sexuality. It is evident that for many young women these experiences are seen as a part of everyday life, becoming 'normalised'. Leaving them to believe that heterosexuality, marriage and a future life as mothers and wives are the only choices that are available. But it is more complex than this. Young women's choices are also underpinned by sanctions and restrictions. Stepping outside of traditional roles and expectations can and does have major consequences for their day to day lives. The previous discussion highlighted the variety of mechanisms at work in these processes, ranging from the sexual discourse surrounding relationships, to the restrictions imposed by parents. Gender and sexuality therefore permeate all aspects of young women's lives meaning that in terms of citizenship this is of central importance.

But social processes around gender and sexuality are not deterministic. Young women are not always passive participants to the processes which affect their choices. They can in some cases develop alternative strategies which resist dominant ideologies around gender and sexuality. For example, young women were both willing and able (in some cases) to resist the pressure imposed on them to conform to expectations. This they were willing to do even at the risk of facing sanctions and further restrictions imposed on them for 'breaking the rules'.

Young women's forms of resistance took many varied shapes, dependent on the situation and the circumstances. One such method can be identified as a passive form of resistance. In relationships with parents negotiation was a central method of overcoming certain forms of restrictions. Young women showed themselves as willing and capable of improving their own lives through a non-conflictual process (20). But young women were also willing to confront directly some of the processes they encountered on a 'day to day' basis. Examples of this would be their willingness to face up and confront their teachers' sexism or their 'fighting back' response to being in a violent relationship. What makes these forms of resistance even more interesting is that in responding this way, young women were liable to encounter further sanctions or pressures to conform to expectations of their gender roles, yet they were still willing to take action.

Resistance could also be identified in young women's demands for a better future. Issues of equality are important to young women, especially in relationships with young men. Of course, such attitudes do not necessarily mean that they will be successful in achieving more equal relationships. Evidence has shown that a gap exists between desires and reality in that changing attitudes towards the sexual division of labour has had little impact on the distribution of work tasks in the home (21). Even with this being the case, young women clearly indicated that their attitudes to the nature of relationships reflected national trends.

There is also evidence to suggest that new opportunities are becoming available for young women which create new possibilities. For example, new opportunities exist for young women in the growth of leisure. As mentioned in chapter Five young women are more willing to take advantage of organised leisure. Privatized developments such as those of Meadowhall offer young women new safe environments where they can enjoy unorganised forms of leisure without the fear of being attacked or physically

abused. It may also be the case, as suggested by Hollands (1989) that the new careerism of the 1980s is affecting how young women see themselves as future workers, challenging the inevitability of getting married and becoming a mother. Although the young women of Westhill had not encountered paid work, it seemed as though many of them had a growing desire for a career, being influenced by a wish to avoid the 'motherhood trap'. Careers may offer hope that the inevitability of this is something they can avoid but the reality is that the social and economic processes which has confined gender relationships between husband and wife and work and home to being unequal has a history that goes back to the industrial revolution and beyond (Walby, 1990). Change will not necessarily come from demand, change also has to be a desire of society at large.

## Chapter Eight

The politics of citizenship; Youth as a political force

The concept of politics has historically always been closely linked to the notion of citizenship. For example, in the Greek city state of Athens, being political was seen as both a central obligation and right of the citizenry. Undertaking responsibilities of political office and being active in the political processes of government was identified as essential for the success of the city state. Marshall also identified political participation as a major feature of 20th century citizenship, suggesting that not only was this an obligation but also a universal right that had evolved alongside the development of capitalism (Marshall 1950 p.20). Such ideas are still dominant within the discussions on citizenship. For example, in the report by the Speakers Commission on Citizenship it was claimed;

Free associations, free trade unions and democratically elected local government represent collective rights held in common. Within the public or political community individuals consult and argue, listen and persuade and in so doing, accept the idea of a public good that transcends the private.

Speakers Commission on Citizenship, 1990 p.8

As the above quote suggests, 'being political' is defined within the context of voting at elections and political association. Taking part in these activities is seen as essential to a good society. In the late 20th century this concept of the political has been challenged (1). It has been suggested that such a perspective of politics is narrow, failing to recognize the importance of sites and activities of other movements. For example Hall and Held suggest;

The politics of citizenship must take into account the role which social movements have played in expanding the claims to rights and entitlements to new areas.

Hall and Held, 1989 p.176

In the 1980s and 90s these social movements have been associated with issues that are of concern to environmental groups such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth and with

the feminist movement (2). Although there is much debate over these alternative definitions of the political (3) such an argument clearly suggests that the narrow focus of the politics of citizenship as participation in a liberal democracy needs to be approached with caution (4). A broader definition which would then include social movements such as those within Feminism and the Green movement needs to consider free association and lobbying within 'civil society'.

In terms of young people's political interest and participation it has been suggested that there is a growing dissatisfaction (5). Concern has been raised, on both the political right and left that the young are becoming increasingly de-politicised, showing little interest in democracy (6). Political participation and interest is seen as being influenced by a variety of experiences (7). When it comes to the young working class it is argued that the major influence to their understanding of politics takes place within the labour market. Willis (1984) in his article, 'Youth Unemployment; thinking the unthinkable' discusses this idea by showing how work is important for the construction of working class political identities. He suggests that these are formed through struggles within the work place in two specific ways. Firstly, going to work brings young people into the daily 'struggles against nature' which lead to a form of enfranchisement into political adulthood;

It is (work) much more than the possession of the vote every 5 years. It is direct involvement in the day to day 'struggle against nature' to provide for human wants and needs.

Willis 1984, p. 19

Going to work therefore brings the young into power struggles associated with wage labour relations which in themselves are effective in creating political identities. A second aspect is the learning of 'knowledge and skills in knowing how things are really made' (p.19). What Willis means by this is that young people gain an understanding of the processes by which commodities are produced in society

thus also learning about the struggles over these processes between management, technologies and workers and about the structure of power in the work place;

Knowing how to place and judge people; knowing who is likely to be against you, who for you; knowing when to speak and when to hold silence; knowing 'what really makes things' tick.

Willis 1984, p.19

Willis's approach does have its problems in that it fails to recognize that the workplace is not the only site of influence on working class politics or that political issues other than those associated with the work may be important to young people's political agendas.

A second and no less important influence on political ideology of the young can be identified within the concept of community. This, as mentioned previously, is of central importance to a working class way of life, being a collective experience, offering support and protection for its members from the hardships of everyday life. This way of life is then worth defending, giving rise to a 'politics of community'. But it is also the case that a strong relationship exists between the politics of the workplace and the community. Historically, working class communities evolved around the industrial developments of the 19th century creating a base for many of the workplace movements. For example, the development of Working men's clubs and Miners' Welfare Centres are closely linked to the work place, showing a relationship between the two. Williams in his article, 'Mining the meaning: Key words in the miner's strike' (1989) discusses the inter-relationship between the workplace politics of the miners' strike in 1984 and the political movements in the community that evolved. Williams suggests that the loss of jobs in the mining industry had major implications for the community therefore the politics of the strike were as much about the 'loss of community' as about the destruction of an industry and jobs. These relationships between community and work have then also seen a historical link being formed, in the shape of electoral support and representation, between the Labour Party and the

working class (8).

It is in the context of tradition and history in the workplace and community, that the politicizing of the young has traditionally taken place. Phil Cohen (1984), in his article, 'Losing the Generation Game' discusses the importance of work and community for the transition of the political ideologies of socialism within the young working class. Using his notion of 'codes of inheritance', he suggests that young people's political 'destinies' are fixed to the culture of the family, workplace and community, transmitting through customary practice of initiation and oral history;

I suggested that, until recently, growing up working class has meant being apprenticed to a special kind of 'inheritance'. In this, destinies were fixed to origins through an active mastery of shared techniques and conditions of labour. As a child you were 'set on' to tasks related to a future function on the shop floor or kitchen floor, and thereby acquired a sense of being 'born and bred' into your class position.

Cohen 1984, p103.

Cohen's article also sets down the context of the debate that has evolved in the 1980's regarding working class youth and political allegiance. He raises questions concerning the inevitability of the processes involved in political socialisation of the young. Fragmentation and the changing experiences of the work place and community are changing how the young are politicised. As voting figures and participation rates have shown, the young working class are becoming disillusioned with the political process and in particular with the Labour Party. If political allegiances are to be reformed then, the agenda of the left is going to have to recognize the needs of the young. Hollands re-affirms much of Cohen's conclusions arguing that many of the young have little interest in formal politics. Hollands main focus is on the effects of the 'new vocationalism' on political identities and how the new changes in work experiences are having, 'serious implications in shifting young people's political perspectives and attachments away from a labour tradition' (p. 194). He goes on to argue that

the labour movement has failed to engage with the realities of the young by its;

...continued reliance on patronising modes of regeneration, the inability to understand and deal with the relationship between traditional and developing youth identities and transitions (constructed across a range of social locations), a collusion in maintaining a generational division of labour and the utilisation of statist and corporate rather than cultural solutions in dealing with training and the economy. These have all contributed to the crisis.

Hollands 1989 p. 209.

Cohen and Hollands ideas are interesting in that they suggest a new form of politics needs to evolve if the young are to be re-introduced to the 'political'. I shall return to this point in the conclusion.

#### A Definition of Politics

From the beginning of the research it became clear that young people in Westhill identified the concept of politics in a traditional manner. For them it related to the formal processes of a parliamentary democracy such as, voting in general and local elections and parliamentary decision making. In this they saw a major role for politicians who were at the centre of decision making within the political system of democracy. Politics therefore was about being governed by a central Parliament which consisted of political parties who competed for power in national elections. Young people perceived the power base of politics as being in London at the House of Commons, seeing little value in local government, believing that major decisions about their lives and their community were made by central government and not local authorities. This definition then, identified politics as belonging to a liberal democracy in which political agendas were defined and dealt with by the formal political system and its politicians, being centred in the House of Commons in London.

Young people's reaction to this form of politics was very clear in that they defined themselves as disinterested

and 'non political'. The following is a selection of comments from the field work in response to being questioned about their interest in politics;

boring

I'm just not interested, it does nothing for me  
They don't interest me they don't know the full  
score.

I'm not political at all.

It's a waste of time an't it ?

they're all the same, they're all ripping off  
cunts anyway.

I should be interested but I don't really  
associate my self with politics, it doesn't do  
much for me.

It's no good asking me about politics I don't have  
nowt to do with it, it's a waste of fucking time.

These types of responses were common. Generally the young would answer questions on politics by shrugging their shoulders, rolling their eyes and expressing statements of boredom. These responses are not dissimilar to the reactions other studies on youth and politics have received from the young (9). They are also reactions that reflect the adult world where political apathy and disinterest is in many cases accepted as the norm (Heath and Topf 1987). But why does this apathy towards liberal democracy exist amongst the young ?

One area that has been studied extensively is the issue of young people's lack of political knowledge and its impact on political participation. Studies such as those by Billig and Cochrane (1987), Denver and Hands (1990), Mardle and Taylor (1987) and the Speakers Commission on Citizenship (1990) have approached the subject of political apathy as a lack of knowledge about the workings of a liberal democracy. This may be the case in that in terms of political knowledge the majority of young people interviewed had little understanding about the complex workings of liberal democracy. For example when asked who their local councillors and MP were, less than a quarter of respondents

knew. Out of these no one could name their councillors and only one had any idea who their MP was. But these findings alone do not adequately explain young people's lack of political participation other factors have to be considered.

### Apathy and politics

Young people had an explanation of their apathy which highlighted issues of powerless and the lack of influence they had over decisions that were made concerning their everyday lives. This was not just a criticism of the government in power but of the actual system of liberal democracy. For example in the following quote Jim clearly suggests that he has little time or concern with the political process, seeing all politicians and parties as the same;

**JIM** They're all the same, so why bother voting for any of 'um.

The main focus of concern was the role that politicians, centred in London, had on the outcome of the democratic system of government. Young people clearly felt angry that London was the centre of political decision making and that 'blank faced' politicians who had no real knowledge of what it was like in their community, made decisions that could effect their everyday lives. For example Bob put it quite clearly;

**BOB** How do they know what it's like here if they've never been ? When did we last see a politician up 'ere ? They don't care about us, as long as they've got a cushy number in London why bother about us ?

These feelings were even stronger when they were asked about Europe and the idea that politicians in the EC were likely to be making decisions about their lives in the near future. Of course decision making is far more complex than how young people perceived it yet these views are still important as it suggests that the political system fails to include either the local community or young people in the important decision making processes. The distance of decision makers from their community may be symbolic but it reinforced their

feelings of remoteness. Young people questioned how politicians all these miles away in London and Brussels could understand what life in Westhill was like. Without this knowledge how could they make the right decisions about young people's needs ?

Being listened to was of central importance. Young people suggested that within the process of democracy they were never listened to and decisions about their lives were made without their views being taken into consideration. Politicians were only concerned with the sections of society that had the power to keep them in political office. For example, the following is a discussion with Peter about democracy;

PETER        We should have a democratic society.  
AF            Don't you think we've got one ?  
PETER        No, because we can't go round and tell them what we want they just tell us to fuck off.  
AF            Why don't they listen to you.  
PETER        Because they don't give a fuck. They've stood there looking down at you just 'cause we're young, going yea what do you want. They're only interested in people that vote for them and they know that if they get their votes from a certain section of society then they'll look after them and we're not part of that.

Such a view is quite cynical yet in many ways it reflects how many young people see the system working. Youth issues within the media and political discourses are usually only discussed in terms of 'youth as a social problem' (10). For example, discussions on education and training tend to focus on the needs of society and the failings of young people rather than on how the system can help them to fulfil their needs. If young people feel that they are only treated as a problem it seems reasonable to claim that their perceptions of the political system as unresponsive to their needs seems quite understandable.

The idea that they were not listened too was reinforced by how they saw politicians representing the interests of both Westhill and the young. Young people argued that politicians are not identifiable with the people they represent. They are seen as being 'different' from ordinary

people and therefore unable to understand or represent the people of Westhill;

**BOB** I think politicians just come and say their piece and go home to their nice houses. That's what pisses me off most about politicians. They come and say, 'You're living in squalid conditions it's terrible' and then they fuck off back home in their nice big car. How can they speak out for poor people ?

What Bob suggests is that the result of these differences is a lack of understanding of life in Westhill especially around issues such as poverty. Being seen as 'the same' as the people they represented was an important means of politicians getting some form of respect. Young people also thought politicians must be in politics for more than 'helping others' or representing the needs of Westhill. For them self interest and corruption were underlining reasons why people got involved in politics. People did not become so involved simply because of political dogma or a sense of responsibility to others. They got involved because of what they could get out of it;

**ALEX** It doesn't matter who gets into power they're all in it for the money and what they can get out of it.

In many ways it is to be expected that young people blame politicians as they are seen as the main actors within parliamentary democracy and part of their role is to be held accountable for the decisions made. Yet it is not only politicians they perceive as the problem. Clearly young people saw the structure of liberal democracy as being at fault in that within the processes they are not encouraged to participate. Young people's experience of 'being political' was then reinforced by their feelings of inevitability about the workings of the system and their belief that they could not alter or change either the structure of liberal democracy or politicians. This was discussed in one of two ways. Firstly, some young people explained their non participation as a result of large majorities. For them the British voting system was a 'sham' in that a system that relies upon the 'first past the post'

method of elections created a system where minority or alternative views could be easily dismissed. Being political and active would therefore bring about little change. As Steve points out when he is talking about the previous national election;

**STEVE** No matter what happens in this country Ambleside will always be Labour. I've got a list of ten strongest majorities and it's number seven for all 650.

This was one of the main explanations of why young people would not vote in local elections. It was argued that if change was to be made, the fact that the local councillors had such a solid majority meant that their vote would have little influence;

**JIM** I don't vote in local elections because it's a clear majority everytime. It's not worth the effort just to knock up someones majority.

An alternative perspective, and more cynical view, was expressed by a minority who suggested that their involvement in the political system would not achieve anything because the real power was not in Parliament but in other areas of society;

**PAUL** Politicians are not in charge anyway. How many times have you heard, 'the City opened cautiously today. Who gives a fuck ? All they do is buy and sell fucking coffee and sugar. What should it matter what they think ? But it does.

This was expanded upon in other discussions to include other areas that they identified as having power outside of Parliamentary control. Democracy therefore seemed of little importance because the real decisions about how the country should be run was in the hands of industry and business. Voting seemed a waste of time. Such a view may stem from their personal experiences of how things are done. For example, in the discussion on work, getting a 'proper job' was determined by industry and local business. Young people suggested that government only seemed to intervene and provide employment that kept unemployment figures down or as a means of controlling their free time. Having such

experiences could be influential in the construction of negative political views.

It could be assumed from this discussion that young people's level of participation in the political processes of democracy would be low. In many ways this was the case but there were inconsistencies between what they said and what they did. Many of the young people, although rejecting the political system as irrelevant, believed that they had a responsibility and duty to participate in voting. When they were asked if they would vote in national elections over half of them said that they would. This commitment was not as strong for local elections, with just over a third stating that they would vote in the next council elections. But also when they were asked if they thought it was important that they voted at 18, over half agreed or strongly agreed. The reasoning for these inconsistencies between feelings about politics and participation was explained by some as the 'the right to criticize'. It was argued that voting was an opportunity to influence events. If it was not taken then young people had little right to complain if they did not like the outcome of elections;

JIM        What gets me, right, is people who don't vote... I don't see how people who don't vote can criticize what happens.

Such a perspective contradicts their claims over the lack of influence they have in the political system. Clearly, what they are arguing is that voting is a method of influencing what happens therefore it is important they take part in elections. This view of the workings of the voting system is how large sections of the population expect voting and elections to work so it is not surprising that they are willing to defend the use of the vote. On the one hand therefore they see the system as not working for them, especially at the level of parliamentary representation but at the level of voting they suggest that participation can bring about some form of change. A second and alternative explanation related to the idea that voting was a right that young people, although dissatisfied with politics, should exercise;

**BRIAN** I don't think politics does any good but you've got to vote because it's the only thing we have.

In their definition voting was the only place where they could act politically, therefore it was a right that they should exercise whenever possible. This was defended on the grounds of past generations having fought for the vote therefore we should use it or be in danger of losing it.

Young people did recognize that other forms of political participation existed such as, being involved in either a political party or trade union. For the majority of young people this form of 'being political' was considered either a waste of time or something they had not really given any thought too. A minority of young people had considered a more active involvement in the political process yet had rejected it because they were unwilling to commit themselves to a particular set of political ideologies. For them belonging to a political party or trade union meant they had to agree with what ever the political doctrine of that party was.

Other forms of participation were evident amongst the young which could be defined as 'political'. Firstly, over a third of the young people had been involved in organised demonstrations. These ranged from 'supporting the teachers' strike' to 'demonstrating against the Gulf War'. This form of participation was dominated by male respondents in that only one young women had taken part, suggesting it is an arena of political action that may reflect 'masculine identities'. For example, taking part in such activities involves a public display of dissatisfaction incorporating aggressive displays of strength which are based on confrontation. Shouting, chanting and marching on the streets may be more attractive to young men than young women because it reflects some forms of typical working class male behaviour, for example some aspect of football crowds. How far this is the case would need further investigation.

Secondly, over two thirds of the young people stated that they had either been involved or were willing to be involved in their local community association. One young

man, Paul, had in effect been Vice Chair for two years and played a major role in fighting for extra support from the local council towards renovation of the local Community Centre. Interestingly, there were divisions which related to gender. All the young women interviewed stated that they had been, or would be willing to be, involved in their community association. Amongst the young men only half claimed they had participated or would be willing to participate, in the active running of the centre. An important point here was that the young people did not recognize this involvement as 'being political'. For them it was more about helping themselves and other members of the community. It was not seen as a political activity even though the organisation had major dealings with the local council and was continually attempting to get its demands met by pressurising the system and its representatives. In many ways this may explain why young women were more willing to be involved than young men. Clearly the way it was perceived by the young had implications for how involvement in the centre was undertaken. Being seen as a place where 'care' was the main activity meant that young men seemed to reject involvement because they perceived 'care' as not what young men should be greatly involved in. On the other hand 'care' was seen as a central activity for young women and it seemed 'natural' for them to have a major role in the 'day to day' running of the centre.

It would seem, then, from the previous discussion that young people's interest in politics is very limited. Any form of political activity seems to be relegated to the notion of duty or responsibility. Young people show little or no enthusiasm for being politically active within the structures of the formal political system. Of course in many ways this lack of interest reflects adult trends. Evidence from previous elections and national opinion polls suggests that large sections of the population are also feeling disillusioned with the political system and especially with politicians (Guardian 22/4/93). Having concerns about parliamentary democracy is therefore not only

an issue for young people, many adults also indicate their dissatisfaction with politics. But evidence suggests that the lack of interest by the young in politics is reaching a point which is of grave concern to democracy. Large sections of the youth population are either not registering to vote, abstaining altogether or showing little interest (Banks et al., 1992).

But does this suggest that young people are 'non political' ? All it would seem to show is a rejection of a particular version of politics. Young people feel marginalised from the political system, their views and interests are given little weight and young people's response is not to participate. What the discussion above indicates is that the sites of being political within a liberal democracy, such as voting, membership of political parties and trade unions and parliamentary democracy, are inadequate for young people's political discourses. Robert and Parsell make this point in their discussion of their own findings;

...it is important to be clear about the sense in which most people are 'not interested' in politics. We can demonstrate that what our sample was 'not interested' in was the politics of politicians as presented through the media...it is important to recognize that young people's professed disinterest does not necessarily mean they are unconcerned about the issues that politicians consider important.

Robert and Parsell (1990 p21)

### 'Political talk'

Throughout the research it became clear that although young people claimed to be 'non political' they were willing, with a little coaxing, to discuss issues that dominated the political agenda; in other words they were willing to engage in 'political talk'. When young people were engaged in 'political talk' they showed themselves as having strong views and concerns about issues that can be identified as 'political'. This idea of 'political talk' has been raised by writers such as MacDonald and Coffield

(1991). They explore the impact of the enterprise culture embedded in self-employment schemes in the North East on political identities of the young. Through ethnography they discovered similar contradictions between apathy, disinterest and a sharp awareness of political issues. Using the work of Gramsci, they argue that young people construct their own 'political theories' which are grounded in 'common sense' that can be identified in their political talk. For example in the following quote they raise the issue of how a definition of 'being political' differs between the researcher and the researched;

These informants are politically educated and have their own political theories (such as anti-enterprise views recorded above) but they do not call them political. The 'P word' is one used by the more academically educated and privileged sections of society (or perhaps, more accurately, those privileged with education). Lynne, earlier, makes the point neatly. When asked about whether she was not in fact talking politically, she responded that no, she was talking practically.

MacDonald and Coffield 1991 p.219

They go on to argue that these 'good sense' working 'political theories' of the young are rooted in 'the collective cultural experience of youth enterprise' (p219) that arise from trying to survive economically through youth enterprise in Cleveland. In this sense therefore young people may not perceive themselves as political but in their analysis of what is happening in their lives they construct 'commonsense' political theories' which are rooted in their everyday experiences.

One such example that shows this clearly is young people's 'political talk' about the Poll Tax. The beginning of the research coincided with the introduction of the Poll Tax. This was introduced in April 1991, legislating that everyone over the age of 18 had the responsibility to pay a Local Government set rate to cover the cost of providing local services (11). The main principles behind its introduction were that everybody benefited from local services therefore everybody should pay something towards Council services and secondly, that taxation should be a

flat rate or 'non-progressive'. The contribution was determined by personal income but a minimum rate of 20% was set that everyone regardless of circumstances had to pay (12). Before the Poll Tax was introduced young people had no responsibility for the paying of rates unless they were house owners or tenants of private or public housing. Out of the participants of the research only 25% were living independently in property of their own. These were all unemployed males over the age of 18 who rented property from the Local Council. In being council tenants and in receipt of Income Support their rates had been paid by the Department of Social Security. So the introduction of the Poll Tax which demanded they paid at least 20% had major financial implications for them (13). Other young people who were living at home and over the age of 18, for the first time had a responsibility to make a payment to the state for living in their parents' home. Previously the rates had been the responsibility of the householders or tenants and rates were fixed on house prices. However with the introduction of the Poll Tax, payment related not to the rateable value of the house but to the amount of people over the age of 18 living in the property. This was a 'person tax' rather than a property tax.

The Poll Tax therefore had a major impact on the incomes of young people and on how they could spend what limited resources they had. The amount young people had to pay was determined by their income and fluctuated between 20% and 100% of the full Poll Tax rate dependent upon their earnings. Out of the young people interviewed 20% of them were in work and only half of these were earning enough for them to have to pay the full Poll Tax rate. So the majority of over 18s had only to pay 20%. This in effect was a £7.10p payment every month for 10 months. For the unemployed this amounted to £31.00 out of Income Support which is 4.7% of their yearly income. On top of this young people living at home already have a financial commitment to paying board. In 1992 it was claimed that over 75% of young people paid board to their parents raising to 90% in the north of

England (Banks 1991). The amount they pay ranges from £10 to £15 a week although this figure can be higher if they live in a household where the father was unemployed (Banks 1991). The implications of the cost of the Poll Tax added to the cost of board clearly significantly reduced young people's disposable incomes. For a young person living at home paying £15 board and 20% Poll Tax it meant over a year they were paying £851 out of £1500, leaving them £12.50 a week disposable income. This was how many of the young people of Westhill experienced the introduction of the Poll Tax.

So what did young people think about the Poll Tax and its principles ? Throughout their 'political talk' on the Poll Tax young people constructed arguments that rejected its central principles suggesting that in effect government, in introducing the Poll Tax, were acting unfairly especially towards the most vulnerable in society. They clearly indicated that governments, in introducing legislation should act 'fairly' and that the implementation of the Poll Tax contradicted such an ideal;

**PAUL** No, it's unfair and I can't afford it, but if I could afford it I still won't pay. But to say I wouldn't pay it because it's unfair is wrong because I can only dream about paying my poll tax, one of them luxuries I can't afford (laughs).

Young people felt that the Poll Tax was unfair because they experienced it as such but as they also suggest feelings about injustice are deeper than just personal experience. Younger members seemed to rely on this type of framework in explaining why they thought it was unfair. The following statement is an example of this. Jane is under 18 and has no responsibility to pay the Poll Tax. But she objects to it because of its impact on certain sections of society;

**JANE** No, they should devise another system to pay it, it becomes too much money for people who can't afford it. There's people like pensioners and the unemployed and they just can't afford it.

This concern over injustice was also developed by the way the young people saw the Poll Tax being implemented. Many of them saw it as being unfair by comparing their own

communities experiences of the Poll Tax with that of other, more well off, areas of Sheffield. Others used arguments that were gained from debates in the media concerning comparisons between different London Boroughs. Young people of Westhill therefore seemed to have constructed an understanding and view of the Poll Tax as unfair by using a variety of different sources and influences. But this is not to say that all principles of the Poll Tax were rejected out of hand. Many young people introduced aspects to the debate which had been raised in wider political discourses. For example, the whole debate had raised the issue of how public services should be paid for and young people clearly saw these issues as important. This was discussed in group sessions;

**PETER** I believe some principles of the poll tax are all right actually, some principles of it. If you want a service you should have to pay for a service but not in the way they're demanding it from every person, you're being person taxed.

This argument seemed to have agreement amongst many young people in that they clearly accepted that services should be paid for by local people. The disagreements revolved around the principle of social justice in that while accepting the necessity for local services to be paid for by people of the locality there still had to be a 'fair' way of implementing it. For example, the following abstract is from a group discussion in which alternatives to a Poll Tax are discussed. There is general agreement that everyone should pay something towards local services but central to their discussion is the debate on fairness and social justice;

**AF** What then do you think about the principle of the Poll Tax, that everyone should, over the age of 18, pay something towards local services ?

**BRIAN** Everyone should pay but only what they can afford.

**JOE** No, not even that.

**BRIAN** I think it should be based on your earnings.

**SIMON** I don't.

**BRIAN** If you earn £70 a week or £500 and you both pay £10 and both get same services, that's not fair.

**SIMON** I think you should get a big bill at the end of the year for what they've used in a year, what services, like Westhill should have a certain bill to pay for what they've used in a year. Like at the moment we're paying the same money while some one else has had twice as much and a bit more than us.

This discussion around the Poll Tax and what is the most just system, 'progressive' or 'regressive' taxation, was not surprising, considering that young people were, for the first time forced to pay something towards local services. What is interesting is that young people show themselves not only willing but clearly capable of constructing 'political theories' through their political talk. For many young people these 'political theories' stem from their practical experiences of trying to get by or survive (a point I shall return too later). For them they are grounded in what they experience as an oppressive relationship with the institutions of the state thus suggesting that the young can be and are political.

So far the discussion has focussed on politics as a passive activity of talk. But were young people willing to be active about their beliefs ? In the previous section young people claimed that they were unwilling to be involved in the formal political organisations, but did they act politically in other ways ? How did young people therefore respond to having to pay what they perceived as an unfair and oppressive tax for local services ? For instance, did they refuse to pay it ? Finding out the extent of non payment is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, the research coincided with the introduction of the Poll Tax and the discussions directly related to it. This took place over the first nine months when young people were getting, for the first time, demands for payment. Threat of action by the courts therefore had not taken place so while the research was being conducted young people were making decisions about non payment yet the realities of being taken to court had not started. Secondly, 'political talk' is problematic in that differences may exist between what people say and what they do. Claiming 'non payment' in the safety of a

group discussion or a one to one interview is not difficult, the realities and risks involved are distant and non threatening. Decisions not to comply can alter when confronted with the threat of the courts, bailiffs and prison, especially if it is an individual experience which has to be faced alone. This is not to say that young people did pay the Poll Tax when they had claimed they intended not to pay it, only that the subject needs to be approached with caution. Figures for Sheffield regarding non payment show that large sections of the community have not paid, so it is possible that young people in Westhill could have followed their claims through (Sheffield Star 12/4/93). The point is we are not in a position to know for certain the outcome of their claims.

So to what extent did young people claim non compliance ? In both the group discussion and one-to-one interviews young people clearly indicated that they did not intend to pay the Poll Tax. Over two thirds of respondents claimed that they had either not paid it or did not intend to pay it. This varied between sexes in that over 80% of young men compared to just over half of young women stated they were unwilling to pay it. It is important to split this into age groups as it is easy to claim non payment if you are not under threat with court action or the appearance of the bailiffs. Amongst the 18 plus over three-quarters said they had not paid it or did not intend to pay it.

Even though a third of respondents said they would pay, they were reluctant payers feeling that the consequences of non payment were too risky. For example, Jim who was unemployed and married with a small child, living with his parents struggled to pay the amount they were trying to charge him. He continually attempted to get them to see reason about his circumstances and why he was not paying it. Even though he did not agree with it he was willing to pay because of the possible consequences;

**JIM** Well I've started paying it but like when I was out of work they kept sending me bills of £260 odd. I kept writing to them to explain I was out of work but they kept sending me bills but I've sorted this out now so I'm going to start paying it. I did object at first but now they come and take your stuff out don't they so I've started to pay it.

Another payer, Mark, faces the issue far more cynically and pessimistically, in that he sees the power of the state as putting him in a 'no win' situation, therefore even though he does not believe the Poll Tax is fair he is willing to pay it;

**MARK** Yea, I pay it, you'll not get away with it, you'll have to pay it in the end won't you, might as well get it over and done with. It's not fair but you've got to pay it.

It is important to recognize then that this response to the Poll Tax was not a collective reaction as suggested in the debates surrounding new social movements (Begguley 1992). Young people were reacting to the Poll Tax very much as individuals, there was no co-ordination between them to make a collective response showing their dissatisfaction. They did not see themselves as a part of the wider political movement, their actions were individually based with no reference to acting collectively.

#### Alternative notions of 'being political'.

In the previous section 'being political' has been discussed in the context of either participation in the political process or as an aspect of 'political talk'. Yet constructing the political in this manner has been criticized, not only by political theorists (15) but also by writers in the field of Youth Studies (16). In this section I want to widen the debate and consider if some of the actions and motivation's in other areas of young people's lives can be understood as political ? In other words is some of the behaviour of young people in this research a political response to the situation they find themselves in ?

Throughout the previous chapters issues of non

conformity or non acceptance have been a focus of the discussions. In many cases young people have clearly shown themselves to be unwilling to accept their situation, being neither 'cultural dupes' or passive recipients of social and economic structural changes. But how far these actions can be understood as political depends upon the definition used.

### The 'Politics of resistance'

One approach that has dominated the literature on youth and politics is the notion of resistance. Such an idea has a long tradition within Youth Studies, being used as a method to identify and explain the actions and behaviour of the young (17). One major influence to this idea originated in the 1970's within the Birmingham CCC school. Writers such as Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Cohen (18) argued that youth subcultural groups evolved as a response to material circumstances and as a solution to the contradictions inherent in the dominant hegemony (Hall and Jefferson eds., 1977). Sub-cultural groups like the Mods and Rockers could be understood as producing styles which were appropriated from the traditions of the locality. These were then transformed, being a 'magical' solution to collective inequality evident within the local community. The styles and actions of these groups could then be 'read' as a political solution to economic or class inequality (19).

Of course, as mentioned in chapter two, such an approach has its limitations. On the one hand such an approach focusses on the most spectacular and visual groups of the young, relegating large sections of the working class as uninteresting and non political (MacDonald and Coffield 1991). But it is also the case that the Birmingham's approach 'over-read' the meanings of particular actions and activities. For example, Muncie (1984) explains this by using Stanley Cohen's notion of a 'forest of symbols', suggesting that the terms 'magical', 'symbolic' and 'imaginary' allow subcultural theorists to infer an infinite range of meanings to subcultural actions. An example that Muncie turn to is the failure of the Birmingham school to

recognize that many of the activities of subcultural groups such as the Skinheads, Mods and Rockers were an expression of right wing politics, not of the left politics which the Birmingham school wanted to find. These groups used threatening behaviour and physical violence against the immigrant population, a fact many from the Birmingham school ignored or redefined to fit within their particular interests (p.129-30) (20).

Yet even with these problems the idea of resistance can not be totally disregarded. Throughout the discussions in the previous chapters this concept has been seen as important. Clearly, many of the young claimed that their behaviour was motivated by resistance to their situation. Two examples from the previous chapters make the point. Firstly, in chapters four and five young people argued that their behaviour of 'winding up' the local police and private security guards was a reaction to the methods of policing that were used against them. Young people suggested that they were not willing to accept their situation and that the only way they could resist or fight back was through methods that were defined as deviant by the adult community. A second example, arose in chapter seven. Young women argued that much of their life was influenced by questions of sexuality. Others such as teachers, boyfriends and parents imposed sexual expectations on young women which had a major impact on the choices they could make. Yet from the discussions it became clear that some young women were not willing to accept this situation. In many cases they were fighting back by devising methods of resistance which allowed them to have more control over their lives. These are two of many examples given by young people that draw upon the notion of resistance as an explanation of their behaviour. This is not to say that the concept does not have its problems (see later discussion) only that as an idea it should not be totally rejected.

## The politics of 'survival' and 'defence'

Another definition of being political, that has developed in the 1980's, is the idea of the politics of 'survival' and 'defence'. Griffin (1993) develops this notion in her book Representations of Youth. Firstly, she attempts to analyse the development of research within the field of Youth Studies, suggesting that two main paradigms exist, one of which she claims is the 'radical perspective'. This she argues has been

...more likely to adopt structuralist and post structuralist analyses, and to deconstruct the association between young people and 'social problems', asking different questions and viewing research as part of a consciously political project.

Griffin, 1993, p.3

Griffin suggests that this approach had, up until the 1980's, the notion of resistance as central to the explanation of young people's behaviour. By focussing on 'sites', (such as, the transition from school to work, unemployment, delinquency, leisure, the family and sexuality) Griffin is able to identify the ways resistance has been central to the discourses within the radical perspectives of youth research.

Griffin then goes on to suggest that the question of resistance has, in many areas, undergone a shift in meaning. Within the radical perspective resistance has somewhat been discredited, being seen as too deterministic and simplistic. In its place the notions of 'survival' and 'defence' have been used to explain young people's behaviour. Two examples are useful in showing how this approach has developed and how it differs from the notion of resistance.

Firstly, unemployment has taken a more central position in the focus of youth research, relegating youth subcultural studies to the peripheral. This has partially arisen due to the changing wider social and economic climate but also because of the inherent weaknesses of subcultural theory. The response of many within the radical tradition has been to focus not on 'social problems' but on issues such as survival and suffering rather than resistance. Griffin

explains this point by showing how American writers have approached the 'black underclass debate':

They are asking different questions about the social context of such 'problems': about the ideological, political and cultural dimensions of agency in young people's lives; and about the agency of survival and the extent of suffering for young people of color.

Griffin 1993, p.95

It is within these discussions surrounding 'suffering' that writers identify strategies and methods of survival which may not be pre-planned forms of resistance yet are motivated by their own personal circumstances. A second example can be found in the area of leisure and delinquency. Griffin suggests similar concerns were being raised over the notion of resistance in the area of leisure studies. Most writers became less confident about arguing that young people engaged in specific conformist or resistant activities, instead it was being suggested that they were developing strategies of survival or defence. For example Griffin points to writers such as Redhead (1991) who, in his writings on football hooliganism, rejects the notion of resistance, preferring to operate through the discourses of defence and survival thus representing football fans as;

...beleaguered by the social and economic conditions in Thatchers Britain, harsher policing strategies, and a newly dehumanising treatment by the institutions of professional football, from the Football league to the popular press.

Griffin 1993, p.149

Defining 'being political' in this context is interesting and useful in terms of the research. Many of the Westhill young people claimed themselves either to be motivated by the need to survive the harshness of everyday living or to protect their way of life. Two examples make the point. Firstly, it was evident that many of the young people were motivated by their desire to defend something that was important to their lives. One area in particular was their community. This became evident in chapter four through discussions over the importance of community to their everyday lives. Defence in this context existed at

different levels ranging from the need to protect the image of the area to the defence of physical spaces. Young people clearly showed themselves willing and able to act upon their need to defend what they saw as important.

A second example can be taken from the discussions on poverty and crime. Many of young people's actions and motivation seemed to evolve from having to cope with the hardships of poverty. Surviving being poor involved young people developing a number of strategies which helped them deal with the situation they found themselves in. Probably the most controversial and problematic solution was young people's willingness to be involved in crime. Living on low incomes clearly created problems for young people. Solutions had to be found especially if they wanted to participate in many of the adult activities or new sites of leisure. Shoplifting was one such strategy alongside working on the 'fiddle'. Neither of these were solutions young people felt at ease with yet what they suggested is that their situation left them with limited alternatives. But such a notion of 'being political' does have its problems as the following discussion will show.

In many ways these ideas on the politics of resistance, 'defence' and 'survival' have similarities to discussions within feminism over the notion of 'the personal is political'. Writers such as Millet (1970) have argued that women's politics are denied by the focus on traditional understandings of 'the political'. What is needed is a wider definition that recognizes the importance of the structures of exploitation and oppression. As Philips argues in discussing the history of this debate:

The 'political' to which these women were laying claim was not the world of elections or governments or theories of the state. Politics worked as shorthand for all these structures (in the language of the time, this would be institutions) of exploitation and oppression against which the struggle must be waged.

Philips 1991 p.94

Not only were these issues to be concerned with the struggle of public issues but the central core of the debate required

that any understanding of 'the political' acknowledges the importance of the 'private' or the 'personal'. Issues therefore such as sexual relationships and the domestic division of labour become as important as relationships in the labour market and the impact of state policies and institutions. Such arguments wanted to suggest that being political was not an issue related just to the public, it had to be recognized that what happened in one sphere affected the other. For example, in their book Women and the Public Sphere Siltanen and Stanworth (1984) argue;

...we do not accept that politics is the prerogative of the public sphere, nor that women are firmly located in the private domain and men in the public. We intend to argue that the private women-public man conception misleads as to the relationship of the political to both private and public...

Siltanen and Stanworth 1984, p. 195

In terms of young people's experiences, issues such as oppression and exploitation, within the public and private domain of their lives has clearly influenced their behaviour. The notions of 'defence', 'survival' and 'resistance' seem therefore to have similarities with the arguments put forward by the feminist movement. The 'personal is political' could be how the behaviour of the young in Westhill is defined. Such an argument is attractive and similar to debates within feminism. Nonetheless the idea that young people's action can be explained as 'politically' motivated does have its problems.

One of the central problems associated with this method of understanding and defining the political is the complexity of meanings that have been given to a variety of actions. Philips (1991) argues that since the 1960s there has been a growing number of actions which come under the heading of 'political' therefore meaning that the definition has become blurred;

Beyond its early history in the 1960s radicalism, the personal is political came to assume a whole complex of meanings. In its most combative forms

it dissolved all distinction between public and private, personal and political, and came to regard all aspects of social existence as if they were an undifferentiated expression of male power.  
Philips 1991. p.94

Philips goes on to argue that this blurring of the boundaries is a central problem for feminist definitions of the political. She asks are all aspects of life political or are their boundaries that need to be drawn, thus making certain issues political and others not ? If this is the case what are these distinctions and how can they be separated ? A similar issue remains in terms of understanding the political motivations of the young. While 'defence', 'survival' and 'resistance' seem useful terms for defining the behaviour of the young as 'political' what are the boundaries of these concepts ? For example, involvement in crime can be linked to young people's need to survive the harshness of every day life. Yet their motivations can be varied and not just linked to poverty. Other explanations, such as jealousy, greed, excitement and fun exist which can undermine a simple cause and effect argument. Crime as a component of the 'politics of survival' therefore becomes clouded by the complexity of explanations given, suggesting that other issues apart from survival might be more important as a source to young people's involvement in crime. Similar arguments can be used to challenge the idea that young people's actions in 'winding up' figures of authority is politically motivated. For example it could be claimed that issues of 'fun' and 'excitement' are the main motivating forces behind such behaviour rather than anything political. Identifying boundaries to 'the political' thus becomes problematic.

A second issue that raises problems over such a definition is the failure of concepts such as 'defence', 'resistance' and 'survival' to incorporate acknowledgement or recognition of the power inequalities that exist within certain forms of behaviour. This issue is evident when arguing that crime is a political act by the young. Such an approach fails to acknowledge the negative effects crime can

and does have on the community. Linking crime and 'the political' glorifies certain actions while marginalising consequences. For example, one of the impacts of crime is fear over the use of public space amongst groups such as the elderly and women. Surely, one of the major effects of crime therefore is the limiting of opportunities to these groups. Crime is thus, by its very nature an oppressive action. Is it therefore a 'political act' or a source of oppression which causes a political response? Concepts such as 'defence', 'resistance' and 'survival' have no answer to such questions, leaving the definition blurred and unresolved. Similar concerns can be raised over the discussions undertaken in chapter seven on gender and citizenship. One of the central issues for young women was that some of the actions of young men, which could be identified as 'political,' are the source of young women's experience of oppression. No distinction is made between acts, thus failing to recognize that power struggles exist within relationships and that the oppressed might also be the oppressors.

### Conclusion

In the introductory section to this chapter it was suggested that although work and community has traditionally been a major influence on the political socialisation of the young, changes such as the restructuring of work and unemployment have influenced the de-politicising of the young (Cohen 1984 and Hollands 1989). What this chapter has shown is that although such changes may be influential there are other factors that need to be considered. Firstly, young people's apparent political disinterest can and does arise from their experiences and feelings about the political process itself. Young people clearly felt marginalised and powerless within the processes of British Parliamentary democracy. They feel that their views or concerns are not considered by the politicians who have the power to improve the lives of people in Westhill. The de-politising of the young is not therefore just a result of structural changes

such as unemployment or the restructuring of the youth labour market, it is also an expression of young people's real experiences of powerlessness within the actual processes of the British version of democracy.

Secondly, to claim that young people are non political is too general, ignoring both their feelings of obligation and duty to vote and their willingness and capabilities to understand and respond to political decisions that influence their lives. As this chapter has shown, young people in their 'political talk' do construct political theories of the world which they may be willing to act upon, thus showing that they can and are political beings. It is also important to recognize that defining the young as non-political is in itself an exclusionary act as it fails to acknowledge both the extent of the understanding young people have of the political process and some of the less traditional forms of political action, such as non payment of the Poll Tax.

Thirdly, political marginalisation has also to be associated with experiences of oppression and exclusion. Unemployment and the restructuring of work may be factors in the de-politicising of the young, but other 'political' concerns around concepts of power and control are also seemingly important. Issues such as the policing and usage of public and private space, opportunities to participate in consumption and new forms of leisure and the feelings of exclusion from the adult world, are also indicated as important 'political' issues. Although a 'politics of citizenship', as introduced in the final section of this chapter has its problems, it would seem that in many cases young people are willing to be 'politically active', around such issues.

Such arguments as outlined in this chapter has implications for the labour movement. Communities such as Westhill have entrenched traditions supporting the Labour party, but as recent evidence as suggested, much of this support is being undermined by young people's non-participation. As Hollands (p.203-210) argues this is

happening because of the labour movement's failure to recognize both the changing experiences of the young and the diversity of the youth population. He then goes on to challenge and criticize the Labour party for its continual focus on statist responses to the 'youth problem' in the shape of what he calls the 'manpower servicedom paradigm' (21). This, Hollands suggests, fails to recognize young people's experience of unemployment and training schemes under a right wing government. While Hollands is right to highlight these contradictions he fails to give importance to other experiences of the young as outlined in this and subsequent chapters. Work and unemployment are clearly important factors in gaining the youth vote yet gaining electoral support from the young needs to recognize other issues. Experiences of exclusion and powerlessness, especially in areas such as the processes of democracy, the usage of public and private space and the opportunities to actively participate in adult society, are clearly of great importance. Maybe what is needed is the development, on the left, of a politics of citizenship that recognizes the wider context of young people's experiences (22).

## Conclusion

In the previous five chapters the discussion has focused on how young people in Westhill live out on a day to day basis their citizenship. This has involved an examination of a particular way of life which has historical roots and traditions born out of industrial struggles. This context is a major influence on defining what it means to be young and working class. How things are done (or not) and what is expected of the young is culturally set in what has gone before. As Cohen (1986) and Hollands (1989) suggest there is a form of 'cultural apprenticeship' which is inherited by the young working class. This is then transmitted through relationships within the family, the work place and the wider community. Being working class therefore has a specific meaning and cultural context that is influential in 'shaping' young people's way of life. But of course being working class is not only 'shaped' by cultural forces, it is also influenced by the structural context of the labour market and opportunities within education and training especially within the locality. For young people to be able to better themselves or 'get on', the structural situation they encounter in growing up is influential in determining what kind of life they are to lead. Being young and working class, as Giddens (1987) suggests, is typically experienced as a 'duality of structure'.

This is not to present a deterministic view of working class life. Other influences are also at work in defining what it means to be young and working class. Youth is a complex term, with its meaning historically and culturally changing. Writers such as Springhall (1986) have identified the different meanings given to youth both historically and cross culturally that have been influential in determining how being young is experienced. This is not to deny the influence of biology but to suggest that what is expected of the young and what it means to 'be a young person' in the 1980s and 90s has undergone change, being influenced by the wider context of social, political and economic forces.

At one level it is important to recognize the political context of 'being young'. Since the early 1980s there has

been an attempt, at both the level of ideas and policies to 'restructure' the meaning of citizenship. Under the banner of 'breaking the dependency culture' the political right have been instrumental in challenging the role of the state in taking universal responsibility for the needs of all. In its place they have proposed that a more reliable and effective means of providing for needs can, and should be undertaken through individuals exercising their choice in the market place. Individuals should therefore be more responsible for themselves and their families.

But changes have also been taking place in the wider economy, influencing the opportunities of the young to be full participating citizens. Traditional sites and industries have been in decline and unemployment has become a major structural feature of British society. 'New' jobs are evolving within a service industry which historically has provided employment of a substandard nature. What choices young people can make are therefore not only influenced at the level of ideas and policy but also as a result of a restructuring of the youth labour market. This has resulted in a growth of government intervention in areas such as training and education, giving young people little option between unemployment or going on a YT scheme. In social policy and the 'moral economy' of citizenship, attempts have been made to direct young people away from being dependent on the state to being independent adults. But in reality such moves have pushed the young back into the family home, delaying their opportunities of moving out to live as autonomous adults. This has then limited their transitions into adulthood and effected their levels of participation in society. It is within this context that the previous discussion and field work has evolved.

Historically our understanding of being young and working class has been greatly influenced by academic discourses on the meaning of youth. As Cohen (1986) and Griffin (1993) have suggested, up until the late 80s a large proportion of youth research has focussed on 'youth as a social problem'. Much was known about the deviant activities

of the few, especially the more visual and spectacular groups of young men such as those identified by the Birmingham cultural studies school in the late 70s, but little was known about the large majority of ordinary working class youth and how they lived out on a day to day basis their citizenship.

What we do know about the way of life of these young people is that community, work, leisure and consumption are important sites where they develop their identities and undertake transitions into adulthood. Yet even this research has its problems. In the majority of cases the focus is on one specific aspect of young people's lives, such as the transition from school to work (Brown 1987) or the cultural significance of youth consumption (Willis 1990). Apart from writers such as Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986) little attempt has been made to examine the interrelationship and connections of these 'sites' for the experiences of the young working class.

The fieldwork presented here has attempted to redress this imbalance by examining the relationship between the different sites, and how change and continuity exists within the lives of the ordinary young working class. One area where this is evident is within the concept of community. Clearly community is still an important site in the lives of the young working class. For many living in a community gives them a sense of 'being a part of something', offering them protection and security while they are moving into adulthood. Community is something they can relate to and feel at ease with, especially in a time of turmoil and change. It is also a site where young people can feel a form of obligation and responsibility to 'put something' back. Many of the young therefore see community as a dual relationship in which benefits and responsibilities are interrelated.

But it is also important to recognize that community can be an oppressive site for the young. For many, community consists of a set of hierarchical relationships built upon generational intolerance. A lack of understanding of what it

means to be young in the 1990s, by adults in the community, can and does increase young people's negative feelings towards their community. This is not to say that the young and society are blameless in this process. Young people's perception of what they should be achieving in life has been raised by the growing expectations imposed on them from all quarters of society. Questions of being 'successful' or 'winners' is measured in material terms in that what consumer goods or property they own determines their status in the community at large. For the young people in Westhill failure to reach these heights is blamed upon the local community. Poverty is, in some cases seen as endemic and unavoidable, being culturally transmitted from within. Feelings of responsibility are thus undermined and 'getting out' becomes a priority.

It is over the use of space and the leisure activities of the young that conflicts can arise. Traditionally young men have spent much of their 'leisure time' hanging about the streets 'doing nothing'. This has historically been a space of generational conflict but as unemployment and the lack of money has forced the young to find their 'excitement' and 'pleasure' in this space conflict has increased. This is not always a chosen activity as incomes are a major factor in determining young people's opportunities to participate as consumers of leisure. This is clearly the case in terms of the new Meadowhall shopping complex. On the one hand young people are being enticed towards the 'new consumption society' yet unless they are willing and able consumers, their participation is not wanted. Control of this space, unlike that of their streets in Westhill, is undertaken by private security guards and laws of public trespass in which the young have few rights. This has resulted in an increase of conflict and a further marginalisation of the young working class in and around their own community.

These feelings of marginalisation and increased conflicts are also reinforced by young people's experiences of the labour market. Paid work is still an important aspect

of citizenship for the young working class. Having a good job, with reasonable wages and prospects is something the majority strive for as it creates opportunities for them to gain access to adulthood and gain status in their local community. But experiences of exploitation and low wages over their working careers create dis-incentives for the young to make an effort. Living on the dole reduces the stress of working in an exploitive environment while 'fiddle work' and petty crime helps them survive financially. Apart from the effect this has on young people's transitions into adulthood it also heightens conflicts within the community in that the young are seen as both 'lazy' and 'workshy' and a threat from within because of their offending. Attempts by the state to reinforce the work ethic and control the young through workfare type schemes and Restart programmes only adds to the increased tensions. Many of the methods of resisting these pressures see the young increasingly using illegal means of surviving which then becomes a further threat to the local community.

Being a young women in Westhill adds another dimension to the meaning of citizenship. Clearly many young women experience unemployment, poor career opportunities and conflict in the local community but other factors are also at work in influencing what it means to be growing up a young women in Westhill. Citizenship for many young women consists of their time and space being controlled and mediated through sexual discourses, sexual harassment and parental restrictions. Be it in the school room, the playground, the street or within relationships with young men, demands, expectations and pressures from within young women's network of friends and community inform them of the importance of having a 'steady boyfriend'. Avoiding this and the possible 'motherhood trap' becomes increasingly more difficult as young women find a lack of job opportunities and viability of alternative options. Questions of sexuality therefore remain at the forefront of their experiences of citizenship.

Young people's response to these experiences is to

reject the very system that claims to represent and act as their voice in the corridors of power. Parliamentary democracy is seen by the majority of young people as the cause of their plight. Politicians are denounced as responsible for their feelings of powerlessness, offering young people little in return for their vote. This is not to say that young people are 'non political'. Many are willing and capable of constructing and acting upon political theories of their world. Many also indicate that a possible political mobilization of the young could be found in the politics of survival, defence and marginalisation if the left was willing to construct policies that recognized the wider context of young people's experiences.

#### A changing context or just more of the same ?

Since the completion of the research changes in the wider context have been taking place. What impact are these likely to have on young people from areas such as Westhill ?

Nationally unemployment has been on the decline. Between the winter of 1992/3 and 1993/4 unemployment amongst the economically active fell 183,000. At the same time employment grew by 157,000 with the greatest growth areas seeing a massive increase in women working part-time in the service sector (1). This apparent mis-match is a result of a general decline in people, especially older men, being defined as economically active. In terms of youth unemployment there has been a gradual decline of unemployment for 16-17 year olds although levels remain reasonably entrenched (2). Nationally 1 in 6 16-17 year olds are unemployed while in the Yorkshire and Humberside the figure are 1 in 4 (3). Out of these it is claimed that 22,000 are receiving payment of the Severe Hardship Allowance (SHA) and 8,000 are receiving the Bridging allowance (BA) leaving over 3/4 of young people registered as unemployed without any income (4).

This development is a direct consequence of the removal of 16 to 17 year olds right to unemployment benefit and income support. This raises questions about not only young

people's opportunities to become independent, autonomous adults but how they are managing to survive at all. If over 74,000 16-17 year olds are not working or receiving any form of benefit how are they getting an income ? One obvious source is from the family yet this can and does create internal conflicts especially if the main breadwinner is also unemployed (Hutson and Jenkins 1989). Families are willing to support their children up to a certain point but when levels of stress and conflict reach such a level that life is uncomfortable for all concerned either young people are asked to leave or they leave by their own choice (Jones and Wallace 1992). This can and does lead to homelessness especially as housing opportunities for the young unemployed are very limited. Other sources of 'getting by' for the young unemployed who have no financial support from their parents, are, as identified in chapter six, to take up 'fiddle work' or become involved in crime. These are not choices the young make lightly but for many choices are not the issue as no alternative method is available. Reducing benefits and young people's incomes therefore have the possible social consequences of increasing homelessness and criminalisation of the young.

Some of the reasons why young people are unemployed and without an income may have arisen from changes that have been taking place around the 'available for work' criteria. Further attempts to increase pressure on the young unemployed to find work have created problems for young people. Since 1993 the Restart programme has radically changed, moving from being a day interview to a week course to a part-time two week course. On top of this new proposals are being piloted around the country that intend to expand this programme into Jobplan Workshops and a Workwise scheme lasting four weeks (5). All of these initiatives have built into them mandatory attendance with financial penalties if absent (6).

Moves have also been introduced aimed specifically at 'catching out' the unemployed who claim to be available for work. One such method has been the introduction of a

'surprise' restart interviews that aims to check out 'job-seeking activities' (7). Other methods have seen increasing pressure from the the Department of Social Security on claimants to fill 'hard to fill' vacancies. These are jobs that usually offer low pay, unsocialable hours in geographical area with poor public transport (8). The implications for the young is that they continually have to justify what they are doing and being pushed either into jobs they do not want to do or lose their benefit (if they are entitled to it). For example if a young person is disqualified from benefit they are suspended for 26 weeks without any form of income. Attempts to get young people back to work therefore are not about the young making choices concerning careers but about filling empty job vacancies and reducing unemployment figures.

Life without work is going to become increasingly difficult for the young. In the 1993 Budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the introduction of the new 'Job Seekers allowance'. This will be introduced in full by April 1996 and will radically transform benefit entitlement for the under 24's. At present people made unemployed, who have full National Insurance contributions are entitled by right to 12 months full unemployment benefit (9). Under the new Job Seekers allowance the unemployed who are entitled to benefits will only receive six months by right. The amounts paid will also be fixed in that the 18 to 24 age group will receive a reduced amount. The other six months entitlement will become means tested and determined by income. The impact of this is an increase in the unemployed relying upon means tested benefits. For example, Murray (1994) argues that people in the 18-24 age group with savings over £8,000 will suffer a 60% loss of income, those with savings of £3,000 will lose 30% and young people with no savings will use 20% as they will be receiving the reduced rate (10). The overall effect of this is that the incomes of many of the poorest in society will be greatly reduced (11).

But this is not all, within the new proposals on 'Job Seekers' is the plan to link benefit with a Job Seeking

contract in which claimants outline steps they intend to take to get back to work. There will then be regular checks established which will review what claimants have done. If this is unsatisfactory then there will be financial penalties imposed. Such a move could have a major effect on young people's entitlements to benefit. If recent evidence is anything to go by (see discussion above) then there is little doubt that this 'contract' will result in further tightening of the 'availability for work' criteria and thus increase the number of claimants who lose benefit.

### The return of the active citizen

One other area that has returned to the political agenda is the issue of youth volunteering and community service. Two recently published reports have called for a 'Citizens Service' as a method of encouraging the young to be 'responsible citizens'. A report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) (12), drawing upon the ideas previously presented by Youth Call, has proposed that a national service scheme could be set up for the young unemployed, helping to tackle many of the social problems associated with being out of work. This would offer participants £50 a week plus food and travel as well as benefit credits to use after an average service of three months. The second report by The Henley centre undertaken on behalf of the Community Service Volunteers attempted a cost benefit analysis for a voluntary scheme for 18-21 year olds. Costs were evaluated on the basis of young people taking part for a year while they received benefits plus £20 which offered the young a better deal than they were receiving on unemployment benefit.

The central objectives of these schemes are the 'encouragement' of responsibility amongst the young. They claim that young people would learn tolerance and understanding through social mixing and duties and obligations through undertaking socially useful work. The question of compulsion is usually denied arguing that the voluntary principle is enough to get young people to take

part. For example the IPPR report suggested that young people would be more than willing to participate as they would see it as 'an entitlement as well as a duty' (p.24).

Support for these ideas have been wide ranging, cutting across political divides. For example, Prince Charles, in a recent documentary (ITV 26/6/94) made a passionate plea for the creation of a national service which aimed to tackle unemployment and crime. John Major on the other hand has also indicated his interest in proposals that encourage 'social responsibility'. The Prime Minister has agreed to help the Princes Trust increase the numbers involved in their Young Volunteer Scheme from 2,000 to 25,000 a year. This has seen resources put into the Department for Education and the Home Office with the intention of funding pilot projects (Guardian 26/7/94). But these ideas have also been greatly supported by the political left. Questions of 'social responsibility' have been a major campaigning slogan of Tony Blair in the recent Labour party leadership elections. The ideas proposed by the Commission on Social Justice received general agreement within the Labour Party suggesting that, if elected, the setting up of a national voluntary scheme would be a serious consideration.

These proposals ignore the previous debates and arguments of the early 1980s. Objection and rejection of proposals such as those put forward by Youth Call was argued by writers such as Jeffs (1984). Evidence clearly identified problems for the massive extension of community service ranging from the lack of participation of the most vulnerable groups to job substitution and supervision of caring work (13). But these recent debates also ignore the fact that, as my research has shown, many young people do and can act responsibly. The idea that the young are not 'socially responsible' ignores and downgrades many of the tasks that young people undertake in every day life in their homes and local community. Responsibility has always been an important aspect of growing up and something that the majority have little objection to undertaking. The undermining of 'social responsibility' is more likely to

result from poverty and the lack of a job. Schemes such as these proposed by the IPPR and Henley Centre report offer little towards combatting these damaging experiences. As MacLegan (1994) argues;

This latest burst of enthusiasm and publicity for volunteering holds one danger. It diverts attention, and potentially, resources from proper training and education. To meet the greatest need and give the best return, these areas are a priority. Any new scheme for school leavers or young adults should be judged simply by whether it increases real choices.

MacLegan 1994, p10.

The cutting back of social rights alongside the increase of means testing, the expansion of monitoring and surveillance by the state over job seeking activities and the increased social (and institutional ?) pressure to act more responsibly, all seem to suggest that life for the young is not going to get any easier. What seems to be on offer is 'more of the same' rather than anything new. Both financial, institutional and family pressure is going to be increased which as my research has shown will do little except increase tensions within young people's lives and the local community, pushing them further to the edge of society. It needs to be recognized that if young people are going to become 'socially responsible' and 'active citizens' then the importance of social rights, benefits and opportunities to move into adulthood needs to be tackled. Young people have not become dependent on the state through their own choice, it has arisen because of poverty and the lack of opportunities in good quality paid employment. Until these issues are tackled young people's feelings of 'putting something back' into society are going to be continually undermined.

### Proposals for Future Research

As this research has progressed it has become clear that gaps exist in our understanding of what it means to be young. As identified in chapter one youth research has historically concentrated on 'youth as a social problem'.

This project has attempted to overcome this approach but how should research progress in the 1990s, what focus should it have ?

The emphasis of this research has been on the everyday activities of the young working class. It has attempted to draw together how different experiences of social change in different sites and settings impact on choices and opportunities of the young. This interrelationship is an important issue for future youth research. Questions of structural and political change and cultural life are important. Changes at a variety of different levels can and does effect how young people experience citizenship. These can influence the structure of young people's relationships with their family, friends, the local community and members of the opposite sex or in opportunities to work, leave home or participate in popular culture. Thus a more holistic approach to youth research needs to be considered.

One issue in particular that needs addressing within the context of interrelationships is the question of structural and political change and youth culture. Writers such as Chisholm (1990) quite rightly identify the need to explore the structural changes taking place in the youth labour market because of their impact on the lives of the young. But what she does not recognize is what impact this may have and how it may create changes in a variety of different contexts and settings. Willis (1990) for example suggests that maybe changes in the labour market and the expansion of the use of market forces are creating opportunities for the young to engage in alternative leisure forms and are thus creating new forms of transitions.

Merchant and MacDonald (1994) add to this debate by suggesting the 1980s have neglected youth cultural activities such as 'raves' giving an expanded emphasis to problems of school to work transitions especially around questions of social reproduction. They go on to argue that there has been a growing body of research into these relationships, between economy and young people's cultural experience, suggesting that more emphasis needs to be given

to unconnected relations. What they fail to recognize is that in comparison to other areas of youth research little has been conducted concerning the relation between economy, leisure and the cultural activities of the young (14). It would seem that it has not been since the Birmingham School's work in the late 1970s that questions of structural change, political discourse and cultural activities have been investigated. This is not to suggest that the BCCC approach needs to be resurrected (although it needs re-examining) but maybe 'raves' for example do have a relationship to deep seated structural problems. It would seem then that as an area of research this area needs further investigation (15).

This issue of the cultural activities of the young raises another important point in terms of youth research. Griffin (1993) argues that apart from the over representation of problem youth, research has focussed on the young as a homogeneous group, failing to identify and highlight questions of difference. This process has gradually been introduced into youth research through the radical paradigm towards understanding youth. For example, she argues that there is a growing body of research into youth and disability, black and Asian young people and gay and lesbian youth but even then very little is known about how they experience life. Her final argument is then to propose that these developments need expanding upon (16). Writers such as McRobbie have supported this argument. In her article 'Youth Culture and Femininity' (McRobbie, 1994), she investigates the changing notion of femininity in areas such as teenage magazines and raves. What McRobbie suggests is that more research needs to be undertaken into questions of 'difference' especially in terms of femininity.

While I would not disagree with these writers another issue that seems important in this area and needs investigation is the question of masculinity. Throughout the previous research, the question of masculinity has been an issue 'bubbling under the surface'. It has also become an area of concern for sociological studies. For example, any

casual examination of journals and publishers lists over the last two years would show that there has been a growing body of work in this area (17). Two particular issues have arisen out of the research that would be interesting for further investigation. Firstly, around the question of crime and generational conflict many of the young men raised the issues of 'excitement', 'fun' 'hedonism' 'risk' and 'pleasure' as important aspects of their everyday lives. In much theorising of youth and crime these issues and their relationship to masculine identities have been ignored or overlooked. Questions that examine the relationship between crime, masculinity and concepts such as 'risk' and 'hedonism' would be interesting. Masculine identities are important not only to adult males but also to the young working class. It is possibly the case that masculine identities are being affected by the decline in work, leading to young men attempting to assert their masculinity in different sites and settings, especially within leisure spaces and activities. If so how this is being constructed would be an interesting area of investigation.

A second and no less important aspect of masculinity that needs further investigation is of young men's perception of themselves and of relationships with young women. Questions of how their masculine views and identities are constructed within their relationships with others, and what the structural and cultural pressures are on young men to conform to, or behave in certain ways would be an interesting area of investigation. Within this area issues such as change could be examined. For example, compared with their fathers, are young working class males attitudes and actions towards women changing? If so are these for the better or worse? What perception do they have of their relationships around concepts such as 'husband,' 'lover' and 'fatherhood?'

Questions of difference, as suggested by Griffin, could therefore also include the notion of masculinity. Criticism of such an approach could be made because it once again focuses resources and attention to young men. But when 80%

of crime is committed by young men and young women's lives are so affected by the actions and attitudes of young men around and towards issues of sexuality it would seem beneficial to all (including young men) if a greater understanding of why many young men behave the way they do was investigated.

Footnotes

## Footnotes

### Chapter One; Marshall, citizenship and youth

- 1) These included writers such as Bendix (1964), Dahrendorf (1959) Lipset (1964) and Lockwood (1974).
- 2) For a full discussion on how Marshall saw this evolution of civil, political and social rights taking place see either Marshall (1950) or Barbalet (1988).
- 3) These were rights such as: the right to work, the right to minimum incomes, the right to housing, the right to welfare and the right to education.
- 4) For a comprehensive review of the changes and conflicts that took place over the shape of the Welfare State see Mishra (1984).
- 5) In the 1960s this was seen as a method of 'modernizing' the Welfare State. This is usually associated with the 1964 Labour Government's 'White heat of technology'. See Coates (1991).
- 6) This was to take place through conscription to National Service which has since been disbanded.
- 7) Attempts at moving toward these ideals can be identified in the mid 70s and early 80s especially within Labour controlled Authorities. See, Blunket and Green (1983).
- 8) For a fuller discussion on Marshall and class see Barbalet (1988).
- 9) Williams, responding to criticisms raised by Juliet Mitchell [in Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review, London, Verso] actually acknowledges this problem with his work.
- 10) For an extended discussion of the differences between Thompson and Anderson see Giddens (1987).
- 11) Although he suggests that these process may also socially reproduce existing social relations. (Anderson 1980 p.19.)
- 12) It was acknowledged by Springhall that youth as a concept did exist previous to this time period but as he states it was not seen as an important stage of development.
- 13) For example, Cohen highlights how biologism has influenced, the writings in the fields of socio-biology and psychoanalysis. Springhall on the other hand identifies how the literature has been dominated by this approach.

14) This is a term developed by Cohen (1986) in his paper, 'Rethinking the Youth Question'. He uses it as an umbrella term to describe those theories that are dominated by biological assumptions.

15) See Springhall (1986).

16) It is also the case that when the New Right talk about individuals they are often in reality discussing the family. This is because they see the family as a functional unit in which the needs and desire of all members are fulfilled through the collective purchases and incomes of the family budget and wage.

17) Vocationalism has since also infiltrated not only training schemes but also developments in schools, further and higher education.

18) Of course this has not been the only method of intervention the New Right has taken into youth unemployment. One other approach has been to encourage self employment through programmes such as the Enterprise Allowance Scheme. This method of dealing with youth unemployment has consisted of young people learning the skills of entrepreneurship through the 'enterprise culture' of business and finance and by setting up their own small businesses. MacDonald and Coffield (1991) show how important the development of an enterprise culture has been to the New Right's approach to youth in that it has been a major influence in both education and employment policies.

19) See Davies 1986.

20) Quoted in Lister (1990) p.96.

21) See for example, Smith (1988) for a good history of the Youth Service and its role in these processes.

22) These figures also have a race dimension see Jeffs and Smith (1990).

23) For example see, Greve and Curry (1990), Liddiard and Hutson (1991) and Jones and Wallace (1992).

### Chapter Two; Youth as a way of life

1) For a more in depth discussion on the concept of 'social disorganisation' see Downes and Rock (1988) Understanding Deviance, chapter three.

2) For an extended discussion on this approach see, Brake, (1985) Comparative Youth Culture, chapter One.

3) Downes (1966) argues that British studies of youth culture have differed from the American approach because of the difference in social and economic climates between the two countries

- 4) For example see Kerr (1958), Morris (1957), and Willmott (1966).
- 5) Although these writers were the first to raise this issue in terms of youth studies, writers such as Westerguard and Resler (1975) in their book Class in a Capitalist Society, were also wanting to re-assert the issue into mainstream sociology.
- 6) Within the Birmingham School different approaches did exist. Clarke (1975), for example, used Levi-Strauss's concept of Bricolage to argue that youth re-ordered and re-contextualised objects of consumption to give them fresh meaning. The example he uses to make his point is that of 'the Teddy Boys' who expropriated the Edwardian suit of the 1950s stockbroker and gave it a new meaning of teenage working class style and menace. Willis (1978) on the other hand uses the concept of homology, to show how certain types of style and artifacts indicate group identity and the subcultural boundaries to other youth groups.
- 7) For example writers from the Birmingham School have moved into areas such as Feminism and Women's Studies (McRobbie), Media Studies (Hall), Socio-Legal Studies (Jefferson) and Pop/Rock sociology (Hebdige)
- 8) See Chapter three by Chisholm (1990) in Chisholm, Buchner, Heinz-Hermann, and Brown (1990).
- 9) For example see Brown (1987), Hollands (1990), McRobbie (1991).
- 10) One other issue that is raised in their argument is the importance of religion. This is a major influence in the construction of young people's identities in Northern Ireland and other communities that have strong historical links to various religions. But in terms of my study, religion had no part to play in young people's identity forming.
- 11) For an in depth discussion of this issue see Pixley (1992) Citizenship and Employment.
- 12) For example see Marshall (1950) Social Class and Citizenship.
- 13) See Pixley, (1992) Citizenship and Employment.
- 13) Such an idea has been criticised for being a male concept of politics. See Swindells and Jardine (1990) Whats Left ? Women in Culture and The Labour Movement.
- 14) Although this is a valid point it is also important to recognize that the fashion industry is very quick to respond to 'new' trends and to re-develop their products in the light of changes.
- 15) Banks et al. (1992) Careers and Identities p. 59.

16) Although to be fair to Willis he does recognize his focus ignores these issues.

17) Again this does tend to see politics as a male concept.

Chapter Three; 'Doing research': Ethnography and the study of youth

1) See for example, Barbalet (1988), Giddens (1982), Held (1989), Mann (1987), Roche (1992) and Turner (1986).

2) For a good discussion on the complexity of this debate see, Phillips (1991) and Siltanen and Stanworth (1984)

3) Although I suggest hanging about on street corners consisted of 'doing nothing' I would agree with Corrigan's (1979) argument that such a term ignores the context and real meanings of 'doing nothing' to young people involved.

4) For example, as mentioned in Chapter One studies by writers such as Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), Corrigan (1979), Gillespie, Lovett and Garner (1992), MacRobbie (1990) and Robins and Cohen (1978), to name but a few, have clearly identified the distinctiveness of youth from either childhood and adulthood. Showing that young people have their own specific 'way of life' which is influential in the forming of their future adult identities.

5) Field research is used here by Burgess as meaning, 'qualitative method', interpretive research' 'case study method' and 'ethnography'.

6) One area where this approach is dominant is in studies of deviance, for example, the Chicago School and the studies of Youth subcultures. See Brake (1985) for a good overview.

7) Jones and Wallace (1992) have since attempted this.

8) Of course, as Hammersley goes on to suggest this issue can be overstated, in that ethnography can also be used to test existing theory, as in the works of Hargreaves (1967) and Ball (1981).

9) Burgess notes that 'all ethnographies are unique and can not be imitated' (1984, p.9) and Ball has said, 'no matter how much theoretical preparation one does, there is no real substitute for actually getting on and doing it' (Burgess ed. 1984 p.70-71). Other writers have discussed this issue in terms of the advice they got when starting their ethnographic field research, for example see Nader 1970, p.98

10) Positivism, has a long history in the social sciences , promoting experimental and survey techniques and quantitative forms of analysis which relies upon ideas generated around scientific methods (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1984 p.4). Naturalism, on the other hand, proposes

that the social world should be, as far as possible, studied in its natural state. It thus rejects the notion of the experiment. According to writers in this tradition, to understand people's behaviour we must use an approach that gives access to the meanings that influence people's behaviour (p.6-7). For a further discussion on these concepts and their influence on research see Hammersley and Atkinson (1984), Hughes (1980) and Kolakowski (1972).

11) For example, see; Bell and Encel (1978), Bell and Roberts (1984) and Shaffir and Stebbins (1990).

12) This idea was initially developed by Denzin (1970) under the heading of 'triangulation' but as Burgess suggests a more useful term is one that incorporates the notion of multiple strategies (p.163-88).

13) Such a view is not uncommon in that other researchers have suggested that it is important to recognize the ongoing process of negotiated access (Geer 1970).

14) Burgess (1991) for example, wants to suggest a hierarchy of power exists within different sites that control certain settings and people within them, a view I would not disagree with.

15) It was also the case that my partner had worked in the Service for over five years and was well known.

16) See Burgess (1984a), Gans (1962), Golde (1970) and Shaffir (1991).

17) For example, see previous discussions on 'the influence of positivism'.

18) Stacey (1969), on the other hand, wants to talk about 'combined operations' suggesting that triangulation can exist, not only in terms of the use of different methods but also in the use of investigators and theories. Triangulation, then according to Stacey, can involve different researchers approaching the research in different ways and different theories being used and tested within the research process.

19) Other writers have raised similar problems for example, Coffield and Borrill (1983) and Jenkins (1984).

20) For an interesting discussion on the effectiveness of silence in interviewing see Griffin (1991).

#### Chapter Four; Living on the edge; The role of community life.

1) The Youth Centre was seen as a 'safe space' partly because it was enclosed in a building that was recognized as such but also because the space was clearly policed by adult Youth Workers.

- 2) For a good discussion on the issue of the growing interest in responsibility see Roche (1992).
- 3) While this definition is proposed by these writers it is also important to recognize that others do exist. For a further discussion see their book, The Politics of Volunteering.
- 4) For a good historical analysis of the development of the Youth Service see Smith (1988).
- 5) For further discussion on this point see Cochrane (1989).
- 6) This notion of 'the culture of poverty' that young people suggested existed in Westhill was similar to that proposed by Keith Joseph (1976).
- 7) While at one level young people saw Westhill at fault for its own poverty, this view was contradicted when they were discussing these issues in terms of politics. For the majority of them the real blame for the poor state of Westhill was with local and national politicians, See chapter Eight.

Chapter Five; 'Doing nothing re-visited'; The importance of leisure and consumption

- 1) For example see, Tomlinson ed. (1985), Parker and Veal ed. (1985) and Willis (1990).
- 2) For a good discussion on the different notions of utopia that underpin these writers. See Pixley (1992).
- 3) This is not to suggest that Willis does not see work as central to the formation of young people's identities. In his earlier work, 'Youth unemployment; thinking the unthinkable' (1985) Willis clearly argues that work is central to the lives of young people. Common Culture (1990) is an attempt to examine other trends that are developing in the sphere of consumption.
- 4) Again similar to Willis, Hollands does not want to deny the importance of work but introduce questions surrounding structural changes and the impact they are having on young people's identities.
- 5) It is important here to recognize that this is clearly a male perspective of leisure being discussed. Writers such as McRobbie (1991) and Griffin (1984) and (1993) want to suggest that much of young women's leisure is conducted in the private sphere. A point I shall discuss in chapter 8.
- 6) Historically research into the leisure activities of the young has clearly shown that the local community is the main site where this form of activity takes place. For example see, Parker (1974) and Corrigan (1979).

7) See for example, Bowles and Gintis (1976), Willis, (1977), and Jeffs and Smith (1989).

8) Of course this is, as mentioned in chapter four, in many ways only a myth because the public space of the community does have rules and regulations about how this space can be used for example, local residents and the police have a major say on what sort of behaviour is allowed within this space which can lead to conflict over how space is used; see for example, Cohen, (1979) and Parker (1974).

9) Similar arguments have been proposed by Hollands (1989) and Willis (1990). As work has declined and been restructured into training programmes, the construction of masculine identities has been a major component of leisure time activities.

10) It is important to recognize that Cohen and Pearson, while developing work that focuses on young people and 'moral panics' do have different emphasis on explanations.

11) It has been recognized that with the expansion of training facilities and the removal of unemployment for the under 18s this group suffer most from unemployment. See. Hutson and Jenkins (1989) and Bates & Banks et al. (1992)

12) This notion of career presupposes that it will provide opportunities for advancement. Of course as the nature of work is changing possibilities for this are becoming squeezed.

13) Although it is important to recognize that young people do have problems with rights. See for example, Jones and Wallace (1992) and Franklin (1986).

14) For example, in 1984 the government introduced the Police and Criminal Evidence Act which attempted to provide a framework of rights for individuals in their encounters with the police.

#### Chapter Six; 'Shit schemes and proper jobs; Demoralisation of the young

1) These figures are taken from July 1990 because this is recognized as the beginning of the recession. These figures are also based on 'travel to work' areas.

2) These figures may in fact be an underestimate the real levels of unemployment. For example a report published by The Local Economy Policy Unit (1994) highlighted that unemployment, using methods of calculation from 1979, were 19%. This is considerably higher than official figures.

3) Young people here are defined as being under the age of 25.

- 4) For example in 1989 the destination of school leavers showed 42% continuing in further education, 40% entering YTS, 12% getting full-time jobs and 6% remaining unemployed (Careers Service Report, 1991).
- 5) This option was very limited for the under 18s because of the changes in eligibility for income support that were introduced in 1988.
- 6) Making this choice was also limited by the changes made in 1988 to young people's entitlements to income support and unemployment benefit. If young people between the ages of 16 and 18 are unemployed they are not entitled to full benefits, only a bridging loan for a short period of time.
- 7) Thus either blaming young people or education see Davies (1986) or Finn (1981).
- 8) Beck (1992) sees this as a consequence of the shift from Fordist to Post-Fordist methods of production.
- 9) Although it is important to recognize that these claims of changes taking place in Germany have also been criticized. For example, see Evans and Heinz (1994) and Roberts, Clark and Wallace (1994).
- 10) But he also raised the issue that he was considering a 'career change' in that he felt the job did not challenge him any more.
- 11) One young person, Lorna left employment while I was undertaking the research.
- 12) This rate is the benefit amount claimable at time of writing. This figure was also higher for over 25s.
- 13) Now called the Training Agency
- 14) For an outline of the historical developments of these programmes see Roche (1992).
- 15) On the Left this includes writers such as Frank Field (1989) and on the Right, writers such as Charles Murray (1989 & 1994).
- 16) See Roche (1992) and Pixley (1992) for a wider discussion of the different types of schemes that have been developed under the heading of workfare.

Chapter Seven; Constraints and control;  
Young Women's experience of citizenship

- 1) Writers such as Benton (1988), (1991), Ellis (1990), Jones (1992), Lister (1989) (1990) (1992), Pateman (1988) and Summers (1991).

- 2) For example, Sarah Benton (1988) suggests that part of the problem of citizenship to achieve equality between men and women, has been its failure to bring into the public domain issues that are defined as private concerns.
- 3) See writers such as Griffin (1985), McRobbie & Garber (1975), McRobbie (1991), and Siltanen & Stanworth (1984).
- 4) An example of this approach can be seen in the works of Corrigan (1979), and Robbins & Cohen (1978).
- 5) Although other writers in fields such as Criminology were raising similar concerns for example see; Campbell, Girl Delinquents (1981) and Smart, Women, Crime and Criminology (1979).
- 6) McRobbie (1991) and others also recognize that young women's absence can be effected by the research process (p.2).
- 7) Although it is worth recognizing that as Griffin (1985) points out, the 'male as norm' is still a major factor in research funding (p.104).
- 8) These issues have also been highlighted by writers concerned with the discourses of citizenship for adult women in a theoretical context. For example see Benton (1991), Ellis (1990) and Lister (1992).
- 9) For a discussion on the impact of British education and the rights of young people see Davies (1986) and Jeffs in Franklin (1986).
- 10) See writers such as; Clarricoates (1980), Deem (1980), Griffin (1985), Sharpe (1976) and Spender (1982)
- 11) Spender, Invisible Women; The Schooling Scandal (1982).
- 12) See Griffin, (1993), Lees, (1985), and McRobbie & Garber (1975).
- 13) Deem (1986), Green, Hebron & Woodward (1990) and Roberts (1990).
- 14) Henwood, Rimmer & Wicks (1987). Jowell, Witherspoon & Brook (1990), McDowell (1989).
- 15) Griffin (1985), Wallace, (1987) and Jones (1992).
- 16) These findings support the conclusions of Lees (1985) and Hemmings (1983).
- 17) Jeffs, takes his argument from the research of Hemmings (1983) who, discovered that young women were starting to challenge some of the traditional expectations and roots to adulthood both verbally and in their actions.

18) The term Youth Training schemes is used as a interchangeable term. It is inclusive of the variety of training schemes that have been made available to young people. The reason for using it as such is because young people were unaware of the different types of schemes. To them they were all 'schemes', little difference seemed to exist between the options available.

19) Hollands (1989) sees this development as a careerist ideology, resulting from the growing opportunities for women within training schemes to encounter new images of women's work. This may then be having an impact on their career choices. Hollands perception may be correct but for the young women of Westhill, who had not yet entered the world of work, their careerist ideology had not been influenced by training schemes.

20) This process is not dissimilar to the negotiation young women used with security guards in Meadowhall. See Chapter three.

21) For example, Allen (1985), Henwood, Morris (1985), Morris (1990) and Rimmer and Wicks (eds.) (1987).

#### Chapter Eight; The politics of citizenship; Youth as a political force.

1) For example see; Hall and Held (1989), Siltanen and Stanworth (1984) and Turner (1986).

2) For example, writers such as Millett (1970) and Siltanen and Stanworth (1984) have challenged conventional notions of politics, suggesting that it ignores the importance of the private. Siltanen and Stanworth for example argue that consideration needs to be given to the private world of women in which their agendas and concerns are ignored by traditional definitions of political activity. In this sense 'being political' is related to the 'personal'.

3) For an interesting discussion on the complexities of the phase, 'the personal as political'. See Anne Phillips (1991).

4) For a further discussion on the concept and influence of social movements on politics see Bryan Turner (1986).

5) One of the main findings in Banks et al (1992) was the growing dissatisfaction of the young towards politics. See chapter eight.

6) For discussions that outline the different perspectives see Speakers Commission Report on Citizenship (1990) (political right) and Hollands (1989) (political left).

7) One area that is not mentioned here but is seen as a major influence is education. While education may have an influence there is much debate over its context and the

method of delivery. This can have a major impact on how successful such an approach can have. For a more in depth discussion see Smith (1987).

8) Williams has, quite rightly, been criticised for the gendered thinking behind his argument. Writers such as Swindells and Jardine (1990) have attempted to show what has been left out by writers such as Williams in an analysis of local politics in the influence of women. Williams (in the same book) acknowledges these criticisms.

9) For example see, Banks et al. (1992), Coffield, Borrill and Marshall (1986), Furnham and Gunter (1991).

10) This area of study has been much neglected over the past 10 years. Probably one of the most interesting analysis of representation of youth in the media was Hebdige's, Hiding from the Light (1988). He argues that young people are usually shown in one of two ways wither as 'having fun' or as a 'problem' although the relationships between the two can be, and are, blurred.

11) The Poll tax was only one form of raising finance for Local Councils. The main source of income is from the Government Support Grant which is determined by central government.

12) Not everyone had to pay the full amount. Exemption existed for certain disabled groups and the mentally disabled.

13) It is important to recognize that a percentage of the 20% was included in young people's income support payment.

14) Writers such as Furnham (1991) and Corr (1990) suggest that parents, the media and friends can have a major influence on the political ideas of the young.

15) See Siltanen and Stanworth (1984) for a critique of mainstream political theory especially in terms of its lack of focus on gender divisions and politics.

16) Writers such as Holland (1989) and MacDonald and Coffield (1991) show in their ethnographies how such a definition of the political ignores much of what young people have to say about the political.

17) Griffin (1993) shows how this concept has underpinned much of the 'radical perspective' in Youth Studies. See later discussion in this Chapter.

18) It is important to recognize that the Birmingham School did not consist of an agreed upon set of ideas. Differences between writers could be clearly identified and in fact much of their work developed by a process of debate and disagreement (for a good history of the Birmingham School see McGuigan (1992)).

19) See for example the article by Corrigan and Frith (1977) for a good over view of these debates.

20) Bhavnani (1991) makes a similar point in criticising the Birmingham writers who have attempted to focus on the meanings and explanations given by young people. She suggests that writers such as Willis have not looked at explicit or conscious views of young people, 'over reading' what they had to say and making claims about their meanings, seeming to ignore the more conforming activities and political motivation behind certain relationships (p.32-34).

21) What Hollands means by the concept of 'manpower servicedom paradigm' is that thinking towards youth unemployment by both the political right and left has been undertaken within the confines of the paradigm constructed by the manpower service training initiatives in the 1980s. Neither political party or the trade unions seem to be able to devise alternative solutions to youth unemployment.

22) Interestingly in the recent (July 1994) Labour Party leadership election Tony Blair attempted to construct a political vision around the concept of citizenship. This involved a discussion on rights and responsibilities as a basis for future policy making. How this approach would develop especially for the young is, at the time of writing, unclear.

### Conclusion

1) 56,000 men compared to 130,000 women. The figure of 157,000 is reached when a deduction is made of job losses of full-time employment, 29,000.

2) The number of unemployed in this age bracket fell 2,500 to a total of 122,500 representing an unemployment rate of 17.4%.

3) Figures taken from Working Brief July (1994).

4) SHA is usually paid to young unemployed who are considered vulnerable and with no other form of support. It is not a universal right but an award made by discretion. The Bridging allowance is similar, in that it is a discretionary payment for a maximum of 8 weeks out of 52.

5) These schemes are at present being piloted on 10,000 young people and aimed at the 18-24 year olds.

6) Benefit reductions are made up to 40% see Working Brief May (1994).

7) See Working Brief June (1994).

8) Stricter Benefit Regime - Hard to fill Vacancies, Memorandum from ES Benefit Management Branch to ES Regional Directors 11/5/94.

- 9) If a claimant has not paid full contributions they can still be entitled to a reduced rate of unemployment benefit.
- 10) Levels of Benefit in terms of losses, is also effected by what type of relationship young people are in. For a more detailed analysis see Murray (1994).
- 11) Figures produced by Youth Aid suggest that one of the major implications of these changes is the disproportion impact it will have on young women. See Working Brief July (1994).
- 12) This report was instigated by the Commission on Social Justice (1994).
- 13) See for example, Jackson (1994), Jeffs (1984) and Spence (1985) for a fuller analysis of the problems with these ideas.
- 14) The nearest to this has been Willis Common Culture in which he tries to argue for a better understanding of the cultural practices of the young. For a critique of this approach see Chapter one.
- 15) For an interesting discussion on the failings of the Birmingham's method of analysis to explain 'raves' see Merchant and MacDonald (1994).
- 16) Griffin has been criticised for suggesting that the failure of her approach is to suggest that the subordination of these groups rests in their inability to influence youth discourses. Although I think this is misrepresenting her argument. See Mizen (1994).
- 17) Although very little has been written about youth and masculinity. Two exceptions are Michael Little's Young Men in Prison (1992) and Bea Campbell's Goliath (1993).

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Appendix one

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CITIZENSHIP

SECTION ONE: PERSONAL DETAILS

1) AGE \_\_\_\_\_

2) MALE/FEMALE

3) What ethnic origin do you regard yourself ?

a) African Caribbean

b) Anglo Caribbean \_\_\_\_\_

c) Asian \_\_\_\_\_

d) Chinese \_\_\_\_\_

e) Arab \_\_\_\_\_

f) European white \_\_\_\_\_

g) other ( please specify ) \_\_\_\_\_

4) do you live at home ?

YES/NO

5) what type of housing do you live in

a) Council

b) Owned by Parents

c) Private landlord

d) other (please specify)

6) how long have you lived in Westhill ?

a) less than a year

b) more than a year but less than 5 years

c) more than 5 years but less than 10

d) more than 10 years but less than 15

e) more than this ( please specify )

f) all your life

7) what type of work do your parents do ? ( if living at home with parents )

PART i) is for people in work

PART ii) is for people at college

PART iii) is for unemployed people

PART iv) is for people still at school

PART i) WORK

a) what type of work do you do ?

b) is it a;

YT

ET

a 'Proper job'

self-employed

other ( please state )

c) is it;

1) Full-time

2) part-time

3) Temporary

4) 'fiddle' job

5) other ( please state)

d) what type of wages do you earn ?

1) £25-£35

2) £36-£45

3) £46-£55

4) £56-£65

5) other (please state)

e) do you like your job ?  
if not why not ?

YES/NO

f) do you think you will be doing this in five years time ?

YES/NO

if not what would you like to do ?

PART ii)

COLLEGE

a) what college do you go to and what course are you doing ?

b) what do you want to do after this course ?

c) why did you choose to go to college ?

d) was college your first choice or did you want to do something else ? YES/NO  
if something else please specify

e) do you get a grant/wages/benefits for attending college ? YES/NO  
if yes how much  
1) £25-£35  
2) £36-£45  
3) £46-£55  
4) £56-£65  
5) other please specify

f) if no where do you get your income from ?

PART iii)

UNEMPLOYMENT

a) how long have you been unemployed ?  
1) less than 3 months  
2) more than 3 months but less than 6 months  
3) more than 6 months but less than a year  
4) over a year ( approx. time please )

b) do you want to get a job? YES/NO  
if yes;  
what would you like to do

if no  
Why not ?

c) do you get state benefits ?

if yes how much

- 1) £25-£35
- 2) £36-£45
- 3) £46-£55
- 4) £56-£66
- 5) other please specify

d) do you have any other form of income on top of benefits ?

e) if you don't receive any benefit where do you get your income ?

Part iv)

SCHOOL

a) When do you leave school

- 1) this year after my exams
- 2) next easter
- 3) next summer
- 4) other

b) what are you intending to do when you leave school ?

- 1) get a 'real job'
- 2) go on a YT
- 3) go to college
- 4) don't know
- 5) other

c) why ?

d) do you have an income ? ( part time work, parents etc.)  
if yes where from and how much ?

SECTION TWO: POLITICS

a) Do you or would you vote in national elections ? YES/NO

b) Do you or would you vote in local elections ? YES/NO

c) Why ?

c) Do you know who your local MP and  
Councillors are ? YES/NO  
if yes please name.

d) are you a member of any political party ? YES/NO  
if yes;

are you active in this organisation ? YES/NO

e) are you an active member of any other type of  
organisation ? YES/NO  
if yes please explain;

f) have you ever wanted to join any political party or  
organisation ? YES/NO  
if yes why didn't you ?

g) have you ever belonged to a political party or  
organisation but now left ? YES/NO  
if yes why did you leave ?

h) Would you become involved in your local tenants association/community association ? YES/NO  
if no/yes why not ?

i) have you ever taken part in a demonstration ? YES/NO  
if yes please explain.

j) do you, or would you, pay your poll tax ? YES/NO  
if no, why not;  
1) because although I can afford it I think it is unfair  
2) because I can't afford it  
3) someone else pay's it for me  
4) I have not registered so they don't know I should pay it  
5) other

if answer b,c, d or e would you pay it if you could afford it ?  
YES/NO

k) what do you think is meant by the term 'citizenship'

### SECTION THREE; VOLUNTARY WORK

do you undertake any voluntary work ? YES/NO

if no answer go onto PART B

#### PART A

a) where do you volunteer / how long have you been doing it/  
how often do you do it ?

b) why do you volunteer ?

c) what do you think you get out of it ?

d) if your voluntary work is with people what do you think they get out of it ?

PART B

have you ever undertaken any voluntary work in the past ?  
YES / NO  
if no go onto PART C

a) where did you volunteer / how long were you doing it/ how often did you do it ?

b) why did you volunteer ?

c) what do you think you got out of it ?

d) if your voluntary work was with people what do you think they got out of it ?

e) why did you stop doing it ?

PART C ( none volunteers )

why don't you do voluntary work;

a) have not the time

b) don't see it as important

c) would like to but don't know how to start

d) its for other types of people

e) other

SECTION FOUR: LEISURE

This section is on how and where you spend most of your leisure time

a) in the day time ( if relevant )

b) in the evenings

c) at weekends

d) what do you enjoy doing most in your spare time ?

e) how often do you go into the town centre ?

1) hardly ever

2) at least once a week

3) between 2 and 4 times a week

4) more than this (number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

f) for what reason do you generally go to town for ?

g) how often do you go to Meadowhall ?

1) hardly ever

2) at least once a week

3) between 2 and 4 times a week

4) more than this

h) for what reason do you normally go to Meadowhall for ?

i) what facilities do you use in your neighbourhood apart from your youth club ?

j) how often have you been to the following in the past month:

- 1) bowling alley \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) swimming Pool at Ponds Forge \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) cinema (town) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) cinema (crystal peaks) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Football (Sheff Wed/Sheff United) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Sports centres ie; Concord \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) other sports club ie; Brendan Ingalls Boxing club \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION FIVE: SHEFFIELD AND WESTHILL

a) What is your opinion of the World Student Games ?

b) do you think that the WSG facilities will benefit you and your area ?

c) what is your opinion of the Meadowhall shopping complex ?

d) do you think it has improved your community ?  
explain

e) what do you think of Wincobank, do you like living here ?  
(good and bad ) explain

f) what do you think of Sheffield. do you like living here ?  
(good and bad) explain

SECTION SIX: ATTITUDES and OPINIONS

1) ADULTHOOD/INDEPENDENCE (In this section number in order of importance )

a) what do you think being an adult means ?

having a full-time job \_\_\_\_\_  
getting married \_\_\_\_\_  
having children \_\_\_\_\_  
living independent \_\_\_\_\_  
freedom to make own decisions \_\_\_\_\_  
to drink alcohol/stay out late \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

b) what of the following list would you like to achieve in the next five years ? ( No. in order of importance )

leave home and live independently \_\_\_\_\_  
own your own car \_\_\_\_\_  
having a better job/having a job \_\_\_\_\_  
getting married \_\_\_\_\_  
having children \_\_\_\_\_  
having more money \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

c) what do you think are the main responsibilities of adulthood? ( No. in order of importance )

managing your own affairs \_\_\_\_\_  
having financial independence \_\_\_\_\_  
helping others \_\_\_\_\_  
organising activities for the young \_\_\_\_\_  
involvement in the community \_\_\_\_\_  
taking part in politics \_\_\_\_\_  
being law abiding \_\_\_\_\_  
getting married and having a family \_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_

2) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE/DISAGREE WITH

1 = strongly disagree 3 = no opinion 5 = strongly agree

CARD ONE: POLITICS

older people don't normally understand the needs of young people

1 2 3 4 5

there's no point in getting involved in politics because it doesn't help me

1 2 3 4 5

politicians generally seem to be aware of young peoples needs

1 2 3 4 5

it is important that young people vote as soon as they are 18 to influence the government

1 2 3 4 5

young people can be quite powerful by joining a political party

1 2 3 4 5

demonstrations are the most effective way young people can voice their concerns

1 2 3 4 5

CARD TWO: TAXES

everybody over the age of eighteen should pay something towards the financing of local services

1 2 3 4 5

only those who are able to pay something towards local services should pay

1 2 3 4 5

everybody should pay the same rate of income tax

1 2 3 4 5

the rich should pay a higher rate of income tax than the poor

1 2 3 4 5

CARD TWO: RIGHTS to BENEFITS

it is only right that young people under the age of 18 shouldn't receive unemployment benefit

1 2 3 4 5

everybody should be entitled to claim unemployment benefit as a right

1 2 3 4 5

people receiving Income support and unemployment benefit are usually unwilling to get a job

1 2 3 4 5

receiving income support and unemployment benefit does not stop people looking for work

1 2 3 4 5

there is enough jobs for everybody if the unemployed were willing to take any type of work or move to other areas

1 2 3 4 5

there is not enough jobs for everybody therefore there will always be high unemployment

1 2 3 4 5

everybody should have a right to a job

1 2 3 4 5

#### CARD THREE; RESPONSIBILITY IN THE COMMUNITY

young people are expected to act responsibly by local people but they are not treated like adults

1 2 3 4 5

Neighbourhood watch schemes are important to keep crime down in the local areas

1 2 3 4 5

it is important that everyone in the local community looks after the old, disabled and mentally ill

1 2 3 4 5

local people, including young people, should, by right, have a say in how their community is run

1 2 3 4 5

#### CARD FOUR: VOLUNTEERING AND RESPONSIBILITY

everybody who is unemployed should have to undertake some form of voluntary work before they can claim benefits

1 2 3 4 5

everybody after leaving school should have to spend a period of time undertaking voluntary work

1 2 3 4 5