COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

AND THE ECONOMY

An empirical study of the early careers of diversified degree graduates from colleges of higher education

Volume Two of Two Volumes

by

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CHAPTER SIX

FACTORS INFLUENCING GRADUATES' CAREERS

Introduction

Thus far, the interpretation of the data derived from the 'Beyond Graduation' survey has treated non-teaching degree graduates from former colleges of education as an undifferentiated homogeneous group. In order ro extend the analysis, in the present chapter, this overall group is broken down into various sub-groupings so that the early careers of different kinds of graduates can be examined and contrasted. In such a way, it is intended that variations in, for example, employment patterns, occupational status and levels of satisfaction can be related to differences in such key variables as gender, age, courses studied and college attended. Throughout this chapter, the analysis is restricted to the 1979 diversified degree respondents from former colleges of education only.

Gender

Of the 247 non-teaching degree graduates who responded to the questionnaire, 177 were female and seventy were male - a similar proportionate ratio (72%:28%) to the one reported in Chapter Four for

the total known population of 1979 college graduates (67%:33%). Corroborating the indications from the first destination returns (see Chapter Four), Table 6.1 shows that a slightly higher proportion of women (46 per cent) had followed a PGCE course than men respondents (37 per cent).

Table 6.1 Gender by rate of entry to PGCE courses<a>

	Men	Women
	%	%
PGCE respondents	37	46
non-PGCE respondents	63	54
TOTALS (100%)	70	177

Phi = .08 (NS)

NOTES

<a> All tables in Chapter Six refer to 1979 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education.

At the time of completing the questionnaire (31.12.81), 74 per cent of women graduates, compared to 70 per cent of men, were in permanent employment (Table 6.2). Male graduates also experienced a higher rate of unemployment: 19 per cent compared to 8 per cent for women (SS), although larger proportions of the latter were temporarily employed and not available for employment. However, given that a greater proportion of women were either permanently or temporarily employed and that the vast majority of women who were not available for employment were working as housewives, it is noteworthy that, in comparison to their male counterparts; a higher share of women

graduates were engaged in some sort of productive activity. Correspondingly, approximately one in ten women, but as many as one in five men, were without any sort of work. It would seem that, unemployment, though not insignificant for women, was a greater problem for men college graduates.

Table 6.2 Gender by latest employment circumstances (31.12.81)

	Men	Women
	%	%
Research/Academic Study	1	1
Teacher Training	6	2
Social Work Training	0	1
Other Training	1	3
Not Available for Employment	0	5
Permanent Home Employment	70	74
Temporary Home Employment	0	5
Temporary Overseas Employment	0	1
Unemployed	19	8
Unknown	3	0
TOTALS (100%)	70	177

Differences between the sexes also emerge when comparing the latest known type of work areas occupied by those in permanent employment on December 31st, 1981. As Table 6.3 demonstrates, 63 per cent of such female graduates were concentrated in just two of the available seventeen type of work categories - Teaching and Secretarial/Clerical work - viz. almost two-thirds of women employees were working as teachers or secretarial/clerical workers. In contrast, with a smaller proportion in their two main categories (46 per cent) - Teaching and Non-specialist administration - male graduates were more

widely dispersed across a greater range of categories.

Table 6.3 Gender by type of work of employed respondents (31.12.81)

	Men	Women
	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0
Non-Specialist Admin.	17	8
Scientific R & D	2	1
Environmental Planning	0	1
Scientific Analysis	4	1
Production Operation	2	0
Buying, Marketing, Selling	10	8
Services to Management	0	2
Financial Work	8	2
Legal Work	2	0
Creative/Entertainment work	8	1
Information, Advisory, Research	2	5
Library, Museum, Archives	0	1
Personnel	4	2
Health & Social Welfare	8	5
Teaching	29	39
Secretarial, Clerical	2	24
Others	2	0
TOTALS (100%)	49	131

Thus, although teaching was the main occupational area for both genders, clearly discernible patterns surfaced for each: while a larger share of women occupied teaching posts and as many as one in four entered secretarial and clerical work, a smaller proportion were to be found in alternative areas; correspondingly, while a smaller share of men were employed as teachers and the number in secretarial/clerical was negligible, a higher proportion remained unemployed or worked in alternative occupations. These alternative areas included Non-specialist administration, Buying, marketing & selling, Creative

and entertainment work, Financial work and Health and Social welfare.

Although scattered across a wider spectrum of non-teaching jobs, the question remains whether or not male graduates were more successful in obtaining entry to occupations with status levels commensurate with that of the teaching profession. Table 6.4 suggests that, although only a small proportion of men graduates had found graduate status jobs outside of teaching, they appeared to be more successful in obtaining such jobs than their female peers. Women graduates were very poorly represented in non-teaching graduate status occupations.

Table 6.4 Gender by occupational status

	Men		Women	
	%		%	
Not employed	30		26	
Low status employees	9		6	
Medium status employees	24		29	
Graduate status employees:		(37)		(39)
Teachers	20		29	
Non-teachers	17		10	
TOTALS (100%)	70		177	

Cramer's V = .07 (NS)

Table 6.4 indicates that, although roughly the same proportions of each gender had attained graduate status work (men: 37 per cent; women: 39 per cent), women graduates did so largely as a result of entering the teaching profession (29 per cent), while men graduates had

almost as many in alternative graduate status jobs (17 per cent) as teaching ones (20 per cent). Consequently, in spite of showing a higher unemployment rate, a larger share of male respondents were able to find non-teaching graduate status jobs, while more women graduates appeared to have evaded unemployment by entering the teaching profession or lower status secretarial work.

Turning to consider the influences of gender differences on other criterion variables, such is the nature of the contrasting patterns of occupational entry for each sex that at an aggregate level, variations are often cancelled out. For example, the aggregate salary disribution for women graduates, who were virtually polarized into two groups of relatively well-paid teachers and low-paid clerical workers, closely matches the same for men graduates, who were not so polarized and had higher proportions in a wider range of occupations. The overall effect is that at each of the different salary levels little variation existed between the genders. For the same reasons, at an aggregate level, no significant differences were found to exist between men and women respondents' attitudes to the extent of intellectual stimulation in their latest work.

One item which did produce slight differences between the sexes was the attitudinal question concerning graduates' levels of satisfaction with the currency of their degrees. As Table 6.5 displays, in comparison to women graduates, there was an increased tendency for men respondents to be less satisfied with the range of jobs their degrees had allowed them to consider. Compared to 24 per cent of females, 39 per cent of male respondents indicated

dissatisfaction with their degree currency (SS).

Table 6.5 Gender by satisfaction with degree currency

"Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider."

	Men	Women
	%	%
Agree	41	53
Neutral	20	23
Disagree	39	24
TOTALS (100%)	70	177

Tau c = .13 (SS)

This finding seems closely related to the higher rate of male unemployment and may also reflect a higher propensity among men to expect more from their 'careers' than women. Some support for this latter supposition, namely, that more men than women invest their 'careers' with higher expectations, is found in the responses to the question on career intentions associated with latest jobs.

Table 6.6 shows that in comparison to 61 per cent of women graduates, 76 per cent of men graduates expressed commitment to a career with their employing organization or their chosen occupation (SS). Correspondingly, a higher proportion of women graduates (19 per cent) than men (10 per cent) indicated that they were 'doing (their) job for experience until something better turns up'.

Table 6.6 Gender by employed respondents' attitudes to job and career

	Men %	Women %
Long term career developing with this organization	39	30
Stay about 3 years, then move to same job but different employer	37	31
Stay 3 years then move to different kind of job	4	9
Doing job for experience until something better turns up	10	19
Dislike this job and trying to find another one	6	6
Dislike this job but will stay here since no others available	4	5
TOTALS (100%)	49	131

On the strength of the above evidence, it would appear that women college graduates were fairly successful at avoiding unemployment, entered teaching at a slightly higher rate than their male peers, frequently accepted clerical jobs with limited opportunities for satisfaction and career prospects, and were under-represented in occupational areas other than teaching or clerical work.

For male graduates, teaching also constituted the main career outlet but was proportionately less prevalent than for female

graduates; secretarial and clerical work was almost completely eluded; unemployment was higher; a greater share obtained non-teaching graduate status work, though as high a proportion as women graduates were to be found in medium or low status jobs. Men respondents displayed slight tendencies towards greater dissatisfaction with their degree currency and greater commitment towards career development within their employing organization or occupation.

At an aggregate level, there were few variations in salaries and intellectual satisfaction between the sexes. However, in the previous chapter, it was seen that occupational areas had a more direct influence on these two variables, and because of this, variations in the distribution of salaries and intellectual satisfaction at work along gender lines, would appear to be more adequately accounted for by the different patterns of occupational area entered by each of the sexes.

Opportunities for women

As a result of the gender imbalance in the student constituency of colleges, a number of academic staff were of the opinion that the colleges needed to develop as specialist institutions for forwarding the cause of increased career opportunities for women. In view of this, it was decided to include in the questionnaire an item similar to one contained in Kelsall et al's (1970) survey, namely; 'To what extent do you think your opportunities for appointments and promotion have been, (or are being) hampered because you are a woman?' The results

are presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Marital status by women's attitudes to restricted job opportunities

"To what extent do you think your opportunities for appointments and promotion have been, (or are being) hampered because you are a woman?"

	All women	Single	Married
	%	%	%
Not at all	49	57	36
To some extent	36	26	52
Largely	7	6	9
Don't know	8	11	3
TOTALS (100%)	175	111	64

Further analyses revealed that, although there was little correlation between the response to this item and graduates' latest known employment circumstances (e.g. unemployment, permanent employment etc.), some association existed between these responses and certain types of latest known occupational areas. While 'Teaching' showed a distribution similar to the overall percentages, 'Secretarial/Clerical' had the lowest proportions of 'Not at all' responses (34 per cent) and 'Buying, Marketing & Selling' and 'Health & Social Welfare' achieved the highest of any 'Not at all' percentages (approximately 70 per cent in both cases). Corroborating the prevailing trend, the largest share expressing some recognition of limited opportunities were to be found in the 'Secretarial/Clerical' section.

Breaking down the overall percentages into the frequencies for single and married respondents, Table 6.7. clearly demonstrates that in comparison to single women, married women were far more likely to perceive themselves as having encountered some form of unequal and discriminatory treatment. For instance, 61 per cent of married women compared to 32 per cent of single women thought that their opportunities had been hampered either 'to some extent' or 'largely' (SS). These findings provide some basis for believing that being married and female can amount to a serious handicap in the graduate labour market.

The responses to an open-ended follow-up question, inviting women respondents to give further details of unequal treatment over employment opportunities, lend support to the view that it is married women who were particularly vulnerable in this respect. Of the forty-five women who volunteered further comments, twenty-six were concerned, in one way or another, with the restrictions placed on career prospects and job opportunities by their marital or motherhood roles. Several respondents, who were dispersed across the full range of occupational areas, emphasized that being female per se was not the chief reason for thwarted opportunities but being married or, worst still, a real or potential mother. The following were typical of many such comments:

> (Q.19, Student Nurse) Rather than being female being married has made some difference - supposition that I would be leaving jobs to have children.

> (Q.19, Assistant Manager in Sports Complex) Before I was married I was given equal oppotunities to those which a man receives but after I was married this encouragement dwindled and now I am no longer given those privileges of a

man.

(Q.19, Teacher) When you get to a cetain age and you happen to be married, promotion seems to be determined on whether the interviewing panel think that you are likely to become pregnant or not. The choice seems to be a full-time career with promotion or a family.

(Q.19, Teacher) In the future I want a family, therefore will have to leave work - losing time and therefore promotion prospects. I am resigned to believing this is inevitable.

(Q.19, Unemployed) As a married woman, employers are not prepared to take the risk of employing someone whom they consider is likely to start a family.

As implied in the last comment, several respondents had been offended by employers' questions and suspicions regarding their personal and familial intentions:

(Q.19, Not available for employment) I found that I was sometimes asked questions which I considered to be impertinent at the interview stage e.g. Do you intend having a family?

(Q.19, Unemployed) Employers (or prospective employers in interviews) always ask whether one is engaged, married or wanting a family soon. Some go so far as to ask how many years they may presume me to be available.

(Q.19, Student Accountant) I have been asked when I am getting married, and then about having children. Even though I am getting married next year, I still want to work for a number of years. Why don't prospective employers believe this?

Another familiar problem for married respondents was the expectation and tendency for a married woman to have to suspend her own career in deference to that of her partners:

(Q.19, Secretary) I accepted that it was more important for my fiance to secure full-time employment first and so restricted the area in which I applied for posts. Present secretarial post has limited prospects - already near top of salary scale- difficult to transfer to administrative grades once have been labelled as a secretary.

(Q.19, Not available for employment) My husband is a Police Constable and when only engaged to him I was asked if he would be moving with his job and if so would I move with him. These types of questions are typical, especially by women on the interview panel.

In addition to the twenty-six who perceived marital and motherhood roles to be the main source of unequal job opportunities, eleven respondents felt that their opportunities had been hampered by employers' tacit preferences for male applicants. The following extracts indicate the type of responses received from this group:

(Q.19, Assistant Retail Manageress) Recent opportunity for promotion within company to one of largest stores. One of four interviewees (three others male). Was informed I had been unsuccessful because manager thought the position involved could only be filled by a male. (N.B. Position mentioned was equivalent to job I was and am currently fulfilling.)

(Q.19, Retail Branch Manager) Within Retailing, Store Management is regarded as a man's job and, although I am as committed to this type of career as much as any man, I have been rejected because of being a woman.

(Q.19, Teacher) There being far less men in [primary] teaching, authorities seem more eager to employ more men, to redress the balance in schools.

A handful of respondents attributed their experience of restricted opportunities to the male-dominated ethos which allegedly prevailed in their workplaces:

(Q.19, Assistant Personnel Officer) I work in a predominantly male organization with several 'old school' types at the top. Women were not employed by them at all until well on into this century. Changes are occurring, but only slowly.

(Q.19, Secretary) It really is, surprisingly, a male dominated industry - perfumery.

Finally, two or three respondents pointed to the negative stereo-typing of women which provided employers with a set of rationalizations for not engaging or promoting them:

> (Q.19, Executive Officer in Civil Service) I have the impression that certain employers feel women are a risk in that we are more 'emotional'.

> (Q.19, Administrative Assistant) I applied for one job, working for British Rail and I was the only female applicant and I felt that this affected their judgement because they seemed to be very worried that I wouldn't like getting dirty or travelling for most of the week.

To conclude this review of women respondents' descriptions of the kinds of unequal opportunities they faced, four main types of disadvantages have been identified: firstly, and by far the largest category, conflicting interests between employment commitments and familial responsibilities, real or imputed; secondly, prejudged preferences for male candidates; thirdly, male-dominated work organizations; and finally, negative stereo-typing of female qualities. It should be stressed, however, that in reality these types frequently overlapped each other and several comments incorporated elements of two or more of them. Furthermore, in setting out respondents' constructions about women's unequal opportunities, the possibility that the participants may be unaware of, or misguided about, the real underlying processes of discrimination must not be overlooked.

Marital Status

Any impression gained from the previous section that it was only women graduates, particularly married ones, who encountered career difficulties must be dispelled. In comparing the careers of single and married graduates, it often seems to be the case that, in many respects, single male graduates constituted the least successful group of graduates.

With female graduates showing only a slightly higher marital proportion than male graduates, Table 6.8 indicates that, at the time of completing the questionnaire, just over a third of college respondents were married. Of these, the majority (71 per cent) married after leaving college, whereas equal proportions of the remainder married either before starting, or while attending, college. Male graduates were slightly more likely to marry during their time at college; female graduates were marginally more likely to marry after college (Table 6.9).

Table 6.8 Marital status on 31.12.81

	All	Male	Women
	%	%	%
Single	62	64	61
Married	35	29	37
Other (Sep./Div.)	3	7	2
TOTALS (100%)	247	70	177

Cramer's V = .15 (NS)

Table 6.9 Gender by time of marriage (if married/other in Table 6.8)

	All	Male	Women
	%	%	%
Before starting college	14	12	15
While at college	15	24	12
After leaving college	71	64	73
TOTALS (100%)	93	25	68

Contrasting the latest known career circumstances of single and married graduates, Table 6.10 demonstrates that, apart from a higher share of married respondents who were not available for employment corresponding to a higher share of unemployed single respondents, both groups had roughly the same proportions in permanent home employment. However, if gender as an additional variable is introduced into the analysis, some interesting differences emerge. Compared to 65 per cent of single male graduates, a substantial 85 per cent of married male graduates were in full-time permanent employment (SS). Similarly, while there were no recorded cases of unemployed married men, as many as 27 per cent of single male respondents were unemployed.

Table 6.10 Gender by marital status by latest employment circumstances

	ALL		MALE		FEMALE	
	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Research/Study	1	0	2	0	1	0
Teacher Training	4	1	4	5	3	0
Social Work Train.	1	0	0	0	1	0
Other Training	3	4	2	0	3	4
Not Available for Employment	0	9	0	0	0	12
Permanent Home Employment	74	72	65	85	78	68
Temporary Home Employment	2	6	0	0	4	8
Overseas Temp. Employment	1	0	0	0	2	0
Unemployed	14	6	27	0	8	8
Unknown	0	2	0	10	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	154	85	45	20	109	65

Although it is tempting to view these disparities as reflecting the increased motivations and responsibilities associated with married life, the alternative direction of causality, namely that for many graduates permanent employment is almost a pre-condition of marriage, should not be ignored. Neither should a third possibility, namely, that graduates with particular personality types simultaneously seek work and relationships which are permanent and secure. Unfortunately, the survey data is insufficient to allow a more detailed investigation of these issues.

Turning to women respondents, Table 6.10 shows that single females had a significantly higher rate of permanent employment than single males - 78 and 65 per cent respectively - and that appreciably fewer single women were unemployed - 8 and 27 per cent respectively (SS). Married women had the same unemployed proportion as single women, but showed a lower rate of permanent employment (68 per cent) due to their share of respondents who worked as housewives and mothers, and were, thus, not available for employment (12 per cent).

Consequently, the results lend some support to the view that the employment rate of college graduates is partially attenuated by the poor performance of single male graduates and by married women's departure from permanent employment to domestic responsiblities. Alternatively, the employment rate was strenghtened by the comparatively sound performance of married men and single women in finding permanent work.

Did married men and single women also experience superior rates of entry into graduate status occupations? Some preliminary answers to these questions are revealed in Tables 6:11 and 6:12.

Table 6.11 Gender by marital status by type of work of employed respondents

	SINGLE			MARRIED		
	All	M	W	All	M	W
	%	%	%	%	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Specialist Admin.	10	24	6	10	6	11
Scientific R & D	1	3	0	1	0	2
Environmental Planning	1	0	1	0	0	0
Scientific Analysis	2	4	1	0	0	0
Production Operation	1	3	0	0	0	0
Buying, Marketing, Selling	9	4	11	8	23	2
Services to Management	2	0	2	2	12	2
Financial Work	3	7	2	5	0	2
Legal Work	1	3	0	0	0	0
Creative/Entertainment work	3	10	0	3	6	2
Information, Advisory, Res.	5	4	6	2	0	2
Library, Museum, Archives	1	0	1	2	0	2
Personnel	3	7	2	0	0	0
Health & Social Welfare	3	3	4	10	12	9
Teaching	31	24	33	47	41	50
Secretarial, Clerical	23	0	31	10	0	14
Others	1	4	0	0	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	114	29	85	61	17	44

Table 6.12 Gender by marital status by occupational status

	SINGLE			MARRIED		
	All	Men	Women	All	Men	Women
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Not employed	26	36	22	28	15	32
Low status employees	8	4	9	6	20	2
Medium status employees	31	27	33	19	15	20
Graduate status employees:	(35)	(33)	(36)	(47)	(50)	(46)
Teachers	23	15	26	34	35	34
Non-Teachers	12	18	10	13	15	12
TOTALS (100%)	154	45	109	85	20	65

Single only: Cramer's V = .15 (NS)

They show that, in comparison to single respondents, a higher proportion of married graduates, male and female, were to be found in 'Teaching' and 'Health & Social Welfare'. In contrast, 'Secretarial/Clerical work' was predominantly occupied by single graduates, who were almost exclusively female. As a result of the larger shares in 'Teaching', proportionatelty more men and women married respondents attained graduate status posts, (47 per cent compared to 35 per cent of single respondents, though not in non-teaching graduate status jobs, in which single men were marginally more successful and single women the least successful. Thus, to return to the question posed above, it would seem that married men achieved superior rates of graduate status job entry, but single women were not as successful as married women in this respect, due to the former's lower participation in 'Teaching' and higher involvement in 'Secretarial/Clerical work'.

Briefly summarizing the employment performance of each of the four groups, it may be noted that, single men had the lowest proportion in permanent employment, the worst unemployment, the lowest rate of entry to teaching but marginally the highest participation in non-teaching graduate status jobs; single women had a high permanent employment rate, a reasonably low unemployment level, but the lowest proportion in non-teaching graduate status jobs with a high concentration in the problematic clerical sphere; married women had a relatively low employment rate; which was almost entirely due to the proportion working as housewives, a reasonably low unemployment level, a high rate of entry into teaching jobs but a fairly low participation in non-teaching graduate status jobs; married men had the best

employment level; no unemployment, the highest entry into teaching and the second best participation in non-teaching graduate status jobs.

Further analysis also disclosed that proportionately more married than single men earned over £400 per month and that proportionately more married than single women were committed to a career with their employing organization or occupation. Of those who were permanently employed, single men were more likely to be dissatisfied with the currency value of their degrees. Finally, over and above the predictable point that the vast majority of housewives who were not available for employment were caring for children under the age of five, the prospects for analyzing the effect of the number and children at home were invalidated by the scarcity of relevant cases.

Age

The question of whether or not the career patterns of 'mature' graduates differ significantly from those of younger graduates, has attracted considerable interest. Unfortunately, because the number of 'mature' respondents was very meagre - only twenty-five of the 247 respondents were over twenty-one at the time they started college - definite or confident answers to this question are not possible. However, in consideration of the interest shown in this area, and in view of the fairly even distribution of 'mature' respondents across all participating institutions, some noteworthy, if very tentative, points can be gleaned from the results. Overall, the findings tend to

challenge the presumption that married women in particular restrict the employment level of older graduates.

Notwithstanding the small size of the over twenty-one sample, two discrepancies between the over and under twenty-ones were apparent: at the end of 1981, the older graduates displayed a lower proportion in permanent employment and a higher level of unemployment. Compared to one in ten of the younger graduates, Table 6.13 demonstrates that one in four of the older respondents were unemployed (SS). Furthermore, from Table 6.14, where the percentage of older graduates has been disaggregated by gender and marital status, it is evident that all but one of the unemployed older graduates were single, and predominantly male.

Table 6.13 Age by latest employment circumstances

	AGE ON ENTRY TO COLLEGE	
	Under 21	Over 21
	%	%
Research/Academic Study	1	0
Teacher Training	3	0
Social Work Training	1	0
Other Training	3	0
Not Available for Employment	3	4
Permanent Home Employment	75	60
Temporary Home Employment	3	12
Overseas Temp. Employment	1	0
Unemployed	9	24
Unknown	1	0
TOTALS (100%)	222	25

Table 6.14 Unemployment among respondents who were over 21 years old on entry.

Numbers of unemployed are shown in parentheses

	Single	Married	TOTALS
Men	6 (4)	3 (0)	9 (4)
Women	6 (2)	10 (1)	16 (3)
TOTALS	12 (6)	13 (1)	25 (7)

Consequently, contrary to some expectations, the results suggest that unemployment among older graduates may be more closely related to the problems of single men than those of married women. They also indicate that, unlike the improved employment rates connected with marriage, being an older graduate is not directly associated with higher levels of permanent employment. In addition, further analyses indicated no discernible differences between older and younger graduates with respect to type of work areas entered, the rate of embarking on PGCE courses, occupational status, and career intentions related to their latest jobs.

Occasionally, a few differences did emerge. Of those who were permanently employed, the over twenty-one group were slightly more likely to earn over £400 a month. As indicated in Tables 6.15 and 6.16, older graduates were slightly more satisfied with the currency of their degrees, but considerably more dissatisfied than younger graduates with the intellectual content of their latest jobs (SS).

Table 6.15 Age by satisfaction with degree currency

"Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider."

	Under 21	Over 21
	%	%
Agree	48	60
Neutral	22	24
Disagree	30	16
TOTALS (100%)	222	25

Tau c = .05 (NS)

Table 6.16 Age by intellectual satisfaction in latest job.

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	Under 21	Over 21
	%	%
Agree	39	64
Neutral	20	8
Disagree	41	28
TOTALS (100%)	222	25

Tau c = .06 (SS)

On examining the cases expressing this dissatisfaction, two kinds of 'mature' graduates figure highly: single males undertaking relatively menial jobs (e.g. van driver, postman) and women graduates working in secretarial or clerical posts. Such findings give rise to a number of questions worthy of further research: Are there significant numbers of mature students who are attracted to three year degree courses because they were experiencing employment and occupational problems before attending college? If so, are they more likely to continue to confront similar problems on completion of their courses? Similarly, is the increased job dissatisfaction of older graduates precipitated by the additional disappointment of having to return to routine work after, what is for many mature students, an intellectually invigorating experience at college?

Finally, it has been suggested that older graduates may be more employable than younger ones because more of the former acquired vocational qualifications prior to commencing their degree courses. Little evidence arose to indicate that pre-college vocational qualifications were a major factor in extending the employability of older graduates. Of the fifteen older respondents in permanent employment at the end of 1981, only three reported that their earlier vocational qualifications were instrumental in obtaining their present work. Significantly, all three were working as secretaries. One emphasized the importance of possessing work-related qualifications 'to fall back on':

> (Q.21, Secretary) ..The employment situation at present means that someone without a skill or a vocational

training in business or hospital work etc., cannot be sure of gaining, and holding on to, full-time employment. Even a simple skill like typing has enabled me to find employment on both a full-time basis and for as little as six weeks.

Other older respondents, especially teachers, valued the general benefits gained from having worked before attending college, even if employability had not been extended by pre-college qualifications. The following quotation was typical:

> (Q.20 viii, Teacher) [Work experience prior to attending college was] most useful preparation for life in general and in gaining a broader outlook on the needs of pupils in general. All teachers should undergo such a period of work outside of an academic environment in order to break the school-college-school cycle and give a more balanced viewpoint.

Although two, possibly three, respondents remarked on the general employment benefits of pre-college work experience, one reinforced the impression gained from the above quantitative findings, namely, that there were few signs that older graduates as a whole found it easier than their younger colleagues to obtain graduate status work:

> (Q.20 viii, Van driver) Having worked before college, I knew what sort of thing was in store but it was just as difficult (if not more so) to find.

'A' levels and degree results

Some careers experts have expressed the suspicion that employers continue to use graduates' 'A' level results as important criteria for occupational selection. In a related manner, questions have been raised concerning the possibility of positive correlations between 'A' level results, degree classifications and employment

indices. For there to be any widespread palpability in these hypotheses, it could be expected that graduates with higher 'A' level scores would display more successful employment records than those with lower 'A' level scores. The survey results provide little evidence to encourage either of these hypotheses.

Excluding those without any 'A' level qualifications, Table 6.17 shows that the median 'A' level score for college respondents was 4.5. 45 per cent of college respondents with 'A' levels had total scores of four or below (these have been categorized as the 'below average group') and 55 per cent had scores of five or above (the 'above average group').

Table 6.17 'A' level scores<a>

Score	Frequency	
0	22	Excluded from analysis
1	3	
2	22	Below average group (45%)
3	37	
4	40	
5	42	
6	29	
7	16	
8	14	
9	7	Above average group (55%)
10	4	
11	3	
12	5	
13	1	
14	1	
16	1	
TOTAL (100%)	247	

NOTES
<a> The methods used to calculate these scores are the same as those used in Tables 4.17 and 4.18.

Having carried out comparative analyses of these two groups, no consistent and significant differences were apparent in career patterns, employment rates, occupational status, teacher training rates, types of work entered, and latest known salaries. The only significant variations suggested that the 'below average group' included proportionately more respondents who held fairly firm career orientations related to their latest known employment areas (SS) (Table 6.18) and who were more intellectually satisfied by the demands of their work (Table 6.19) than members of the 'above average group' (SS).

Table 6.18 'A' level groups by attitudes to job and career

	Below Average %	Above Average %
Long term career developing with this organization	31	28
Stay about 3 years, then move to same job but different employer	42	27
Stay 3 years then move to different kind of job	3	12
Doing job for experience until something better turns up	16	19
Dislike this job and trying to find another one	5	7
Dislike this job but will stay here since no others available	3	7
TOTALS (100%)	75	89

Table 6.19 'A' level groups by intellectual satisfaction with job

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	Below Average 'A' levels %	Above Average 'A' levels %
Agree	36	47
Neutral	17	20
Disagree	47	33
TOTALS (100%)	102	123

Cramer's V = .14 (NS)

Table 6.20 indicates that a higher proportion of the 'above average group' obtained Honours rather than Ordinary degrees - compared to 42 per cent of the 'below average group', 56 per cent of the 'above average group' gained Honours degrees (SS). Futhermore, contrary to expectations, a significantly higher share of the 'above average group' achieved good Honours classifications - 33 per cent gained a First or Upper Second, (mainly the latter), compared to a meagre 5 per cent of the 'below average group' (Table 6.21, SS).

Table 6.20 'A' level groups by level of degrees

	Below Average 'A' levels	Above Average 'A' levels
	%	%
Honours Degrees	42	56
Ordinary Degrees	58	44
TOTALS (100%)	102	123

Phi = .4 (SS)

Table 6.21 'A' level groups by Honours degree classification

	Below Average 'A' levels	Above Average 'A' levels
	%	%
First	0	3
Upper Second	5	30
Lower Second	56	41
Third	39	26
TOTALS (100%)	43	69

On the grounds of this evidence, it would seem that, relative to their less well qualified peers, college students with good 'A' level scores have better chances of obtaining an Honours degree with higher classifications. However, these advantages do not appear to have been translated into enhanced employment performances - at least at an aggregate level. The overall results of comparisons between career patterns and degree levels (Honours/Ordinary), including degree classifications, were very similar to those for the 'A' level groups, namely, little significant variation in employment indices, and only a slight tendency for graduates with Ordinary degrees to be more committed to, and more intellectually satisfied by, their latest known job. Consequently, the findings do not suggest major career enhancements according to 'A' level results and level or classification of degree, but there could be a case for arguing that larger samples are required to confirm this interpretation more confidently.

Social class

Recent research has indicated a gradual decline in the proportion of students from working class backgrounds studying at the former colleges of education (Gibbs and Cree 1982). Consequently, this trend inevitably reduces the extent to which this type of college can claim to be providing the avenue of occupational and social mobility it once offered many working class students in the 1960s. Questions need to be asked, however, about the impact of diversification on the colleges' capacity to facilitate upward occupational mobility. In spite of the overall reduction in the proportion of working class

students at colleges, do working class graduates with diversified degrees experience forms of occupational advancement? If so, is this upward mobility achieved through the traditional avenue of teaching or through entry to alternative professions?

Based on the Registrar General's classification of fathers' occupations and social classes (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys 1980), Table 6.22 shows the numbers of non-BEd respondents in each of the seven class categories.

By a large margin, the highest category was 'Intermediate' employees (one hundred and twenty respondents) and the lowest was 'Unskilled' employees (one respondent). Adopting the same method for collapsing these categories as used by Gibbs and Cree (1982), namely, grouping 'Professional', 'Intermediate' and 'Skilled Non-manual' workers as 'Middle Class' and 'Skilled Manual', 'Semi-skilled' and 'Unskilled' as 'Working Class', 76 per cent of the classifiable respondents were from middle class families, the remaining 26 per cent had working class origins.

Table 6.22 Social class (Father's occupation)<a>

	Frequency	Class Categories	Frequency	Gender M	Gender W
Professional	38				
Intermediate	120	Middle	175 (76%)	69%	79%
Skilled Non-manual	17				
Skilled Manual	45				
Semi-skilled	8	Working	54 (24%)	31%	21%
Unskilled	1				
Unclassified	18	(Excluded)			
TOTALS (100%)	247		229	62	167

Social Class by Gender: Tau b = .10 (NS)

NOTES
<a> Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (1980).

These proportions were identical to the percentages for each social class of the 1980 entrants to the six institutions in the CCRG (Gibbs and Cree 1982). Only one student in four was from a working class background - a proportion very similar to that for the 1979 entrants to GB universities.

The same Table also reveals that middle class respondents included a higher proportion of women graduates, while working class respondents contained a correspondingly higher share of male graduates. Apart from a slight tendency for a higher share of Honours degree respondents to belong to the middle class category, few class-based variations in terms of 'A' level scores, degree classifications and marital status were detectable.

Two rather intriguing features are unfolded in Table 6.23, which compares the latest known career circumstances of the two broad social classes. These are the comparatively high employment rate of working class respondents and the wholesale concentration of graduates who were either not available for employment or temporarily employed within the middle class group.

Table 6.23 Social class by latest employment circumstances

	SOCIAL CLASS	
	Middle	Working
	%	%
Research/Academic Study	1	0
Teacher Training	3	4
Social Work Training	0	2
Other Training	3	2
Not Available for Employment	5	0
Permanent Home Employment	71	83
Temporary Home Employment	4	0
Overseas Temp. Employment	1	0
Unemployed	11	9
Unknown	1	0
TOTALS (100%)	175	54

While both classes demonstrated similar unemployment rates, 83 per cent of working class respondents were permanently employed, compared to only 71 per cent of middle class respondents (SS). Consequently, because the latter exceed the former by more than two to one, they had the effect of depressing the overall level of permanent employment.

Furthermore, whereas 5 per cent of middle class respondents were not available for employment and 4 per cent were temporarily employed, not a single case from the working class group was to be found in either of these categories. Since, all the respondents who were not available for employment were women, and in both classes women tended to marry and have children at similar rates, the reasons why middle class mothers were more likely to be unavailable for employment than their working class counterparts are not immediately obvious. Although the greater aggregate number of women in the middle class group create grounds for caution, possible explanations could be related to the differential influences of class-based cultural norms or discrepancies in material resources to allow the option of becoming totally unavailable for employment. Reminiscent of the earlier proposition that married male graduates appear to be more highly motivated to acquire and sustain permanent employment, perhaps an element of married women with working class origins are more likely to experience similar pressures to continue working in some form of employment.

Returning to the questions raised in the opening paragraph, Table 6.24 establishes that 44 per cent of working class respondents had advanced to positions of graduate status employment. The corresponding percentage for middle class respondents was 39 per cent. However, the vast majority of working class respondents (37 per cent) had achieved this level of occupational status by entering the teaching profession and only a mere 7 per cent of this social class attained graduate status jobs in non-teaching occupations.

Table 6.24 Social class by occupational status of employed respondents

	Middle Class	Working Class
	%	%
Not employed	29	17
Low status employees	6	11
Medium status employees	26	28
Graduate status employees	(39)	(44)
Teachers	24	37
Non-teachers	15	7
TOTALS (100%)	175	54

Cramer's V = .13 (NS)

Table 6.25 shows that, in comparison to the middle class group, a higher share of working class respondents undertook PGCE courses and Table 6.24 reveals that a higher proportion of the latter actually gained employment as teachers. This result is particularly interesting and somewhat contrary to expectations since the middle class group contains a higher share of women, who, as indicated earlier, were slightly more likely to take up teaching. The middle class group had a lower proportion employed as teachers but a higher share in non-teaching graduate status jobs - 15 per cent compared to 7 per cent of the working class group.

Table 6.25 Social class by entry to teacher training

	Middle Class	Working Class
	%	%
PGCE respondents	42	52
non-PGCE respondents	58	48
TOTALS (100%)	175	54

Tau b = .08 (NS)

In addition then to the phenomena of a falling working class contingency in the colleges, the findings suggest that occupational mobility to graduate status professions as a result of taking a diversified degree was not within the experience of the majority of graduates from working class families. Moreover, the extent of mobility attained by this class of graduates remained highly reliant on the conventional avenue into the teaching profession.

Differences between colleges

Due to the fact that several colleges of higher education produced very modest amounts of diversified degree graduates in 1979, contrasting graduates' early careers from different colleges is difficult and necessarily requires the adoption of some methodological compromises. For instance, of the eight former colleges of education participating in the survey, four had fewer than thirty-five non-BEd graduates (see Table 2.4). With a response rate of 54 per cent for this type of college, it would be misleading to conduct a comparison of career trends from different colleges on the basis of such small populations in each group. However, the remaining four former colleges of education in the survey (Colleges 1, 2, 3, and 8 in Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4) produced at least fifty non-teaching degree graduates in 1979 and it is considered that some interesting points of contrast can be validly drawn from a comparison of the findings for each of these

institutions. The results of these comparisons are set out in Tables 6.26 to 6.35.

Table 6.26 College by gender and social class

	GENDER			SOCIAL CLASS		
	Men %	Women %	TOTALS (100%)	Middle %	Working %	TOTALS (100%)
College 1	41	59	34	83	17	30
College 2	31	69	90	66	34	83
College 3	20	80	69	86	14	66
College 8	14	86	21	95	5	20
Other Colls.	33	67	33	59	41	27
All Colls.	28	72	247	76	24	226

Gender: Cramer's V = .19 (NS) for first four rows
Social Class: Cramer's V = .26 (SS) for first four rows

Table 6.27 College by age and 'A' level groups

	AGE			'A' LEVEL GROUPS		
	Under 21	Over 21	TOTALS (100%)	Below Average	Above Average	TOTALS (100%)
	%	%		%	%	
College 1	85	15	34	39	61	33
College 2	97	3	90	54	46	90
College 3	94	6	69	40	60	63
College 8	100	0	21	29	71	21
Other Colls.	58	42	33	50	50	18
All Colls.	90	10	247	45	55	225

'A' Levels : Cramer's V = .18 (NS) for first four rows

Table 6.28 College by level and classification of degree

	LEVEL OF DEGREE			CLASS. OF HONS. DEGREE		
	Hons.	Ord.	TOTALS (100%)	1/2.1	2.2/3	TOTALS (100%)
	%	%		%	%	
College 1	0	100	34	-	-	-
College 2	24	76	90	9	91	22
College 3	100	0	69	26	74	69
College 8	95	5	21	30	70	20
Other Colls.	58	42	33	16	84	19
All Colls.	53	47	247	22	78	130

Degree Level: Cramer's V = .82 (SS) for first four rows
Classification: Cramer's V = .17 (NS)

Table 6.29 College by latest employment circumstances

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
Research/Academic Study	0	0	3	0
Teacher Training	0	5	4	5
Social Work Training	0	0	0	0
Other Training	3	2	3	5
Not Available for Employment	6	2	4	5
Permanent Home Employment	79	77	68	76
Temporary Home Employment	6	2	4	0
Overseas Temp. Employment	0	0	3	0
Unemployed	6	11	9	9
Unknown	0	1	2	0
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21

Table 6.30 College by rate of entry to PGCE courses

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
PGCE respondents	47	36	51	48
non-PGCE respondents	53	64	49	52
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21

Cramer's V = .14 (NS)

Table 6.31 College by occupational status of employed respondents

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
Not employed	21	23	32	24
Low status employees	3	9	9	0
Medium status employees	38	35	20	19
Graduate status employees:	(38)	(33)	(39)	(57)
Teachers	32	20	27	43
Non-teachers	6	13	12	14
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21

Cramer's V = .13 (NS) for first four rows

Table 6.32 College by salaries of employed respondents

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
Gross monthly income	%	%	%	%
(£)				
Under 200	0	2	0	0
201 - 300	5	10	11	15
301 - 400	20	33	14	23
401 - 500	60	43	43	46
501 - 600	10	6	23	16
601 - 700	5	2	9	0
Above 700	0	4	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	20	51	35	13

Table 6.33 College by type of work categories of employed respondents

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0	0	0
Non-Specialist Admin.	7	12	15	0
Scientific R & D	4	0	0	6
Environmental Planning	0	2	0	0
Scientific Analysis	0	4	0	0
Production Operation	0	1	0	0
Buying, Marketing, Selling	15	12	4	6
Services to Management	0	2	2	0
Financial Work	4	4	4	0
Legal Work	0	1	0	0
Creative/Entertainment work	4	2	2	0
Information, Advisory, Research	7	4	2	6
Library, Museum, Archives	0	1	2	0
Personnel	4	0	5	6
Health & Social Welfare	7	7	2	0
Teaching	41	26	41	57
Secretarial, Clerical	7	22	21	19
Others	0	0	0	0
TOTALS (100%)	27	69	47	16

Table 6.34 College by satisfaction with degree currency

"Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider."

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
Agree	59	50	39	72
Neutral	21	17	36	14
Disagree	20	33	25	14
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21

Cramer's V =.19 (SS)

Table 6.35 College by intellectual satisfaction in latest job

"My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be."

	COLLEGES			
	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%
Agree	35	50	39	29
Neutral	15	15	23	19
Disagree	50	35	38	52
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21

Cramer's V = .13 (NS)

It is evident from these tables that the main trends and interpretations presented earlier are also visible as inherent characteristics, to a greater or lesser extent, in each of the four institutions under comparison. As a consequence, the case for establishing the institutional generality of the earlier interpretations is supported by the finding that the diversified degree graduates from the four colleges, by and large, share the same salient constituency features and career trends.

By way of illustration, it may be noted that the non-teaching degree output from each college was predominantly female, middle class (Table 6.26) and under twenty-one years old on entry (Table 6.27). Thirty months after graduation, the graduates from each institution showed unemployment rates of around 10 per cent and approximately three in every four were permanently employed (Table 6.29). By overwhelming

margins, teaching was the main occupation entered by the four groups of graduates and each college also displayed similarly small proportions entering non-teaching graduate status occupational areas (Tables 6.30 and 6.31). For all colleges but one, the second most prevalent occupational outlet was secretarial and clerical work (Table 6.33), none of the colleges had significant proportions entering the industrial sector (Table 6.33) and generally less than one in five earned salaries of more than £500 per month (Table 6.32). The extent to which graduates from each college were satisfied with the intellectual content of their work, and with the employment currency of their degrees, corresponded positively to the proportions each college had entering the teaching profession - the higher the share in teaching the greater the proportion of satisfied graduates (Tables 6.33, 6.34 and 6.35). In view of the institutional similarities in terms of the general findings, good grounds exist for believing that the more detailed observations presented earlier also possess widespread significance and relevance.

Notwithstanding the above conclusion, the tables do disclose some differences between the colleges, even though most tend to be differences of degree rather than of kind. A brief consideration of these differences represents a useful way of exploring factors which appear to have a bearing on graduates' careers, and which, as such, deserve fuller investigation in subsequent sections.

Of the four institutions in the comparison, College 1, a voluntary, university validated college in a moderately sized city in

the north of England, contained the highest proportions of men graduates (41 per cent, Table 6.26) and mature graduates (15 per cent, Table 6.27), though they still showed a predominantly middle class bias (83 per cent, Table 6.26).

The 1979 non-teaching degree output from this college consisted of graduates with BA Ordinary degrees in combinations of liberal arts subjects, and although no Honours degrees were taken, it is worth recalling at this point that, at an aggregate level, no significant employment-related differences between Ordinary and Honours degrees were detectable.

Thirty months after graduation, graduates from this college displayed the highest proportion in permanent employment (79 per cent, Table 6.29) and the lowest proportion in unemployment (6 per cent, Table 6.29). Although the college attained a rate of entry into graduate status occupations that paralleled that of other colleges (38 per cent, Table 6.31), it did so by being heavily dependent upon entry into the teaching profession. Only 6 per cent of its graduates were employed in non-teaching graduate status occupations - the lowest for any college - and 38 per cent of its respondents were employed in medium status areas - the highest for any college (Table 6.31). College 1 was the only institution for which 'Secretarial and Clerical' work was not the second most prevalent occupational outlet for its graduates, instead, 'Buying, Marketing and Selling' was the most frequent alternative to teaching (Table 6.33). The fairly reasonable levels of satisfaction indicated by their graduates (Tables 6.34 and 6.35) reflect the substantial proportions of teachers in this colleges'

output, and possibly an element of low aspiring graduates who seem content with medium status positions.

These features appear to be consistent with the proposition that this college represents an interesting case and bears important implications for several institutions of its type: namely that, without the good fortune to be situated close to a local labour market relatively rich in opportunities for graduates, without more marketable and vocationally-related subject areas, and possibly without distinctive curricula features such as careers education schemes, fairly satisfactory proportions of their graduates will obtain employment but this will tend to be heavily concentrated in teaching or occupational areas previously unaccustomed to graduate entry. The majority of graduates from this kind of college faced two options: teaching or occupational areas associated with being overqualified and underemployed.

College 2 has several affinities with College 1. Situated in, and close to, a city of an equivalent size, also in the north of England, College 2 is another voluntary, university validated college with a similar rather limited local market for graduate employment - at least, in comparison to the greater number of graduate opportunites available in London and the South East. (Out of all the 247 non-BEd respondents from former colleges of education, thirty-two obtained non-teaching graduate status jobs and half of these were located in and around London.)

Apart from an additional provision of some science courses, it also offers a matching range of subject areas. In one respect, however, it clearly differs from College 1. In addition to providing the 1979 graduates with a careers advisory service, as did the first college, College 2 also mounted a careers education scheme which included a four week off-campus work experience component. This provision underscores the significance of the particular case of College 2, since, in terms of the colleges participating in the survey, the scheme was quite unique.

Of the four institutions under comparison, College 2 contained the highest proportion of respondents from working class origins (34 per cent, Table 6.26) and the highest with 'A' levels in the below average category (54 per cent, Table 6.27). It had very few mature graduates (3 per cent, Table 6.27), only a quarter obtained Honours degrees and of these only 9 per cent gained first or upper second classifications (Table 6.28).

Thirty months after leaving college, a marginally higher share of graduates from this college were unemployed (11 per cent, Table 6.29) than from elsewhere, although this group of respondents displayed a proportion in permanent employment commensurate with that of two other colleges and higher than the fourth (77 per cent, Table 6.29).

One of the most striking features of the career trends of graduates from College 2 was the relatively low proportions working within the teaching profession. Teaching remained the foremost occupational outlet, but in comparison to other colleges, by a

significantly reduced margin. In contrast to the average rate of entry into PGCE courses for the other colleges, approaching 50 per cent, 36 per cent of College 2 graduates embarked on teacher training courses (Table 6.30). Likewise, while other colleges had between 41 and 57 per cent of their employed gradautes working as teachers, College 2 had the smaller corresponding percentage of 26 per cent (Table 6.33).

However, because the rate of entry into non-teaching graduate status work for College 2 (13 per cent, Table 6.31) was no higher than that for the norm of the other colleges, the effect of reducing the involvement with teaching was to give the college the lowest overall proportion of respondents with graduate status positions (33 per cent, Table 6.31). Conversely, related to its diminished dependence on careers in teaching, College 2 displayed the highest proportions in medium and low status occupations (44 per cent, Table 6.31).

Moreover, apparently as a consequence of their high proportions in both non-graduate and non-teaching work, of the colleges under comparison, respondents from College 2 were the least well-paid (Table 6.32), the least satisfied with the intellectual content of their work (Table 6.35) and the least content with the employment currency provided by their degrees (Table 6.36).

Being one of the forerunners in diversification, College 2 provides early warnings to other institutions of the difficulties they and their graduates could face in the event of students being successfully diverted away from thinking of teaching as the automatic employment outlet. There seems little doubt that this college was

successful in broadening the career orientations of its students away from a narrow pre-occupation with teaching, and that its career education package played an instrumental part in helping to achieve this. However, to some extent, it then paid the penalties for this success: it faced the bigger problem of helping relatively more graduates to find appropriate alternative employment.

While the careers education scheme appears to have effected the widening of graduates' career awarenesses, it does not appear to have delivered the suitable levels of employability that needed to accompany it. This colleges' relatively inferior performance in unemployment rates, occupational status, salaries, and levels of satisfaction in particular, indicate the considerable difficulties colleges face when genuine attempts are made to diversify the range of career possibilities for non-teaching degree graduates. Indeed, there is an important need to contemplate the hypothesis that in 'warming up' students' career insights and expectations, then subsequently failing to fulfil them, the college may unwittingly heighten graduates' sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction. Ironically, colleges where little effort is made to concentrate the minds of undergraduates on life beyond graduation may provoke less criticism and disillusionment, simply by not planting the notion in students' minds that careers is a problem for which the college authorities share joint responsibility.

College 3, a voluntary and university validated institute of higher education situated in London, clearly enjoys a more favourable local graduate labour market than the two provincial colleges just considered. Concentrating on degrees in subject combinations, it also

appears to offer one or two allegedly more marketable courses (e.g. Business Studies). Unlike the previous two institutions, however, a properly organized college-based careers advisory service was not available until after the 1979 cohort had graduated. The respondents from College 3 displayed a particularly strong bias towards women (80 per cent, Table 6.26) and middle class graduates (86 per cent, Table 6.26). Very few of its graduates were mature students (6 per cent, Table 6.27); all obtained Honours degrees and as many as a quarter of these gained first or upper second classifications (Table 6.28).

Although its graduates exhibited an unemployment rate compatible with that of other colleges (9 per cent, Table 6.29), they showed the lowest of all proportions in permanent employment (68 per cent, Table 6.29). This disparity is partially accounted for by the higher percentages in research/academic study and temporary overseas employment (3 per cent in each, Table 6.29).

Given that 51 per cent of its respondents proceeded to take PGCE courses - the highest percentage for any college - it is surprising that only 27 per cent of the cohort were employed as teachers thirty months after graduation (Tables 6.30 and 6.31). Thus, graduates from College 3 demonstrated a marked tendency to take teacher training courses without subsequently entering employment as teachers - just under half of its respondents who completed PGCE training were not working as teachers.

Matching the norm for all the colleges, 39 per cent of its respondents were to be found in graduate status occupations, though this percentage was heavily dependent on a continued commitment to the teaching profession, and despite its proximity to a broader range of graduate opportunities, the proportion in non-teaching graduate status jobs was no higher than that attained by graduates from the provincial colleges (12 per cent, Table 6.31). Compared to the remaining three colleges, more College 3 graduates earned salaries of over £500 a month but this is thought to be largely a function of London weighting allowances.

Finally and somewhat contrary to expectations derived from the occupational status distributions, this institution had the lowest proportion who were satisfied with their degree currency in terms of its occupational range (39 per cent, Table 6.34), and the second highest proportion who were dissatisfied by the lack of intellectual demands in their work (39 per cent, Table 6.35). Three factors are especially noteworthy in interpreting these levels of satisfaction: (i) the higher than average percentages of neutral responses owing to this group's larger than usual proportion not in employment (ii) an impression gained when coding the questionnaire responses that some London-based teachers were more demoralized by their working environments than teachers elsewhere in the country (iii) a similar degree of strong dissatisfaction among non-teaching and non-graduate employees as expressed by College 2 respondents.

With regard to the quality of impact on graduates' careers,

College 3 seems closer to College 1 than College 2. Whereas College 2 showed signs of initiating the process of broadening graduates' career horizons to a range appropriate to diversification but, by and large, failed to enhance employability, College 3 appeared to have effected little influence in both these respects. It indicated little impact both in diversifying graduates' career orientations away from teaching (as shown by the large proportion entering PGCE courses) and in assisting the procurement of non-teaching graduate status occupations (particularly in view of the opportunity to capitalize on a more favourable range of employment openings).

As with College 1, the consequence of following the College 3 approach, is that the very substantial dependence on teaching as the major career outlet justifies adopting the perspective of the so-called 'diversified' degree programmes as unpremeditated and adventitious substitutions of one method of training teachers for another. Implemented as such, the main employment-related criteria for evaluating the 'diversified ' courses must focus on how successfully they prepare students for teaching, in comparison, say, to the existing concurrent BEd programmes or the more innovatory teacher education programmes that have been proposed (e.g. the three cycle scheme recommended in the James Report, DES 1972a).

Although possessing fewer respondents, College 8 provides a number of qualities which deviate from those of the previous three. Situated in the south west of England, this college is controlled by a local education authority and validated by a university and CNAA. Located in a graduate employment market that would probably approximate

that of College 2, its 1979 graduates completed BA and BSc Honours degrees in single subjects, music and home economics. The respondents were nearly all women (86 per cent, Table 6.26), almost invariably middle class (95 per cent, Table 6.26) and completely without any mature students (Table 6.27). Of all the colleges, they contained the highest proportions in the above average 'A' level group (71 per cent, Table 6.27) and in the first or upper second honours classifications group (30 per cent, Table 6.28).

Displaying average employment and unemployment rates (Table 6.29), 48 per cent of this cohort proceeded to take PGCE courses (Table 6.30), and, in sharp contrast to College 3 graduates, having completed their courses, almost all gained employment as teachers. With a substantially higher proportion of teachers among their ranks (43 per cent, Table 6.31) and a share of non-teaching graduate employees fractionally higher than other colleges (14 per cent, Table 6.31), College 8 possessed, by a significant margin, the largest proportion of respondents in graduate status occupations (57 per cent, Table 6.31). As a derivative of this comparatively high proportion in graduate employment, this group expressed the greatest extent of satisfaction with their degree currency (72 per cent, Table 6.34) and the lowest extent of dissatisfaction with the intellectual content of their work (29 per cent, Table 6.35).

The career trends of College 8 graduates clearly evince the same kind of propulsion towards teacher training that characterized graduates from Colleges 1 and 3. Nevertheless, the careers direction taken by College 8 graduates is manifestly related to the single

subject studied at degree level. Whereas music graduates exhibited a very marked predilection for teaching, home economics graduates were more varied in their career orientations, and a promising proportion succeeded in entering occupations of a suitable status. The overall impact of this institution, however, followed the same pattern as two of the three colleges previously described: by a significant margin, the overriding employment orientation of the non-teaching degree courses was teaching.

In addition to the influence upon careers of the degree subjects taken by graduates, the above comparisons have exposed a number of other determining factors which could be examined further in the light of the questionnaire findings. Among others, these have included: the geographical dispersion of suitable vacancies and the requisite mobility of graduates; courses taken, careers education and advisory services; and student levels of aspiration and ambition. Consequently, the remaining sections in this chapter concentrate on providing a more detailed examination of the influence of such topics.

Geographical mobility

To permit an analysis of the relation between employment trends and geographical mobility, graduates were asked to give details on (i) the furthest distance away from college and their parental or permanent home before starting college for which posts were applied for and (ii) the distance from college and their parental home of their current places of work (see questions 8 and 9 in the questionnaire). Although

the questionnaire items offered the respondents eight mileage categories, it subsequently proved necessary to reduce these to five, due to the paucity of cases in some categories, especially in view of the need to disaggregate the results on a college by college basis. Consequently, Tables 6.36, 6.37 and 6.38 tabulate the findings for this item in the following categories: 0 - 25 miles, 26 - 100 miles, over 101 miles, overseas, and not applicable.

Prior to discussing these tables, it may be noted that, at the time of leaving college, few significant differences in the propinquity of posts applied for, either from college or the parental home, between the sexes, 'A' level groups and the two broad social classes, were evident. Mature students, however, showed an increased tendency to apply for jobs closer to college and home, and married graduates were marginally less likely than single graduates to apply for posts over a hundred miles away from their permanent residences before starting college. Relative to Ordinary degree graduates, proportionately more Honours degree graduates applied for appointments nearer to home and college, but this result is definitely a reflection of the high share of Honours degree graduates from the London college, many of whom remained in the capital after graduation. With regard to the proximity of latest known workplaces to college and parental homes, in addition to reiterating the latter point about Honours graduates from the London college, proportionately more mature and married respondents stayed closer to their colleges, but only the former showed an increased tendency to be resident at or near to their pre-college homes.

Differences in the extent of graduates' geographical mobility were found to vary in accordance with the college they attended. Table 6.36 sets out the distances from college of applications on graduation and latest known workplaces for the four colleges contrasted in the previous section.

Table 6.36 College by geographical mobility from college

	COLLEGES							
	1		2		3		8	
Miles from College	<a> %	<b> %	<a> %	<b> %	<a> %	<b> %	<a> %	<b> %
0 - 25	9	27	1	16	36	57	5	14
26 - 100	32	41	13	35	23	19	9	19
Over 101	47	29	67	46	18	14	76	67
Overseas	3	0	6	1	9	3	5	0
Not App.	9	3	13	2	14	7	5	0
TOTALS (100%)	34	34	90	90	69	69	21	21

NOTES

<a> Furthest distance from college for which a post was applied for.
<b> Distance from college of latest known place of work.

Thirty months after graduation, while the majority, 57 per cent, of the the London-based College 3 were working within a 25 miles radius of their college, only 16 and 14 per cent of Colleges 2 and 8 graduates were employed in the corresponding vicinity of their colleges (both attained SS). In between these extremes, College 1 had 27 per cent of its graduates working close to the college. Considering the more mobile respondents, a comparatively high share of Colleges 2 and 8 graduates were working over a hundred miles away from college (46 and

67 per cent respectively), while the corresponding proportions for Colleges 1 and 3 were only 29 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

Table 6.37 indicates that a similar, if less pronounced, pattern of college-based variations exists for distances away from pre-college residences, students' parental homes in the majority of cases. Once again, unlike Colleges 2 and 8, which possessed the lowest proportions of graduates working within 25 miles of their parental homes (30 and 19 per cent respectively), Colleges 1 and 3 produced higher proportions of home-orientated graduates (56 and 41 per cent respectively).

Table 6.37 College by geographical mobility from parental home

	COLLEGES							
	1		2		3		8	
Miles from parental home	<a>	<b>	<a>	<b>	<a>	<b>	<a>	<b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0 - 25	12	56	8	30	22	41	14	19
26 - 100	32	24	13	22	26	25	19	43
Over 101	47	20	56	42	32	27	57	38
Overseas	6	0	4	1	7	3	5	0
Not App.	3	0	19	5	13	4	5	0
TOTALS (100%)	34	34	90	90	69	69	21	21

NOTES

<a> Furthest distance from parental home for which a post was applied for.

<b> Distance from parental home of latest known place of work.

Taking the distances from college and parental homes together, graduates from Colleges 2 and 8 were clearly more mobile than their counterparts from Colleges 1 and 3. Bearing in mind a finding from an earlier CCRG survey, namely that Colleges 1 and 3 attracted more local students than College 2, the combined results suggest that a significant factor determining the degree to which a colleges' output will seek jobs in the neighbouring vicinity is the extent to which the colleges' student recruitment is locally-based. Where, as in the case of College 3, the local graduate employment market is relatively favourable, emphasis on the recruitment of nearby students could be advantageous to the institution and its graduates when seeking employment; alternatively, as in the case of College 1, where the immediate market opportunities are more restrictive, attracting too many local students could aggravate the problems of finding suitable employment outlets.

This last interpretation is borne out by details, presented in Table 6.38, on the employability and occupational status of three college-based groups of graduates with differing levels of mobility from colleges: low (0 - 25 miles), medium (26 - 100 miles), and high (over 101 miles).

Table 6.38 College by occupational status by geographical mobility from college

Percentages of each geographically located group

	MILES FROM COLLEGE		
	0 - 25	26 - 100	Over 101
	%	%	%
College 1			
Not employed	33	14	20
Low status employee	11	0	0
Medium status employee	33	43	40
Graduate status employee	23	43	40
Teachers	(23)	(36)	(30)
Non-teachers	(0)	(7)	(10)
TOTALS (100%)	9	14	10
College 2			
Not employed	50	25	10
Low status employee	14	9	7
Medium status employee	29	35	39
Graduate status employee	7	31	44
Teachers	(0)	(16)	(27)
Non-teachers	(7)	(15)	(17)
TOTALS (100%)	14	32	41
College 3			
Not employed	18	54	50
Low status employee	5	15	10
Medium status employee	28	8	10
Graduate status employee	49	23	30
Teachers	(31)	(15)	(30)
Non-teachers	(18)	(8)	(8)
TOTALS (100%)	39	13	10

In spite of the inevitably small numbers of cases in each group, the data strongly suggest that, whereas, for provincial colleges such as Colleges 1 and 2, the more mobile graduates improved their chances of being permanently employed in graduate status occupations; for the London college, the reverse was the case: the least mobile group stood the better chances of reaping these benefits. Conversely, in the provincial colleges, proportionately more of the least mobile group were not employed and occcupied in graduate status work, while in the London college, a relatively greater share of the more mobile graduates were without employment and were less evident in graduate level work.

These trends were particularly conspicuous for non-teaching graduate status occupations, but the patterns of mobility required for teaching jobs bore a parallel, if less marked, resemblance to them. It is felt that these results go a long way to vindicate the earlier assumption that the wider graduate opportunities in London are advantageous to College 3 graduates, even though comparatively few appear to have made the most of them. Similarly, the findings underline the need for provincial colleges to maximize the mobility range of its graduates, and in this respect College 1 graduates appear not to have been as willing to travel as College 2 graduates. This factor may explain the difference in the proportions in non-teaching graduate employment between these two institutions.

As one of the attitudinal items in the questionnaire, graduates were invited to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with

the statement, "I think I would have obtained a better job had I been prepared to travel further afield." As displayed in Table 6.39, the majority of all college respondents disagreed with the statement and only one in five concurred with it. Predictably, institutions with higher proportions of less mobile graduates (i.e. Colleges 1 and 3), had slightly higher shares of respondents who believed that travelling further afield would have brought better employment. Likewise, graduates were more likely to agree with the statement, if they had remained close to their college or home and if they worked in jobs which offered little in the way of intellectual stimulation.

Table 6.39 College by attitude to mobility and jobs

"I think I would have obtained a better job had I been prepared to travel further afield."

	COLLEGES					
	1	2	3	8	Others	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	24	16	23	14	15	19
Neutral	23	20	26	10	33	23
Disagree	53	64	51	76	52	58
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21	33	247

Cramer's V = .12 (NS) for first four columns

College courses and services

In deference to the importance of relating graduates' careers to the courses they studied, Chapter Four contained a cross-sector comparative analysis of the first destinations of graduates from five

broad discipline areas: arts, social studies, arts & social studies, science, and other combinations. Owing to the many permutations of combined subjects involved, the low numbers of graduates in discipline areas other than the arts, and the small numbers of colleges offering some certain courses, it was acknowledged that the exercise was one of compromise and circumspection. Indeed, at the intra-college of higher education comparative level, the social studies category was completely eliminated from the interpretation, because the vast majority of graduates in this discipline were almost exclusive to the proto-polytechnics.

Nevertheless, in spite of such shortcomings, the analysis provided useful indications that, for the college of higher education sector as a whole, the arts clearly constituted the predominant discipline area. Arts graduates appeared to experience a slightly lower employment demand than graduates from other disciplines, and although, contrasting college arts graduates with those from universities and polytechnics amounted to the most favourable form of comparison from the colleges' viewpoint, the proportion entering permanent home employment from former colleges of education was lower, and more teacher orientated, than the output from the two other college types.

Developing the above, but now focusing on a within-group comparison of graduates from former colleges of education, each of the respondents were assigned to one of the five discipline classifications used in Chapter Four (see Appendix C for classification frame). In extending this analysis, particular interest centred on whether or not

discipline areas such as science and social studies demonstrated superior employment indices, when only former college of education graduates were included, as opposed to graduates from all types of colleges as in the first destinations analysis.

Unfortunately, because the analysis is impeded by similar difficulties to those which beset the earlier attempt, e.g. low numbers in discipline areas other than the arts, the results obtained do not inspire high levels of confidence. Notwithstanding this, although one or two specific subjects appeared to be more marketable, the results, however tentative, offer little or no encouragement for the view that employability is enhanced by the colleges' non-arts disciplines. This finding suggests that the earlier indications of increased employability for science graduates was determined more by the college type attended than by discipline-based differences within the former colleges of education. At an intra-former college of education level, graduates' career experiences and patterns were generally common to all discipline areas, and where slight differences did occur, these were in such minority areas as to produce negligible impact on the overall trends for the substantial majority of arts-based graduates. Thus, the features of graduates' careers depicted earlier in the study are thought to be of a generic, college-based nature, unspecific to particular disciplines, but, of course, most evident for graduates in the arts.

By way of substantiating this interpretation, Table 6.40 demonstrates that just over half of the respondents were awarded combined degrees with both subjects in the arts discipline area and at

least a further quarter had one subject in the arts. This result reaffirms the very considerable arts bias of college graduates. In contrast, only 7 and 8 per cent respectively studied two subjects in the social studies and science disciplines, the remaining 11 per cent being classified in the other combinations area (e.g. PE/any other subject, social studies/science combinations).

Table 6.40 Discipline areas by college

	COLLEGES					
	1	2	3	8	Others	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Arts	41	51	44	62	70	51
Social Studies	0	3	19	0	6	7
Arts & Social Studies	21	24	33	0	12	22
Science	3	11	0	38	3	8
Other Combinations	35	11	4	0	9	11
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21	33	247

The same Table also displays the discipline distributions for each of the main colleges involved: College 2 closely resembled the average distribution for all participating colleges; the apparently low share of arts graduates at College 1 is deceptive, due to the fact that three rather than two subjects were taken and, hence, more respondents with, say, two arts subjects combined with PE or a science were assigned to the other combinations area; College 3's distribution reflects the more extended provision of social studies rather than science courses; and College 8's output consisted of single subject degrees in music (arts) and home economics (science). Although not

shown in the Table, women were slightly over-represented in the arts and arts & social studies areas, and correspondingly, under-represented in social studies, science, and particularly, other combinations.

Respondents who studied arts subjects were marginally more likely to proceed to PGCE courses, while those in science, and especially social studies, were less likely to do so. All discipline areas showed matching proportions who were not in employment thirty months after graduation (between 26 and 30 per cent, Table 6.41), except graduates in the 'Other Combinations' category, in which, with only 18 per cent not in employment, respondents from College 1, the college with the highest share in permanent employment, were over-represented. Additional analyses confirmed that all five discipline areas were associated with similar unemployment rates.

Table 6.41 Discipline areas by occupational status according to graduates' employment circumstances on 31.11.81

	DISCIPLINE AREAS				
	Arts	Social Studies	Arts & Soc. St.	Science	Other Combs.
	%	%	%	%	%
Not employed	29	28	26	30	18
Low status employees	6	17	7	10	0
Medium status employees	22	22	38	25	32
Graduate status	(42)	(33)	(29)	(35)	(50)
Employees: Teachers	29	5	25	20	32
Non-teachers	13	28	4	15	18
TOTALS (100%)	126	18	55	20	28

Table 6.41 shows that the proportion of arts graduates employed as teachers (29 per cent), was higher than the corresponding proportion for science (20 per cent) and social studies graduates (5 per cent, SS), while the share of social studies respondents in alternative graduate status jobs (28 per cent) was greater than the appropriate shares for arts (13 per cent) and science (15 per cent) graduates. Due allowance should be given, however, to the small numbers in the science and social studies categories, the latter of which, included a number of graduates who, as explained below, studied the subject Education, having transferred from a BEd to a BA programme.

Overall, the results suggest that, because the influence of such a substantial majority of arts graduates is so great and the career outcomes of other disciplines lack an alternative and consistent distinctiveness, broad discipline areas, in the face of the overall college culture and curricula, do not appear to impart a major differential impact on graduates' careers. However, in order to trace a course-based influence on careers, it may be necessary to look in more detail at the trends and outcomes for particular subject offerings.

Although several subjects had insufficient graduates to permit a subject-based comparison of the early careers associated with them, it has proved possible to present details of graduates' latest known type of work areas for the seven most prevalent subjects studied for: English, History, Education, Science/Maths, Religious Studies, Language & Area Studies and Geography (see Table 6.42). It should be noted that

in order to incorporate a science element, individual subjects such as chemistry and biology have been conflated into a composite category 'Science/Maths'. A similar procedure has been adopted for 'Language & Area Studies'. It should also be noted that, because the great majority of respondents obtained degrees in combined subjects, many individuals will figure in more than one subject column.

Table 6.42 Subjects by type of work categories of respondents who were permanently employed on 31.12.81

	SUBJECTS						
	Eng.	His.	Educ.	Sci. Maths.	Rel. St.	Lang.	Geog.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
General Traineeships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Specialist Admin.	7	8	16	10	24	9	5
Scientific R & D	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Planning	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Scientific Analysis	0	0	3	16	0	0	0
Production Operation	0	0	3	0	0	0	5
Buying, Marketing, Selling	9	6	10	13	4	14	11
Services to Management	1	0	3	3	0	0	5
Financial Work	6	4	0	0	0	14	5
Legal Work	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Creative/Entertainment work	4	4	3	0	4	0	0
Information, Advisory, Res.	4	7	3	6	0	0	0
Library, Museum, Archives	1	2	3	0	0	0	0
Personnel	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Health & Social Welfare	7	2	10	10	12	0	5
Teaching	36	40	20	23	40	29	43
Secretarial, Clerical	22	21	26	19	16	29	21
Others	1	0	0	0	0	5	0
TOTALS (100%)	73	52	31	31	25	21	19

With only relatively minor exceptions, the dominant pattern of occupational distribution depicted earlier in the study was broadly

analogous for each subject: the principal occupational outlet was teaching, followed by secretarial, administrative and retail work. The subject, Education, for which secretarial work constituted the main occupational outcome, was the most noticeable deviation from this pattern, but this was almost entirely due to very special circumstances. At some colleges, BEd students, who early in their college life discovered that teaching was no longer their preferred career choice, were able to transfer to a BA programme by offering Education as one of their two degree subjects. Consequently, this subject recruited more than the normal number of students who definitely did not aspire to teaching as a career. Other slight exceptions to the general pattern included tendencies for an increased proportion of Science/Maths graduates to opt for scientific analysis rather than teaching and for an increased share of Languauge/Area Studies graduates to work in the secretarial/clerical field (29 per cent, Table 6.42), thus reducing the proportion in teaching (29 per cent).

Table 6.43, which tabulates the levels of occupational status attained by graduates from each of the main subjects, lends support to the view that the majority of college graduates' careers were neither heavily determined nor differentiated by the precise nature of the subjects studied. Consequently, apart from a few slight variations, significantly in subjects with fewer students, the employment range and currency of college degrees appear to be generalized and not specific to particular subject offerings.

Table 6.43 Subject by occupational status

	Not Employed	Low Status	Medium Status	Graduate Status: (All)	Teaching	Non-Teaching	TOTALS
	%	%	%	%	%	%	N
English	30	8	27	(35)	25	10	105
History	24	4	32	(40)	31	9	68
Education	24	10	37	(29)	15	14	41
Science/Maths	24	12	29	(34)	17	17	41
Rel. Studies	34	5	24	(37)	26	11	38
Lang./Area Studs.	22	11	37	(30)	22	8	27
Geography	21	4	25	(50)	33	17	24
Music	22	0	17	(61)	52	9	23
Drama/Media	33	14	23	(32)	23	9	22
Art	36	5	23	(36)	27	9	22
Sociology	50	6	19	(25)	19	6	16
All respondents	27	7	27	(39)	26	13	247

This interpretation accords with the finding that the bulk of the graduates themselves conceived of their degrees, either positively or negatively, as denoting general rather than subject-specific relevance to occupational selection and performance. In response to an invitation to comment on the extent to which their degree courses may have assisted in the processes of obtaining employment or preparing for work (Q.20i), only a small minority implied a subject-specific perception of the relevance of their degree to employment. Irrespective of whether or not they were satisfied with the employment currency associated with their degrees, the vast majority expressed or implied a generalist interpretation of their qualifications. This interpretation was presented in a variety of forms.

The most frequent of these was the passport or admission ticket view, whereby the degree was allegedly intended to secure entry to occupations, regardless of the precise nature and content of the subjects studied. Typical examples of this form included:

> (Biology/Chemistry; Assistant Biologist) Passport qualification in some ways, feel a bit of jack of all trades due to nature of courses.
>
> (Home Economics; Showroom Manageress) When applying for jobs, the fact that I was a graduate helped by ensuring that I was better qualified than most other applicants, although the actual content of the degree course did not help particularly.
>
> (English/Education; Clerical Officer) I think that having a degree helped me obtain employment, but simply because of the employment situation, in that employers were demanding higher qualifications than they would have done, say, five years ago. I believe that degree courses, particularly arts, ought to have a practical side to them, for example, a literature course could involve students going to work for a few weeks at a printers, a newspaper office, a bookshop etc.
>
> (Religious Studies/Geography; PGCE student) My degree was not essential for my child care work, but it probably looked good at my interview. My subjects were not relevant to the job though - I guess it would have been useful to have talked more about careers at the interview, then I might have chosen more appropriate subjects.
>
> (Business Economics/Sociology; Sales Manager) My degree course in Economics and Sociology left a lot to be desired. The courses in Economics, for instance, boarded on 'O' level standard, infact, I used an 'O' level text book to revise for examinations. My degree has offered no practical usefulness to me and has only helped in a 'status' sense.
>
> (Sociology/Social Administration; Student Nurse) My degree made it very easy to obtain an SRN post because the nursing profession is trying to increase the number of graduate members.

Elaborating a little further on the perceived reasons and rationalizations as to why employers should use degrees as a selection

device, a second and frequent form of a generalist response pointed to employers' construction of degrees as an I.Q. measure. Suggesting that for employers, the constitutive meaning of a degree lies in its signification of general and higher intellectual prowess, several graduates offered contributions such as:

> (English/History; Secretary) As far as employers are concerned, a degree seems to be a measure of intelligence. To employers who don't have degrees themselves, it seems to be an intellectual status symbol surrounded with a certain mystique.
>
> (Music/Religious Studies; Not available for employment) The fact that I had a piece of paper which proved that I had a certain amount of intelligence was useful, though the course itself was of no specific use.
>
> (English/Maths; Technician) My degree helped me to enter an area [electronics] which I had very little experience in, because it suggested that I was intelligent and quick to learn.
>
> (Religious Studies/English; Administrative Assistant) I do not think the content of an arts degree can help in any career other than teaching. It is merely a measure of intelligence like an 'A' level.
>
> (Rural Science/Education and Community Studies; Quality Control Assistant) A degree is useful in indicating to a prospective employer a certain level of general ability, although in the current employment situation most employers appear to prefer applicants with lower, or no qualifications. I studied for a degree for personal satisfaction only, rather than to enter into a particular career, although I would have thought that having a degree would carry more weight with employers than it appears to at the moment.

Another group of respondents expounded a parallel interpretation, but viewed from their perceptions of their own personal development instead of the employers' perspective. Thus, in this type of response, the indications of the generalist conception of college degrees were evident in graduates' descriptions of the broad-based abilities developed as a result of studying their subjects. The

following comments were indicative of this type of response:

> (English/History/French/Geography; Assistant Retail Manager) Degree course followed was a General Ordinary course, therefore allowing me to study four different subjects - giving great variety and also knowledge to the areas covered. The variation and broad span of knowledge enabled me to consider a vast range of careers and also helped considerably in coping with work that involves constant variation and instant decision making. However the courses followed being general rules out jobs requiring specialist knowledge.

> (Visual Arts; Graphic Designer) My degree course in no way prepared me for work with regard to understanding commercial processes. What it did give me was an adaptability in the understanding and use of new methods, machines and ways, i.e. the ability to learn new ideas quickly.

> (English/French; Secretary) [My degree courses] have rounded my academic personality and prepared me for coping with writing reports, answering difficult enquiries. It has also given me confidence and I believe made me a more 'rounded' person.

> (English/History; Teacher) The variety of elements in my degree, has been a positive advantage, showing that I was flexible and capable of stretching myself.

Other respondents made similar points, but expressed them in the negative form. Comments typical of this type highlighted the generality of their degree courses by citing its lack of subject-specific relevance to occupational entry and performance:

> (Geography/Education and Community Studies; Secretary) First degree did not really prepare me at all for my present post. I would advise any one else not to do a general degree but an 'occupation directed' degree.

> (Sociology/Education; Clerical Officer) My degree course I have only found useful as a general qualification. Having found that I am unable to get another year's grant to train me for a specific career, (I would like to do librarianship), I wish now that I had taken a vocational degree.

> (Drama & Media/Human Movement; Unemployed) As no vocational element was included I could only tender my

courses as personal development. Vocation need not predominate in courses but departments should think early about matching individuals and professions.

(English/French; Clerical Assistant) Two subject course meant wider superficial knowledge than depth of research into single subject. Very few degree courses lead to jobs without further training - often not made clear to students.

The small number of respondents who returned comments which alluded to a subject-specific perception were predominantly teachers who felt that their subjects were applicable to their work, or other workers who considered parts of their courses to be relevant to their jobs. The following were typical of this perspective:

> (Music/Social Administration; Teacher) My degree course gave me a sound musical education on which I now rely very heavily.
>
> (History/Sociology; Teacher) Obviously the subjects taken influenced the subjects I could offer in the teaching profession. My degree also helped me to obtain a position in an upper school.
>
> (Language Studies/History; Teacher) I chose a subject that I knew would be relevant to my career i.e. linguistics - language development is extremely important when working with both mainstream children and with the mentally handicapped.
>
> (Maths/Science; Unemployed) My fourth year thesis was the main reason for being offered my first job, and also, to some extent, my second job.
>
> (Geography/Education; Unemployed) To some extent, [with reference to work as a betting shop assistant], statistical work involved in several aspects of the course, and research work, were useful.

While the replies to this item were heavily loaded in favour of generalist rather than subject-specific perceptions of their degrees, quantitative indications of satisfaction with the employment currency of their qualifications were more evenly balanced. Approximately seventy-six respondents volunteered answers which appeared to be

critical and less than happy with their degree currency, sixty-six were generally satisfied, forty-five submitted accounts which were evenly mixed, and about sixteen acknowledged the limited employability associated with their degrees but asserted that they never intended nor expected that their studies should lead to enhanced career prospects.

Among those respondents who were disillusioned by the limited employability engendered by their degrees, seven broad types of dissatisfaction can be identified:

1. failing in a general and unspecified sense to assist in the procurement of employment and preparation for work;

2. incapacity to fulfil the career expectations that were raised as a result of studying at college;

3. a lack of market currency, leading to the acceptance of jobs for which only 'O' and 'A' levels were required;

4. restricted too narrowly to the teaching profession;

5. failing to provide a more specific relevance to other careers;

6. insufficiently practical and work-orientated;

7. inadequate number of vocational courses and components.

In addition to the earlier quotations which are also applicable to the current topic, the following extracts exemplify the tenor of the comments received under each type:

1. failing in a general and unspecified sense to assist in the procurement of employment and preparation for work;

> (English/History; Secretary) I do not think that my degree course has contributed in any way to my present situation and certainly played no part in my obtaining this particular post.

> (English/History; Research Writer) [My degree courses] haven't helped at all - there are only two of us out of thirty with degrees and promotion is given on job experience and workablility, not paper qualifications.

2. incapacity to fulfil the career expectations that were raised as a result of studying at college;

> (English/Drama/History; Secretary) ..I got a lot out of my degree courses because I felt starved of education, so did other mature students, but a BA in English and Drama simply doesn't qualify you for a job in any way related to those subjects except teaching. Studying our literary heritage is a wonderful occupation; it may develop self-discipline and reasoned thought, how to tackle a problem, but anything more definite? more relevant to a job?... In my experience, it was no good toting my degree round employment agencies. I thought I had sufficient back-up with typing, but at 'Graduate Girls Agency' I was offered copy typing for the house magazine of an engineering firm and nothing else, and was turned down for a number of jobs because "I'd be bored". They were right, but I needed a job. At the head hunting agency, I was at least working at a level that suited my age and experience and was tempted to stay. When I was supplanted by somebody who could do shorthand, I enrolled for a Pitman's shorthand evening class course the same day and now have the diploma. At the head hunting agency and in my present job I have to deal with job applications myself, and see things from an employer's point of view. When competition is fierce, we can afford to choose kids with practical experience and back-ups like typing etc. I don't think half my problems would have arisen if I'd been a man, like having to do secretarial work, but again I might not have got into theatre administration at all. I don't

think its the actual courses that need adapting. If you study literature, you've got to read, research, debate, write about it - there's no other way. But perhaps college authorities might think about beating into the heads of young students the need for self-discipline, application, punctuality and the matter of compromise when doing things they don't enjoy, otherwise the world comes crashing in when they leave college and they turn into dissatisfied, disillusioned people. There is one hell of a gap between the expectations bred into the young and the reality they face, and I think it has something to do with an education system based on academic attainment rather than preparation for work. I sometimes think that humanities courses should be banned, except for people studying for the love of it, or wanting to climb the academic ladder. My boss's daughter - good degree at Bristol - fails to find job - goes back to do PGCE - doesn't really want to teach - what else does she do with an English degree? She doesn't know.....

(Geography/History/English; Not available for employment) Helped me obtain employment under a STEP scheme, though once I had the job the minimum of intelligence was needed. I think my degree gave me false hopes for employment - I expected more than my employers were either willing or had the time to give me.

3. a lack of market currency, leading to the acceptance of jobs for which only 'O' and 'A' levels were required;

(Business Economics/French; Temporary Staff Consultant) My degree course has in no way helped me to find my present job - in fact a great deal of employers were rather 'put off' that I did have one. However I do feel in the long run they will be of more value. I felt the courses were rather an extension of school than a preparation for work.

(Home Economics; Unemployed) Many friends who were employed at eighteen are doing better than I was at [my previous employers]. There is always the thought the degree will count more in years to come.

4. restricted too narrowly to the teaching profession;

(Art/Education; M.Litt Student) Not really applicable because am still studying, but I found that the

only career that my degree in Art and Education was useful for as far as employers were concerned was teaching art, even though this was not a professional degree.

(English/Education; Clerical Assistant) I think my degree course was totally irrelevant to my present situation. I don't think it has helped me to obtain employment and it didn't prepare me for work. As my degree was in English and Education, I feel it would only be relevant to the teaching profession or anything vaguely related to it.

(English/Religious Studies; Teacher) The degree course was still based around topics to be taught in schools.

(English/Movement, Music, Drama; Sports Centre Supervisor) My degree courses were designed for PE teachers, regardless of what my lecturers said. As, after the first year at college, I had no intention of teaching the courses were fairly irrelevant to my chosen career. This opinion is not held by my employers.

5. failing to provide a more specific relevance to other careers;

(Art/Education; Graphic Designer) When I entered college I thought I might want to teach and so took a teaching BEd course with Art as my main subject. However this was largely due to parental pressure as I really would have preferred art college. After an unhappy year I decided teaching and I could not get along so instead of wasting the year I transferred to a humanities degree keeping both subjects but dropping teaching practice. In my opinion (and in retrospect) this was a rather useless degree, in that it was too wide and didn't prepare me for very much and furthermore [it] meant nothing to most people and they refused to acknowledge the art course.

(English/History; Teacher) Totally irrelevant to my present work, due to bad advice and pressure from college.

6. insufficiently practical and work-orientated;

(Art/Education & Community Studies; Office organiser) Some of my practical art course has helped me with the graphics I do now, although I did not actually study graphics. The rest of my degree course has been of little help to my present job. Courses would have been more useful had more practical work in industry etc. been involved.

(Sociology/Social Administration; Personnel Officer) I did Sociology/Social Administation combined Honours and I feel that my degree course helped in terms of stimulating questions about life and institutions. But in the busy hum-drum of life what is needed essentially is not a philosophical/intellectual approach but rather a pragmatic professional/organisational view. I believe my course could have been structured in a number of different ways. For example, sociological theory should have been directly related to the modern world and management/trade union/financial systems. Practical projects using quantitative methods should have been commonplace.

7. inadequate number of vocational courses and components;

(English/Education and Community Studies; Not available for employment) Always choose a vocational degree.

(Home Economics; Teacher) More relevance to the intended job i.e. showing how to avoid mistakes in practical teaching (less having to find everything out for yourself).

(Music; PGCE student) Certainly my degree will be a future factor in looking for a teaching job though was not so for my last two posts. With regard to teaching, a more practically based course would have been better.

Adopting the same approach to the responses which indicated a positive and favourable view of the employment currency of diversified degrees, four broad types of contributions can be identified:

1. providing some general but unspecified assistance in the tasks of obtaining employment and preparing for work;

2. extending accessiblity to employment areas by signifying to employers that the degree holders possessed useful, but unspecified, qualities (most numerous);

3. instrumental in nurturing a range of general skills and attributes which were relevant to occupational performance;

4. offering subject-specific knowledge and skills which were relevant to occupational performance (predominantly teachers).

Repesentative examples of each of these types of comments were as follows:

1. providing some general but unspecified assistance in the tasks of obtaining employment and preparing for work;

> (Rural Science/Biology; Teacher) My degree course has helped greatly.
>
> (Dance; Teacher) Degree courses have helped me obtain my permanent position.

2. extending accessiblity to employment areas by signifying to employers that the degree holders possessed useful, but unspecified, qualities (most numerous);

> (Art/English; Social Worker) When I obtained my present post I was told that being a graduate got me the job, as they felt that 'I had something to offer'.
>
> (English/Sociology; VSO Teacher) I wouldn't have got this job if I hadn't had a degree. The 'paper qualifications' does actually count for quite a lot.
>
> (Business Economics/Social Administration; Trainee Accountant) The very fact of being a graduate is now quite important in finding a job to train in chartered accountancy. It also reduces the training time required. The course could usefully have placed more emphasis on regular study.
>
> (English/Religious Studies; Not available for employment) I could not have got into the civil service at Executive Officer level without my degree, as non-graduates are seldom offered even clerical officer posts in the Inland Revenue in the present economic climate.

(History/Environmental Studies; Teacher) It has provided the necessary qualification for teaching. A BA has been advantageous - a definite advantage compared with a BEd.

3. instrumental in nurturing a range of general skills and attributes which were relevant to occupational performance;

(English/History; Research Assistant) I don't think the actual content of the courses helped, but the disciplines and skills involved in the study of those subjects were helpful - i.e. increased literacy, ability to formulate ideas and follow through arguments.

(History/English/Drama; Education Social Worker) (a) Broadened my perception of life past, present and future. (b) Enabled me to understand why people are the way they are. (c) Most importantly, the degree taught me to be able to absorb, collate and interpret any information in an intelligent, rational manner. It educated my I.Q. (d) The degree course gave me confidence to be able to converse with anyone without feeling 'beneath' them.

(English/Biology; Clerical Officer) My degree courses have given me a good educational background for my career. Studying has also taught me self-discipline and use of my own initiative which are both useful qualities in my present job.

(American Studies/History; Secretary) My degree course did not have, and was not intended to have, any relevance to future employment. What did work to my advantage was the fact that, having gained a degree, my employers gave me a job I was not particularly suitably qualified for, on the understanding that I would 're-learn' shorthand in a short space of time, which I did.

4. offering subject-specific knowledge and skills which were relevant to occupational performance (predominantly teachers).

(English/French; Teacher) As I studied a foreign language, this is self-evident.

(Music; Teacher) Without my degree, I could have done my PGCE type course but would not have been accepted in my present post and would not feel qualified enougth to teach the 'A' level standard I do teach.

Of those who were assigned to the evenly balanced category, the great majority typically indicated that their degrees delivered some limited employability benefits, but had generally failed in the process of preparation for work. For example:

> (Biology/Chemistry; Social Worker) Apart from having a degree, it did not help me obtain employment.

> (Movemement/Education; Library Assistant) The particular course I did, has not helped me obtain my present employment but having a degree has helped. Though for anyone wishing to do temporary work in catering, for example, it is preferable when applying not to mention one has a degree. My degree course gave me higher expectations about life - they were lowered when I realised the boredom and dissatisfaction of work.

Finally, a further group of respondents recognized the limited employment currency of their degrees, but then went on to explain that, from their point of view, this did not amount to a criticism, since the courses were neither selected nor approached as enhancements of career prospects or preparations for work. The following three extracts typify this kind of comment:

> (English/Religious Studies; Unemployed) My degree course did not help me in any way to make a decision about future careers. I did not regard it as the main function of my degree to do this.

> (English/American Studies; Unemployed) My degree courses were, by and large, irrelevant to any job I have had or am likely to have - this is not to criticise the courses - it was me, after all, who chose them.

> (English/Religious Studies; Shopowner) A BA in English and Religious Studies has no relevance to my work. However I am glad I did it for personal benefit.

In so far as these comments suggest an attitude of mind which constructs courses as intrinsic personal enrichment rather than extrinsic career advancement, they closely resemble one of the

quantifiable attitudinal statements included in the questionnaire. Constituting a useful way of assessing the generality of this type of comment, respondents were asked to indicate their strength of agreement or disagreement with the statement, 'It is more important that higher education should develop students as people rather than prepare them for a career'.

As can be seen from Table 6.44, graduates' replies were fairly evenly distributed: approximately a third gave priority to personal development over career preparation; another third marked the neutral category, presumably, suggesting equal weighting to both aspects; and the remaining third implied that the emphasis should be placed on career outcomes. Even allowing for the fact that these responses were retrospective, the collective message from respondents seems clear: they desire courses which concomitantly provide personal enrichment and career enhancement.

There is also the hint in Table 6.44 that teachers were less prepared than workers in other occupations to demote the importance of career benefits, although employees in general administration, with a similar proportion agreeing to the statement as teachers, were an exception in this respect.

Table 6.44 Main types of work by attitudes to higher education as personal development rather than vocational preparation

"It is more important that higher education should develop students as people rather than prepare them for a career."

	All	Teaching	Sec./ Clerical	Gen. Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health & Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	36	28	43	28	44	73
Neutral	31	37	21	44	19	18
Disagree	33	35	36	28	37	9
TOTALS (100%)	180	65	33	18	16	11

Cramer's V = .21 (NS)

One of the conclusions emerging from the responses to the open-ended item presented above, namely that, with the exception of teachers, graduates rarely testified to any direct correspondence of specific skills between their their courses and their work, receives substantial support from an associated quantifiable question. Of the 41 per cent who indicated their agreement with the statement, 'The particular skills I acquired in my college courses are of close relevance to my present work', two-thirds were working as teachers.

As Table 6.45 shows, whereas 72 per cent of teachers believed that their work utilized specific skills acquired in their degree courses, only 18 per cent of secretarial/clerical workers (SS), and 22 per cent of general administrators (SS), indicated that no such

relevance existed for them. These, and similar non-teaching employees, also displayed correspondingly low proportions assenting to the statement. These findings tend to endorse the considerable number of open-ended comments which highlighted the continuing teaching orientation of many diversified degree courses and which underlined the perception of teaching as the only directly relevant career outcome for liberal arts subjects.

Table 6.45 Main types of work by employed respondents' attitudes to the relevance of course skills to their jobs

"The particular skills I acquired in my college courses are of close relevance to my present work."

	All	Teaching	Sec./ Clerical	Gen. Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling	Health & Social Welfare
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	41	72	18	22	25	27
Neutral	24	22	12	28	38	36
Disagree	35	6	70	50	37	37
TOTALS (100%)	180	65	33	18	16	11

Looking more broadly at the overall experience of college life, rather than just the subjects taken, a considerable proportion of college graduates felt that useful and work-related personality attributes had been fostered during their time in higher education. Table 6.46 shows that two-thirds of college respondents agreed with the statement, 'College life helped me to develop personal qualities which have been useful in my present (or most recent) work'. However, the

Table also reveals appreciable variations according to the college attended. While former students from Colleges 1 and 8 demonstrated particularly high proportions affirming the development of useful personal qualities (85 and 76 per cent respectively), graduates from Colleges 2 and 3 displayed the correspondingly lower proportions of 67 and 54 per cent respectively.

Table 6.46 College by attitudes to colleges' contribution to the development of work-related personal qualities

"College life helped me to develop personal qualities which have been useful in my present (or most recent) work."

	COLLEGES				
	1	2	3	8	All
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	85	67	54	76	66
Neutral	3	15	24	19	18
Disagree	12	18	22	5	16
TOTALS (100%)	34	90	69	21	247

Cramer's V = .18 (SS)

One of the open-ended items included in Q.20 of the questionnaire produced a valuable data source for elaborating upon this latter finding. Responses to the question, 'In what ways has the social life of the college campus helped you to obtain employment or prepare you for work?', reflected the same college-based differences as observed in the previous quantifiable item, and suggested that, in the view of the respondents, the development of useful personal attributes

owes more to the students' social life than the teaching they received. By way of justifying these interpretations, it was evident that Colleges 1 and 8 respondents were more inclined to vouch for the benefits associated with the students' social and cultural experience than College 2 and 3 graduates. The comments of respondents from these latter institutions included several positive ones, but were generally less frequent and enthusiastic, and occasionally more critical.

College 1 graduates in particular clearly approved of the extent to which college life extended personal and social skills beneficial to their subsequent occupational performance. Often in very emphatic terms, they declared that the college's social life had helped them to grow in self-confidence, independence, tolerance and maturity. The following two contributions illustrate the flavour of these remarks:

> (English/Drama/Religious Studies; Trainee Houseparent) This area was of the utmost importance for my needs. The experience of living and sharing with people of my own age in a residential setting gave me the impetus I needed to discover my own personal traits and character, strengths and weaknesses. Every opportunity should be made to increase a student's awareness of the unique opportunites that student life enables them to experience.

> (English/History/French/Geography; Assistant Retail Manager) Provided one involves oneself and contributes to the social life this can be one of the main aids in preparation for employment. Helps you to meet people and socialise, relax, to tolerate and accept a broad selection of personalities from a wide geographical area.

Graduates from other colleges, especially College 2, also expressed a considerable degree of satisfaction with the way in which their social experience at college had advanced their personal development to the point of being advantageous in their occupational

roles. Identifying similar benefits to those already mentioned, such comments as the following were received:

> (English/Theology; Unemployed) Yes, helpful. Contact with other people, students and lecturers helped give me more confidence, listen to others' opinions and views, sort myself out as a person etc. etc.

> (Biology/Chemistry; Assistant Biologist) Good. Learning to deal with other people is most important skill of all: knowing when to say the right thing, how not to offend, or to offend, trying to be important, or at least convincing others you are somebody and making them realise they are.

> (English/Sociology; VSO Teacher) Experience from running various societies and social events has certainly been very helpful. I'm sure my record of this helped me obtain this VSO post.

> (History/Religious Studies; Clerical Officer) Helps you to mix with a wide variety of different people from different backgrounds. Important when employer is looking to see how you will fit in with the rest of staff.

However, in contrast to College 1, respondents from the two larger participating institutions, especially College 3, had smaller proportions offering positive comments and greater proportions who were critical of the social life at college and more sceptical of its value to careers and work. The following contributions illustrate this type of response:

> (English/History; Teacher) Did not prepare me for maturity needed in full-time employment.

> (Sociology/Social Administration; Personnel Officer) College life was really far too insular. More effort should be made either to get the real world in or the students out. Obviously I accept that much is up to the individual but without wishing to sound paternalistic, the world of work comes as something of a culture shock. Ten weeks in vacation time does not enable a student to face the pressure and hum-drum of work.

> (English/Religious Studies; PGCE student) Practically

non-existent, apart from a very good summer ball. It would help if the students did not on the whole, insist on going home at weekends.

(Art/Education; Teacher) My particular college had little social life due to its close proximity to London.

(History/American Studies; Trainee Accountant) Although students are able to get together and have topical discussions, they live very sheltered lives, even off-campus. They may be well informed on national and international events but still do not seem a part of the 'real' world as the college in many respects was 'over-protective' i.e. bed-linen distributed, bills paid even in flats outside of college etc.

The latter comment opens up an awareness of the problems of searching for a secure and close-knit student community without it producing a restrictive and debilitating constraint on students' scope for development. In order to alleviate the degree of culture shock associated with the transition from college to work, as argued by one of the lecturers quoted in Chapter Three, it would seem desirable that the initially small and safe community environment, appropriate for the typically rather timid characteristics of the student intake, must progressively open up to a more challenging and demanding set of social circumstances. A final comment comes close to summarizing the tension between matching the appeal of a closely integrated college-based community with the need to encounter a less narrow and inward-looking field of social situations:

(Sociology/Social Administration; Student) The size of the college made for a friendly atmosphere, which in retrospect, represented a considerable advantage over a large anonymous university. However, the range and depth of social and cultural activities were somewhat restricted.

In addition to commenting on their experience of college courses and campus life, graduates were given opportunities in the form

of both closed and open-ended questions to evaluate the efficacy of other provisions, including careers services and work experience placements, where appropriate. In a quantifiable form, respondents were offered a range of informational sources and provisions, of which they were asked (i) to choose the single most important source through which contact was first established with their initial employer and (ii) to rank the three most helpful provisions in the their general approach to job-hunting. Table 6.47 presents the results for (i), Table 6.48 for (ii).

In these Tables, for ease of presentation, one source, 'employment agencies', has been formed by combining two of the original minor response categories and a composite source, 'Careers Service', has been derived by aggregating the frequencies of responses for its specialist constituent elements. It should also be noted that, in a few cases, respondents answered the question with regard to the careers service at the institution where they studied for a PGCE qualification, instead of the college where they obtained their first degree.

Table 6.47 Sources of information used to establish contact with initial employers

		COLLEGES			
	All	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%	%
National paper/journal	27	32	22	27	43
Local paper	16	17	21	12	9
Friend/relative	9	15	6	9	5
Personal contacts	4	3	2	4	0
Employment agencies<a>	10	9	7	11	5
Speculative approach	8	6	7	9	14
Vacation work contact	3	0	5	4	5
Academic staff	2	3	2	3	5
Careers Service<b>:	(10)	(12)	(13)	(11)	(0)
Careers adviser	2	3	3	1	0
Vacancy notices	3	3	4	4	0
DOG, GO etc. <c>	2	6	4	1	0
CSU Vacancy lists<d>	1	0	1	3	0
Employers' visits	1	0	0	1	0
Careers conventions	1	0	1	1	0
Prestel<e>	0	0	0	0	0
Others	5	3	6	4	9
Not applicable	6	0	9	6	5
TOTALS (100%)	247	34	90	69	21

NOTES

<a> Combines two categories: 'Employment Services Agency/Professional Employment Register' and 'Private employment agency'.

<b> Shows the composite percentage for the following specialist facilities offered by Careers Services.

<c> Vacancy mailing lists published by the Central Services Unit.

<d> Various directories of graduate opportunities.

<e> A computerized informational source on vacancies.

Table 6.48 Sources of information ranked first as being generally helpful in job-hunting

		COLLEGES			
	All	1	2	3	8
	%	%	%	%	%
None	31	14	30	39	29
National paper/journal	26	23	27	23	43
Local paper	9	15	9	4	5
Friend/relative	4	9	3	3	0
Personal contacts	2	3	0	2	5
Employment agencies<a>	7	12	3	7	5
Speculative approach	3	3	1	6	9
Vacation work contact	2	3	3	3	0
Academic staff	3	3	6	2	0
Careers Service<b>:	(12)	(15)	(18)	(10)	(0)
Careers adviser	3	0	7	1	0
Vacancy notices	3	6	6	0	0
DOG, GO etc. <c>	3	6	3	3	0
CSU Vacancy lists<d>	3	3	2	6	0
Employers' visits	0	0	0	0	0
Careers conventions	0	0	0	0	0
Prestel<e>	0	0	0	0	0
Others	1	0	0	1	4
TOTALS (100%)	247	34	90	69	21

NOTES

<a> Combines two categories: 'Employment Services Agency/Professional Employment Register' and 'Private employment agency'.

<b> Shows the composite percentage for the following specialist facilities offered by Careers Services.

<c> Vacancy mailing lists published by the Central Services Unit.

<d> Various directories of graduate opportunities.

<e> A computerized informational source on vacancies.

Even allowing for this possible contamination of the results, which if anything, should have increased the use of careers services, the contribution of college-based provisions towards securing specific employment and general assistance in graduates' job search, is surprisingly low. Table 6.47, for example, shows that only 12 per cent of all respondents learnt about their initial employer through the career services or academic staff. More influential methods of contact included national and local newspapers, external employment agencies, friends, relatives and speculative approaches to employers. Apart from an indication that those institutions with highest proportions of teachers also displayed the highest proportions with respondents who learnt about their employer through a national paper (TES, Guardian etc.), this finding was consistent across all the major participating colleges.

Moreover, exactly the same pattern emerges when general usefulness rather than specific job placement is considered. Table 6.48 indicates that as many as 30 per cent of respondents were unable to record that any of the sources and provisions were helpful in the task of looking for employment. Once again, only 15 per cent of all respondents ranked the careers service or academic staff as the most helpful, although in this respect, College 2 had a higher percentage (24 per cent) than College 1 (18 per cent), which in turn was higher than College 3 (12 per cent). It is believed that this ordering reflects the comparative extent to which each of these institutions had established a college-based careers service for the students who graduated in 1979.

The responses to the open-ended item on careers services (Q.20iv) firmly substantiate the findings of the previous question. An overwhelming majority of respondents were clearly dissatisfied by the inadequacy of the provision in the careers area and several returned highly critical and uncomplimentary replies. As could be expected, criticisms were particularly severe from graduates of the institutions which had been slow to develop their careers services, but even graduates from colleges which had extended their provisions were demonstrably unimpressed.

Numerous respondents complained about the lack of properly equipped careers services and strongly advocated a more thorough and comprehensive provision:

> This was virtually non-existent, but a tremendous amount of organization and research needs to go into this sort of service, if it is to be of any use to a student who is more worried, during his 3/4 years, whether he will finish his essays before the deadline.

> Was the absolute minimum - it may just as well not have existed.

> The college careers service at my college was not particularly dynamic, the main channel of communication being in reality the noticeboard listing potential job opportunities. Sadly though when one considers the present economic cutbacks, it is unlikely that this situation will improve greatly, especially when college staff have to devote so much of their time to recruitment and promotion campaigns for their colleges so that they can remain employed.

Among those critical of the services provided, a common complaint was the overemphasis placed on careers in teaching:

> This is an aspect of college facilities that I found particularly useless. My careers adviser was underinformed and unimaginative. She knew nothing of careers outside the field of teaching and the Civil Service.

Non-existent. It was assumed that everyone would enter teaching.

Found the emphasis was mainly on those students looking for teaching posts - amount of advice and information offered by the Careers Service for students other than teaching was to an extent narrow and short-sighted - duplication of information obtainable in directories.

At the time of my graduation, the college provided little real help in terms of job contacts. More could be done with regard to building up a careers service which had links with industry and commerce. (However, it does very well as regards the teaching profession.)

Terrible except a certain amount of literature but bias to further education/teaching.

There were many general remarks (e.g. 'Dreadful', 'Hopeless', 'Pathetic' etc.) but of the more detailed comments, shortcomings which were regularly alluded to, included: the tendency to offer information and advice 'too little, too late' for the student to take effective decisions; overreliance on published material instead of individual counselling; a lack of contact and familiarity with employing organizations and the world of work in general. The following can be taken as illustrative examples:

I think they could perhaps do more by visiting college's first year students. They should also find more detailed information on careers e.g. I was told I would be able to do accountancy. I was not told my Maths 'O' level had to be a higher grade. I feel I could have saved myself a lot of time and trouble applying for accountancy vacancies, perhaps I may have considered other jobs more favourably if I'd known. More detailed information is needed. I feel students ought to be consulted in their first year about careers, then the careers advisory services could give them an opportunity for work experience in a field they are interested in, then there is enough time for a student to change his/her mind without any detrimental effect.

This didn't help me. We have a self-service careers information room, but little or no personal guidance.

No help whatsoever. Would be improved by treating

students as individuals rather than as names on a list to be processed on completion of a degree programme.

Out of touch with the real world.

More direct contact with employers.

Only a small proportion in each college expressed satisfaction with the careers services, but a few more made certain allowances for the poor quality of the provision. For example, some appreciated that they were among the first diversified degree graduates and hoped that the services would improve in the future. Similarly, a small number accepted that the onus for careers rested with the student and not the careers service. Examples of such responses included:

> My college careers service was, to be honest, laughable. We had one short session in which we were asked - 'who wants or needs to work anyway?' I understand the situation has improved since.

> In 1979 the college careers service was comparatively new and had little experience in directing BA students, the majority of information was gained by personal contacts and interviews.

> I feel the service was not very adequate, but at the time I was perhaps too anxious to be 'spoon-fed'.

In addition to a careers advisory service, one institution offered a short work experience component for all its non-teaching degree students. Although, as noted earlier, there was no evidence to suggest that the work experience provision improved the colleges' employability rates, the majority of their respondents were favourably disposed towards this scheme and supported its development. Each of the following comments illustrates one of the benefits the graduates believed they had gained from their off-campus work experience placement:

Work experience was amazing in my case and very rewarding (worked with disabled children).

Only in that it gave me experience of working environment.

The work experience placements were particularly valuable in that they gave one time and the opportunity to reflect on whether or not that was what one wanted to do in the future. It could have saved a lot of people from wasting valuable time on leaving college.

I worked with handicapped children for a month at college. I have found that this experience has helped me to be more understanding towards any underprivileged person (even if, in the present political climate, they be black etc etc.)

Placements in sports centres etc. would be very helpful to those seeking management posts in recreation.

Should be increased. Encouragement of relationship between students and prospective employers. Not dissimilar to Polys. (sandwich course) and Universities (milk round).

Criticisms usually focused on the lack of suitable preparation and unstimulating work situations:

Working on off-campus experience served no purpose in obtaining a post. I felt that we were merely cheap labour.

An utter waste of time - 2 weeks in a theatre (sweeping the stage) - comprised my off-campus work. Other people fared better, but they were mainly those who could not see beyond a classroom.

Not much use as so disorganised and short term.

Although only one of the main participating colleges offered a work experience scheme, many graduates from other institutions also recommended more practical and work-related components in their courses. Overall, these responses reaffirm many of the earlier comments which urged a greater practical relevance in the degree courses offered by colleges.

Careers aspirations or accommodation?

In addition to considering the careers effects of such factors as subjects studied and geographical mobility, there is a related need to enquire how the low level of entry into graduate status jobs apart from teaching may have been influenced by students' own career aspirations and attitudes. Although lacking the kind of longitudinal evidence necessary to conduct a thorough examination of the personal development and decision-making associated with the transition from college to work, the remaining data to be derived from the questionnaire provides a sufficient basis at least to offer an introduction to the topic.

It should be stressed, however, that a major drawback of attempting to discuss attitudinal development without the benefits of longitudinal data, is the dependence on respondents' hindsight constructions of previously held aspirations and motivations. As a result, the reliability of such evidence is inevitably weakened by memories which are not infallible and by biographical accounts which are not immune from the tendency to reconstruct the past in the light of subsequent experience.

Given that the limited evidence only permits a preliminary exploration of the topic, it would be inappropriate to raise too many specific and detailed questions, but one general question seems particularly important:

To what extent do graduates' constructions of their biographies and decision-making approximate a career 'choice' model (sifting information, rational choice, aspirations to graduate status employment, appropriate applications, rejection/acceptance etc.) or a career 'accommodation' model (reduced emphasis on choice, more a matter of adjusting to difficult external circumstances, hence comparatively low aspirations with a more adventitious experience of occupational entry.)?

If the occupations obtained by respondents (Table 5.8) are viewed alongside the jobs applied for upon graduation but not obtained (Table 6.49), apart from a slight increase in the applications for more creative outlets (e.g. journalism, acting), the type of posts unsuccessfully applied for closely resemble those actually obtained. On the basis of the career choice model, more applications indicating higher levels of aspiration and ambition could have been expected.

Table 6.49 Occupational categories<a> of posts applied for other than those obtained<b>

Occupational Groups	%
None mentioned	38
Teachers	10
Clerical workers	11
General administrators	7
Social or welfare work	4
Trainee personnel officers	3
Librarians	3
Graphic designers	2
Researchers	2
Sales representatives	2
Journalist, author	2
Acting, theatre management	2
Shop assistants	2
All others (1% or less)	12
TOTAL (100%)	247

NOTES

<a> Based on Qualified Manpower Follow-up Survey (see Williamson 1981)

<b> First posts to be recorded by respondents

Table 6.50 indicates that approximately a quarter of the respondents believed that, at the point of leaving college, they were undecided about their ultimate career goal; a third saw teaching as their career objective; the aspirations of the remaining group closely matched the type of occupations predominantly entered, as well as a small minority who aspired to professions of a more creative nature than those typically entered by this group of graduates. Echoing the interpretation of the previous table, if the career choice/ambition model had been widely applicable, it would seem reasonable to have anticipated higher levels of aspiration at least in terms of expressed

ultimate career objectives, if not in terms of actual job applications.

Table 6.50 Respondents' perceptions of their career goals

	When entering college	When graduating	Latest held
	%	%	%
Undecided	38	24	13
Teaching	43	34	38
Gen. Admin.	0	5	6
Mother/Housewife	1	2	5
Author, Journalist	2	4	4
Social/Welfare Work	2	2	3
Librarian	0	1	2
Acting, Theatre Man.	3	5	3
Higher Civil Servant	0	1	2
Personnel Manager	0	5	2
Retail Manager	0	3	2
Clerical	0	2	2
All Others	7	9	14
No response	4	3	4
TOTALS (100%)	247	247	247

The same table also reveals that a substantial proportion of respondents considered that as undergraduates they were heavily committed to teaching as their ultimate career goal. With as many as 38 per cent suggesting that they were undecided about their career aims when entering college, 43 per cent stated that they aspired to teaching. Put another way, of those who had decided on a career goal upon commencing life as an undergraduate, 70 per cent had chosen the teaching profession. The 43 per cent with teaching ambitions on starting college had fallen slightly to 34 per cent upon completion of their studies.

This finding suggests that the high proportion of college entrants who pinned their hopes on becoming teachers constitutes an important factor in explaining the substantial number of college graduates who eventually found employment as teachers. Thus far at least, the patterns of applications and aspirations for teachers would seem reasonably consistent with the career choice-ambition model of occupational entry, but for other occupations this model seems less appropriate.

Running parallel with this tentative interpretation, Table 6.51 demonstrates that, when leaving college, those who eventually found employment in non-teaching occupations experienced greater difficulties in making a decision about their careers than did their teaching colleagues, many of whom had already made that profession their preferred choice. In Item 15 of the questionnaire, graduates were asked to select and rank five of ten categories according to the level of difficulty they presented in their job-hunting when leaving college. Table 6.51 shows the proportions of categories which were ranked either first or second; the inclusion of the lower order rankings produced no significant effect on the overall picture of the main difficulties faced by respondents.

Table 6.51 Job-hunting difficulties ranked either first or second

	All	Teachers	Non-teachers	Not employed
	%	%	%	%
Application letters	7	17	3	7
Finding suitable vacancies	29	36	24	31
Interviews	7	12	7	4
Deciding what to do after college	18	10	23	17
Obtaining relevant information	10	9	9	10
Knowing what I was good at	9	3	12	7
Obtaining advice and counselling	9	7	9	12
'A' levels	0	1	0	0
Selection tests	1	0	2	1
Others	3	2	3	4
None mentioned	7	3	8	7
TOTALS<a> (100%)	494	130	230	134

NOTES

<a> These totals refer to the total numbers of first and second ranked difficulties and not individual respondents.

While teaching respondents found 'Finding suitable vacancies' to be the major difficulty (29 per cent), followed by the problems of job-hunting techniques ('application letters' and 'interviews'), respondents employed in non-teaching jobs found 'Deciding what to do after college' (23 per cent) to be as great a problem as 'Finding suitable vacancies' (24 per cent). For this latter group, the techniques of job-hunting were relegated to positions of lower importance and the proportion of references to 'Knowing what I was good at' was higher than that for the teaching groups. Around 10 per cent of both groups ranked 'Obtaining relevant information' and 'Obtaining advice and counselling' as their first or second most difficult problems.

In the main, the variations in response to this item accords with the substantial number of open-ended comments that posed the overriding dilemma confronting diversified degree graduates, namely, what do you do if you don't want to teach? Among those seeking alternatives to teaching, there were few signs of 'vigilant information processing' (Janis and Mann 1977), anticipatory decision-making, or determined aspirations. The overall impression gained was of hurried, eleventh-hour adjustments to a limited set of opportunities, which were frequently entered on the basis of chance, with little sense of personal control, and with the attitude of accommodating the levels of desirability of an outcome to match the perceived probabilities of achieving it (Dowie 1980). Testifying to its typicality, one college careers adviser referred to it as 'the headless chickens' approach.

Further evidence of the increased likelihood for the non-teaching group to display characteristics associated with the accommodation model of occupational entry, is supplied by Table 6.52. Responding to the statement, "I did not give a great deal of thought to any particular career until my final year at college", a considerably larger proportion of the non-teaching employees, when compared to teaching respondents, indicated that they had deferred deliberations about specific careers until their final year. For example, compared to only 29 per cent of teachers, as many as 52 per cent of secretarial and clerical workers indicated their agreement with the statement (SS).

Table 6.52 Timing of career deliberations by type of work areas

"I did not give a great deal of thought to any particular career until my final year at college."

	All	Teachers	Sec./ Clerical	Gen. Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	43	29	52	39	44
Neutral	10	12	6	17	12
Disagree	47	59	42	44	44
TOTALS (100%)	247	65	33	18	16

Following on with a similar finding, Table 6.53 reiterates the earlier conclusion that, in contrast to the other main occupations, teachers were more likely to contemplate their long-term career development in terms of greater commitment to a particular occupation. While 49 per cent of teachers were favourably disposed towards the statement, "I think it is very important that one should make a determined commitment to a career rather than move from job to job", only 30 per cent of secretarial and clerical workers were prepared to agree with it. Other non-teaching employees were similarly disinclined to adopt a strong careerist perspective.

Table 6.53 Attitudes to career commitment by type of work areas

"I think it is very important that one should make a determined commitment to a career rather than move from job to job."

	All	Teachers	Sec./ Clerical	Gen. Admin.	Buying, Marketing & Selling
	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	38	49	30	28	38
Neutral	35	34	55	28	25
Disagree	27	17	15	44	37
TOTALS (100%)	247	65	33	18	16

Cramer's V = .23 (SS)

Although there is evidence to suggest that many non-teaching employees lacked a strong career ambition or commitment to a particular occupation, this would seem to be more a reflection of the perceived probability of finding suitable employment rather than any general or serious lack of motivation to carry out useful work within society. Table 6.54 shows that only a meagre proportion of 12 per cent agreed with the statement, "All I want out of life is a steady, not too difficult job with enough money to live comfortably". Furthermore, the responses to this item displayed no significant differences between male and female, teaching and non-teaching, respondents.

Table 6.54 Attitudes to the level of occupational demands

"All I want out of life is a steady, not too difficult job with enough money to live comfortably."

	All	Male	Women
	%	%	%
Agree	12	13	11
Neutral	15	10	18
Disagree	73	77	71
TOTALS (100%)	247	70	177

Tau c = .04 (NS)

Finally, Table 6.55 indicates that the majority of college graduates favoured work of a caring nature. 62 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement, "I prefer work which allows me to help and care for other people." Only 9 per cent disagreed with it. Women graduates showed only a slightly higher tendency to prefer this type of work.

Table 6.55 Attitudes to caring work

"I prefer work which allows me to help and care for other people."

	All	Male	Women
	%	%	%
Agree	62	56	64
Neutral	29	33	28
Disagree	9	11	8
TOTALS (100%)	247	70	177

Tau c = .08 (NS)

Summarizing the above, it appears that a careers choice and aspiration model of occupational entry was plausible for a sizeable share of graduates who proceeded to enter the teaching profession. Displaying an earlier consideration of a specific career than other graduates, a substantial proportion of teaching respondents indicated that they aspired to their chosen profession both on entering college and on graduating. As a result, compared to other graduate employees, fewer teachers suggested that deciding what to do after college was a particular problem. Even for this group, however, the conspicuous problem of finding suitable alternatives to teaching necessitates that the notions of 'choice' and 'aspiration' should be viewed as relative rather than absolute categories. Similarly, the possibility must remain open that, faced with few alternative employment opportunities on graduation, several teaching respondents retrospectively overestimated the degree to which they saw that profession as their chosen career goal when entering college.

Among the remaining respondents, although it is possible to identify individual cases of graduates who were successfully launched on routes towards their ultimate career goals (e.g. trainee accountants), few were applying or aspiring to posts outside a rather limited range of opportunities. With the exception of a relatively small number who wished to become actresses or self-employed writers, for the non-teaching respondents, jobs applied for, and jobs aspired to, closely resembled the modest range of jobs obtained. This group of graduates were less likely to have given early consideration to particular careers and more likely to experience difficulties in

deciding what to do after graduation. Such characteristics correspond to explanations of occupational entry which emphasize its adventitious and accommodating nature.

On the basis of the timid personality traits allegedly associated with college entrants, some may argue that the above results demonstrate that many college graduates continued to display a lack of determined ambition and motivation in their job-hunting. In considering this argument, it should be recalled that the majority of graduates indicated a desire to find interesting and challenging work, especially of a caring and altruistic nature. While acknowledging the possible existence of a personality factor, it should also be remembered that the evidence is compatible with the view that graduates' levels of aspiration and motivation are strongly influenced by the state of the labour market, by the quality of their information on available employment opportunities, as well as by their perception of the probability of their qualifications and abilities being good enough to give them a chance of competing for these vacancies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Before proceeding to draw together the various findings and their attendant policy implications, three justifications may be given for pausing first in order to locate the data in a suitable theoretical context.

Following such authors as Wright Mills (1970) and Kuhn (1970), it is held that empirically-based descriptive and prescriptive accounts of anything but the most rudimentary of social realities inescapably require the engagement of explanatory frameworks or theoretical models. Among other things, such frameworks or models contain conceptual schema, frames of reference and causal inferences about the segment of the social world under consideration. Very often, in many so-called 'atheoretical' studies, the tenets of the underlying theoretical perspectives are neither overtly stipulated nor coherently organized, but are covertly assumed as the taken-for-granted way of looking at the problem. The risks of excluding theoretical dimensions include an increased likelihood of applying conceptual and causal relations to the data in a reified and uncritical manner, so that inconsistencies and

inadequacies in the conceptions of the problem, including policy-orientated ones, go undetected and, hence, unresolved. For this reason alone, it is felt that a satisfactory analysis of the policy repercussions of the research demands a preliminary exploration of what appear to approximate the most convincing set of theoretical propositions in which to contextualize the empirical data.

Secondly, contributions to social theory are worth pursuing in their own right; for as Gouldner (1973) has remarked, "Knowledge is not simply a hammer with which to make the world yield." (p.125). Accordingly, it is thought that the empirical material relating to the particular case of higher education provision in question holds out a useful opportunity to address relevant theoretical issues, which, as argued in the following section, have been badly neglected by earlier work on graduates' initial career experiences.

Thirdly, invoking a theoretical dimension, provides further scope for viewing the early careers of college graduates in a broader perspective. Although the results of the analysis show that college graduates collectively possess a set of characteristics which in some ways distinguish them from university and polytechnic graduates, it would be erroneous to conceive of the careers of college graduates as divorced from the labour market trends and experiences for graduates from all sectors of higher education. While Chapters One and Four located the early careers of college graduates in the context of the descriptive literature and information on university and polytechnic graduates' patterns of initial employment, this chapter, by considering some of the more general theoretical issues inherent in the data,

provides an additional means of viewing college graduates as part of a wider social phenomena.

On the basis of the above, it is proposed to examine the empirical details arising from the research in the light of recent sociological theories of relations between educational and economic processes. Although this area of theorizing is of seminal importance to the ways in which the problems of graduate employment are conceived, as yet few empirical studies of graduates' early careers have approached the subject from a sociological perspective, let alone from the specific discourse of education and economy conceptualizations. Thus, it is hoped that the following analysis will go some way to rectify this deficiency in the study of students' careers after graduation.

A sociological perspective on graduates' early careers

Applications of analyses based on sociological perspectives, including theories of education and economic relations, are widely evident in several empirical accounts of school-leavers' transition from secondary education into work (Brannen 1975, Carter 1966, Corrigan 1979, Roberts 1974 and Willis 1977). In addition, an example of this mode of analysis can also be found for non-advanced further education (Gleeson and Mardle 1980). In contrast, however, examples of corresponding sociological accounts of the transition from higher education into employment are few and far between.

More usual frames of reference for research into graduates' early careers are either based on psychological paradigms, particularly the developmental theories of occupational choice (Brown 1971; Mansfield and Davies 1971) or, what purport to be, purely empirical and descriptive models (Williamson 1981 and Whitehead and Williamson 1980 for a cross-section of graduates in all subject areas; Caswell 1980 for geography graduates; Baum and Bourner 1981 for sociology graduates). In a sense, both approaches provide and reflect the occupational ideology and practice of careers advisers and counsellors. While the applied psychology perspective offers a theoretical justification which bolsters the case for professional counselling (Roberts 1975), the strictly empirical approach accords with careers advisers' projected image of their role as purveyor's of neutral and objective information, uncontaminated by intermediary interpretation.

However, as indicated earlier, the atheoretical appearances of graduate career studies that aim to do nothing more than provide information, often belie the reality that the collection and presentation of such data covertly assume theoretical underpinnings which are not subjected to critical analysis or empirical verification. By way of illustration, Baum and Bourner's (1981) paper on the initial employment experiences of UK sociology graduates is typical of this approach.

These authors implicitly accept a technical-functionalist view of higher education and the economy, in which the current labour market for the highly qualified is presented as displaying recent dysfunctional aberrations.

As examples of features consistent with this model, it may be noted that industrial and professional requirements for more applied knowledge are accentuated, that the salient antecedents of unemployment among sociology graduates are to be found in the immediate economic climate (e.g. recession, SSRC cut-backs in the provision of higher degree studentships), and that information on occupational areas entered by graduates is only provided for horizontal classifications. A degree of reflexivity and a closer awareness of alternative theories of education and the economy could have advanced the analysis, and thus the ellucidation of problems warranting the attention of policy makers. For example, from the perspective of a normative conflict theory, reduced emphasis on the relevance of technical knowledge could have led to the hypothesis that employers seek attitudes and values which sociology graduates are less likely to project; more long-term and structural reasons could have been postulated to explain the unemployment and oversupply of graduates, and finally; recognition of the process of filtering down, or 'vertical substitution' as it is sometimes called (Teichler et al 1980), could have underlined the need to examine the level, as well as the type, of jobs obtained by graduates. In using the Baum and Bourner paper as a means of drawing attention to the shortcomings of omitting to articulate and explore the theoretical underpinnings of empirical data, it should not be inferred that this source is unique in its susceptibility to such criticisms. Very similar charges could be levelled against other ostensibly descriptive studies of graduates early careers.

As a result of the tendency to adopt psychological or purely empirical paradigms, Kelsall et al (1972) remains the only major

sociological study of graduates' early careers. This work recasts their earlier descriptive account of the careers of 1960 university graduates (Kelsall et al 1970) in a sociological mould, which is subsequently reinforced by a small-scale study reported in Cherry (1975). Conceived in the tradition of the mobility studies initiated by Glass (1954), the drift of the analysis advanced by Kelsall et al (1972) is the inequality of the educational opportunity for female and working class members of society. Notwithstanding the historical importance of this study, with the benefits of hindsight, it can be seen to possess serious inadequacies.

Firstly, sociological issues were addressed in an ad hoc manner and no concerted attempt was made to provide an overriding theoretical framework for the findings. As a result, inconsistencies exist in the theoretical underpinnings which are not explored or explained. For instance, although a Weberian model of social stratification is invoked, a functionalist perspective of the relations between higher education and economic needs is uncritically accepted. By way of explaining why the functionalist conceptualization was not called into question, it may be noted that the experiences of their 1960 cohort pre-date the far-reaching developments in the graduate labour market which precipitated the theoretical examinations of the dominant functionalist perspective. For example, in contrast to the contemporary problems of graduate saturation and filtering down, Kelsall et al (1972) state that "..our graduates are alike in that virtually all of them have high status occupational roles.."(p.40). Thus, it is held that in the passage of time since Kelsall et al conducted their studies, the rapid expansion in higher education and

its consequential effects on the graduate labour market have radically transformed the requirements of an adequate theoretical model. While the latter authors could confront the theoretical issues of equality of opportunity and choice of professional careers, on the assumption that a degree almost guaranteed entry to an occupational elite, as the title of their study indicates, any modern theory of education and the economy must question such assumptions and make problematic the whole domain of functional relevance between economic requirements and the contents and processes of higher education. Similarly, the associated implications for educational and social change need to be revised. Recent trends would suggest that social reconstruction and mobilization requires more than simply widening access to higher education or exhorting women graduates to exercise their occupational choice. Moreover, they seem to demand a theoretical framework which would pay closer attention to the limitations for advancement which may be inherent in the basic organization of economic structures.

In view of the rather out-dated nature of the theoretical perspective offered by Kelsall et al (1972), and the lack of any alternative sociological studies, it is felt that the absence of an empirically-based study of graduates' early careers, set in the context of sociological theories of education and the economy, constitutes a serious omission in the relevant literature. Although the present thesis is limited to a partial and small-scale study of the graduate labour market, it is hoped that it will serve to demonstrate the extent to which sociologists have neglected this area and make some contribution towards remedying this oversight. Consequently, in response to the need to place the findings within a theoretical

dimension, this penultimate chapter addresses the questions, 'Which of the available sociological theories of education and the economy provides the most plausible set of explanations for the empirical material arising from the research?' and 'What modifications to that theory, if any, do the empirical data on the experiences of college graduates appear to warrant?'

Unlike the literature for the policy-related questions, the literature relating to education-economic theorizing is extensive and some a priori selection of what appear to be the most persuasive of the current theoretical formulations is essential. Hence, three types of theoretical work are selected for consideration - technical-functionalism, a neo-Marxist conflict theory, and a neo-Weberian conflict theory - and the potential of each to account for the evidence collected is assessed. As explained at the beginning of Chapter Two, the methodological approach is one of exploring plausiblities rather than any formal hypothesis testing in the hypothetico-deductive mould. Concluding that existing theories seem deficient in one respect or another, some suggestions for future theoretical development are offered.

Technical-functionalism

The sociological theory which most closely articulates popular conceptions of the connections between education and economic structures, and which is usually implied in allegedly atheoretical accounts of the graduate labour market, is technical-functionalism. This theory of education and the economy is a particular application of

a more general functionalist theory of social stratification, such as that proposed by Davis and Moore (1945). These writers argue that the relative rank of different occupational positions is determined, firstly, by the extent to which an occupational position holds functional centrality and, secondly, by the extent to which it requires innate abilities or lengthy training. They maintain that, given an unequal distribution of talent and motivation throughout society, in order to attract the most talented and highly motivated, prospective incumbents must be induced to suffer the drawbacks of lengthy training and to perform the most important and demanding functions within society: hence occupational positions must be organized into stratified hierarchies accompanied by different degrees of reward and prestige.

The general theory's particular application to education follows from the premise that the occupational structure requires specific skill performances and that formal education is a particularly important method of training to meet these requirements. Hence, the central tenet of the technical-functional theory of education is that formal education fulfils the function of preparing a future work force by developing specific skills and general capacities, particularly those for the more highly skilled jobs (Clark 1962, Banks 1968). Educational institutions are viewed as being largely determined by, and responsive to, the occupational 'needs' of an advanced technological economy.

Attempts to validate this central proposition have frequently involved a demonstration of the theory's apparent capacity to explain the phenomenal expansion of formal education during the process of

industrialization and subsequent technological advance. Proponents of the theory also maintain that the levels of educational qualifications required for occupational entry constantly rise in response to the increase in skill demands required by an advanced technological society - an explanation which is particularly pertinent to our present interests in the contemporary state of the graduate labour market, degree currency inflation and the problems of filtering down.

To sum up, essentially, the technical-functional theory of the education-economy interface consists of three basic tenets: it asserts the functional necessity of a stratified occupational structure; it considers the economy to be the salient determining force on the education system; and it posits the inculcation of skills and knowledge as the primary mediation between educational and economic processes. A related variant, normative functionalism, shares the first two of these tenets but accentuates the transference of norms and values rather than skills and knowledge as the main mediation between educational experience and subsequent economic roles (Parsons 1965, Dreeben 1977).

Technical-functionalism is vulnerable to criticisms specific to its subtype level, as well as those common to all functionalist accounts, namely, that they overestimate consensus, order and equilibrium at the expense of differences, conflict and ideological struggle. In opposition to Davis and Moore's general functionalist account of stratification, Tumin (1967) refutes the alleged necessity for differential rewards and highlights the dysfunctional consequences of stratified systems. Another critic, Wesolowski (1967) argues that people's motives are not necessarily based on personal gain but reflect

the type of culture individuals are reared in.

At the subtype level, Collins (1972) has mounted a particularly forceful and tightly argued case against it. Rebutting the claim that formal education provides the required job skills, he demonstrates how the available research evidence does not substantiate the essential propositions that (a) better educated employees are more productive than less educated employees and (b) vocational skills are predominantly acquired through educational institutions.

Attacking the former proposition, he identifies the circular reasoning contained in 'human capital' arguments based on correlations between level of educational qualifications and economic development or wage returns. Paci (1977) has also noted that mere correlations between level of education and economic development (e.g. Harbison and Myers 1964) implies nothing about the direction of causality between the two variables: educational provision may expand as a consequence of technological development rather than as a precondition for it. Collins also marshalls the more direct evidence of Berg (1970), who, in a study of a large employing organization, found that the better educated employees, including graduates, were no more productive than their less well educated colleagues, and very often were actually less productive. Similarly, Layard et al (1971) studied sixty-eight British companies in the electrical industry and found no evidence to suggest that those with the largest proportions of highly educated personnel attained higher profits, increased sales, higher outputs or lower costs.

Contrary to proposition (b) above, Collins maintains that sufficient evidence exists to support the view that occupational skills are not predominantly acquired through formal education but through on-the-job learning. Several other writers have pointed to the acquisition of occupational knowledge through on-the-job learning in contrast to the frequently irrelevant nature of academic knowledge attained in educational establishments (Becker 1971, Cotgrove 1962, Freidson 1975).

With particular significance for the subject matter of this study, Collins also found little evidence to substantiate another cornerstone of technical-functionalism, namely, that the inflation in educational certificates is due to the upwards shift in the occupational structure towards a higher proportion of skilled and knowledgeable workers. He cites Folger and Nam (1964), who calculated that only 15 per cent of educational certificate expansion could be attributed to shifts in the occupational structure, 85 per cent of educational upgrading occurred within job categories. In addition, Dore (1978) has provided numerous illustrations of how the inflation in qualifications appears more likely to be the result of increased consumer competition than demand-led 'up-skilling' changes in the occupational structure.

In the minds of other critics, a further inadequacy of the technical-functional approach has been its inability to explain frequent 'mis-matches' between educational supply and economic demands. For example, Ben-David (1963) offers three examples of such mis-matches: the oversupply of professional groups (e.g. teachers) in

many European, African, Asian and American countries; the tendency of formal education systems to encourage professional or civil service entry rather than respond to the needs of the primary industrial base of the economy; the limitations of economic factors to explain the growth of higher education. Paci (1977) has also demonstrated the inadequacies of functionalist based theories to explain the declining opportunities on the labour market and an overabundance of highly educated graduates. Finally, Roberts (1971) has pointed out that the theory is remiss in explaining the actual process of mediation and control between the two spheres, given that economic organizations do not directly govern the direction taken by educational institutions. As a result of these and similar criticisms, the case for supporting technical-functionalism in its entirety is unconvincing.

In accord with the latter conclusion, the evidence collected here suggests that the diversification process in the colleges was neither envisaged as, nor manifested as, a functional response to economic needs.

As demonstrated in the outline of the emergence of diversification, the DES criteria for initiating non-teaching degree courses made no reference to the meeting of economic and employment demands. In fact, rather than devising new provisions in the light of unfilled gaps in the demand for highly qualified personnel, the developments went ahead in spite of growing indications of a distinct lack of employment demand and oversupply of liberal arts degree graduates. The background to the implementation of diversified degree programmes suggests that the policy was far more concerned with

satisfying, as cheaply as possible, the rising demand for higher education places and with averting the political embarrassment of a colossal number of college closures than with extending the colleges' contribution to economic and technological growth. Reflecting a similar orientation towards complying with consumer demands and preferences, the interviews with members of academic staff seldom included any recognition of the need to be responsive to economic requirements, as expounded in the technical-functional model.

If the avouched intentions underlying the new programmes displayed little concern for economic relevance, neither does it appear that a substantial response to economic needs arose as an unintended outcome. The evidence relating to the early careers of diversified degree graduates exemplifies the mis-match between a declining number of employment opportunities and an increasing supply of graduates, especially in the liberal arts. As a consequence of this mis-match, the research found numerous examples of graduates who, in search of employment, were moving down market to accept jobs for which they were often overqualified and underemployed. Additionally, once ensconced in such posts, there were few signs of significant internal promotion or upgrading of the skill requirements of the work involved.

Hence, it is hardly plausible to conceive of the new degree courses as originating or operating as a response to the increased skill demands of a changing economic and industrial base. Moreover, as an exemplification of the general trend in graduate employment observed by Ben-David, the majority of diversified degree graduates gravitated to the public service and education sector of employment rather than

the industrial and manufacturing sector, where, even in a recessionary period, the demand for graduate employees is not so readily satisfied.

Insofar as there was scant evidence of any direct control over the instigation of the new programmes by employers, managerial or professional groups, the findings expose the inadequacy of the theory to explain the channels through which economic interests allegedly exert a determining influence over educational processes. Finally, in view of the questionnaire replies, little credence can be given to the Davis and Moore proposition that high status workers need to receive higher occupational rewards in order to entice them to suffer the drawbacks of lengthy training. Almost the complete reverse was the case: far from 'deferring their gratification', the vast majority appeared to enjoy their college experience as an end in itself, even if the occupational rewards following graduation were often less than anticipated.

As a result of the above points, taken as a whole, the technical-functional conceptualization of education and economy is considered to be deficient in accounting for the empirical details of the case in question. The evidence is particularly persuasive in highlighting the weaknesses in the functionalist notions of strong and direct deterministic bonding between education and economic structures. Consequently, any alternative theoretical formulation will need to show greater sensitivity towards degrees of partial and indirect determinacy, although it is held that certain functionalist elements are clearly indispensable for any general theory of the education-economy interface.

A neo-Marxist conflict theory

A number of neo-Marxist versions of functionalist theories of education and the economy have been developed and, during the latter half of the 1970s, one such version - Bowles and Gintis (1976) - attracted considerable influence and attention. Recasting many features of normative functionalism in a Marxist mould, Bowles and Gintis argue that the manifest attempts by educational institutions to transmit cognitive skills are of subsidiary and ideological significance in comparison to the function of reproducing a workforce with the appropriate values, internalised norms and attitudes required by the social relations of capitalist production.

Maintaining that most vocational knowledge is acquired on-the-job, they contend that intellectual abilities fail to explain the patterns of high occupational placement. Instead superior positions in the occupational hierarchy are said to be dependent on the possession of non-cognitive personal attributes acquired through socialization in the family and educational institutions. Thus, according to these authors, it is through the form of education (i.e. the hidden curricula and values) rather than its content, that universally-required norms (e.g. punctuality, instrumentalism) and differentiated norms (e.g. leadership qualities for those selected for higher education) are instilled into the future workforce of a capitalist economy.

Reminiscent of functionalism's strong bonding of educational and economic structures, Bowles and Gintis assert that the economic base imparts a determining influence on the educational system, and that the form of educational institutions, as with other superstructural institutions, normally 'corresponds' to the form of capitalist social relations in the hierarchical organization of productive processes. Through the institutions of education and the family, whose forms are 'correspondingly-tied' to the form of capitalist social relations, each new successive generation is socialized into the norms, attitudes and personality traits of distinct class subcultures. One of the central propositions in Bowles and Gintis's theory is that employers' 'criteria of hirability' for high level employees takes non-cognitive personality traits as primary. Qualities such as motivation, self-presentation and manner of speech are held to be more important than intellectual capacities and credentials are said to be interpreted by employers as indicating prestigious subcultural conditioning.

The Bowles and Gintis thesis has encountered similar difficulties in explaining mis-matches and lack of correspondence between educational and economic structures as those levelled against functionalist theories, especially those of the normative variety. Several writers have criticized the mechanistic economic determinism in their work and Robinson (1981) has summed up a central problem for such theories:

> The striking fact about education is not how well it serves the requirements of capitalism but how badly.

(Robinson 1981, p.197)

Since several studies have shown that the products of the British education system often display attitudes and values which run counter to the purported requirements of capitalist management (Willis 1977, Corrigan 1979), whether technical skills or normative socialization are taken to be the primary outcomes of the educational process, the arguments for a strong correspondence between the two sub-structures seem unfounded.

Redeploying one of Hussain's (1976) criticisms of functionalism, Demaine (1979) has maintained that educational systems do not directly provide manpower for the occupational structure, since educational qualifications do not confer entitlements to occupations, only the basis and opportunities for job selection. As such, the educational system cannot be said to actually channel individuals into occupational placements. Demaine (1979) has also questioned whether industry really requires the form of socialization described by Bowles and Gintis and concludes that no satisfactory account is provided of the controlling mechanisms through which the economy can secure a correspondence of institutional forms or match the supply of labour with demand. Rather than allowing for a reciprocal education-economy relation, the American authors are accused of vulgar economism and determinism.

Rejecting what thay see as the heavily mechanistic and deterministic qualities of Bowles and Gintis, other sociologists such as Gleeson and Mardle (1980) and Davies (1976), seek a framework which

avoids treating individuals as mere puppets and facilitates an interactive relationship between educational and economic institutions. In a similarly critical vein, O'Keeffe (1979) has marshalled the arguments against a crude 'correspondence principle' and for an alternative direction, points to the need to develop theories which allow for partial indeterminacy between education and the economy and for a more sophisticated view of the structure of social control and the system of social stratification than that typically offered by Marxist analyses.

The Bowles and Gintis theoretical model shares many of the inabilities of functionalist theories to account for the discernible lack of economic orientation in the planning and implementation of the colleges' diversified degree programmes. It fails to establish a satisfactory explanation of the evident maladjustment between employment demands and the supply of graduates in liberal arts subjects. Similarly, no convincing elucidation is made available to clarify the absence of any direct mediation between economic interests and the provision of the new courses.

Most significantly, the research findings lend little or no support for the view that the primary task for educational institutions is the inculcation of appropriate work-related attitudes and values necessary for the reproduction of social control in capitalist relations of production. At best, any non-cognitive personality attributes associated with the experience of college higher education displayed an ambivalent and arbitrary relevance to employers' alleged normative requirements; very often, they appeared to be contrary to the

supposed preferences.

The large majority of staff were vigorously opposed to orchestrated attempts to steer and manipulate students' personality and attitudinal development, especially in an uncritical direction towards the ideological outlook deemed to be required by capitalist employers. Indeed, many lecturers confessed themselves to be unable to specify employers' preferences for personal and social traits within the overall criteria for occupational selection. Furthermore, the results did not suggest that the purported economically-orientated norms were unwittingly transmitted through the hidden curricula of the diversified programmes.

The most likely set of hidden values to be communicated to students related to staff's deep-rooted and committed beliefs in the intrinsic merits and insights associated with their own particular academic subjects, art or craft. This widespread belief in the value of one's own subject as an enriching activity and end in itself was interpreted as constituting a major feature in the latent rationalizations underpinning the everyday practice of most members of staff. A number of staff interviewees suggested that this strong intrinsic academic and subject orientation among staff encouraged apathetic, indifferent and sometimes, critical, attitudes to the world of work among undergraduates. As part of the overall cultural ambience of the college courses, scholastic and creative values were believed to be more powerful and pervasive than applied and vocational attitudes and this was thought to be an important factor in explaining students' commonly-held anti-materialism and scepticism of commercial businesses

and bureaucracies.

Such attitudes are reflected in the pronounced reticence of the graduates to apply for posts in the industrial and large-scale commercial sectors of employment. Although appreciating colleges' contribution to the development of their confidence and personal maturity, few respondents were inclined to apply for posts that demanded hard-headed instrumental and commercial attitudes typical of many positions within capitalist firms and organizations. Instead, they showed a much stronger motivation to desire intellectually satisfying work that would, as far as possible, provide an outlet for their subject-based, often artistically-orientated, interests or involve a caring and social contribution to the well-being of the community. In short, the Bowles and Gintis 'correspondence principle', the pivotal tenet of their thesis, is called into question by the misalignment between employers' alleged normative requirements, such as instrumental attitudes to work, and the intrinsic and altruistic values held by many of the graduates of diversified degree programmes.

Finally, the finding that most respondents perceived employers to use degrees as screening indicators of general intelligence and abilities is clearly at odds with the claim that employers interpret degree credentials as signifying the possession of suitable non-cognitive personality traits. Only very exceptionally did respondents volunteer remarks which could be taken to imply a perception of employers' use of credentials consistent with the interpretation of Bowles and Gintis. In response to such difficulties as these, these authors invoke a 'false consciousness' argument and

maintain that graduates generally misrecognize employers' real use of qualifications. This, of course, is possible, but it necessitates a more detailed exposition of how such an overwhelming proportion of comparatively intelligent applicants are so consistently deceived as to the true significance of credentials than that provided by attributing the phenomena to the dominance of an all-encompassing technical-meritocratic legitimating ideology.

Hence, as a consequence of the employment mismatches and lack of mediation between the college programmes and economic demands, the very dubious degree of correspondence between the normative requirements of capitalist employers and the cultural and value orientations of the higher education experience, and the failure to adequately explain the alleged inaccuracy of the dominant meanings ascribed to employers' use of degree qualifications, the Bowles and Gintis theory is considered to be seriously remiss in offering a plausible interpretation of the relations between the diversified degree provision and economic processes.

A neo-Weberian conflict theory

Building on his critique of technical-functionalism, Collins (1972) argues that a more adequate theory can best be advanced by incorporating functional elements within a neo-Weberian conflict model of social stratification. Rejecting the functionalist conceptualization of work organizations as possessing fixed and universally-accepted goals and demands, Collins maintains that

organizational demands represent the outcome of on-going bargaining between the persons who fill positions and those who attempt to control them. Illustrating this point, he asserts:

> Individuals want jobs primarily for the rewards to themselves in material goods, power and prestige. The amount of productive skill they must demonstrate to hold their position depends on how much clients, customers, or employers can successfully demand of them, and this in turn depends on the balance of power between workers and their employers.
>
> Employers tend to have quite imprecise conceptions of the skill requirements of most jobs, and operate on a strategy of satisfying rather than optimizing - that is, setting average levels of performance as satisfactory, and making changes in procedures or personnel only when performance falls noticeably below minimum standards. (Collins 1972, p.182)

From this perspective, the operations of organizations are directed by the relative power of the different groups involved and as such, the power of 'ascribed' groups and classes constitutes the prime basis for occupational selection rather than technical skills. Since education signifies membership of a particular status group, not technical skills or achievement, and educational requirements reflect the interests of whichever group has the power to set them, it thus becomes a key tool in the continual struggle for the various goods - wealth, power and prestige. According to Collins:

> The main activity of schools is to teach particular status cultures, both in and outside of the classroom. In this light, any failure of the schools to impart technical knowledge (although it may also be successful in this) is not important; schools primarily teach vocabulary and inflection, styles of dress, aesthetic tastes, values and manners.....
>
> ....Insofar as a particular status group controls education, it may use it to foster control within work organizations. Educational requirements for employment can serve both to select new members for elite positions who share the elite culture and, at a lower level of education, to hire lower and middle level employees who have acquired a

> general respect for these elite values and styles.....
>
> ....This requires evidence that: (a) schools provide either training for the elite culture, or respect for it; and (b) employers use education as means of selection for cultural attributes. (Collins 1972, pp.187-8)

In support of (a), historical and descriptive evidence is marshalled to demonstrate that educational establishments, usually founded by powerful or autonomous status groups, provide settings in which particular status cultures, or a respect for it, are acquired from teachers, other students or both. In support of (b), Collins cites a number of studies which suggest that employers regard educational credentials as a screening device for selecting employees with desirable middle class characters and demeanours, indicating appropriate motivation and social experience.

Further support for his framework is purportedly provided by the finding that, in the USA at least, educational requirements are deemed to be of greatest importance where the fit is closest between the culture of the graduating status group and the status group doing the hiring. Although some allowance is made for the alternative explanation that a concern for technical skills may also account for the same closeness of fit, it is generally concluded that higher educational requirements for employment reflect higher concerns for normative control and thus for acquiring respectable and well socialized personnel rather than for the provision of technical skills and abilities.

Of close relevance to the present study's interest in the issues of certificate inflation and filtering down, Collins also maintains that his conflict theory offers a promising explanation of the rise in educational requirements for employment in Western industrial economies. The main determinant of this rise is attributed to the growth in the supply of educated persons, caused by the expansion in education provision, which in turn can be seen as being shaped by three factors: the demand for education as mobility opportunity; competition among status groups to provide education; and functional demands due to technological development.

According to the first of these propositions, the result of education's traditional association with high economic and status positions has been a popular demand for educational provision as a mobility opportunity. This demand has not focused on vocational education but that most closely aligned with elite status cultures, frequently the classical Bachelor's degree. The existence of a comparatively small group of elite jobs, which may well have been based on technical necessity, was sufficient to stimulate a demand for large-scale opportunites to acquire these positions. As a result of the ensuing expansion in educational provision, the status value, hence the currency value, of educational credentials became diluted, since standards of esteem are relative to the changing range of cultural differences. Describing the spiral development of what Dore has called the 'diploma disease', Collins concludes:

> Led by the biggest and most prestigious organizations, employers have raised their educational requirements to maintain both the relative prestige of their own managerial ranks and the relative respectability of middle ranks. Education has become a legitimate standard in

terms of which employers select employees, and employees compete with each other for promotion opportunities or for raised prestige in their continuing positions. With the attainment of a mass (now approaching universal) higher education system in modern America, the ideal or image of technical skill becomes the legimating culture in terms of which the struggle for position goes on.

> Higher educational requirements, and the higher level of educational credentials offered by individuals competing for position in organizations, have in turn increased the demand for education by the populace. The interaction between formal job requirements and informal status cultures has resulted in a spiral in which educational requirements and educational attainments become even higher. As the struggle for mass educational opportunites enters new phases in the universities of today, and perhaps in the graduate schools of the future, we may expect a further upgrading of educational requirements for employment. (Collins 1972, p.195)

Few comprehensive critiques of the theoretical model proposed by Collins are evident in the available literature. Criticizing its vagueness, Halsey et al (1980) have usefully formalized Collins' notion of 'demand for mobility opportunity', although their refinement necessitates the adoption of a rational-choice and utility maximizing model of consumer demand. Perhaps the most penetrating criticisms of the model are to be found in Tyler (1980). The latter source identifies a number of problems for the neo-Weberian theory: it is based on an earlier, almost classical, conception of the division of labour and overlooks the introduction of newer forms of work organization (e.g. team efforts of small groups of interchangeable specialists); elements of the theory which relate to the exploitative perpetuation of the advantages of elite status groups are not adequately distinquished from those which derive from technical necessity; it fails to provide a satisfactory reason why, by accepting the possible educational examinations failure of their children, higher status parents should risk sacrificing the perpetuation of the family

position in order to reproduce the dominance of their status group; finally, it also raises the problem of how the model reconciles the Weberian notions of capitalist rationalization and hard-headed efficiency with a use of credentials based on ritual and a legitimation of status rather than technical and functional contribution.

In accounting for the particular case under study, the conflict theory as expounded by Collins contains a number of notable improvements over the previous two theoretical models.

Firstly, it offers the scope for incorporating aspects of both functional and conflictive relations within a general theory. This, for example, opens up the possibility of recognizing functional connections between the diversified degree courses and certain professions such as teaching, while simultaneously viewing the process of filtering down the labour market as an outcome of the struggle for economic and status advantages.

Secondly, the problem of explaining the absence of a direct controlling mechanism between economic and educational institutions is partly reduced by initiating the shift away from emphasizing direct control from above ('pull' factors) to acknowledging the economy's indirect influence on educational institutions through the labour market and the popular demand for mobility opportunity from below ('push' factors). Collins does not pursue this shift of emphasis to its full potential - for example, he still espouses a considerable degree of affiliation between the status group doing the hiring and the

status group supplying the education provision - but, through it, he does achieve an important break with previous conceptualizations.

For our purposes, this shift of emphasis offers an opportunity to explain how during a period when, despite the public rhetoric to the contrary, economic and employment criteria for planning policy developments in higher education were rarely properly considered, occupational structures and processes may still have affected important influences on the provision of the colleges' new programmes. From this perspective, in order to conceptualize the education-economy interface, it needs to be asked how the size and nature of educational provisions are determined and restrained, not directly by employers and their various agents (e.g. C.B.I., M.S.C.), but as mediated through the consumer demand for education partly as an aid in the competition for jobs. Because, in the formation of the diversified degree programmes, both the DES and the colleges' own management patently paid more attention to meeting demand and recruitment factors than satisfying economic requirements, any theory which postulates the education-economy interface in terms of its mediation through student demand, necessarily achieves a greater potency than those which insist on direct 'pull' forces.

A third advantage of Collins' model is the explanation it provides of the rise in credentialism and the consequent dilution of the currency value of degree qualifications. Instances of college graduates confronting the various difficulties associated with seeking employment with degrees that commanded lower currency and status values than often expected, approximate the analysis of spiralling credentials

offered by the conflict theory. However, notwithstanding the value of its contribution to understanding the linkage between educational qualifications and occupational selection, the picture depicted by the model is a fairly general one and more detailed extensions are required. For example, as it stands, it fails to clarify - in terms of either status group preservation or functional necessity - why exactly there should inevitably be a shortage of higher order occupational tasks for the highly qualified to perform. To strengthen the theory in this direction, it is thought that greater attention should be devoted to the dominant patterns of work design and occupational allocation in advanced industrial societies.

Despite its strengths, in their present form some of the central tenets in the neo-Weberian conflict theory run counter to the empirical evidence arising from the research. Because it espouses a similar interpretation of employers' use of educational certificates as that adopted by Bowles and Gintis, namely that credentials signify non-cognitive and social class attributes, Collins' model also falls short of providing an adequate explanation of the ubiquitous and alleged misrecognition of the real meaning of certificates.

Although several respondents stressed the importance of personality attributes and social experience as secondary stage criteria, the paramount impression conveyed in graduates' accounts indicated that it was the degree as a mark of membership of a pool of high general intellectual ability that could get the applicant as far as the secondary stage (e.g. an interview). From their perspective, degrees were viewed primarily as 'badges of ability' (Sennett and Cobb

1972). In addition, numerous respondents described various aspects of what may termed the 'overqualified phenomena' in occupational selection. Examples included: employers suspecting that a graduate applicant would be too intelligent for the post in question and would soon become frustrated and inhibited by the limited tasks involved; graduates concealing their degrees and taking menial temporary jobs to negate the high flyer's image prospective employers typically hold of graduates; employees feeling intellectually underworked in posts for which they consider themselves to be educationally overqualified. Thus, at the lower end of the graduate labour market, both parties in the processes of occupational selection and entry appear to act on the basis that degrees denote advanced intellectual attainment and expectation.

At the other end of the scale, graduates who entered positions traditionally more commensurate with their qualifications, teaching or otherwise, very rarely complained of the lack of intellectual challenge in their work. In fact, from these respondents there were more reports of the very rigorous intellectual demands being made on them, the trainee solicitor and accountant quoted earlier, for example. The qualitative accounts linking greater intellectual challenge with higher professional employment gained substantial quantitative support such as the high degree of positive correlation that was found to exist between intellectual satisfaction in latest jobs and graduate occupational status (Table 5.9).

The most plausible interpretation to be drawn from this evidence suggests that (a) employers use degrees primarily as

signifying general cognitive abilities, as illustrated by the meanings imputed to degrees in the overqualified phenomena; and (b) that they are justified in doing so; given that there seems to be a probability of some functional correspondence between the general intellectual abilities honed up through higher education and the mental demands involved in performing occupational roles accustomed to graduate entry, as illustrated by the finding that respondents in graduate status employment were far more likely to be satisfied by the scope for intellectual stimulation involved in their work.

These conclusions challenge the central propositions in Collins that employers use degrees for non-cognitive purposes and that any apparent functional correspondence is frequently illusionary and largely serves as legitimating ideology to conceal the exploitative processes of status group preservation and reproduction. On the basis of a non-cognitive interpretation of degree qualifications, employers and graduates could have been expected to display greater anxieties for applicant-job mis-matches in terms of personality attributes rather than intellectual demands. Similarly, the theoretical model advanced by Collins is not consistent with the empirical indications that the majority of positions entered by graduate status employees demanded high level general intellectual capacities and that, in view of the limited amount of time spent in these positions, such capacities were more likely to be attributable to formal educational experience than on-the-job learning.

Collins' submission that the main task of educational institutions is to teach status cultures rather than cognitive

abilities or technical skills incurs similar difficulties in explaining the diversified degree curricula to those encountered by the Bowles and Gintis thesis. As recounted above, college staff were adamant that the development of personality and social attributes did not constitute their main preoccupation and few indications were apparent to intimate that socialization in the dominant status culture was accomplished unintentionally through hidden curricula influences. The sources and context of personal growth reported by graduates were often beyond the sphere of direct influence of college authorities (e.g. students own personal relations and leisure pursuits) and frequently the cultural traits acquired appeared to be only arbritarily, occasionally contrarily, related to the purported dominant status culture (e.g. clashes in vocabulary, styles of dress, cultural tastes etc.). Thus, less colourful but perhaps more apposite, the central task of the colleges' diversified degree programmes was not understood as that of non-cognitive cultural conditioning but that of intellectual, academic and artistic advancement.

Finally, the graduates' accounts of their early careers and attitudes to their degree courses provide good grounds to contest the supposition that 'individuals want jobs primarily for the rewards to themselves in material goods, power and prestige'. The most striking feature about most graduates' motivations towards employment was that they sought intrinsic rewards from their jobs as well as extrinsic ones. Accordingly, in addition to seeking adequate salaries and status in their employment, graduates showed a strong tendency to look for psychological rewards and meaning from work, often intellectual stimulation or altruistic worth. Being deprived of the opportunities

to gain an element of meaningful self-actualization from their work tasks often constituted an underlying source of discontentment in respondents' descriptions of occupational roles for which they felt overqualified or underemployed. On the other hand, graduates who were more successful in finding work of a suitable standing, teachers and social workers for example, regularly expressed their satisfaction with the intrinsically rewarding aspects of their jobs. Consequently, it is held here that in seeking employment, graduates often require as many psychological benefits as extrinsic ones, although eventually several may have to compromise their dual goals by sacrificing one in order to secure the other.

It is also maintained that such a duality of motivations upon graduation is also evident in their applications to enter higher education and in their preferences of courses and subject areas. From this perspective, throughout their passage through higher education and beyond, students attempt to perform a balancing act, seeking extrinsic rewards, while holding on to intrinsic meanings and worth. Accordingly, reflecting the finding that numerous respondents still appreciated the intrinsic value of their courses in spite of subsequently encountering limitations with the currency of their degrees, it would seem erroneous to reduce students' intentions towards their courses or employment to purely extrinsic goals. The tendency towards such reductionism is evident in many theoretical formulations of education and the economy, and one which any alternative theory must be at pains to avoid.

Taking stock of the above points, it may be concluded that, owing to its questionable interpretation of employers' use of educational qualifications, its emphasis on normative rather than cognitive aspects of the curricula, and its tendency to accentuate only the extrinsic nature of individual motives, the explanatory power of the conflict theory is incomplete and fragmentary. Despite this, however, in comparison to the two previous theoretical constructions, it was found that key elements of the economy-education conceptualization postulated by Collins, notably, the process of mediation of economic influences on the demand for education, the inflationary trend of credentialism and the incorporation of indispensible functional features, more closely approximate the particular characteristics of the case in question. As a result of these strengths, a neo-Weberian conflict theory is considered to provide the most promising explanatory foundation in which to base any theoretical modifications suggested by the research data.

Theoretical development

To conclude this discussion of the theoretical implications arising out of the study, a number of proposals for inclusion in a more comprehensive model of economy-education relations are offered. These points contain no pretentions to constitute a theory in themselves, but it is hoped that they will serve to delineate some of the key tenets a prospective explanatory model will need to embody.

The proposals are predominantly founded in the neo-Weberian conception of social stratification as an outcome of the on-going negotiation and struggle for advantage between different status groups and classes. As such, the achievement of 'goals' and 'functions' need to be approached as meeting partial and group-based interests, albeit often mutually shared, rather than the reified and socially holistic conceptions of ends and returns widely circulated in functionalist thinking. Similarly, the proposals adopt the neo-Weberian perspective on the competition among individuals for mobility opportunity and jobs, though in this respect, it is maintained that the search for intrinsic meaning is as significant a factor as the drive for material rewards and prestige.

1. In order to account for the scarcity of higher order occupational tasks and the ensuing competition among individuals for psychologically rewarding employment, closer attention needs devoting to the design of work and labour processes than that provided by Collins. Persuant to this, two fundamental assumptions ought to be adhered to. Firstly, in opposition to technical determinism (e.g. Kerr et al 1973), it is maintained that, in the last resort, the technical relations of production are subsidiary to the social relations of production. Following Habermas (1975), technology, although a powerful influence once adopted, is, nevertheless, ultimately applied as a means to predetermined goals and interests. Technology is not implemented in depoliticized vacuums, but under specific social and ideological circumstances. Secondly, and as a corollary of the first assumption, the composition of work situations is not derived from biologically determined instincts of what constitutes the most natural and efficient

method of working but is instead a human creation designed in a certain historical and cultural milieu (Berger 1975). Although commonly understood and experienced as 'just the natural way of doing things', work designs are sustained as habituated reflections of the variations in the balance of power between dominant and dominated groups.

In both management-labour and professional-client relations, the search for profit maximization and the preservation of material and psychological rewards from work have given rise to an overriding pattern of work design based on the principles of the division of knowledge and the allocation of tasks requiring higher order cognitive capacities or specialist knowledge to a privileged minority. Despite Tyler's (1980) call for economy-education theories to recognize newer forms of work organization, the separation of conception from execution according to the tenets of Scientific Management and Taylorism (Braverman 1974) remain the most commonplace and influential work design practices in advanced industrial societies. Similarly, the professional-lay client relation shares the same basic design feature of accumulating esoteric knowledge and higher order decision-making and then allocating its associated tasks to a selected minority. In this relation, the guiding principle, credat emptor, necessitates that the client must trust the judgement and skill of an expert who has gained a mandate to provide a specialist service on the basis of being privy to an exclusive body of knowledge and intellectual abilities (Hughes 1958, McKinlay 1973).

Consequently, for the first of the theoretical proposals, it is postulated that the explanation of the comparative scarcity of

occupational roles requiring higher order cognitive capacities rests with the practice, in both forms of work relations, of segregating knowledge and concentrating the performance of high level tasks in the hands of as small a proportion of workers as possible. In the first instance, such practices should be seen as functional to the interests of capitalist employers, professional groups and their neophytes. The extent to which they are functional to a wider social base is more questionable and deserves closer scrutiny. Such an undertaking would require the distinction between group-based 'efficiency' and a more general social 'efficiency', in which wider social costs and benefits were incorporated into the analysis.

2. The dominant patterns of organizing work create an hierarchical design structure in which opportunites for workers to construct positive personal meanings of work are unevenly distributed. Higher level work tasks facilitate richer opportunities for workers to attach greater intrinsic meanings to their occupations so that work can be viewed as being of pivotal significance to personality development, psychological fulfilment and self-images of worth and esteem. For the majority of lower level workers, occupational tasks offer little scope for the construction of intrinsic meanings. Instead, work is mainly approached with extrinsic and instrumental attitudes, typically as a necessary hardship which must be endured in order to provide sufficient resources to survive and enjoy the rest of life when work ends. Whereas most of those in lower occupational positions, with their comparatively closely-controlled and low-discretion jobs, can only accommodate to their situations by restricting definitions of their

work to instrumental vocabularies, often in the sense of 'sacrificing themselves' (Sennet and Cobb 1972), those with higher order tasks typically enjoy greater discretion, independence and autonomy, which not only provide handsome instrumental rewards but also permit deeper constructions of work as intellectually stimulating, altruistically worthwhile and personally fulfilling. The competition among individuals to acquire such intrinsic benefits is a factor which has consistently been underestimated in economy-education theorizing.

3. In the main, employers and professional groups interpret educational credentials as indicators of technical skills, specialist knowledge and general intellectual abilities. Although management frequently select personnel according to attitudinal and personality criteria at a secondary stage, this normally follows the preliminary use of educational qualifications to define the standard of the ability pool from which they wish to recruit.

From the employers' side, several advantages can be derived from such a use of credentials. It reduces the need to cover the costs of alternative selection and probationary practices; it strengthens the likelihood of restricting the time and resources required for specific occupational training; and it offers a favourable <u>probability</u> that the knowledge and skills developed through formal education will have a positive effect on the performance of higher order work tasks, thus limiting the risk that the investment in occupational training will return a loss. Hence, the constitutive meaning of credentials entailed in such selection procedures consists of a belief that a degree of functional correspondence will <u>probably</u> exist between the cognitive

abilities enhanced through education and the skill requirements of higher level occupational tasks.

In the majority of cases, employers' confidence in the odds on achieving a productive degree of functional correspondence is justified. As a substantive outcome, the occupational performance associated with higher strata positions is usually improved by the application of the specific and general capacities developed through extended education. It is thought, therefore, that accounts which posit high level educational knowledge as principally serving to legitimate and mystify higher strata occupational superiority (e.g. Gorz 1977) grossly underestimate the degree of material functional affinity that generally exists between discretionary work and educational attainments.

For a variety of reasons, however, incidences of graduate employment in high level occupations which fail to demonstrate such a productive and functional relation are likely to occur. Firstly and underlying the point that selection processes are always carried out under conditions of uncertainty, educational credentials only provide a prediction of likely functional correspondence and by no means guarantee it. Secondly and especially in periods of an abundant supply of highly qualified applicants, some employers seeking to fill positions at the margins of high and low order occupations will hire graduates for ritualistic and status-enhancing reasons rather than for any convincing functional application. Thirdly, with the aim of upgrading their social image and standing, pseudo-professional groups will attempt to establish their intellectual credibility by recruiting

more highly qualified personnel than is functionally required by the skill demands of the work concerned. These and similar qualifications form the basis for countering the research evidence which purports to show a lack of direct functional correspondence between occupational performance and higher qualifications (e.g. Berg 1970).

4. As a consequence of employers' use of educational qualifications, the latter are widely perceived and desired as forms of accreditation vital for gaining entry to work situations which permit intrinsic as well as instrumental rewards. Thus, the constitutive meaning of credentials initiates and sustains a popular demand among individuals and their families for opportunities to acquire them.

It would, however, be mistaken to consider the demand for educational opportunites purely in terms of an extrinsic orientation towards obtaining qualifications to assist in the competition for jobs. Relaying their own procurement of work situations which allow for both intrinsic as well as instrumental benefits, parents in the dominant social groups tend to rear their chidren in a cultural climate which incorporates this dual motivation and expectation. These children are accordingly acclimatized to the view that psychologically rewarding activities, be they at school or work, can also entail extrinsic advantages. Hence, when progressing through the various routes of educational provision, especially in the post-compulsory stage, the majority of such students choose, or perhaps more appropriately, adjust to the prevailing circumstances, by attempting to maximize intrinsic and extrinsic considerations. A similar balancing act between the two

factors is evident in their search for employment upon leaving formal education. Given that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives are significantly effected by the dominant practices of work design and occupational selection, it is through the dual motivation of the popular demand for educational opportunities that economic structures mediate indirect but powerful influences on the nature of educational processes.

5. The impact of the dual motive demand on educational provision has taken many different forms. For example, the demand for education to bestow employment-related benefits has produced a strong emphasis on assessment and examinations, which in turn stimulates a 'back-wash' effect on the secondary and primary school curricula (Dore 1978). Similarly, the phenomenon of 'academic drift' can be seen as being determined partly by the popular perception of prestigious employers' preferences for degrees in non-vocational subjects (extrinsic orientation) and partly by the widespread attraction among undergraduates, especially women, to the intrinsic rewards of studying the arts and other non-scientific subjects (intrinsic orientation). The survival and reputation of educational establishments is closely dependent on their capacity to adjust to such demands and it is this necessity to comply with demand, rather than any direct economically-based influences or agencies, which frequently establish the parameters in which educational curricula may operate.

6. In response to the dual motivation pressures; the main task of formal education is to impart technical skills, specialist knowledge, critical reasoning and general cognitive capacities. As a latent outcome of performing this task, educational processes also transmit a respect for cognitive abilities as valid criteria for differential allocation in the occupational hierarchy. Accordingly, almost regardless of whether or not they succeed in acquiring the cognitive content of the overt curriculum, most pupils attain a tacit understanding of what counts as high status knowledge in society and an image of themselves in relation to the yardstick of this high status knowledge. Because such images are frequently formulated in the early stages of schooling, they play a salient part in shaping pupils' perceived probablities of securing different positions in the occupational hierarchy and consequently seriously affect the strength of their attitude and motivation towards subsequent schooling. Thus, while the overt curriculum is instrumental in contributing to an individual's position in the occupational hierarchy; the covert values imparted as an epiphenomena of the manifest task are generally successful in gaining acquiesence of the dominant patterns of designing work, the legitimacy of the social relations of production, and the acceptance of the individual's allocation to a particular position in the occupational structure.

7. The competition for intrinsically and extrinsically satisfying work through the demand for educational qualifications outstrips the increase in the number of suitable new opportunities facilitated by the structural ratio of higher order discretionary

occupations to lower level ones. As a result, in order to discriminate successfully between the relative variations in the intellectual calibre denoted by different credentials, employers increase their qualification requirements for the posts concerned, which in turn precipitates a spiralling downwards of the currency value of credentials. As casualities of the increasing intensification in the struggle for higher level positions, a growing body of first degree graduates will find themselves accepting jobs which are unaccustomed to graduate entry and which entail little functional correspondence between the occupational tasks and the intellectual abilities acquired through extended education.

8. The potential for taking advantage of the educational opportunities to obtain the appropriate credentials to participate in the competition for rewarding work is not uniformly distributed throughout society. In Bourdieu's terms, parents in the dominant occupational positions convey 'cultural capital' to their children (Bourdieu 1976, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). As Halsey et al (1980) make clear, educational processes also possess the capacity to produce 'cultural capital', but its transference through the family affords the children of parents in the dominant groups better chances of maximizing the benefits to be derived from fromal education. It is thought here that the 'cultural capital' inherited by children of parents with high level occupations comprises of three main elements:

(a) a superior grounding in the general skills and knowledge associated with educational curricula and high level

occupational tasks;

(b) a more confident and optimistic perception of the probability of gaining entry to higher level work by undertaking extended education;

(c) a dual motivation perspective which encourages the perception of educational and occupational activities as allowing for the mutual compatibility of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (in contrast to children of parents at lower levels of the occupational hierarchy, who can often only model themselves on instrumental approaches to work and schooling).

Summary and conclusion

In this final chapter, an attempt has been made to provide the evidence on the early careers of diversified degree graduates from former colleges of education with an adequate theoretical underpinning. In search of the most plausible set of explanations to account for the empirical material arising out of the research, three sociological theories of education and the economy were selected for analysis: technical-functionalism, a neo-Marxist conflict theory and a neo-Weberian conflict theory.

The first of these, technical-functionalism, was found to be particularly remiss in explaining the conspicuous mis-match between the

abundant supply of the type of graduates produced by the colleges and the diminishing number of suitable vacancies, the notable absence of any responsiveness to employment or technological needs in the planning and inauguration of diversification, and the intrinsic motivations towards education and work prevalent among this group of respondents. Taken as a whole, therefore, technical-functionalism was considered to fall well short of supplying a satisfactory account of the case in question.

It was subsequently recognized, however, that elements of this theory - e.g. a technical skills interpretation of educational credentials, and a probable functional affinity between the intellectual demands of graduate status occupational positions and cognitive capacities developed through extended education - ran parallel with evident features of the findings and would thus require incorporation into a general theory of the education-economy interface.

The neo-Marxist theory chosen for consideration, the Bowles and Gintis thesis, also encountered serious problems in providing a convincing explanation of the data. Such problems included the failure to account for the misalignment between the purported normative requirements of capitalist management and the apparent anti-entrepreneurial ethos of the academic institutions concerned, the mis-matches between employment needs and the subject biases of the graduate supply; the lack of mediation between the diversified degree programmes and economic influences, and graduates' overwhelming belief that degrees were interpreted as measures of general intellectual abilities rather than non-cognitive personality traits. For these

reasons, the Bowles and Gintis thesis was rejected as a useful base for mounting a theoretical framework in which to conceptualize the case of college graduates.

Although not without significant limitations which required modifications in the light of the research results, a more promising explanatory model was deemed to be available in the neo-Weberian conflict theory expounded by Collins. This model contained at least three elements which were especially pertinent to the details of the case under study: it allowed for the embodiment of both functional and conflictive aspects of the college graduates' experiences; it suggested an explanation for the absence of any economy-based control over diversification by moving the emphasis to an indirect form of mediation through the labour market and the demand for mobility opportunity; and it provided an account of the falling currency value of degrees and the consequential processes of filtering down and underemployment.

However, despite these strengths, a number of serious incongruities were also evident. It postulated a normative interpretation of credentials whereas graduates' accounts of employers' practices strongly accentuated a cognitive usage; there appeared to be a greater probability of functional correspondence between the skill demands of graduate status jobs and the cognitive skills acquired through formal education than Collins' thesis allowed for; the proposition that the main task of educational institutions is to teach status cultures ran counter to many of the observations on the diversified degree curricula; and finally, the view that individuals were primarily extrinsically motivated belied the finding that the

majority of graduates sought intrinsic psychological rewards from work as well as purely instrumental benefits.

Consequently, it was argued that progress towards an alternative neo-Weberian conflict theory could be made by taking account of the adjustments necessitated by the above discrepancies. As a contribution to theoretical development, a set of explanatory hypotheses were proposed, which retained the neo-Weberian emphasis on the struggle for advantage between different status groups, but as part of this competition, introduced a greater recognition of the functional correspondence between higher level occupational demands and educational knowledge; and shifted the perception of education and credential as normative to one which was principally cognitive.

In addition, as a result of giving increased priority to intrinsic motives in the demand for education and employment, the proposals also located the source of differential opportunites to obtain intrinsically and extrinsically satisfying work as resting with the socio-economic reproductive capacity of parents in high strata jobs to bequeath cognitive and attitudinal advantages to their children. Hence, the restriction on high level discretionary work and the transmission of intellectual skills and expectations associated with it were posited as an influential outcome of the prevalent patterns of designing work and allocating labour.

It is concluded that a neo-Weberian conflict theory modified along these lines provides a plausible account of the early careers

experiences of the colleges' diversified degree graduates. Such a framework appears to be consistent with the main features of the research findings, namely - a problematic first degree currency with associated filtering down, overqualification and underemployment; the combined articulation of intrinsic and extrinsic expectations of work and extended education; an absence of direct employment-related considerations in the implementation of diversification but a strong corresponding response to demand and recruitment forces; an evident functional correspondence in graduate status occupational roles; a cognitive meaning and use of credentials; a preponderance of students from middle class families; and college curricula more inclined towards the transmission of general intellectual skills than normative and personality conditioning.

Accordingly, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to articulate an adequate theoretical underpinning for the case under study. In the next and final chapter, it is hoped to demonstrate that part of the value in providing this theoretical framework rests in its capacity to point to possible solutions to a number of problems evident in the research findings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

By way of drawing together the various threads of the thesis, this final chapter is divided into four main sections:

- a compilation of what appear to be the key reservations for which due allowance must be made when assessing the significance of the results and their implications for future policy development;

- a summary of the main research findings in the form of tentative answers to the initial empirical questions posed in Chapter One;

- an analysis of the implications arising from the results, and from the explanatory model they appear to support, for two of the central problems currently facing higher education and labour market policy formation;

- a consideration of the study's implications for the policy-orientated questions raised in Chapter One concerning

the institutional and curricula development of colleges of higher education.

This structure should allow a set of specific implications for the colleges of higher education to emerge as a derivation of a wider perspective on the evidence's repercussions for policy development in higher education and the labour market in general.

The results in context

Before assessing the implications of the evidence for the questions raised in the opening chapter, a number of preliminary points are necessary to put the results in a balanced perspective. These points provide an essential context in which to base an appropriate appraisal of the significance of the findings and several of them point to an appreciation of the boundaries to the scope of the present inquiry. As such, they often delineate the type of questions which the research was quite clearly not designed to answer. Reinforcing several earlier recognitions of the limits of the study, for example, those contained in the description of research methods and sampling (Chapter Two), it is hoped that the following points will serve as caveats to help dispel any mistaken impressions that the results and interpretations advanced are grounded on total certainty and confidence.

Firstly, it is certainly prudent to raise questions regarding the typicality of research based exclusively on students graduating in

one particular year. It has been argued, for instance, that, in comparison to later year groups, the 1979 graduates, the first substantial group from the diversified degree programmes to leave the colleges, were especially committed to the teaching profession on entering college and, consequently, were more likely to proceed to PGCE courses on graduation. Although this particular argument is very suspect - analyses of the first destination statistics for 1980 and 1981 graduates from former colleges of education show correspondingly higher, not lower, proportions of graduates taking up teacher training - the question of how similar the 1979 group may have been to subsequent year groups in terms of post-graduation experience remains an open question. The only sure way of answering this question would be to replicate the study for, say, the 1982 group of graduates.

Secondly, largely because the 1979 graduates were the first appreciable diversified degree output, the colleges' careers advisory services were very much in their early stages of development. It is generally accepted that many colleges have since extended and improved these services, (e.g. more colleges now receive the benefits to be derived from AGCAS membership) and it is possible that these developments have influenced the early career patterns of college graduates. Similarly, it seems likely that in 1979, many employers and personnel managers would have been unaware of a small output of graduates from a comparatively obscure sector of higher education. Latterly, it could be assumed that, as a consequence of employers becoming better informed about this group of graduates, some impact on graduates' careers and employment trends could be expected. Once again, without further extension, the research cannot provide any

evidence to put these assumptions to the test. Some early reports of recent results from the Brunel project suggest, however, that the majority of employers remain ignorant of the fact that colleges of higher education produce non-teaching degree graduates (Times Educational Supplement 1983).

Thirdly, it must be stressed that the present study has observed graduates' early careers throughout a period of economic recession and rising graduate unemployment, especially for the kind of liberal arts graduates produced by the former colleges of education. Consequently, and as argued in Chapter One, when evaluating the relevance of the results, some allowance must be made for the extenuating circumstances of a particularly competitive graduate labour market. On the other hand, it would be wrong to over-react to this point: recent indicators suggest that since 1979, general vacancies for graduates have declined still further. This has led some observers (Dore 1978; Paci 1977; Teichler et al 1980) to believe that the widespread experience in Western economies of an oversupply of graduates with non-vocational degrees signals a growing structural problem rather than a temporary aberration from a normally buoyant market for the highly qualified.

Related to the latter point, the extent to which the early careers of 1979 liberal arts graduates from other sectors of higher education progressed along similar lines to those reported here, constitutes a further issue about which one can only speculate. Although, on the basis of first destination statistics some conspicuous differences in employment trends were drawn in Chapter Four, no

comparable data to that provided by the Beyond Graduation questionnaire for college graduates are available for 1979 graduates from universities and polytechnics. Such a deficiency underlines the need for a full cross-sector investigation into the initial careers of graduates. It remains to be seen whether the universities and polytechnics, at a time of limited opportunities for many graduates, will actively foster independent research into a sensitive but crucial topic, which entails serious repercussions for thousands of prospective entrants to higher education.

Without wishing to appear to subscribe to a simplistic input-output model of educational performance, analyses of the quality of the output of an institution must take some stock of the quality of the relevant input. The survey evidence bears out the generally accepted view that, relative at least to university undergraduates, college entrants had lower 'A' level grades. Putting it bluntly, in the main, colleges are operating at the bottom of the 'A' level market. Additionally, although there is little firm evidence to substantiate the view, some acknowledgement must be given to the opinion often expressed by staff that, relative to university and polytechnic entrants, college undergraduates are more likely to display timid and introverted personality traits. Consequently, to a certain extent at least, it is necessary to assess the careers performance of college graduates in relation to their inferior academic qualifications, and possibly less confident personality attributes, on entry to the colleges. As pointed out in Chapter One, this point constitutes an additional reason why it would be injudicious to expect the highest of standards in terms of careers performance and employability from the

1979 graduates from former colleges of education. However, too much weight should not be attached to this argument, because it runs counter to the frequently expressed insistence firstly, that 'A' levels are poor predictors of degree and careers success and secondly, that the particular styles of teaching allegedly provided by the colleges are instrumental in redeeming the fairly modest academic achievements attained in secondary schooling.

As part of presenting a context in which to evaluate the implications the results carry for policy formation, there is a need to recapitulate a key theme which clearly emerged in the review of the historical development of diversification (Chapter One). Ultimately, the onus of responsibility for the size of the supply of college graduates in the market for the highly qualified rests with the Government, especially the Department of Education and Science; rather than the colleges and institutes of higher education themselves. In overseeing the early stages of diversification, two particular features of the DES involvement were conspicuous: firstly, an absence of a coherent and comprehensive strategy for the educational and economic role of colleges of higher education; and secondly, the imposition of an effective restriction on diversified curricula development to the existing resources and staffing associated with the teaching of the traditional BEd degree. Latterly, it is widely considered that DES policies for the colleges have continued to allow the aim of curbing public expenditure to overshadow all other considerations. Thus, bearing in mind the above points, especially the depressed state of the labour market, it would be totally unreasonable to perceive the colleges as being solely accountable for the careers experience of

their graduates.

Additionally, it is readily acknowledged that there are many other agents and participants in the careers field whose views were not canvassed and represented in this research (e.g. school's careers staff, employers, parents etc.). Thus, as with most research, it is accepted that the findings and the interpretations based on them necessarily reflect a partial rather than a global view of a small part of the social world.

For a variety of reasons, a detailed and universal exposition of all the possible ramifications generated by the above findings clearly surpasses the resources of the researcher and the research project. Consequently, some selection of what appear to be the salient issues and problems seems to be both imperative and highly desirable. Because it is inevitable that the very selection of problematic areas will be influenced, to some extent at least, by the researcher's own biases and concerns; it is hoped that other parties (e.g. College careers advisers, undergraduates) will be active in drawing their own conclusions and implications for policy from the results. It is intended that the following discussion should be viewed as one among several possible interpretations of the policy implications to be extracted from the findings.

Finally, it is recognized that the discussion of the evidence supplied by the research touches upon sensitive areas and arises at a time when colleges of higher education seem to be locked into a state of perpetual pressure and vulnerability. Although some consider the

climate to be so adverse as to preclude the raising of any public debate; it is maintained here that such an approach merely allows decisions to be made without open discussion and rational appraisal of empirical evidence. In this particular case, such a stance inevitably leads to a reduction of problems to financial expediency without proper consideration being given to genuine educational, social and economic objectives. As a consequence, the following discussion is offered in the belief that the benefits of posing questions arising from the research findings in a frank and open forum outweigh the risks of the results being exploited as a means of attempting to justify wholly negative and unconstructive policies.

Summary of findings

Prior to considering the study's policy implications for higher education in general and the colleges in particular, it is proposed that the empirical questions raised in Chapter One be used as basis for organizing a summary of the main findings to be derived from the research.

1. As indications of economic contribution, what were the main early career and employment patterns displayed by the 1979 non-teaching degree graduates from colleges of higher education which diversified from a teacher training base?

(a) The evidence presented throughout the study consistently shows that entry to the teaching profession was, by a substantial margin, the most prevalent type of career route followed by these graduates. Of those respondents who reported having a career goal on entering the colleges, 70 per cent cited teaching as their objective. Thirty months after graduation, 44 per cent of the respondents had undertaken PGCE courses and a further 15 per cent expressed desires to do likewise. In the period subsequent to the first year of graduation, teacher training continued to attract more recruits than any other occupational training. At the time of completing the questionnaire, 36 per cent of permanently employed graduates were working as teachers.

(b) At the end of 1981, the other occupational areas commonly entered by these graduates were: Secretarial and Clerical Work (18 per cent of employed respondents), General Administration (10 per cent), Buying, Marketing and Selling (9 per cent) and Health and Social Welfare (6 per cent). Apart from teaching, the only other numerically significant form of postgraduate occupational training entered after leaving college was for secretarial work.

(c) The majority of employed respondents were engaged in the Public Service and Education sectors of employment (62 per cent), with comparatively small proportions in Industry (14 per cent) and Commerce (13 per cent).

(d) At the close of 1979, only a third of the graduates were in permanent employment. At the end of 1980, as a result of the large number of PGCE graduates finding employment, this share had doubled to

two-thirds. A year later in December 1981, the proportion in permanent employment had reached 73 per cent.

(e) Throughout the period covered by the survey, the rate of unemployment experienced by the graduates remained stable at the 11 per cent level. In addition, by the end of 1981 a further 8 per cent were either not available for employment or engaged in temporary work.

(f) No more than a minute proportion of the graduates progressed to research or further academic study. Only 1 per cent in any of the three years since graduating advanced their studies to higher degree level.

(g) At the time of responding to the questionnaire, only 13 per cent of the respondents had remained in their posts for the major part of the period covered by the survey. The two peak periods for entering latest known jobs were in the late summer months of 1980 and 1981, when the substantial numbers who followed PGCE courses were launched into the labour market.

2. As a further indication of economic contribution, at what levels of occupational status were these graduates finding employment?

(a) The survey findings provided support for the tentative interpretations of first destination statistics which indicated that, relative to university and polytechnic graduates, greater proportions of college graduates were 'filtering down' the market and entering

types of work hitherto largely unaccustomed to highly qualified personnel. These areas included 'Buying, Marketing and Selling', 'Secretarial and Clerical Work', 'General Administration', and 'Health and Social Welfare'. At the time of completing the questionnaire, there were more graduates employed in these areas than at any time since graduation.

(b) On the basis of graduates' accounts of the currency standing of their work, as well as general interpretations of the available coding frames and the normally required qualifications for occupational entry, each respondent was assigned to one of four categories: not employed, low, medium or graduate status employment. Although 39 per cent achieved graduate status positions, the majority of these were teaching appointments - only 13 per cent were successful in obtaining work of a similar status in other fields. Broadly conceived, three groups were identifiable: (i) just over a quarter were not permanently employed, (ii) a third were in low or medium status jobs generally not associated with graduate entry (mainly secretarial and clerical work), (iii) almost two-fifths were in graduate status occupations, two-thirds of which were in teaching.

(c) Furthermore, there was only a small proportion of cases where internal promotion to work of a more suitable and intellectually demanding level had been procured and even fewer incidences of graduates appearing to be in a position to upgrade the quality and skills requirements of the jobs they had entered. Indications of the difficulties prohibiting the accomplishment of these strategies included: being overqualified and overeducated, 'dead-end' departments,

the lack of opportunities for displaying initiative and higher order abilities, the feeling of inertia due to the prolonged experience of tedious and demeaning tasks, and the problems of constructing and presenting a new identity, once stereotyped, in the eyes of employers and colleagues, as a relatively menial and routine employee.

3. Are there any sub-groups among these graduates whose early careers were markedly different from the rest of the group?

(a) At several points in the analysis, comparisons have been drawn between the group of graduates who undertook PGCE courses and those who did not. In contrast to the non-PGCE stream, respondents who belonged to the PGCE group were more likely to find graduate status employment, predominantly in teaching, experience less unemployment, command higher salaries, be more satisfied with their jobs, degree currency and course relevance, and possess a stronger career commitment to their occupation or employer.

(b) Almost three in every four respondents were women and many of the problems which permeate the research findings (e.g. the significant effect of the underemployment encountered in secretarial and clerical work) reflect the special difficulties women graduates faced in finding suitable alternatives to teaching. While similar proportions of male graduates found non-teaching graduate status jobs and teaching ones, practically three times as many female graduates entered teaching as entered alternative jobs with a parallel standing. Similarly, whereas women were heavily concentrated in the two main type

of work categories, 'Teaching' and 'Secretarial and Clerical Work', a greater proportion of men were more widely dispersed across a range of categories. Women were also less likely to invest their latest jobs with a firm long-term career commitment. In addition, just under half of women respondents felt that their employment opportunities had been hampered because of their gender. Married women were particularly concerned about incidences of sex discrimination, of which the most frequent complaint referred to employers' suspicions and questions regarding the probability of conflicting interests between family and work responsibilities. Subsequent evidence revealed that, at an aggregate level at least, respondents appeared to apply for jobs similar to those obtained. This finding offers some support for the view that the paucity of women in certain sectors and levels of employment (e.g. industry) is partly attributable to their reticence to apply for relevant vacancies. This would suggest that, given the continued bias in the recruitment of women, the colleges need to make more resources available to provide courses and services which aim to raise the careers consciousness and competitiveness of female undergraduates.

(c) During the period since graduation, single male respondents displayed an increased vulnerability to unemployment, while married men constituted a small but distinctively successful group with very low unemployment and high employment rates.

(d) Reflecting the colleges' emphasis on recruiting undergraduates straight from schools, the number of mature students (over 21 on entry) included in the survey was low. However, the

results tentatively suggest that unemployment among this group was higher than that among the younger group and once again this appeared to be associated with single, especially male, rather than married respondents.

(e) Relative to their peers who were less well qualified on starting college, students with above average 'A' levels were more likely to obtain Honours degrees. However, for college graduates at least, the advantages of higher 'A' level grades or an Honours degree as opposed to an Ordinary one, produced few detectable effects on the patterns of initial career and employment experiences.

(f) The survey provided further evidence of the middle class bias in the colleges' student constituency: only one in four graduates were from working class families. Compared with graduates from a middle class background, a higher proportion of graduates from working class families were permanently employed, though the latter were heavily reliant on entry to the teaching profession, with smaller proportions finding employment in alternative and compatible occupations.

(g) By and large, the dominant patterns of early career routes applied to all participating colleges, the notable exceptions being the variations in entry to PGCE courses and the proximity of the institutions to favourable employment opportunities. With the exception of the London college, for which the reverse was the case, a higher share of the more successful graduates were to be found among

those who were willing to travel further afield to find suitable work.

(h) The limited number of colleges which produced diversified degree graduates in 1979; the uniformity of the subjects offered, and the bias towards liberal arts as opposed to science courses, were all factors which conspired to make it virtually impossible to disentangle a clear view of graduates' early careers disaggregated according to degree subjects studied. With the comparatively minor exceptions of rather idiosyncratic indicators for certain subject offerings (e.g. music graduates showed a high propensity to enter teaching rather than alternative jobs of similar status, while science and maths graduates displayed a reduced orientation to teaching with a corresponding slightly higher than normal entry to non-teaching posts), the trends portrayed throughout the study were apparent for the vast majority of subjects and discipline areas offered by the colleges. Since only one of the participating colleges had introduced an early form of a careers education programme, it is totally impossible to isolate the effects of this from other institutionally specific factors. It would appear, however, that although the careers package may have contributed to a broadening of graduates' career horizons, its impact on employability is not immediately encouraging since the graduates from this college were among the least successful in terms of salaries, level of employment, and satisfaction with job performance and degree currency.

4. How did the early careers of these graduates compare with graduates from other sectors of higher education?

(a) First destination statistics and previous research indicated that throughout the late 1970s unemployment among liberal arts graduates from all sectors of higher education reached new high levels and moreover, Catto et al (1981) pinpointed these graduates as being particularly susceptible to the processes of filtering down. On the grounds of Bacon et al's (1979) conclusions that degree qualifications from universities and polytechnics were not held in a parity of esteem by employers, it is reasonable to conclude that college credentials will also be perceived as possessing unequal status and currency.

(b) In comparison to the first destinations of 1979 graduates from universities and polytechnics, graduates from former colleges of education displayed low proportions in further academic study and permanent home employment, especially in the industrial sector, and particularly high participation rates in PGCE courses. Furthermore, increased proportions of graduates from former colleges of education were evident in type of work categories lacking a tradition of substantial graduate entry.

(c) By restricting the comparison to graduates in the arts, which represented the main discipline area available in the colleges, there emerged a more balanced view of the first destinations achieved by graduates from the different sectors. However, for the colleges, this was only attainable at the 'all types' level; once the graduates from the combination colleges and proto-polytechnics, the latter of which most closely resembled the trends in the polytechnics' output, were extracted, arts graduates from the former colleges of education

revealed an unusually high involvement with teacher training.

(d) The small number of proto-polytechnic graduates who received the 'Beyond Graduation' questionnaire limits the comparative part of the survey analysis to illustrative purposes only. In comparison to respondents from former colleges of education, those from the proto-polytechnics indicated lower levels of unemployment; substantially fewer on teacher training courses, more on training courses for other occupations, slightly more in permanent employment, especially in industry, greater proportions working in such occupations as sales executives and accountants with less in teaching and hardly any in secretarial and clerical work. Compared to 39 per cent of respondents from former colleges of education, a weighty 67 per cent of proto-polytechnic graduates found graduate status employment, 49 per cent being in non-teaching graduate status positions (13 per cent being the equivalent for former college of education graduates). Reflecting this gulf in careers performance, proto-polytechnic respondents were receiving significantly higher salaries and, in general, were manifestly more satisfied with their career development, job satisfaction and degree currency.

(e) The small group of graduates from combination colleges did not fare so well. Relative to graduates from former colleges of education, they demonstrated very high levels of unemployment (over a quarter) with correspondingly low proportions in permanent home employment and smaller rates of entry to PGCE courses. Of those who were employed, higher proportions were to be found in creative and entertainment work, fewer in teaching and roughly the same in

secretarial and clerical work. Compared to the 39 per cent of graduates from former colleges of education, only 22 per cent of combination college graduates obtained graduate status employment, which in turn reflected the lower salaries and levels of satisfaction experienced by respondents from this type of college.

5. To what extent were graduates satisfied with their degree currency and occupational circumstances?

(a) For the items concerning respondents' levels of satisfaction and evaluation, a familiar theme reverberated throughout the interpretation of the findings. The most satisfied were more likely to be found among graduates who were employed in teaching, or, as in the case of a minority, in alternative graduate status occupations; the least satisfied were more likely to be employed in lower status jobs, especially secretarial and clerical work, or else not in employment at all. As one of several confirmations of this general trend, a strong correlation existed between occupational status and intellectual satisfaction with latest jobs.

(b) A substantial amount of qualitative and quantitative data testified to the frequency and intensity of mental frustration and underemployment encountered by respondents in the three non-teaching types of work most commonly entered. For instance, in comparison to 25 per cent of teachers, 73 per cent of secretarial and clerical workers, 61 per cent of those in general administration, and 50 per cent of retail workers, expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of intellectual stimulation in their work. Graduates in these areas often

described their work as tedious, mundane, repetitive, soul-destroying, requiring a minimum of intelligence and initiative, and capable of being performed by people with low, or even no, qualifications.

(c) Other than teaching, substantial proportions of graduates incurred real difficulties in finding occupations or employing organizations in which they felt they could invest a commitment to long term career development. By way of illustration, while 80 per cent of teachers saw their future career development in line with their latest occupation or employer, two thirds of secretarial and clerical workers were unable to perceive any career advancement in terms of their latest jobs or employers. As a result, several non-teaching employees felt that their jobs were not fulfilling the career expectations raised through studying for a degree.

(d) Similarly, responses to attitudinal statements revealed that employees in the main non-teaching areas were significantly less satisfied with the currency value of their degrees than those in teaching. Furthermore, the open-ended material tended to reinforce this interpretation and showed that their reasons for feeling disillusioned with their degree currency included, working in jobs which did not require a higher education or a degree qualification, competing with graduates who possessed superior types of degrees, encountering a labour market in which the prestige value of a degree was fading, holding a degree which had little specific relevance to occupations other than teaching, and coping with employers who perceived graduates to be overqualified and probably overambitious in relation to the scope of the vacancy under consideration.

(e) The vast majority of graduates perceived their degrees to denote general rather than applied subject-specific relevance to occupational selection. Most respondents believed that employers used degrees as a passport device, indicating a general level of intelligence, rather than a particular accreditation in occupationally-relevant knowledge.

(f) While almost three in every four teachers indicated that the particular skills acquired in their courses were of close relevance to their occupational performance, less than one in four in other occupational areas expressed the same view. This finding tends to support the considerable number of open-ended comments which drew attention to the continuing orientation of diversified degrees towards teaching and to the view that teaching is the only directly relevant career outcome for liberal arts graduates.

(g) From a retrospective view, the graduates as a whole indicated support for higher education to provide both intrinsic personal enrichment and extrinsic career advancement. Moreover, two thirds of the respondents considered that college life had helped them develop personal qualities which had proved useful in their latest work. Open-ended comments suggested that the social life of the college campus was the main contributory factor in fostering such personal growth, although in this respect some variations between the colleges were noted.

(h) Respondents severely criticized the absence of, or at best,

the early development of, college-based careers advisory services. Few respondents found the services to be of much benefit in their initial search for employment and national and local newspapers, external employment agencies, friends, relatives, and speculative approaches to employers, were considered to be of more direct use in establishing contact with their first employer. In comparison to those who entered the teaching profession, non-teaching respondents were more likely not to have thought about a particular career until their final year at college and consequently found the problem of deciding what to do after college almost as difficult as finding suitable vacancies.

6. Does the diversified degree appear to enhance the career prospects, employability and salaries of its holders?

(a) Without specific comparative information on either the indices of employability open to respondents on completion of their secondary schooling, or on the employment trends for 1975 and 1976 school leavers of similar ability who did not enter higher education, an 'objective' measurement of the extent to which degree courses may or may not have extended graduates' career prospects is unobtainable. The most that can be offered here is an indication of graduates' own perceptions and evaluations of career enhancement and an impression of the relative range and level of opportunities available to them at the stages of commencing and completing their higher education. It is appreciated that other participants not included in the research (e.g. schools careers staff, employers, parents etc.) may also have been able to offer valuable, perhaps diverging, accounts of the opportunities available on leaving school, but this is simply to restate a point

which has already been conceded: the research, like most of its kind, is bounded by its own limitations and as such, the view that it presents of the world is inevitably a partial one. However, notwithstanding these limitations, it is concluded that the accounts of filtering down and underemployment portrayed above are sufficiently persuasive to contest the commonly held assumption that career advancement as a result of obtaining a degree can be taken for granted.

(b) With regard to graduates' latest known employment circumstances; for the two-fifths of the respondents who obtained teaching posts or jobs of a similar status, it is practically self-evident that they have enhanced their career prospects beyond those open to them as an alternative to entering higher education. For the remaining three-fifths in lower status work or not in employment at all, the case for careers enhancement lacks substance. Virtually all of their jobs were reported to be open to candidates without degree qualifications and a considerable number of these respondents illustrated the disadvantages of possessing a degree when searching for many jobs, occasionally pointing to the superior circumstances of those who entered work immediately after leaving school.

(c) With regard to graduates' perceptions of their potential career prospects, one in every three non-PGCE respondents felt that their future job prospects would have been as good without a degree.

(d) Finally, the salaries acquired by non-teaching employees leave little scope for any significant advantages over those who left school without entering higher education. While 91 per cent of

teachers earned gross monthly salaries of over £401, 67 per cent of secretarial and clerical workers earned less than £400 a month. Similarly, as many as 46 per cent of non-PGCE respondents had salaries of less than £400 a month.

7. How do members of the academic staff perceive their institutions' potential for contributing to the enhancement of their graduates' employability?

(a) Only very occasionally did staff explain the college curricula with reference to its direct responsiveness to social and economic needs and requirements. Reflecting deeply held commitments to liberal education values, staff predominantly conceived higher education in terms of its benefits to students as private individuals. Concerning the extent to which these benefits should include subsequent employment, staff could be located on a continuum according to the strength of their support for the view that colleges should be answerable for graduates' careers. At one end of the spectrum, many staff held that colleges need only accept a minimum of responsibility for graduates' careers, intellectual development and personal growth being far more appropriate objectives than extending employability. At the opposite polarity, a minority of staff maintained that the colleges had a primary responsibility to ensure that their graduates were able to obtain suitable employment, otherwise the morality of continuing to recruit students to courses with poor employment records could be seriously contested.

(b) At an institutional level, staff perceptions of their colleges' potential to contribute to graduates' careers enhancement were organized into a typology of 'ideal' models: (i) monotechnic teacher education, (ii) small liberal arts university, (iii) small applied and vocational polytechnic, (iv) small university with traditional college hallmarks, (v) alternative: liberal arts courses with careers education. Few staff subscribed to the small polytechnic model; the monotechnic model was voiced mainly in an institution which had largely remained concerned with teacher training; the alternative form was propounded at the college which provided a careers education scheme; but the model which received most general support, and probably which most closely articulated staff's modus operandi, was the small university with perpetuated college characteristics.

(c) The main ways through which the diversified degree programmes were purported to be capable of contributing to graduates' career prospects were as follows: (i) the provision of first rate degrees, (ii) the development of adaptable and flexible skills through pure rather than applied courses, mainly in the liberal arts, (iii) the introduction of more applied and vocationally-orientated subjects, (iv) the opportunity to take a degree in valuable and unique subject combinations, (v) the establishment and extension of college-based careers advisory services, (vi) a major curriculum emphasis on careers education, including consciousness raising courses and work experiences, (vii) the fostering of greater determination and work-related attitudes through teaching methods and extra-curricula

activities.

Implications for graduate employment and higher education

In the previous chapter, a modified version of a neo-Weberian theory of education and the economy was advanced to account for the empirical material summarized above. While retaining some of the central tenets postulated by Collins (1972) - the recognition of both functional and conflictive dimensions, the labour market's indirect influence on educational provisions through the demand for mobility opportunity, and the explanatory account of spiralling credentialism - the reformulated theoretical framework incorporated additional, and sometimes alternative, elements: a greater emphasis on the social construction of work designs and meanings, a cognitive interpretation of the use of credentials and the contribution of educational to economic processes, and an awareness of the importance of students' intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivations towards education and employment.

The significance of such theorizing is not limited to a purely academic discourse. As a consequence of entailing particular ways of conceptualizing contemporary problems in the labour market for the highly qualified, it also cultivates a certain set of criteria for assessing the various proposals for alleviating these problems. For example, according to the adopted model, the growing problem of graduate unemployment in many advanced and non-advanced economies cannot be explained as a mere reflection of general unemployment.

Instead, the model would suggest that the structural relations between higher education and employment, including the popular demand for mobility opportunity and attractive public subsidies, encourage a long-term tendency towards disequilibrium in the supply and demand for graduate labour. Consequently, in addition to the ensuing unemployment as graduates find it difficult to obtain jobs in conditions of 'graduate saturation' (Neave 1976), an associated outcome is the tendency towards 'vertical substitution' (Teichler et al 1980), whereby graduates displace non-graduates from posts hitherto not usually held by those who had completed courses of higher education.

As Williams (1973b) has noted, the effect of the filtering down process on the demand for higher education is potentially ambiguous:

> On the one hand, the advantages of possessing a degree are less certain - it is no longer a sufficient condition for a top job. This would tend to reduce the demand by students for higher education. On the other hand non-possession of a degree would put the individual at an even greater disadvantage in the labour market and this would increase the demand for higher education. (p.44)

While accentuating the latter of these reactions, the explanatory model applied here also points to more sociological reasons for the persistent demand for higher education, in spite of the growing awareness of graduate unemployment and underemployment. Operating primarily on the basis of tacit assumptions about the relative benefits for employment prospects, powerful cultural forces prompt an expanding pool of parents to expect and seek degree qualifications for their children. However, at the individual level at least, such instrumental motivations are frequently expressed in vague and hazy terms (Watts 1973); and seldom are they explicitly calculated in accordance with

formal decision-making techniques. Additionally, it was argued earlier that the expectations of intrinsic rewards from both education and work constitute a further influential feature of middle class norms which underlie and help sustain the demand for higher education.

Finally, by incorporating both functional and conflictive elements, the theoretical account of the evidence draws attention to the contrasting degrees of technical relevance between graduate performance in high status occupational positions and those which lack a tradition of graduate entry. In economists' terms, the social returns on investment in higher education which results in the vertical displacement of non-graduates and a dubious degree of enhanced technical and productive contribution, seem likely to be inferior to that in which higher education leads to a more relevant and demanding utilization of graduates' advanced knowledge and capabilities.

Having illustrated the nature of the perspective provided by the adopted theoretical model, we may now turn to consider, albeit briefly, two of the kernel problems facing policy development in the sphere of higher education and the graduate employment market. Supplementing much of the policy-orientated literature (Greenaway and Williams 1973, Neave 1976, Teichler et al 1980, Kelly and Dorsman 1984), the empirical evidence presented above testifies to the urgent need for policy makers to address:

(i) the continuing oversupply of graduates in non-applied subjects with its attendant problems of unemployment, filtering down, vertical substitution, overqualification and

underemployment;

(ii) the mounting evidence of employers' discrimination in the recruitment of graduates' from different sectors of higher education and its associated problems of hierarchies of prestige and inequalities of opportunity within the provision of higher education.

Evidence of the first set of problems, upon which the following discussion is concentrated, is clearly apparent in the findings presented above and no further reiteration of this should be necessary. Writing in 1973, Williams succinctly described the dramatic transformation in the difficulties confronting policy making in higher education and the labour market:

> For a quarter of a century after the end of the second world war, in developed and developing countries alike, educational planners have been concerned with shortages of qualified manpower. By the beginning of the 1970s the preoccupations of planners had changed. It was no longer difficult to find the qualified manpower needed by the economy. The problem was rather how labour markets could absorb the output of rapidly expanding higher education systems. (Williams 1973b, p.41)

Since this was written, the difficulties of 'graduate saturation' have intensified and, as argued in Chapter One, the issues have largely been neglected Moreover, the relevant policy implementations have tended to aggravate rather than alleviate the problems.

Reports of graduates in routine clerical jobs obviously blunt the argument for investing scarce resources in higher education on the

grounds that graduates improve productivity and economic well-being. They also undermine the credibility of the claims that higher education can extend equality of opportunities or assist in reducing social inequalities in general (Neave 1976, Teichler et al 1980). For an illustration of this, the experiences of the 1960 graduates from working class origins described by Kelsall et al 1972, for whom the entry to an occupational elite was an almost automatic sequel to gaining access to university, may be contrasted with the increased probability faced by the 1980 counterparts of joining non-graduates on the dole queues or in lower level work situations.

Furthermore, in concentrating on the social and structural dimensions of the problems of graduate oversupply, namely, declining contributions to economic efficiency and equality of opportunity, there is a tendency to ignore the private pressures and emotional injuries experienced by the victims of filtering down and underemployment. Many of the accounts reported above document graduates' experiences of the lack of meaning and social esteem associated with their work, as well as their stressful adjustments involved in coming to terms with unrealized expectations and potential. In view of the dominant definitions of what counts as suitable work for each of the sexes, and what counts as the most suitable subjects for each to study, women graduates were seen to be particularly exposed to the experience of underemployment and the psychological strains which it often induces.

Effortless and comparatively minor adjustments to the system seem illequipped to deal with the ubiquitous and deep-rooted nature of the problems involved. One response, for instance, is to argue the

case for a functional dissociation between higher education and occupational selection. Greenaway (1973) has quoted the National Union of Students as having argued along these lines:

> The NUS is realistic in its exhortation: 'The myth about a university degree being a first-class ticket to an executive post must be dispelled and a student must be prepared to value his education for its own sake rather than as a qualification for employment. (p.20)

A similar viewpoint regularly emerged during the interviews with college lecturers. Reluctantly conceding the rather uncompelling quality of the grounds for establishing a sound employment relevance for the diversified degree programmes, several members of staff rejected the need for courses to be justifiable in employment terms at all, and challenged the ideological frame in which such economic criteria were allegedly based. For them, the function of the programmes could be overlayed with the single objective of intrinsic benefits, mainly personal enrichment and intellectual growth. Issues of employment and economic relevance were posited as mere epiphenomena of the central business of higher education; as such, they were not a necessary condition to be incorporated in any rationale of colleges' diversified degree provision or higher education in general.

The weakness with the functional dissociation solution is that the chances of reducing participant's expectations and motivations to purely intrinsic ones appear very slight. From a hindsight perspective, the majority of respondents wanted both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from higher education. Furthermore, given the high probability of employers continuing to use degree qualifications in the process of occupational selection, it seems highly likely that

potential undergraduates will also continue to expect, albeit tacitly in many cases, both personal enrichment and career advancement. In addition, the purely intrinsic conception of degree courses completely ignores the often distressing incongruity between the attainment of higher intellectual and critical sensibilities engendered by higher education and the everyday monotony of routine and demeaning work. As the qualitative material collected frequently illustrated, for many graduates it can be severely frustrating and debilitating to experience the 'intellectual explosion' of academic life only to end up in undemanding occupations which offer few or no opportunities for psychological, mental and altruistic satisfaction. Consequently, leaving aside the public subsidy arguments for ensuring economic relevance, it is considered here that the survey evidence, as well as the theoretical model it supports, underlines the point that degree programmes must be justifiable in extrinsic and economic terms as well as intrinsic and academic ones.

For similar reasons, other tenuous reactions and corrective measures also seem inadequate to the scale of the problems involved. Manpower planning has accumulated an uncommendable record and has been roundly criticized on ethical, technical, economic and educational grounds (Greenaway and Williams 1973, Lindley 1981). Improved counselling of sixth formers (Watts 1973), the strengthening of 'market messages' (Lindley 1981) and 'broad steer' measures (Catto et al 1981) may affect the subject mix within higher education, but, for reasons offered above, seem highly unlikely to squeeze the overall public demand for degree qualifications. Likewise, by itself, widening access to higher education (Society for Research in Higher Education 1983) as

a contribution to expanding its role in facilitating equality of educational opportunity will increase still further the number of graduates needing to be absorbed by a saturated labour market.

Superficially, various 'brakes on' strategies aimed at curbing the flow into higher education, either by directly restricting places or by negative subsidies, appear to offer an effective solution to the problems. On examination, however, it soon becomes apparent that these strategies involve and precipitate other undesirable outcomes which are counter-productive and undo the intended gains. By way of illustration, limiting entry to higher education could only accomplish a reduction in the size of the pool of thwarted and unemployed graduates at the expense of increasing the size of the pool of thwarted and unemployed school leavers. Over and above the repercussions this may have for social cohesion and the growing alienation of unemployed school leavers, public expenditure savings accruing from the reduction in higher education places would be largely offset by welfare benefits and the funding required to provide alternative educational and training services. Moreover, such policies ignore other important educational outcomes, such as higher education as a civilizing force, and extend a socially devisive constraint on educational opportunities, whereby entry to degree courses would be further restricted to the affluent and academically elite sections of the community.

Applying the theoretical development advanced in the previous chapter and extending the tentative policy recommendations proposed by Teichler et al (1980), an alternative solution to the current predicament of the graduate labour market may be offered. Assuming a

substantive and functional correspondence between the general intellectual capacities stimulated by degree courses and the occupational performance of higher order work tasks, it is suggested that in a civilized and advanced industrial society it is not the oversupply of general degree graduates which is problematic and undesirable *per se*, but the failure of the dominant patterns of the occupational structure to facilitate sufficient opportunites for meaningful and challenging work. Thus, according to this alternative proposal, rather than allow restrictions on the availability of higher level discretionary jobs to permeate a wholly negative influence on the access to higher education, a much wider distribution of higher order work roles is held to be necessary in order to make full use of the expanding supply of applicants with extended education.

Allowing for a more constructive and efficient use of human resources, it is believed that the most productive and convincing justification for sustaining and widening the access to higher education is located in the context of a comprehensive government policy to ration out, more evenly than at present, work which imparts increased opportunities for social and psychological rewards. Such a policy would involve the restructuring of the ways in which labour is currently organized and allocated, including the implementation of job-sharing schemes among professional workers in both public and private sectors. In addition to absorbing more graduates by rationing out the available jobs to a larger number of incumbents, by transforming the dominant patterns of designing and distributing work tasks, the scope exists for increasing the actual number of jobs requiring discretionary capabilities. Such reforms would involve the

dismantling of hierarchical and bureaucratic forms of work design commonly found in organizations based on 'role cultures' and a wider application of the more loosely linked forms of work design associated with 'task cultures', often characteristic of many of the emergent information technology industries (Handy 1978). As part of the reorganization of work designs and the methods of allocating labour, particular attention should be paid to removing the obstacles inherent in existing practices and conditions (e.g. hours of work and career cycles) which mitigate against an equal representation of women graduates in professional and discretionary employment. In widening the opportunities for challenging and discretionary employment, such reforms would extend the prospects for fulfilling more of the rewards and expectations generated by degree courses.

Although, as argued in the theoretical discussion, the organizational patterns of work and labour should not be conceived as immutable, it should also be recognized that the political resistance to such changes are likely to be extensive and that the proposed reforms will only materialize with a matching rise in consciousness and determination. The frustrations and disillusionment associated with graduates' experiences of filtering down and underemployment constitute a potentially powerful source of motivation for changing the dominant patterns of work design and allocation. Some of this force may be dissipated as expectations are lowered as a result of greater public awareness of the processes of filtering down, but the dissonance between the substantive capabilites extended through higher education and those demanded by the relatively less challenging jobs being

entered by many graduates is likely to intensify, thus inflaming the pressure for major changes to occupational structures. In this respect, degree courses, and especially careers-related components, could usefully embrace the task of raising students' critical awareness of the need and scope for reforms in the social organization of work, providing this could be achieved without 'cooling out' and demotivation effects.

In turning to consider briefly the second set of selected problems, it may be noted that a substantial body of empirical evidence is now available to substantiate the view that employers do not attribute parity of esteem to institutions of higher education (Bacon et al 1979, Kelly and Dorsman 1984 and early reports of the findings of the Brunel project in the Times Educational Supplement 1983). The perceived reality of a rank order in institutional status, what Kelly and Dorsman (1984) term the 'entrenched hierarchy of prestige', is a feature which permeates most aspects of the findings collected during the present research. It is evident, for example, in the considerable differences between university and college students' 'A' level scores, in the variations in the career performances of graduates from different sectors of higher education, in respondents' perceptions of the superior status of university degrees, and in the 'second or third best' assumptions underpinning staff accounts of the instutional models for the colleges. Besides the official rhetoric to the contrary, as a reflection of the hierarchization within higher education, it is difficult to participate in the daily activities of college life without sensing an ethos of institutional inferiority, vulnerability, anomie and at times, paranoia.

The growth of differential status in higher education and its attendant problems for such institutions as the colleges of higher education should not be construed as a peculiarly British experience. In their comparative study, Teichler et al (1980) identify the phenomena as virtually an invariable and universal consequence of the transition from elite to mass higher education. As an example of the cross-cultural quality of the trend towards hierarchization, these authors describe the low status reputations of the American 'community colleges', which one article has described as the 'coming slums of higher education' (Corcoran 1973). Their remarks on this type of institution are particularly apposite to our present concerns, since the colleges of higher education have sometimes been categorized as the British versions of 'community colleges' (Scott 1982). Although the latter author warns against the dangers of the wholesale adoption of the American model, such factors as the low level of 'A' level scores attained by its recruits and its uncertain image in the eyes of employers, represent powerful determining pressures which may make it exceptionally difficult for the colleges to resist being forced down the low status road of the American 'community colleges'.

Unequal status and prestige between the different sectors of higher education exacerbate many of the outstanding problems which beset this area of educational provision. For instance, the hierarchical structure encourages attempts to upgrade the prestige of low status institutions through the emulation of the characteristics which are believed to constitute the essence of high status institutions' appeal. Accordingly, the process of 'academic drift'

observed in the polytechnics (Pratt and Burgess 1974) can also be witnessed in the colleges of higher education. This process entails a serious deleterious consequence for the economic relevance of degree courses. It sustains the denigration of several applied subjects within higher education curricula, such as engineering, which in turn produces a 'back-wash effect' of a similar low status for such subjects in the secondary school curricula.

Differential institutional status also undermines the extent to which higher education can be said to widen the scope for equality of opportunity. The traditional competition for access to higher education in general is in danger of developing into a struggle for advantage over the particular sector to which a student can gain admission. Consequently, following the experience of other developed countries, a comparatively disadvantaged group within higher education is beginning to emerge. By default rather than by design, a tripartite system of higher education is developing, which bears many of the hallmarks of the corresponding state of affairs that troubled secondary education throughout the 1950s and 60s, including parallel injustices and inequalities to the participants in the unfortunate lower status institutions. In view of the gender bias in their student constituency, the low status identity of the college sector is passed on to women graduates and represents a further limitation to their level of employability. Although many colleges would aspire to specialize in promoting the mobility opportunity of women students, from a female perspective, however, the low status of the college sector renders it a very mixed blessing - at best, it binds them to teaching, very often it results in underemployment.

Ultimately, it is felt that the only effective solution to the increasing hierarchization between different sectors of higher education rests in pursuing policies equivalent to those which were used to eradicate the streaming of pupils in the tripartite system of secondary education. Accordingly, higher education would seem to require corresponding comprehensivization strategies, in which the different types of institutions currently offering advanced further education would be integrated into a single system of university provision. Such a solution would be accordance with the experience of countries that have moved closer towards mass higher education, where a number of low status institutions of higher education have actively sought integration into a comprehensive university provision (Teichler et al 1980).

The integrationist proposal for developing higher education offers several improvements to existing circumstances. Providing all newly-designated 'universities' were instructed to admit specific proportions of applicants with low or no 'A' level scores, the conspicuous institutional separation of a comparatively disadvantaged group in higher education would be terminated, as would the psychological effects and low morale among staff and students in low status institutions. In addition to expanding the scope for advancing equality of educational opportunity, a comprehensive system of universities would be less conducive to the processes of 'academic drift' and hence, more congenial to increasing the status of applied and vocational subjects such as engineering. Consequently, such reforms could create the conditions for extending the contribution that

higher education can make to economic advancement. Finally, although it would seem unlikely that many of the colleges and institutes of higher education would be sufficiently large enough to justify being nominated independent 'universities', amalgamation with existing universities or polytechnics could be so arranged as to preserve their distinctive courses and specialist expertise as integral units within the larger institutions.

To recapitualte, in this section discussion has focused on the wider implications of the research findings for two particular issues which currently confront higher education policy development in general, namely the various problems associated with the oversupply of certain types of graduates and the increasing hierarchization between different sectors of higher education. In view of these problems, it has been argued that future policy formation should concentrate on broadening the number and distribution of occupational tasks involving discretionary work and integrating the different sectors of higher education into a comprehensive university provision.

Specific implications for colleges

As a result of their broad and general nature, it is not envisaged that the above analysis and suggestions for reforms should impart an immediate and direct bearing on the specific policy issues presently facing the colleges and institutes of higher education. Alternatively, however, they represent long-term strategies, which, according to the espoused theoretical model, will grow in importance as

credentialism continues; and as such they need to be borne in mind when taking current policy decisions. Consequently, it is not being argued that colleges should immediately seek fuller integration with neighbouring universities and polytechnics, but that they should pursue policies and curricula which would strengthen the distinctive contribution they could make within the context of comprehensive 'universities' and reforms to the occupational structure. Such an approach underpins the following tentative responses to the three policy-related questions raised in the opening chapter.

1. In view of the early career experiences of diversified degree graduates, would (a) the extending of the occupational relevance of teaching degree programmes or (b) the continued provision of non-teaching courses represent the most efficient and resourceful method of giving the colleges the required stability to respond flexibly to a fluctuating demand for teachers?

The question is founded on the proposition that the former colleges of education cannot function efficiently and effectively as long as they are continually exposed to the alternating periods of expansion and contraction produced by the vicissitudes of the teacher labour market. To avert personal employability problems for their graduates and regular rounds of institutional trauma for their staff, college degree programmes require an element of flexibility which would allow them to survive and manage the ever-changing demands for new

recruits to the teaching profession. Having raised in the question two strategies for achieving such flexibility, it is considered that the research findings provide little support for key assumptions underpinning the so-called 'diversified degree' programme. Consequently, they raise the question whether or not closer investigation of the flexibility potential for alternative, wider based 'teaching degree' programmes should be afforded greater priority than it has hitherto received.

A central, but usually implicit and certainly untested, assumption underlying the introduction of diversified degrees in the mid-1970s was the supposition that, whereas a BEd graduate who did not enter the teaching profession could be considered a wasted resource, a BA/BSc graduate who likewise did not enter teaching would be less of a wasted investment, because of the latter's greater capacity for successfully transferring to other professions. Accordingly, the BA/BSc diversified degree programmes were conceived, not as alternative 'back-door' routes into teaching, but as avenues into a genuine diversity of occupations and careers.

The research findings establish beyond all doubt that teaching constituted the principal employment outlet of 1979 BA/BSc diversified degree graduates. With only 13 per cent of graduates in non-teaching jobs of broadly equivalent standing, the assumption that BA/BSc degrees in colleges would be less teacher-orientated and more easily transferable to other occupations receives no empirical verification and is seriously challenged by the evidence collected. Similarly, in view of the underemployment experienced by respondents and the manifest

scale and level of difficulties faced in finding suitable alternatives to teaching, the research failed to provide sufficient evidence to refute the assertion that BA/BSc graduates not entering teaching also amounted to 'wasted resources'.

Therefore, it must be conceded that the findings provide some justification for earlier suspicions that the diversified degree programmes would operate largely as unplanned alternative avenues in initial teacher education. Indeed, some college principals and staff actively encourage the view that the diversified degree courses constitute new ways of implementing the colleges' natural commitment and traditional expertise in teacher training. Instead of a three or four year BEd degree, it is said, the colleges now accentuate the BA-plus-a-PGCE route. As a logical consequence of this emphasis, it follows that, in the main, the efficacy of the diversified degree programmes' relevance and responsiveness to economic needs must be judged in terms of its quality of contribution to the general preparation for the occupational demands of teaching.

The question that arises from this line of argument is not simply whether or not the colleges are implementing the most effective method of initial teacher education, but whether or not they are providing the most effective scheme of initial teacher education they themselves are best able to offer within the context of the overall provision for teacher education. Thus, rather than advocate the case for colleges' teaching degrees (BEd) as the single most effective scheme, it is sufficient, for present purposes, to acknowledge that primary as well as secondary teaching benefits from a diversity in

teacher education, and that, as part of the total diversity, the colleges' education degrees foster qualities, skills and insights which are difficult to achieve through other avenues, notably the BA degree followed by a one year PGCE course. Some indications of the comparative and distinctive strengths and weaknesses of three or four year teaching degree are demonstrated in the well-documented study, 'The New Teacher in School' (Department of Education and Science 1982a). In shifting the balance of their provision from specialist teaching degrees to general degrees followed by a PGCE, the colleges appear to be in danger of relinquishing, or at least diminishing, their largely unique contribution to initial teacher education in order to adopt a model of teacher education which is uniformly available in other sectors of higher education and which incorporates courses which many consider to be already well-catered for and oversubscribed (e.g. academic drift etc.). Furthermore, in the light of the findings presented here, it remains to be demonstrated that the rationale for implementing this shift - namely that BA/BSc degrees purportedly command greater transferable currency value - is based on any empirical evidence or justification.

As a supplementary inquiry, the 'Beyond Graduation' questionnaire was also administered to a small sample of 1979 BEd graduates who were thought not to have entered the teaching profession. The questionnaire was posted to 278 BEd graduates from the six CCRG institutions and 130 completed returns were received (i.e. a response rate of 47 per cent). Because a higher proportion of the BEd group were orientated towards teaching and fewer had attempted to use their degrees to enter alternative occupations, it would be misleading to

contrast the overall frequencies for the BEd and non-BEd samples. However, upon restricting the comparison to those who were not working within the teaching profession, it was found that exactly the same proportion of each sample was employed in graduate status occupations. Accordingly, 16 per cent of the sixty-one non-teaching BEd graduates from the CCRG sample compared to the same percentage of the 143 non-teaching BA/BSc graduates from the corresponding institutions occupied graduate status positions. Although the small percentages involved underline the need for caution, the data suggest that, providing the motivation exists, a similar proportion of BEd graduates can obtain non-teaching graduate status jobs as that attained by the BA/BSc diversified degree graduates. If this was the case, it would mean that even the existing BEd may offer as much potential for occupational transferability as that displayed by BA/BSc degrees.

These results are not interpreted as implying the need for a retreat from diversified degrees and a straight-forward reversion to traditional BEd degrees, but it is thought that they do raise the question of whether a revitalized form of the latter, in preference to the former, could not better provide the necessary flexibility and transferability to other occupations, as well as strengthen its contribution to the richness and diversity of initial teacher education. If, for example, a restructured BA (Education) degree incorporated greater academic and experiential learning based in a variety of work settings, including but not exclusive to the classroom, then its employment relevance and currency for other professions could be extended, while simultaneously, providing new teachers with a knowledge and appreciation of work organizations other than educational

establishments. (The need for teachers to bring a wider understanding and experience of work in industry and commerce was a major recommendation of the DES report, ' Teacher Training and the Preparation for Working Life', Department of Education and Science 1982b.) In such a manner, the revived degree would be in a strong position to incorporate many of the more innovatory elements that have been developed within the diversified degree programmes (e.g. careers education, experiential learning etc.)

The colleges and institutes would also stand to gain a number of benefits from the proposed degree. As a more distinctive degree programme than currently available with most liberal arts courses, former colleges of education would reduce the risk of directly competing with other sectors and institutions of higher education, and make full use of their specialist resources and expertise. Likewise, because the degree would be largely unique to the college sector, applications could be expected from a larger number of prospective students with higher 'A' level grades and qualifications. Following Bacon et al (1979), this should have the positive effect of raising employers' perceptions of the academic status of the graduates holding the degree. Essentially though, the main strength of the proposed development would lie with its capacity for occupational transferability beyond that displayed by existing BEd and BA/BSc programmes, thus avoiding the need for periodic reductions in recruitment with every fall in the demand for teachers.

Moreover, in the event of colleges merging and integrating with universities and polytechnics as part of a comprehensivization

programme discussed in the previous section, the BEd courses in initial teacher education would be far more likely to survive as distinctive and integral areas of specialist provision. With their tendency to duplicate many of the courses already provided by other sectors of higher education, the diversified degree programmes would seem likely to be absorbed by similar courses offered by the dominant and high status institution in the merger.

2. Assuming the desirability of some provision of diversified courses, do the early career experiences of non-teaching graduates lend support to the strengthening of (a) liberal arts degree programmes or (b) more vocationally-specific courses?

In the opening chapter the hope was expressed that the findings would provide some broad indications of the relative economic and employment merits of fostering the two types of diversification first mentioned in the Robbins Report: (a) general courses in the arts and sciences and (b) more vocationally-specific courses with special reference to various professions in the social services.

The study has pointed to the increased susceptibility to unemployment encountered by liberal arts graduates from all sectors of higher education. Against a background of an oversupply of this type of graduate, the survey findings have highlighted the particular employment problems confronting graduates from former colleges of education, most of whom studied liberal arts subjects. Although this particular project has not covered the employment trends of the output

from the more vocational courses offered by the colleges, first destination statistics reveal that it is generally associated with comparatively higher levels of appropriate employment and occupational entry. Thus, in terms of securing suitable career opportunities for their graduates, the results would indicate that the colleges should, wherever possible, increase their commitment to the the latter type of courses rather than the former.

While not implying a wholesale condemnation of the mid-1970s policy of diversification through liberal arts degrees, the results do suggest that the benefits gained by this strategy (e.g. institutional survival, flexibility for the colleges, satisfying the early 1980s peak in demand for higher education places by providing degrees in the least expensive subject areas) may have been bought at the cost of adding to the pool of a category of graduates who were already experiencing greatest disappointment and frustration in their early years after graduation. Hence, if employment criteria are given their due consideration, colleges should be wary of thinking that diversification through liberal arts degrees constitutes a permanent solution to their problems of institutional flexibility and development. An alternative view would be to consider this form of diversification as a transitional stage, providing a breathing space in which to progress to a more secure type of diversification based on greater emphasis on vocational courses leading to specific occupations other than teaching.

In the context of this latter proposal, the research findings have underlined the particular need to extend the provision of vocational courses which would strengthen women graduates' chances of

finding suitable and meaningful work outside of the teaching profession. Because of their traditional bias in the enrolment of female students, many of whom unwittingly add to their relative economic disadvantages by taking liberal arts subjects, it could be justifiably argued that the colleges inherit a moral duty to encourage more women to study subjects with greater vocational relevance and application.

Finally, almost exactly as argued in the response to the question on BEd programmes, if moves towards integrated institutions of higher education were implemented, courses with particular occupational application would be far less vulnerable to absorption than those with only an open-ened relevance.

3. Assuming the continued provision of diversified liberal arts degree programmes, do the results offer encouragement for any distinctive curricula innovations which may enhance the economic relevance and marketability of college graduates?

Barring some association between the provision of careers education and a reduced dependence on teaching, none of the factors described by staff in Chapter Three as making a positive contribution to the career prospects of diversified degree graduates (e.g. unique subject combinations, careers advisory services, careers education schemes, 'beefing up' of personal and social skills etc.) were clearly instrumental in greatly extending graduates' employability in non-teaching occupations. The results were consistent with the view

that the influence of (i) attributes common to all participating colleges (e.g. dominant liberal arts subject bias, the perceived status of degrees and institutions etc.) and (ii) more penetrating institutional differences (e.g. the contrasting local employment opportunites for graduates) far outweighed the effects of any supplementary curricula innovations and other provisions.

Although it should be reiterated that sufficient institutions were not included in the research to extricate all the possible variables required for a confident verification of this tentative interpretation, the case for augmenting the main degree courses with additional curricula components (such as careers education or work experience) on the grounds that they extend employability is neither immediately nor readily established by the research findings. Thus, at this stage in their development, any interpretation of their value must remain an open one. At best, such schemes may be viewed as mollifying the severest difficulties produced by more powerful determining forces; at worst, they may act as cosmetic presentations, which convey misleading impressions of the currency value of the degrees concerned, and which in turn, lead to a more intense sense of disillusionment and dissatisfaction after graduation. In view of the evidence suggesting the restricted influence of supplementary provisions, the veracity of either of these two perspectives depends more on the appraisal of the currency value of the degrees themselves, rather than that of the extra courses and services appended to them.

In the current economic structure and circumstances, and

especially if support were forthcoming for the earlier policy recommendations, looked at purely from the angle of individual extrinsic expectations and economic returns, the justifications for sustaining the present form of diversified degree provision appear rather weak and limited. In the labour market for the highly qualifed, the programmes duplicate a type of graduate for which an abundant supply already exists; their graduates seem particularly prone to the problems of underemployment and filtering down; and, assuming widely held notions of what constitutes suitable graduate employment, their main economic contribution remains the same as that of the programmes they were intended to replace and broaden, namely teaching.

Consequently, given that careers education features seemed to have produced little impact on graduates' employment performances, the economic and careers-related arguments for maintaining diversified degree programmes, with or without careers education, are not substantiated by the research data. In addition, it would seem likely that, in view of their similarity to courses provided by other institutions of higher education, diversified degree programmes could easily be subsumed under the degree course structure of merging universities and polytechnics. With such a dubious employment relevance and a manifest lack of distinctiveness, it may be imprudent of the colleges to commit their energies and resources to the development of their diversified degree programmes.

More immediately, of course, the colleges are committed to providing non-teaching degree programmes and the research results clearly show that graduates of these courses would have appreciated

much more assistance on career decision-making than is generally provided by the institutions. In this, more limited respect, careers education appears to have an important contribution to make. Without claiming that such courses will improve the standing of their degrees in the eyes of employers, careers education schemes could help students to acquire the skills of 'vigilant information processing' (Janis and Mann 1977) and to appreciate the links that could be made between academic courses and more experiential forms of learning. Moreover, as suggested in the previous section, providing the demotivation of students could be avoided, a central task of such courses should be the development of undergraduates' critical awareness of the need and potential for change in various facets of the social organization of work. Although, in the event of colleges being integrated with universities and polytechnics, it is thought likely that diversified degree programmes would be absorbed into the broader provision of the newly designated institutions, expertise in providing careers education emphasizing decision-making methods, experiential learning and critical perspectives on occupational structures would constitute an additional strength in the colleges' distinctive curricula.

Conclusions

On the basis of the main features of the research evidence summarized above and the theoretical model derived from them, the discussion has concentrated on two of the most pertinent issues for the future policies of British higher education in general, namely the various problems surrounding the oversupply of certain types of

graduates and the mounting hierarchization between different sectors of higher education. It was argued that the most effective solutions to these problems were to be found in policies aimed at broadening the number and distribution of occupations demanding discretionary capabilities, and integrating institutions of higher education into a single comprehensive provision.

Whether in persuance of these long-term modifications or more immediate concerns, the need was emphasized for colleges to develop courses and programmes which would combine economic and employment relevance with a genuine claim to distinctiveness throughout higher education curricula. Vocationally-specific courses and BEd degree programmes, suitably extended to apply to a wider range of related professions, were considered to offer better prospects for achieving these criteria than diversified degree programmes. In the medium to long-term perspective, the problematic quality of their graduates' employment performance must cast doubt on the continued provision of the colleges' non-teaching degree programmes, irrespective of whether or not these are supplemented by careers education courses.

In the more immediate perspective, the current reality of the problems faced by many students on such programmes suggests that careers education components possess the potential to help students prepare, adjust and cope with the prevailing conditions of the graduate labour market. To go further and suggest that they can provide long-term solutions to the oversupply of such graduates or the problematic employment relevance of diversified degree programmes would be to exaggerate their potential. Such fundamental problems would seem

to require the more general and far-reaching measures suggested earlier.

Personal and Confidential

Beyond Graduation

A QUESTIONNAIRE TO 1979 GRADUATES FROM COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Combined Colleges Careers Project

How to Answer

For most of the questions we ask you to record your answer by choosing one of several alternatives given to you. To answer, you just put a circle around the number opposite the item of your choice. If none of the answers exactly matches the answer you would like to give, choose the one that comes nearest.

The remaining questions are 'open-ended'. For these, you are requested to write your answers in the spaces provided. If you find the appropriate space is inadequate for the number of comments you wish to make, please write any further comments on the inside of the front cover, including the number of the question to which the additional comments relate.

Ignore the numbers in the right hand margins - they are there to help us tabulate the results.

Confidentiality

The information you give in this questionnaire will be completely confidential and will only be seen by the research team engaged in analyzing the data.

1. Sex

Circle one number

Male	1
Female	2

51

2. Age When you entered college were you:

Circle one number

Under 21	1
21-25	2
Over 25	3

52

3(a) Present Status

Circle one number

Single	1
Married	2
Other	3

53

(b) If 'married' or 'other' when did you get married?

Circle one number

Before college	1
During college	2
After college	3

54

4(a) Do you have any children?

Circle one number

Yes	1
No	2

55

(b) If 'yes', please indicate the number of your own children under the age of five, who normally live at home with you.

Circle one number

One	1
Two	2
Three or more	3
None	4

56

5(a) Were you in full-time employment during the period between leaving school and entering college?

Yes	1
No	2

57

(b) If 'yes', please state any professional or post-secondary qualifications obtained prior to commencing college.

.....

.....

58-59

6. Which of the following most accurately describes your present circumstances?

Circle one number

I am in full-time employment	1
I am in full-time education/training	2
I work as a housewife and I am not seeking full-time employment	3
I am unemployed but I am seeking full-time employment or education/training	4
I am unemployed but I have full-time employment or education/training arranged. Please give brief details.	5
I am not available for full-time employment or education. Please state reasons why.	6

60

7. Are you studying for a further professional qualification in connection with your present work?

Yes	1
No	2
N/A	3

61

If 'yes'; please give details (e.g. name of qualification).

.....

.....

62-63

8. When you were leaving college, what was the furthest distance away from (a) and (b) below that you actually applied for a post? If you have not applied for a post please circle 8.

Please circle one number in [a] and one in [b]

(a) miles from college		(b) miles from your permanent residence before starting college	
0-10	1	0-10	1
11-25	2	11-25	2
26-50	3	26-50	3
51-100	4	51-100	4
101-200	5	101-200	5
Over 200	6	Over 200	6
Abroad	7	Abroad	7
N/A	8	N/A	8

a	b
64	65

9. How far is your present work from (a) and (b) below? If you are not currently working please respond in terms of your present address.

Please circle one number in [a] and one in [b]

(a) miles from college		(b) miles from your permanent residence before starting college	
0-10	1	0-10	1
11-25	2	11-25	2
26-50	3	26-50	3
51-100	4	51-100	4
101-200	5	101-200	5
Over 200	6	Over 200	6
Abroad	7	Abroad	7

a	b
66	67

10(a) How did you find out about your initial employer?

Please circle the most appropriate number.

Advertisement in national paper or journal	01	Employment Services Agency/ PER*	10
Advertisement in local paper	02	DOG/GO/GET/ROGET*	11
Friend/Relative	03	Careers Dept. Vacancies notices and leaflets	12
Personal contacts with employer	04	Speculative approach to employers	13
CSU Current/Forward Vacancies list*	05	Careers adviser	14
Employer visiting college/ university*	06	Vacation/Work experience contact*	15
Information from academic staff	07	Private employment agency	16
Careers convention/recruitment fair*	08	Others (please specify)	17
Prestel	09	NOT APPLICABLE	18

*Please delete as appropriate

(b) If you found any of the above sources of information generally helpful in your job-hunting, please select up to three items from the above list. Please place the appropriate numbers, in rank order, in the boxes below.

Rank	1st	2nd	3rd
Item			

68-69

Col. 80 Pun 1

NEW CARD (2)
1 - 5

1	2
6-7	8-9

11. In the table below, please enter details of all your employment, unemployment or educational circumstances since leaving college. Start with your circumstances immedciately after leaving college and end with your present circumstances. Please use a separate row for each new set of circumstances (including substantial promotions).

Approx. Dates From	To	Title of post or circumstances (e.g. policeman, student, unemployed)	Nature of work or qualification studied for (e.g. car patrol, PGCE)
12-13		14-15	16-18
29-30		31-32	33-35
46-47		48-49	50-52
63-64		65-66	67-69

Name of employer/ educational establishment (e.g. South Yorks Constab. Sheffield University)	Please state reasons for choosing this post and, if applicable, reasons for leaving.	Temp. or Perm. T/P	Full or Part Time F/P	Would you care to indicate your gross monthly salary? (nearest £10)
19-21	*22-23* *24-25*	*26*	*27*	*28*
36-38	*39-40* *41-42*	*43*	*44*	*45*
53-55	*56-57* *58-59*	*60*	*61*	*62*
70-72	*73-74* *75-76*	*77*	*78*	*79* *Col. 80* *Punc 24*

NEW CARD [3]
Cols 1-5

12. If you have applied for jobs other than those mentioned in Q.11 over, please indicate the range of jobs (up to a maximum of 5) for which you have applied.
(e.g. shop assistant, clerical officer, labourer, social worker).

1 6-8
2 9-11
3 12-14
4 15-17
5 18-20

13. How does your present post fit in with your long-term view of what you expect to be doing in the future? Please consider the following statements and *circle one number* which best matches your feelings.

I see my long-term career developing with this organisation.	1
Probably stay about 3 years before looking for promotion in similar job but with different organisation	2
Probably stay about 3 years before looking for promotion in different kind of job.	3
Will do job for experience until something better turns up.	4
I dislike this job and am trying to find another one.	5
I dislike this job but will stay here because there are no other jobs available.	6
Not applicable because I am not currently employed.	7

21

14(a) What post do you see as your *ultimate* career goal? *22-24*

(b) What post did you see as your *ultimate* career goal when leaving college? *25-27*

(c) What post did you see as your *ultimate* career goal when entering college? *28-30*

15. Please consider the following items:

01.	Letters of application
02.	Finding suitable vacancies
03.	Interviews
04.	Deciding what to do after college
05.	Obtaining relevant information
06.	Knowing what I was good at
07.	Obtaining advice and counselling
08.	'A' level grades
09.	Selection tests (e.g. IQ etc.)
10.	Others (please specify) ....

Select and rank 5 of the items according to the level of difficulty they presented in your job-hunting when leaving college. By placing the appropriate numbers in the boxes below, rank the most difficult as 1, the second most difficult as 2, and so on.

Rank	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Item					

Cols.
1. 31-32
2. 33-34
3. 35-36
4. 37-38
5. 39-40

16. Please consider each of the following statements. By circling the appropriate number, please indicate the strength of your agreement or disagreement with them. If you have not worked since leaving college, you may have difficulty in responding to those statements marked* If this is the case, please respond to the remaining statements in this question.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
*The particular skills I acquired in my college courses are of close relevance to my present (or most recent) work.	1	2	3	4	5	41
I think I would have obtained a better job if I had gone to university.	1	2	3	4	5	42
I did not give a great deal of thought to any particular career until my final year at college.	1	2	3	4	5	43
Given the current level of unemployment, I am satisfied with the range of jobs my particular degree has allowed me to consider.	1	2	3	4	5	44
I think it is very important that one should make a determined commitment to a career rather than move from job to job.	1	2	3	4	5	45
*College life helped me to develop personal qualities which have been useful in my present (or most recent) work.	1	2	3	4	5	46
On reflection, I now think my future job prospects would have been as good without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5	47
I think I would have obtained a better job had I been prepared to travel further afield.	1	2	3	4	5	48
It is more important that higher education should develop students as people rather than prepare them for a career.	1	2	3	4	5	49
*My present (or most recent) work is not as intellectually stimulating as I hoped a graduate's job would be.	1	2	3	4	5	50
All I want out of life is a steady, not too difficult job with enough money to live comfortably.	1	2	3	4	5	51
I prefer work which allows me to help and care for other people.	1	2	3	4	5	52

17 Could you please tell us a little about your father's job at the time you entered college. If your father was not working at the time, please give details of his previous job.

(a) In what business or profession did he work? (e. g. electrical engineering firm). 53-57

(b) What was the title of his job? (e.g. civil engineer) .....

.....

(c) If the nature of your father's work is not obvious from the information given above, please describe briefly the work he did.

.....

.....

.....

(d) Was your father:

employed	1
self-employed without employees	2
self-employed with employees	3

18. FOR THOSE NOT IN FULL-TIME TEACHING POSTS

Please circle the number against the statement which most clearly describes your attitude to teaching as a career.

I had no intentions of teaching before entering college and have not changed my mind.	1
I had decided before leaving college that I did not want to teach and I have not changed my mind.	2
I had decided before leaving college that I did not want to teach, but have subsequently changed my mind.	3
Before leaving college I wanted to teach, and I have been seeking a suitable full-time post, but so far unsuccessfully.	4
Before leaving college I wanted to teach, but I am no longer seeking a full-time teaching post because	5

58

19. FOR ALL WOMEN

To what extent do you think your opportunities for appointments and promotion have been, (or are being) hampered because you are a woman?

Not at all	1
To some extent	2
Largely	3
Don't know	4

59

Please give details (if you wish) .....

.....

.....

60-61

Col.	Punch
80	3

The remaining questions invite 'open-ended' answers.

20. In what ways, if any, have the following items helped you obtain employment and prepare you for work? Have you any criticisms or suggestions on how they could be made more useful to future students?

(i) Your degree courses

(ii) Any short 'optional' courses (if applicable)

(iii) Practical work within your degree programme (including any work experience placements)

(iv) College Careers Service (if applicable)

(v) Other Careers Advisory Services (if applicable)

(vi) The social life of the college campus

(vii) Vacation work (if applicable)

(viii) Work experience prior to attending college (if applicable)

IF YOU ARE WORKING

21 What warnings or advice would you offer to present students hoping to enter your current area of employment?

The research team would like to follow up this survey with a number of interviews. These interviews will not involve any travelling for the interviewee. If you would be willing to discuss your experiences since graduation with a member of the research team we would be very grateful if you would indicate this by completing the following:

I am willing to talk to a member of the research team

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

.....

Very many thanks for your time and co-operation. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed 'free-post'envelope (no stamp required).

The Combined Colleges Research Group
Freepost,
YORK YO1 1GT
Telephone: York (0904) 54877

21st September, 1981.

Dear Graduate,

I am writing to you, and a number of others who graduated in 1979 from 26 colleges and institutes of higher education, (including the one which you attended), to ask if you would be willing to participate in a survey of graduates' opinions and experiences since leaving college. The survey is an important part of an independent research project which is funded by the Combined Colleges Research Group.

The aim of the project is to study the different kinds of problems and situations encountered in the immediate years after graduation. Amongst other things, it is hoped that the survey will shed some light on graduates' attitudes to their current jobs or circumstances, as well as their levels of satisfaction with college courses and subsequent career developments. Much of the information collected will form the basis of research reports which will be widely available so that college courses and services may be constructively evaluated and reviewed.

Perhaps it should be stressed that your participation in the survey would be much appreciated irrespective of whether or not you have been in full-time paid employment since leaving college. Ideally I would like to hear from people in all circumstances: housewives, employees, the unemployed, self-employed, those undertaking further education, part-time workers, and so on. Similarly, I would hope to receive replies which together reflect and represent all shades of opinion, e.g. comments from those who are critical of college courses and degrees, and those who feel more favourably about them.

If you are willing to participate in the survey, I would be very grateful if you would complete the accompanying questionnaire, and return it to me in the enclosed free-post envelope. <u>All the information and comments you give will be treated in complete confidence and will be seen only by members of the research team</u>. Unless you wish to express a willingness to participate in a follow-up interview, you are <u>not</u> required to provide your name and address on the final page of the questionnaire.

If you have any queries or problems about the questionnaire, please ring York (0904) 54877 (daytime), or Pickering (0751) 72499 (evening), or contact me at the above address.

Once again, I would be most grateful for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

<u>John B. Harland</u>
<u>Research Fellow</u>

The Combined Colleges' Research Group

Freepost,
YORK YO1 1GT
Telephone: York (0904) 54877

date as postmark

Dear Graduate,

I find this a rather difficult letter to write because you may or may not have seen my previous attempt at contacting you.

If you did receive my earlier letter (21.9.81) you will already know something about the enclosed questionnaire. May I just say that I am still very interested in receiving a completed questionnaire from you and that I would greatly appreciate your participation in the survey. I believe that graduates may be encountering circumstances and problems which need bringing to the attention of public bodies and unless people like yourself provide us with the benefits of your experience, there is very little alternative information available. Please reply, even if you cannot afford the time to complete the closing 'open-ended' questions.

If my earlier letter did not reach you, I should explain that I am writing to you, and a number of others who graduated in 1979 from 26 colleges of higher education, to ask if you would be willing to participate in a survey of graduates' opinions and experiences since leaving college. The aim of the survey, an independent research project funded by the Combined Colleges Research Group, is to study graduates' circumstances, attitudes and levels of satisfaction so that college courses and services may be evaluated and,if necessary, restructured. It should be stressed that your participation in the survey would be much appreciated irrespective of whether or not you have been in full-time paid employment. Whatever your circumstances and whatever your opinions, your involvement in the research is certain to increase its value and validity.

If you are willing to participate in the survey, I would be very grateful if you would complete the accompanying questionnaire, and return it to me in the enclosed free-post envelope. All the information and comments you give will be treated in complete confidence and will only be seen by members of the research team. Unless you wish to participate in a follow-up interview, you are not required to provide your name and address on the final page of the questionnaire.

If you have any queries or problems about the questionnaire, please ring York (0904) 54877 (daytime), or Pickering (0751) 72499 (evening), or contact me at the above address.

Once again, I would be most grateful for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

John B. Harland
Research Fellow

APPENDIX B

Planning Notes for the 'College Staff' Fieldwork

The aim of the fieldwork is to collect accounts and opinions from members of staff on how they see the colleges' courses and advice as contributing to students' ability to find satisfactory employment (Q1 in 'A Research Framework'). It is also hoped that the fieldwork will help introduce the Research Fellow to college staff and increase his awareness of the aims, problems and research needs of the college.

To conduct the research, I would like to reside in the college for one working week - if possible staying from Sunday night until Friday evening. During that time, the following fieldwork items would be useful:

1. Six one-hour interviews with (as far as possible):
   (a) Director Academic Planning or Director of BA Programmes
   (b) Principal or Deputy Principal
   (c) Careers Adviser
   (d) Head of Dept. (Someone whose subject is generally recognised as having a greater occupational relevance than others)
   (e) Head of Dept. (Someone whose subject is not seen as having these links
   (f) Someone on recommendation of link-person (e.g. Studies Adviser)

   If interviewees have no objections, I would like to record these interviews.

2. Two small and invited discussion groups: one for Senior staff, one for other staff. The discussions would be recorded and last approx one hour. Ideally they would include about five members of staff, representing different interests and shades of opinion.

3. Informal discussions and conversations; general observations.

The above could be time-tabled in any order, but it would be helpful if interview 1(a) could be arranged early in the week so that a closer acquaintance with the details of course structures may be obtained prior to other interviews. (In this respect, any relevant literature that could be sent in advance would be much appreciated.) If some time on Thursday or Friday could be left free, this would allow for any additional interviews and discussions resulting from informal contacts established during the week. I would be grateful for suggestions and any help in making these informal contacts. I would similarly appreciate advice on the booking of rooms for the proposed interviews and discussions.

J. Harland

28.1.81

Q1. DO YOU THINK THE COLLEGE SHOULD BE CONCERNED WITH PREPARING STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT?

Probe:

- the ways of helping they accept, the ways they reject
- what arguments would you put against those who hold ... ...(opposing viewpoints)
- search for general outlooks/rationales
- should the college be doing more to offer particular assistance for women in job finding, given the high proportion of female to male students?
- if a 'balanced' position is proposed, (i.e. a balance between vocational/non-vocational elements) explore the details of that balance

e.g.(1) should the devlopment of social skills be assessed?
(2) should the development of social skills constitute part of the degree programme (courses in actually developing interpersonal skills)?
(3) should 'social skills' be developed alongside 'pure academic' subjects, but not incorporated in courses/degree?
(4) should more vocationally related subjects be encouraged in the BA/BSc programme?
(5) bearing in mind the low status of 'vocational degrees' (Swansea Report), is there a danger by incorporating social-skill training or more vocational courses into the overall programme, the degree in employers' minds, and hence students, will be devalued?

- what proportion of staff would share those views?

Q2. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE MAIN WAYS THROUGH WHICH THE COLLEGE IS CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO PREPARE THE (BA/BSc) STUDENT FOR WORK AND INCREASE HIS CHANCES OF OBTAINING SATISFACTORY EMPLOYMENT?

Probe: (Keep their thoughts on describing actual attempts to assist 'marketability')

- explore the details of how they see the main influences (whose responsibility to implement, keep asking for arrangements, processes, provision, and explanation of aims)

- in addition do they see any of the following as contributory factors?

1. the currency value of the 'degree' (a good status degree/reputation etc)
2. occupationally related knowledge in courses either (a) general development of thinking etc. (b) specific vocational skills.
3. the way course options can be chosen and structured to respond to developing career/occupational interests. Is this possible in practice?
4. 'through the way we teach rather than what we teach'(development of independence, attention to spelling and other standards)
5. by developing social skills and 'self-awareness'
6. 'Work experience'/Vacation work
7. Advice and information. From whom? Careers Adviser, Studies Adviser. Anyone who is available.
8. Use of references
9. Actually placing students in jobs
10. by providing general education (BA) as preparation for later vocational courses and training.

- apart from the above conscious attempts, can you identify any unintended consequenses the college may be having on the development of career interests and successful occupational entry.
(e.g. hidden values of certain subjects, internal recruitment of depts.)

Q3 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE COLLEGE IS SUCCEEDING IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO EXTEND THE STUDENTS 'MARKETABILITY'?

Probe:

- what obstacles and difficulties do staff experience in implementing these attempts? (student apathy or resistance to career, other staff, validation restrictions etc)
- how could it improve and develop the assistance it gives to the student who wishes to increase his/her marketability?
- are you conscious of conflicting sources of advice which may reduce the impact of colleges' career contribution? (e.g. between subject specialists, studies advisers, careers advisers)
- do you feel there is a disparity between students immediate motives and staffs' perceptions of students' long term interests?

Q4 WHAT WEIGHT DO YOU THINK STUDENTS ATTACH TO OCCUPATIONAL REASONS WHEN DECIDING TO ENTER THE COLLEGE AND WHEN CHOOSING DIFFERENT COURSE OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THEIR COLLEGE LIFE?

Probe:

- urge them to offer both descriptive and normative answers
- do they see students as operating according to instrumental or intrinsic/consumption motives?
- are students in particular subject areas more or less occupationally motivated than students in other subjects?
- is there a sex difference?
- is there an age difference (e.g. 18+ v. 25+)?
- is there a gradual development in the weight attached to occupational motivations as the student progresses through college?
- contrast strength of occupational instrumentality in this college with other colleges of H.E. with other sectors of H.E.
- do you think many students are attracted to general subject degrees precisely because they are <u>not</u> occupationally specific and this gives them time to think about careers?
- do students tend to separate 'getting a degree' from 'getting a job'?

Q5 WITH REFERENCE TO THE RELATION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORK, WOULD YOU SEE COLLEGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS HAVING A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE - AS DISTINCT FROM UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS?

Probe:

- in what ways 'special'? (courses, advice, social skills etc.)
- probe whether they are offering descriptive or normative answers, ask for the one not given,
- does/should the college offer employers anything different from universities and polytechnics?
- how do you interpret the needs and criteria of the kind of employers who hire graduate labour?
- which of these needs/criteria can colleges of H.E. hope to satisfy?
- are these opinions based upon direct experience in the labour market/ world of work, or impressions gained from within institutions of H.E.
- are you aware of any particular problems experienced by college graduates in the labour market?
- in your opinion, are your graduates obtaining posts compatible with graduates from other sectors of H.E. Why not?
- should the college be 'warming up' students' career expectations or 'cooling them down'?
- would you accept the argument that the college's expertise in training teachers could be usefully transferred to other occupations? If so, give examples.

Subject Classification of College Degrees

An attempt has been made to classify degree subjects according to course content rather than the title of degree. To achieve some consistency with subject classifications from other sectors of higher education, the groupings used in the First Destinations Statistics of University Graduates 1978-79 (UGC) form the basis of the broad classifications of college subject areas. These groupings, with any additional college courses are listed beneath the main subject areas.

1. ARTS

University Group 8
- Language, literature and area studies.

English
Welsh and other Celtic languages and studies
French language and studies
French/German language and studies
German language and studies
Hispanic languages and studies
Other and combined Western European languages and studies
Russian language and studies
Other Slavonic and Eastern European languages and studies
Chinese language and studies
Oriental, Asian and African languages and/or studies
Classical studies
Other, general and combined language, literature and area studies

University Group 9
- Arts other than languages.

History
Archaeology
Philosophy
Theology
Art and Design
Drama
Music
Arts general, and combined other arts subjects

plus Combinations of subjects within this category

2. SOCIAL STUDIES

University Group 6
- Social, administrative and business studies

Business management studies
Economics
Geography
Accountancy
Government and public administration
Law
Psychology
Sociology
Social Anthropology
Combinations within social studies

University Group 1
- Education

Education

plus combinations of subjects within this category

3. ARTS AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Combinations of Categories 1 and 2 above

4. SCIENCE

University Group 5
- Science

Biology
Botany
Zoology
Physiology and/or anatomy
Biochemistry
Other, general and combined biological sciences
Mathematics
Mathematics with physics
Physics
Chemistry
Geology
Environmental sciences (other than geology)
Other, general and combined physical sciences
Combinations of biological and physical sciences

plus Home Economics
Liberal Studies in Science
Combinations of subjects within this category

5. OTHERS

Arts (1) and/or Social Studies (2) combined with Science (4)
Physical Education
Sports Studies
PE or Sports Studies combined with Arts (1), Social Studies (2), Science (

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