

RECONSIDERING THE SOCIOLOGY OF YOUTH

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By

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## ABSTRACT

Young people are considered here, in sociological terms as actual or potential labour power and hence in terms of their relationship to the organisation of production. They are further located within the institutional setting of the school, allowing for a consideration of the extent to which age acts as a mediation of class within an institutional setting.

Our findings point to the problems involved in a consideration of the relationship between age and class in sociological discussions of youth. They indicate the necessity of not only considering age as a mediation of class but of remaining sensitive to variations and contradictions within specific class cultural formations and, where applicable, including the important variables of gender and ethnicity.

Our conclusions indicate that the Althusserian notion of the school as an Ideological State Apparatus which simply reproduces a "dominant" ideology is far from adequate. We are obliged to conclude that analyses which accept this notion uncritically necessarily reproduce an essentially functionalist problematic.

## PREFACE

It is our belief that young people, or 'youth', have received insufficient attention in sociological analysis. What little work has been carried out in this direction can be characterised by its attempts to either treat youth as a 'problem', or to construct young people as a homogeneous or unified grouping which stands opposed to an equally homogeneous adult culture. We regard these as being both confused and inadequate.

This study stands within a recent tradition of work, the central feature of which has been a reconsideration and transformation of these established notions of youth and youth culture. In this sense our study places stress upon the historical and cultural specificity of youth-cultural formations and we consider age, as such, only in so far as it acts as a mediation of social class.

Given the scope of such a project our study is confined to a presentation of a number of ways in which young people might be usefully reconsidered in sociological analysis. The end product is thus not so much a consecutive narrative as a series of chapters around a set of closely connected themes. However, two main unifying strands run throughout the study. First, we consider young people, in sociological terms, as actual or potential labour power and, hence, in terms of their relationship to the organisation of production. Secondly, young people are located within the institutional setting of the school. This allows

for a consideration of the extent to which age acts as a mediation of class within an institutional setting. At the same time we are able to consider the role of the school and its relationship with other societal institutions in the structuration of the material experiences of young people.

Chapter one deals with our theoretical ideas. Here we specify the location of young people within a particular theoretical framework which assumes the existence of both dominant and subordinate class-cultural formations. We also introduce the key notions of class negotiation and mediation.

In Chapter two we outline and criticise traditional theories of youth and youth culture. Beginning with the work of psychologist Stanley Hall, we trace the 'career' of youth cultural theory looking in turn at developmental, normative and sub-cultural models of analysis. We criticise the notion of youth culture as homogeneous and unified in its opposition to adult society. Drawing upon the work of Albert Cohen (1955) we stress the important connection between youth culture and class culture, indicating the importance of a class analysis. At the same time, however, we are compelled to probe the question of why young people, within the same class location, adopt different forms of negotiation and resolution. We argue that this question can only be answered by going beyond the general characteristics of either youth or class and examining the detailed variations in the mediation of class within specific work and non-work situations.

In chapter three our own analysis begins. We start here by locating young people within a structural and historical framework of

analysis. In this sense we consider the relationship of young people to both the organisation of production and the development of state controlled, compulsory schooling in nineteenth century Ontario. This represents, what we consider to be a useful method of 'looking at' young people historically, while, at the same time, it provides an important backcloth against which a contemporary analysis of young people, within the Canadian context, is later presented.

Chapter four is once again concerned with the relationship between young people and the organisation of production. In this sense we consider the relationship between education and the labour market in the determination of the material experiences encountered by young people. In setting the stage for our fifth chapter we demonstrate, here, the relationship between social class, education and unemployment.

In chapter five we provide empirical information on the attitudes of a sample of working class high school students towards compulsory schooling and their futures in the labour market. This chapter allows for a consideration of the relationship and 'fit' between our theoretical notions and the findings of an empirical research project.

In chapter six we discuss our conclusions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a visitor in Canada during the writing of this thesis I have been welcomed and befriended by a great many people. I would therefore extend my thanks to friends at McMaster University and in Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. In particular I want to thank my friend and supervisor Graham Knight for his constant encouragement, constructive criticism and unflagging sense of humour.

Writing a thesis can be a lonely experience. Thankfully during my time in Hamilton I have been far from alone. 170 Cline Avenue North has seen many people come and go but I am grateful to have shared my time in the house with Jan Christilaw, Marie Elliott, Bill Bullock and Jim Bell, scholar, socialist and the dearest of friends. My stay in Hamilton has been further enhanced by Marie Boutilier to whom I express gratitude for her constant and endearing friendship, encouragement, love and support.

If there was one thing that kept me going on this thesis when the going got tough it was the people who mean more to me than anything else in the world, my mother and father. To them I say thank you for the years of constant love and support you have given to me. Thanks also to my sister and brother, Maria and Daniel.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY IDEAS

This thesis stands within a tradition of work whose concern has been with a radical transformation of established "sociological" theories of "youth culture". In this sense it has been argued by Frith and Corrigan that,

A focus on the youthfulness of youth culture means a focus on the psychological characteristics of young people--their adolescence, budding sexuality, individual uncertainties, and so on- at the expense of their sociological characteristics, their situation in the structure of the social relations of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

In place of this perspective our work is concerned with the construction of "A more careful picture of youth sub cultures, their relation to class cultures and to the way cultural hegemony is maintained, structurally and historically".<sup>2</sup>

While the emphasis within this perspective is upon class and class relationships, it is maintained only in so far as particular types of specific class experiences intersect with particular types of age-specific experiences. As Murdoch and McCron have pointed out, "It is not therefore a question of simply substituting class for age at the centre of analysis, but of examining the relations between class and age, and more particularly the way in which age acts as a mediation of class".<sup>3</sup>

This perspective overcomes the frequent problem of the representation of youth as a class "in itself" with interests of its own which

stand opposed to those of adults.<sup>4</sup> Instead, following Parkin we distinguish clearly between "youth" as a social class and "youth" as a social category. Parkin (1972) has noted that,

To plot each person's position on a variety of different dimensions tends to produce statistical categories composed of those who have a similar 'status profile'; but it does not identify the type of social collectivities or classes which have traditionally been the subject matter of stratification. Such an approach tends to obscure the systematic nature of inequality and the fact that it is grounded in the material order in a fairly identifiable fashion.<sup>5</sup>

### Age, Class and Mediation

We are interested here in the relationship between class and age and in the way in which age acts as a mediation of class. The question of mediation is of crucial importance here and will remain central to our analysis. Murdoch and McCron have pointed out that,

Young people, along with everyone else, experience class relations primarily in the mediated or filtered form of the concrete social relations which they are involved in at school, on the job, in the family, and in the local area. At the level of everyday life, then, class inequalities are encountered not as some abstract and far-away force, but as specific distributions of opportunity, advantage and control. A class analysis must therefore begin by examining the ways in which class relations are experienced within particular work and non-work situations.<sup>6</sup>

In locating youth within this framework of analysis we distinguish between a "hegemonic" or dominant culture and a subordinate working class culture.<sup>7</sup> Gramsci (1971) used the term "hegemony" to denote a situation in which a ruling class is able to ensure its "total social authority" over subordinate classes. This type of authority involves the control of a particular kind of power, "The power to frame

alternatives and contain opportunities, to win and shape consent so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes appears not only 'spontaneous' but natural and normal.<sup>8</sup>

The struggle for hegemony is fought within the institutions of civil society and the state, which have been categorised elsewhere as "State Apparatuses" (Althusser 1971, Poulantzas 1973). These apparatuses operate, in part, through "ideology". That is, the definitions of reality which become institutionalised within these institutions come to constitute "reality as such" for the subordinate classes, Clarke (1977) has noted that,

Hegemony works through ideology, but it does not consist of false ideas, perceptions, definitions. It works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into the key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominant order. It is, above all, in these structures and relations that a subordinate class lives its subordination. Often, this subordination is secured only because the dominant order succeeds in weakening, destroying, displacing or incorporating alternative institutions of defence and resistance thrown up by the subordinate class.<sup>9</sup>

~~In relation to the hegemony of the ruling class the working class is, by~~ definition, a subordinate social and cultural formation.\* Within this relationship hegemony ensures that the social relations between these classes is reproduced in their dominant and subordinate forms. While contained by the overall framework of hegemonic domination, however, the subordinate class develops its own characteristic institutions, social relationships and values. These have been "won" as a result of

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\*We understand "culture" to be the practice which realises group life in a meaningful shape and form. "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce."<sup>10</sup>

continuous struggle over certain "cultural spaces".<sup>11</sup> Many working class institutions\* represent the outcome of this particular form of historical struggle and form the basis of what Parkin has called a "negotiated" version of the dominant system, "Dominant values are not so much rejected or opposed as modified by the subordinate class as a result of circumstances and restricted opportunities".<sup>12</sup> These negotiated solutions arise for the subordinate class because its perspectives are contained by immediate concerns or limited by material situations. Parkin argues that the subordinate class draws upon two distinct levels of normative reference; the dominant value system and a "stretched" or "negotiated" version of it.

We can perhaps add to this formulation by suggesting, further, that which of the two frames of reference is actually drawn upon will be situationally determined; more specifically, it could be hypothesised that in situations where purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version- or the subordinate value system- will provide the moral framework.<sup>13</sup>

This explains why authority which is embedded in major societal institutions may be acceptable at an abstract level and yet rejected and opposed when experienced directly.

When we refer, in the course of our argument, then, to the concepts of mediation or negotiation we are talking about the ways in which subordinate classes, or agents within these classes, experience and "come to terms with" class relationships and class domination.

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\*Trade Unions represent the most obvious example of these.

### Our Study: Where we are going

Our analysis focuses upon a subordinate class, the working class, and upon its relationship to the institution of compulsory schooling. The study is presented in two parts. We first trace the emergence and centralisation of compulsory schooling, as a distinct apparatus, in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario. We then draw upon our foregoing discussion of mediation in a consideration of the relationship of young, working class people, to the educational apparatus in a contemporary setting.

### The School

The school assumes importance here, both in historical and contemporary terms, for a number of reasons. For our purposes the school will be viewed as a displaced, but nevertheless important, area of class negotiation and mediation.\* Clarke et al. have noted that,

It is the local school, next to houses, streets and shops where generations of working class children have been 'schooled', and where ties of friendship, peer group and marriage are forged and unmade. Yet, in terms of vertical relationships, the school has stood for kinds of learning, types of discipline and authority relations quite at variance with the local culture. Its selective mechanisms of streaming, tracking, eleven-plus, its knowledge boundaries, its intolerance of language and experiences outside the range of formal education, link the urban working class locality to the wider world of education and occupations in ways which are connective but also, crucially, disconnective. It remains a classic, negotiated, or mediated class institution. In this context we can begin to look again and assess

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\*We assume, along with Murdoch and McCron (1977) that the most powerful and pervasive mediations of class occur within the work situation, at "the point of maximum articulation to the system of production". (p. 25)

differently the varying strategies, options and 'solutions' which develop in relation to it; the 'scholarship' boy or girl; the 'ordinary, average-ability' kids; the 'trouble makers'; truants and absentees; the educationally-and-emotionally 'deprived', the actively mis-educated.<sup>14</sup>

The importance of the school as an area of class negotiation results from its role as a dominant "Ideological State Apparatus"<sup>15</sup> and, hence, as a historical site of class struggle. In this sense a historical evaluation of the development of compulsory schooling enables us to locate specific forms of negotiation and resolution within a specific historical context. At the same time a historical analysis allows us to locate the development of the school, as a bourgeois institution, within a complex web of contradictory class relations, so avoiding a "conspiracy" theory of history.

#### Education and Capitalist Development

Our analysis of the development of education, as a distinct apparatus, will be related to the development of capitalist production. That is not to say that we view the relationship between the "economic base" of capitalist society and the growth of education as directly causal. In clarifying our position we draw upon the writings of the French Marxist, Louis Althusser.

In his discussion of the relationship of the economic order to the "social whole" Althusser has noted that,

Marx conceived of the structure of every society as constituted by 'levels' or 'instances' articulated by a specific determination: the infrastructure, or economic base (the 'unity' of the productive forces and the relations of production) and the superstructure, which itself contains two 'levels' or 'instances': the politico-legal (law and the state) and ideology (the different ideologies, religious, ethical, legal, political, etc.).<sup>16</sup>

Althusser makes it quite clear that the relationship between these levels is not directly causal. In explaining this he ascribes each 'level' with what he calls their "respective indices of effectivity".<sup>17</sup>

It is easy to see that this representation of every society as an edifice containing a base (infrastructure) on which are erected two 'floors' of the superstructure, is a metaphor, to be quite precise, a spatial metaphor: the metaphor suggests something, makes something visible. What? Precisely this: that the upper floors could not 'stay up' (in the air) alone, if they did not rest precisely on their base.<sup>18</sup>

The respective 'floors' of the superstructure are assumed by Althusser to possess their own 'relative effectivity' while at the same time they are determined, in the last instance, by the economic base.

It is possible to say that the floors of the superstructure are not determinant in the last instance, but that they are determined by the effectivity of the base; that is they are determinant in their own (as yet undefined) ways, this is true only in so far as they are determined by the base.

Their index of effectivity (or determination) as determined by the determination in the last instance of the base, is thought by the Marxist tradition in two ways: (1) there is a 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure with respect to the base; (2) there is 'reciprocal action' of the superstructure on the base.<sup>19</sup>

Our own methodology presupposes an institutional order which is hierarchically ordered around this base-superstructure metaphor. Within this metaphor we assume the relative autonomy of the superstructure and the reciprocal action of the superstructure on the base.

In relation to the theoretical structure outlined above the educational apparatus is seen by Althusser to constitute an important element of the 'superstructure'. Specifically, it is viewed by Althusser as an "Ideological State Apparatus". In specifying the nature of the educational apparatus, then, it will be necessary to locate it within the

base-superstructure metaphor. In this sense we will draw upon the technique of 'social archeology' in the excavation and examination of the relationship between the various 'levels'. In specifying this relationship and connecting it up with our analysis of youth we will draw upon two important notions. Firstly, that of the school as an "Ideological State Apparatus" and, secondly, upon Marx's concept of the "Industrial Reserve Army".

### The School as an Ideological State Apparatus

Within the theoretical framework outlined above the educational apparatus constitutes an important part of the superstructure of society. Althusser discusses the educational apparatus as part of his general discussion of the state.

The State (and its existence in its apparatus) has no meaning except as a function of state power. The whole of the political class struggle revolves around the state. By which I mean around the possession, i.e. the seizure and conservation of state power by a certain class or by an alliance between classes or class fractions. This first clarification obliges me to distinguish between state power (conservation of state power and seizure of state power), the objective of the political class struggle on the one hand, and the state apparatuses on the other.<sup>20</sup>

However, Althusser continues,

In order to advance the theory of the state it is indispensable to take into account not only the distinction between state power and state apparatus, but also another reality which is clearly on the side of the (repressive) state apparatus. I shall call this reality by its concept: the Ideological State Apparatuses.<sup>21</sup>

These apparatuses present themselves in the form of distinct and specialised institutions and are constituted as the following,

The Religious I.S.A.  
 The Educational I.S.A.  
 The Family I.S.A.  
 The Legal I.S.A.  
 The Political I.S.A.  
 The Trade Union I.S.A.  
 The Communications I.S.A. and  
 The Cultural I.S.A.

The existence of these apparatuses is historically specific and we would expect to find them all only within contemporary capitalist social formations. In the pre-capitalist period the church, alongside the family, constituted the dominant Ideological State Apparatus. In mature capitalist social formations, however, this role has been taken over by the educational apparatus. "One might even add, the school-family couple has replaced the church-family couple".<sup>22</sup>

As the dominant Ideological State Apparatus the educational apparatus operates in two ways. Firstly it reproduces the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class.\* Secondly, it operates as a streaming mechanism which is designed to distribute individuals to their respective positions within the social division of labour.<sup>23</sup>

While the latter of these propositions has received widespread attention in sociological and educational research the former has, in many cases, been accepted as unproblematic. In the course of this study we consider the relationship between the notion of a "ruling" or "dominant" ideology and the practical everyday experiences of young actors as lived in the world. This, in our opinion, prises open and illuminates some important areas within, what has hitherto been, a relatively closed theoretical discourse.

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\*For an elaboration of our understanding of the school as an institution concerned with ideology and streaming see Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. Schooling Capitalist America.

The educational apparatus fulfils an important role in the relationship between individuals and the social division of labour. Within the context of our discussion we will argue that the role of the school within this relationship has held particular consequences for young people. In this respect we argue that the development of compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was paralleled by a marked transformation in the social roles and obligations of young people. Specifically, it was a transition in which young people ceased to constitute actual labour and assumed their historically specific role as potential labour, or what we shall refer to later as 'labour in waiting'.

The emergence of compulsory schooling coincided both with changes in the organisation of production and, in turn, with the exclusion of young people and women from socialised production.<sup>24</sup> With the decline of commodity production in the late nineteenth century the household was transformed from a unit concerned with production, reproduction and consumption. Production took place, increasingly, outside the home and became the prerogative of the adult male labourer. The concerns of the household consequently centred around the requirements of reproduction and consumption while women came to constitute an effective and inexpensive Industrial Reserve Army. (Marx 1971, Connely 1976).

The subsequent "career" of women and of their relationship to the organisation of production has been documented by feminist historians and sociologists. (Beechey 1977, Boutilier 1977). The subsequent historical career of young people, however, has been largely overlooked, partly, perhaps, because of the proficient role performed by

the school in the mediation of the relationship between young people and the organisation of production. The nature of the historical role performed by the school in the mediation of this relationship, then, becomes an important subject for sociological investigation in general and a reformulated sociology of youth in particular.

As a final theoretical point and as an aid to our understanding of the relationship outlined above we will briefly outline Marx's concept of the Industrial Reserve Army.

#### The Industrial Reserve Army

For Marx an Industrial Reserve Army is a necessary product of capital accumulation and a fundamental pre-condition for the existence of the capitalist mode of production,

It forms a disposable Industrial Reserve Army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. Independently of the limits of the actual increase in population, it creates, for the changing needs of the self expansion of capital, a mass of human material always ready for exploitation.<sup>25</sup>

This is not the case in the early stages of capital accumulation but emerges in the transition to modern industry.\* Here a reserve army becomes a permanent feature of capitalist accumulation. Thus,

The course characteristic of modern industry..... depends on the constant formation, the greater or less absorption and the reformation of the industrial reserve army or surplus-population. In their turn, the varying phases of the industrial cycle recruit the surplus population and become one of the most energetic agents of its reproduction.<sup>26</sup>

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\*The concept of the Reserve Army can only be fully understood when it is analysed in relation to the development of capital accumulation as a whole. This has been outlined by Marx in the three volumes of 'Capital'.

When accumulation develops in old branches of production or penetrates new branches of production,

There must be the possibility of throwing great masses of men suddenly on the decisive points without injury to the scale of production in other spheres.<sup>27</sup>

Marx distinguishes between the following forms of the industrial reserve army.

1. The Floating Form in which labourers are sometimes repelled and sometimes attracted into the centres of modern industry. This can be linked to the argument that the demand for labour in the centres of modern industry tends to substitute unskilled for skilled labour and young people for adults.

2. The Latent Form. This is constituted by the agricultural population which is displaced by the capitalist penetration of agriculture.

3. The Stagnant Form, comprising labourers who are irregularly employed, for example, in domestic industry. Its members are recruited from the supernumerary forces of modern industry and agriculture.

Below these are the categories of pauperism and the 'Lazarus Layers'.<sup>28</sup>

Marx's analysis contains two elements. First, a theory of the tendency for capital accumulation to both attract and repel labour which, in Braverman's words, is,

Seized, released, flung into various parts of the social machinery and expelled by others, not in accord with its own will or self activity but in accord with the movement of capital.<sup>29</sup>

This suggests that the structuring of the working class by the process of capital accumulation is a dynamic process and that the process of capital accumulation generates considerable amounts of underemployment.

The second element of Marx's theory is a theory of the functions of the industrial reserve army. It appears to us that it has two major functions. Firstly, it provides a disposable and flexible population. Secondly, it constitutes a condition of competition among workers, the degree of intensity of competition depending on the pressure of the relative surplus population. This competitive pressure depresses wage levels by forcing workers to submit to exploitation through the pressure of unemployment.<sup>30</sup>

It is, of course, a matter for concrete historical analysis to determine which sources of the industrial army are drawn upon in specific periods. We can expect that this would be determined, among other things, by availability and political expediency. Fundamentally, the components of an industrial reserve army in any historical conditions are politically determined, this means that they are a result of class struggle.<sup>31</sup>

We can assume from our reading of Marx that the organisation of production in the capitalist mode of production is intimately related to the emergence and reproduction of a reserve army of labour. With this in mind we will later consider the historical transformation in which young people cease to assume the role of actual labour and take on the historically specific role of potential labour. In this sense we will be involved, to an as yet undetermined degree, with a consideration of the creation of an industrial reserve army.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Simon Frith and Paul Corrigan, "The Politics of Youth Culture". In Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, (Eds.), Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post War Britain. London: 1976; p. 236.
2. John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A theoretical Overview", In Hall and Jefferson, *Ibid.*, p. 5.
3. Graham Murdoch and Robin McCron; "Youth and Class: The Career of a Confusion". In Geof Mungham and Geof Pearson, Working Class Youth Culture. London: 1976; p. 24.
4. For example in G. Lenski, Power and Privilege. New York: 1976.
5. Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order. St. Albans: 1972; p. 17.
6. Murdoch and McCron, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
7. Clarke, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 38.
8. *Ibid.*.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
10. Karl Marx, The German Ideology, London: 1970; p. 42.
11. See for example, John Clarke, "Football and Working Class Fans: tradition and change". In John Clarke, (Ed.) Football Hooliganism: The Wider Context. London: 1978.
12. Parkin, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
14. Clarke, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 44.
15. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, (Notes towards an investigation)". In Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays. New York: 1971; p. 141.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
17. *Ibid.*.

18. Ibid., p. 135.
19. Ibid..
20. Ibid., p. 140.
21. Ibid., p. 142.
22. Ibid., p. 154.
23. Ibid., p. 155.
24. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises. New York: 1973; p. 73.
25. Karl Marx, Capital, Volume I. London: 1974; p. 592.
26. Ibid., p. 593.
27. Ibid., p. 592.
28. Ibid., p. 602.
29. Harry Braverman, Labour and Monopoly Capital. New York: 1974; p. 378.
30. Ibid., pp. 383-384.
31. Two examples illustrate this point. In Canada during the second world war women were drawn into industrial occupations only to be expelled again during the immediate post war period. A second example emerged in the 1960's in Britain when it became politically expedient to restrict immigration from the commonwealth to particular occupational groups, thereby making women a preferred source of surplus labour.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORIES OF YOUTH: AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE AND CRITIQUE

The rise of industrial capitalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century heralded changes in the social roles of both individuals and institutions. For young people, as for their parents, the changes experienced during this period were extreme. They may be characterised in general sociological terms by saying that in terms of the relationship of youth to the labour process, their former and historically specific role as actual labour power became transformed into one which involved a new role as potential labour power.<sup>1</sup> The new and expanded institution of the compulsory school was to now provide for the socialisation and training of the new potential labour force while, also, holding it in "reserve" until required by the capitalist labour market.

But while the (uneven) social changes which were transforming the social condition and roles of the young were in motion long before the turn of the century it was not until the 1900's that a major social response to these changes was clearly articulated. The initial response has been described by a number of commentators as "the discovery of adolescence".<sup>2</sup>

This discovery was exemplified by the first thorough psychological exploration of the 'teen years' by G. Stanley Hall in the 1890's and launched fully with the publication of his two volume work

Adolescence in 1904. In the years that followed Hall's work was widely distributed in books and articles aimed at helping parents and teachers to understand their adolescent children.<sup>3</sup> In numerous ways the work of Hall reflected many of the traditional ideas and images of adolescence as a potentially dangerous, critical and threatening stage of life. Hall, for example, characterised adolescence as a time of 'storm and stress'. Yet, in other respects the new literature was distinctive in a number of ways. First of all the primary focus was on teenagers, especially upon those between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Secondly, within this category, the major emphasis was on early adolescence around the age of puberty. This marked a change from the contemporary advisory literature for 'young men' which was aimed at the eighteen to thirty age group. Kett has pointed out that the characteristics of the new literature clearly reflected contemporary social developments in America.

In effect a stage of life was being defined in terms of a stage of schooling, for the 14-18 age range also happened to be the modal age range for high school students at the turn of the century. The emphasis on early adolescence underscored the critical importance the years from 13 or 14 to 16 were coming to have as economic determinants. That is at the particular stage of industrialisation which America had reached by 1890, critical and often irreversible decisions were being made for and by young people during the years of early adolescence.<sup>5</sup>

The most distinctive and influential aspect of the psychological literature on adolescence, however, was its purely normative character. In a variation on the theme of 'storm and stress' adolescence came to be seen as a season of development during which the individual was to be given every opportunity to bloom. The central point of Hall's doctrine

was that of 'recapitulation'; the idea that the child passes through the stages of racial development from barbarism to civilisation in the course of his or her growth. Any attempt to speed up this 'natural' development and to force the commitment of premature adulthood upon the unwilling adolescent would lead to inevitable problems in later years. In this sense Hall insisted upon the value of catharsis for all instinctual drives in the adolescent stage before a safe passage to the next developmental stage could be guaranteed.<sup>6</sup>

In an era of awakening humanitarianism Hall's work rapidly influenced the emerging 'child study' movements in both Canada and the U.S.A. Child Study focussed the attention of teachers and the general public on the need for a humane and understanding attitude towards children. At the same time the movement did much to publicise and popularise the new science of psychology and to focus it upon the individual problems of development encountered by young people.

#### The Legacy of Hall: The Invisibility of Class

By far the most important influence of Hall's work upon the study of youth has been its normative characterisation of adolescence as an experience which stands outside of 'society in general'. Two important correlates of this position have had a major effect upon subsequent studies. Firstly, it has established a discourse in which adolescents are constructed as constituting a unified and homogeneous culture. Secondly, and following on from this, adolescents as homogeneous culture are seen as standing opposed to a homogeneous adult culture. What has been missed here, of course, and (as we shall see

later) in subsequent studies, is even the slightest notion of class, a notion which has historically sliced through and repudiated any idea of homogeneity in either the culture of adults or youth. In line with this argument, Murdoch and McCron (1976) have pointed out that,

Theories of youth have been tied to the withering away of class primarily by the argument that the division between the generations has increasingly replaced class inequalities as the central axis of the social structure, and that any shift has been accentuated and confirmed by the emergence of a classless culture of youth, separated from, and opposed to, the dominant adult culture.

Variations of this argument have underpinned a great deal of both the popular and sociological commentary on youth, with the result that in much of the writing, class is seen as largely irrelevant and either evacuated altogether or treated as a residual category.

The avoidance of a class analysis, then, was firmly established by Hall and this trend was clearly reflected in the studies which followed.

These may be roughly characterized as having fallen into one of either 'sub cultural' or 'developmental' types of analysis. Bennett Berger, in a contemporary discussion of youth culture, has characterised these two types of analysis as representing sociological and psychological theories of youth. Berger argues that most psychological studies of youth refer to it as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood,

a period ridden with conflicts and tensions stemming partly from an acceleration in the individual's physical and cultural growth but also from the age grading norms of our society that withholds from adolescents most of the opportunities, rights and responsibilities of adults.<sup>8</sup>

Here Berger is clearly talking of the problems of development so clearly characterised by Hall sixty years earlier.

Moving on to a discussion of sociological theories of youth Berger considers analyses in which discussions of youth revolve around their experience within their own age graded peer groups.

The emphasis in these discussions is quite different from that in discussions of adolescence as a transitional stage; the stress is on the orientation of adolescents to their peers. From this perspective emerged the idea of an adolescent sub-culture as a relatively autonomous 'way of life', controlled internally by a system of norms and sanctions largely antithetical or indifferent to that offered by parents, teachers and clergymen--the official representatives of the adult world.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear then that both types of analysis have been influenced by the work of Hall. His separation of a homogeneous, age graded adolescent culture from the rest of society clearly paved the way for the development of 'sub cultural' oppositional analyses. At the same time his concentration upon the developmental features of childhood as a time of 'storm and stress' provided the guidelines for a subsequent analysis of adolescence as transitional and, hence, as 'something they will grow out of'.

Alongside the theories of Hall and his colleagues the period 1890-1920 saw the emergence, in the U.S.A. of a number of adult sponsored youth organisations. Once again, as with the youth oriented literature, these bore no resemblance to the young men's associations which had previously catered for young men between the ages of 16 and 30, and which dated back to the seventeenth century. Organisations like

the Boy Scouts and the boys department of the Y.M.C.A. sought to bring the leisure time activities of young people under rigid direction.<sup>10</sup>

Kett points out that,

The institutionalisation of adolescence during the early twentieth century 'progressive era' embraced juvenile courts, "junior republics" and the like, but its most enduring effects were in the field of education. Between 1870 and 1920 many states restricted the use of child labour and established compulsory education.<sup>11</sup>

Later Kett points to the relationship between youth and the labour process, a phenomenon which we will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

The crusade against child labour and the expansion of compulsory education grew out of a variety of forces, including humanitarian opposition to the crass exploitation of juveniles for profit and labour opposition to the displacement of adults by juveniles in the job market.<sup>12</sup>

By the 1920's a very clear intellectual and institutional response to the problem of youth had emerged and the academic work which followed was to be largely an elaboration upon a singular theme. This is not to say that Hall's conception of adolescence was not subjected to criticism. During the 1920's his work was attacked for its absolutism and pseudo-scientific nature. Hall had tended to assume that his analysis of adolescence in one culture could be generalised to account for the behaviour of adolescents everywhere. The general concept of adolescence as a period of 'storm and stress' for instance, was exploded, as were a number of other biologicistic assumptions, by the publication in 1928 of Margaret Mead's Coming of Age in Samoa. Here Mead pointed to the fact that in some societies the experience of

adolescence was without turbulence. Mead's work was complemented by more sophisticated studies in the 1920's and 1930's, which insisted that the study of adolescence must concentrate upon specific cultural determinants of development rather than upon biological determinants of behaviour.

While this critique directly attacked Hall's biological determinism, however, it left the central implication of his work untouched, namely, the normative characterisation of adolescence. Kett argues that,

Despite all these qualifications, the normative character of the concept has endured. For psychologists with very few exceptions have continued to hold that in our society some sort of prolongation of adolescence is desirable, that youth needs a time of moratorium to establish identity and autonomy.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of adolescence as a separate and homogeneous, if culturally specific, categorisation was reinforced in the U.S.A. in the years following the publication of Mead's book.\* It was against this background that the American Sociological Association organised its conference in 1934 to explore future directions for the sociology of youth. In one of the key papers presented at the conference E. B. Reuter firmly reproduced the tradition of 'separateness' by arguing that future work in the area should concentrate upon establishing how far "adolescents live in a world which is isolated from that of adults" and how far "they think of themselves belonging to a "we group" as opposed to adult groups".<sup>14</sup>

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\*I am indebted here to Murdoch and McGron (1976) for their excellent comments upon the history of youth cultural theories.

In 1942 the historical threads of adolescence theory were woven together to form an analysis of what Talcott Parsons was to call 'Youth Culture'. For Parsons youth culture stood opposed to the role of the male which epitomised adult culture. In Parsons' words,

Perhaps the best single point of reference for characterising the youth culture lies in its contrast with the dominant patterns of the adult male role. By contrast with the emphasis of responsibility in this role, the orientation of the youth culture is more or less specifically irresponsible. One of its dominant themes is "having a good time" in relation to which there is a particularly strong emphasis on social activities in company with the opposite sex . . . . Negatively there is a strong tendency to repudiate interest in adult things and to feel at least a certain recalcitrance to the pressure of adult expectations and discipline.<sup>15</sup>

While Parsons was formulating his conceptions of youth culture as anti adult culture another sociologist, August Hollingshead, was conducting his own study of adolescents in Elmtown, a small town in the midwest. Originally interested in measuring the 'gap' between 'individual' and 'social' determinants of adolescent forms; Hollingshead eventually focussed his study upon what he concluded to be the largest single determinant of social behaviour among the young: social class. Hollingshead found that class background determined two key areas of adolescent reality; their social behaviour and their social consciousness. On the one hand,

One of the important things that this study highlights is the diversity of behaviour exhibited by adolescents in the different classes . . . . Commonsense judgements might have induced us to think that in such a narrowly restricted age group social behaviour would fall into a more or less common pattern in each sex group. That it did not was a surprise.<sup>16</sup>

In addition,

The family and neighbourhood sub cultures, provide him (the adolescent) with ways of acting and definitions of action . . . . .  
Situations . . . are defined in a general way by the class and the family cultures, but they are defined explicitly by the cliques in which adolescents spend their leisure time.<sup>17</sup>

Hollinghead's study was published amidst the cold war ideology which stressed the pluralist and democratic nature of American society. Within such a dominant ideological mode any attempt to establish a class-based analysis of American society was received negatively.

As a consequence Elmtown Youth was well received as a detailed and useful piece of research while its central implication, that of class inequalities in the lives of teenagers, was largely passed over. On the other hand Parsons' theory fitted well with the wider social and political concerns of the period. Murdoch and McCron argue that,

Returning to the theme of Youth Culture in 1950, he (Parsons) underscored his earlier emphasis, arguing that the developing "Youth Culture" was characterised by "a compulsive independence of and antagonism to adult expectations and authority" and a "compulsive conformity within the peer group of age mates" (Parsons, 1950, pp. 342-343). This stress on conformity fitted well with more general cold war concerns, and more particularly with fears that the ethos of individualism which formed the basis of the pluralist system was being superseded by a growing emphasis on going along with the crowd.<sup>18</sup>

Parson's notion of a homogeneous and oppositional youth culture, then, fitted well with the wider social and political concerns of the period. At the same time it was this, reproduced and extended, notion of a homogeneous youth culture which was to herald the arrival, in the nineteen fifties, of the new modern adolescent: the 'teenage' consumer.

Modern Adolescents: The New Teenage Consumers

From the outset the imagery surrounding the teenager has been linked with the notion of a consumer society. It is true, of course, that the 1950s, both in Britain and the United States, witnessed a boom in consumer spending and it was youth that was placed firmly within the sights and strategies of the new leisure industries. Building around the expanding popular music business the entertainment industry constructed both the market demand and the glittering supplies which would fulfil the new teenage 'needs'. Music, fashion, dance halls and glossy magazines all unfolded before the eyes of the 'new consumer'.

The emergence of the youth market was seen as further evidence of the rapidly growing homogenisation of youth culture.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, not only was a concept of class being systematically ignored by commentators on youth; young people were increasingly considered to constitute a class 'in themselves'.

Foremost in the elements of mass culture which were said to justify the notion of youth as homogeneous culture was that of popular music. As one commentator put it.

If one was asked to identify the single cultural trait which best characterises the American Youth Culture, one would find it difficult to avoid mention of its popular music.<sup>20</sup>

It appears, however, that far from constituting a unifying set of cultural and age specific symbols, various styles of popular music were appropriated by youth, differentially, on the basis of clearly defined class divisions. Commentating upon research which has established such divisions Murdoch and McCron point out that,

Despite the fact that Elvis Presley had been insistently publicised as the incarnation of the youth cultural values of sexuality, hedonism and antagonism to adult authority, only a fifth of the sample nominated him as their favourite pop performer, the majority of the rest opting for the adult approved style of Pat Boone. Further, a secondary analysis revealed a clear connection between pop preferences and class background. Presley's brand of rock and roll was an almost exclusively working class taste.<sup>21</sup>

These findings clearly undermined the notion of a homogeneous youth market and established a model for the analysis of differential class responses to the leisure and entertainment industry. But the emergence of a class based analysis was soon to be papered over yet again with the publication of Mark Abrams' (1959) study of teenage consumer spending.<sup>22</sup> Abrams concluded in this and later studies that youth had emerged as a significant market for records and other mass entertainment goods. A class analysis based upon differential responses to the leisure industry was redundant for Abrams who chose instead to subsume notions of class beneath the "You've never had it so good" ideology of the "affluent society".<sup>23</sup> Abrams insisted that,

Under conditions of general prosperity the social study of society in class terms is less and less illuminating. And its place is taken by differences related to age.<sup>24</sup>

In general terms or as a study of ideological incorporation Abrams could well have been right for it was the mid sixties which spawned the success of the Beatles, a phenomenon which, briefly, and if only symbolically, appeared to unite youth (and later, generations) around a set of shared cultural symbols. But, in this case, appearances did not coincide with deeper social realities.

The problem at this point clearly involved the complex relationship between youth culture and the leisure industry. In 1966 Peter Wilmott's study of working class boys in London illuminated this relationship and made inroads into its analysis. Wilmott's study pointed to the fact that the values, aspirations and life styles of his respondents were firmly rooted in their local neighbourhoods. Although the majority of Bethnal Green boys had access to the mainstream entertainment offered by the organised leisure industry, only a minority chose to make use of them.

Rather than replacing class based cultures, the new leisure culture was being laid over the top, setting up an increasingly complex interaction between the two.<sup>25</sup>

Wilmott's study, then, moved away from the imagery of a passive youth culture determined totally by the leisure industry. His analysis was to open the way to further studies in which the youth cultures of different class backgrounds were to be seen as highly selective in their choice and appropriation of cultural artifacts.

We have seen that sociological writings on youth in the 1950's and early 1960's continued to reflect and reproduce the myth of a homogeneous youth culture. In spite of the absence and continuing rejection of systematic class analyses in the sociology of youth and leisure, however, advances were taking place in the more specialised field of delinquency studies. It is to these that we shall now turn.

### Youth and Delinquency

Talk about the relationship between young people and delinquency is not new. Youth has been linked historically with notions of hedonism

and irresponsibility and, in the literature of the social sciences, this connection was made explicit in the early studies of juvenile gangs conducted by the Chicago School.<sup>26</sup> Once again these studies reproduced the notion of a separated and self contained adolescent peer group which stood opposed to adult authority. It was not until the 1950's that an analysis emerged in which attempts were made to locate juvenile gangs within a wider, and more complex, class analysis.

The work of Albert Cohen (1955) marked a shift away from assumptions of a homogeneous youth culture. In Delinquent Boys Cohen drew upon seemingly unrelated research findings dealing with delinquency, social class and socialisation. He then went on to speculate on the relationship between delinquency and the problems of adjustment faced by working class youth. Central to Cohen's thesis was the role of the school in the mediation of social class. For Cohen, working class children experienced problems in adjusting to the norms of the middle class school. The resulting lack of success and self esteem led them to form an autonomous sub culture around leisure activities. Here, the values of the leisure world; hedonism, excitement and "A good time now" stood opposed to those of the school with its values of conformity, subordination to authority and future oriented goals.

Cohen's formulation was important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it recognised the importance of the education system in the reproduction of class inequalities. Secondly, it offered a useful model for the analysis of differential, class related, experiences mediated within the school; and thirdly, it went a long way towards establishing

a more realistic and rigorous model of analysis which could begin to account for, and make sense of, the complexity of the multi-faceted relationship between youth culture, education, leisure and social class.

While making significant advances over established theory, however, Cohen's work ignored two important aspects of the determinant relationships of which youth, as delinquent culture, comprised. Firstly, by positing working class delinquent subcultures as explicitly opposed to adult culture it ignored the important continuities between them.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, by reproducing the self-contained notion of the working class gang, Cohen's argument ignored the more important connections of the gang with the wider working class culture as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

In 1962 David Matza picked up on Cohen's analysis and sought to establish the missing connections. According to Matza youth culture had appropriated and extended values which were rooted in both the dominant and working class cultures. As a consequence the seemingly 'separated' sub cultural responses of youth were seen as 'stretched' versions of the hedonistic values of leisure which found conventional expression in the officially approved forms of recreation and consumption.<sup>29</sup> In a seminal article published in the same year<sup>30</sup> Matza made his propositions, and the connections, explicit, while at the same time concretising and extending the advances made by Cohen. In Subterranean Traditions of Youth Matza advances two important formulations. Firstly he attacks the notion of a homogeneous youth culture, arguing that delinquent or rebellious youth constitutes but a small segment of the youthful population.

First, we may not contend that extremist versions or youthful rebelliousness characterise anything like a majority of the youth population. Rather, it seems that the great majority of American youth behave either in a conventional manner or participate in conventional versions of deviant youth traditions; this despite the fact that many youths are vulnerable to rebelliousness.<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, Matza points to the historical nature of youthful deviance, suggesting that it is "nothing new", while at the same time stressing the importance of historical and cultural specificity,

There seems to be no reason to believe that there have been any long-run increases or decreases in rates of youthful rebelliousness during the modern era. Rather, it seems likely that some forms of youthful rebelliousness have increased somewhat over the past twenty five years, whereas rates of other forms have declined . . . deviance does not typically represent an historical innovation; rather, it has a history in particular neighbourhoods or locales. Thus the individual deviant is linked to the society in minimal fashion through companies of deviants and through localised traditions. To speak of subterranean traditions is to extend the notion of linking to the wider social system; it is to posit connections between localised deviant traditions and the broader traditions of conventional society. The notion of subterranean implies that there is an ongoing dialectic between conventional and deviant traditions and that, in the process of exchange, both are modified.<sup>32</sup>

Matza's work presented an important alternative to Parson's conception of a 'unified youth culture'. Centrally, it stressed the distinction between the dominant or hegemonic culture and the subordinate culture of the working class. In so doing it raised the crucial question of the triangular relationship between youth culture, dominant culture and subordinate culture.<sup>33</sup>

In 1966 the range of class analysis was extended by David Downes. Downes argued that class background not only determined the youthful experience of work and education but of leisure also. For

working class youth the sphere of leisure is directly juxtaposed to that of work, offering excitement, hedonism and glamour. But the leisure industry offers promises of escape that it cannot keep and the imagery of excitement and hedonism fade amidst the growing structuration and control of organised leisure. Increasingly, as dance halls are policed by more and more security guards and the culture of the street, (historically the domain of youth) is destroyed by urban renewal and the 'moral panic' of media and police, working class youth . . .

reacts against both middle class and 'lower class' culture, and arrives at the 'delinquent sub culture' by pushing the legitimate values of 'teenage culture' to their logical conclusion.<sup>34</sup>

In the field of delinquency, then, and to some extent in educational studies<sup>35</sup> theorists were moving towards a class based analysis of youth. At this point what was clearly needed was a multidisciplinary approach which would be capable of bridging the gap between the various and fragmented sub-fields of sociology in order that a cohesive and comprehensive sociology of youth might be created. But this was not to be. With the growing sociological division and specialisation of labour in the sixties the gap between the sub-disciplines became even wider.

Delinquency research continued in its lone endeavour to make the connections between delinquency and the problems of working class youth. By this time, however, the focus of such research was beginning to look narrow. First of all delinquency research concentrated only upon working class boys; girls remained marginal to the analysis.<sup>36</sup> Further, middle class youth were excluded from the analysis by virtue of their

'non-delinquent' character. The "Beats" of the period had little in common with the gangs studied by the Chicago school or Albert Cohen's "delinquent boys". Rather they presented themselves as a rather passive group of middle class men and women whose ambitions presented no threat to the dominant culture. As a result the historical transformation of the beat generation of the fifties into the hippie culture of the late sixties came as a surprise to both delinquency theorists and mainstream sociologists of youth.\*

When they did arrive the hippies were seen as a homogeneous youthful response which stood opposed to the stark consumerism of the new mass affluent society. As with the Beatles in England the appearance of half a million young people at Woodstock in the summer of 1969 seemed to confirm the trend. But, like sub cultural responses before it, the hippie movement was revealed to have a class base. The hippie movement was an essentially middle class movement,\*\* taking its strongest support from students in higher education. Its love and peace philosophy was essentially pacifist and individualistic with goals of self-realisation and fulfilment through the introspective use of drugs and mediation. The visibility of the class base of the movement however

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\*For examples of studies of middle-class delinquency see: W. Vaz (Ed.) Middle Class Juvenile Delinquency, 1967; and James F. Short, Jnr, (Ed.) Gang Delinquency and Delinquent subcultures, 1968.

\*\*While this was clearly the case for England, the hippie response in the USA raises more of a problem. While the response by each in historical terms could be related to Bohemianism, the American response was clearly extended along class lines in direct response to the Viet Nam war. I believe it can be argued that in spite of this the actual mainstream hippie culture in the USA was still a mainly middle class response.

was matched by its class related concerns and philosophies. A number of studies have indicated that the core concerns of the hippies were extensions of themes and values embedded in contemporary middle class culture.<sup>37</sup> The focal concern with "doing your own thing", for instance, appeared as a modified version of the central middle class values of individualism and self-expression.

The notion, then, of a homogeneous youth culture was yet again exploded, especially in England where a specifically working class response, the skinheads, arose almost in opposition to hippie culture. In England, at least, the hippies were largely ignored by working class youth who reacted with disinterest and sometimes hostility. For Murdoch and McCron nothing expressed this social cleavage more than the differential, class based modes of cultural appropriation adopted by each group.

Ironically, it was pop music which provided one of the main means through which this basic class division was expressed and confirmed.<sup>38</sup>

The hippie counter culture had given rise to new, and more complex musical and lyrical styles (progressive rock), the vehicle of which was the stereo LP. This now stood opposed to the older and more established "single" record which continued to be played in discotheques and which provided for the bulk of smash hits.

This basic technological and stylistic division between 'progressive' work and mainstream pop largely corresponded to a social division within the youth audience, between those who had left school at the minimum age and those who had stayed on to take a place in the rapidly expanding higher education sector, a division, which in turn, largely reflected the class differentials in educational opportunity. Hence, far from dissolving

class differences and creating a homogeneous generational culture, the bifurcating cultures of pop and rock became one of the main means through which these divisions were extended into the sphere of leisure.<sup>39</sup>

Class differences were being uncovered in sociological analyses of youth then, alongside the rediscovery of class inequalities within the wider society. With the redundancy of the notions of "affluence" and "embourgeoisement" and their accompanying connections with a theory of a "unified" youth culture, commentators resolved to restore class to the centre of their analyses. In recent years it has been in Britain that the most significant advances in theory have been made. Drawing upon work in the fields of education and delinquency research and later upon social history and cultural studies theorists set out to forge an interdisciplinary approach to the study of youth. Perhaps the best known and most recent of this type of research has been that conducted at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Drawing upon the writings of Antonio Gramsci<sup>40</sup> the centre sought to incorporate existing sub cultural theory within a materialist framework.

Gramsci argued that the political and economic dominance of the ruling class was maintained through "hegemony" or cultural leadership and that, as a consequence, struggles over cultural power must be fought as part of the struggle for political and economic change. This extract from the work of the Birmingham group illustrates their use of Gramsci.

In so far as there is more than one fundamental class in a society (and capitalism is essentially the bringing together, around production, of two fundamentally different classes- capital and labour) there will be more than one cultural configuration at play at a particular historical moment. But the structure and meanings which most adequately reflect the position of the most

powerful class- however complex it is internally- will stand, in relation to all others, as a dominant socio-cultural order . . . . . Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this order: they will enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign-- its hegemony.<sup>41</sup>

And later,

The struggle between classes over material and social life thus always assumes the form of continuous struggle over the distribution of 'cultural power'. By giving the term 'culture' a more historical reference it became easier to see that cultures exist in some tension, relation or contradiction with one another. The study of cultures is then easier to grasp as one aspect of the way particular historical groups in their given circumstances try to realise, in activities and institutions, as much as in language and symbols, their interests and outlooks.<sup>42</sup>

From this new theoretical standpoint sub-cultural theory's focus on working class sub-cultures seemed justified and researchers began to examine the varying articulations of cultural expression among them. As an outcome it was suggested by the centre members that sub-cultural expressions among working class youth may be examined at the level of 'style' and 'symbol'. Within this formulation such expressions were viewed as symbolic attempts by youth to transcend their class determined situations. For the centre a discussion around the notion of 'style' would begin to approach the central problem of the relationship between youth culture and the youth culture industry. To what extent, for instance, was 'style' the spontaneous creation of youth sub-cultures or, on the other hand, to what extent was it the creation of an increasingly youth oriented music and fashion industry?

'Style' we consider to be the result of a process of appropriation of disparate objects and symbols from their normal social context and their reworking by members of the group into

a new and coherent style with its own special significance . . . . Our notion of style is one of 'moments' when, temporarily, the social formation, and the position of a specific group within it, becomes crystallised in specific symbolic systems which express its experience of that formation.<sup>43</sup>

The elements out of which style is constructed then may be a mixture of commercially produced artifacts and those common to the experience of the group as a class:

For the skinheads, whose experience was grounded in some of the crucial nexi of this economic and cultural conflict (e.g. housing, education and employment) their style attempted to revive, in a symbolic form, some of the expressions of traditional working class culture which could articulate their social experience.<sup>44</sup>

This type of approach presented a new and refreshing image of youth sub-cultures while falling into line with the rediscovery of class inequalities. More importantly it stressed the importance of mediation in the class based experience of youth which, as Murdoch and McCron pointed out, is crucial,

for young people, along with everyone else, experience class relations primarily in the mediated or filtered form of the concrete social relations in which they are involved at school, at work, in the family, their local area and in their leisure activity.<sup>45</sup>

While it represented an important attempt to construct a notion of youth within a materialist framework, however, the approach presented by the Birmingham group ran into a number of difficulties. The development of the group's analysis of youth must be considered in the light of two important determinants. Firstly, in terms of its own historical and theoretical development and, secondly, in terms of the way in which this development determined the groups theoretical orientation towards an analysis of youth sub cultures.

The Centre was formed by Richard Hoggart within the department of English at Birmingham University in 1964 and has since assumed the status of an independent research and postgraduate centre. From the outset the concerns of both Hoggart and the centre have been informed academically by the liberal arts and politically by the "New Left", features which have heavily influenced its ongoing analysis of contemporary culture in general and working class culture in particular.<sup>46</sup> This type of approach has been enhanced by the multidisciplinary nature of the Centre's work and its accompanying emphasis upon the de-specialisation of the academic division of labour.<sup>47</sup> While the basic class orientation of the Centre's work has remained, its direction in recent years has been characterised by its incorporation of a notion of ideology as being central to its work.<sup>48</sup> Drawing upon the french structural school of Marxism (Althusser) and the notion of hegemony developed by Gramsci the Centre sought to trace the relationship between culture and ideology; a quest which has resulted in a number of studies which have located the production and reproduction of culture within a structural and historical framework.<sup>49</sup>

Turning towards the Centre's reading of youth sub-cultural theory and its own subsequent work in the area we will be able to see to what extent its analysis and the problems which it confronted were determined by its own historical development and theoretical background. Youth sub-cultures of the sixties provided for some rich and fascinating studies. Drawing upon Cohen's notion of class mediation (1955) and Matza's relation between youth culture and dominant culture (1962) the Centre attempted to incorporate youth cultural theory within their own

mainstream theoretical perspective. The result was encouraging, but not without its problems. From the very beginning the Centre's analysis of youth was determined by its own overriding concern with ideology and ideological processes. Youth sub cultural responses were viewed as a symbolic form of resistance to ideological incorporation into dominant culture.<sup>50</sup> The concept of resistance is important here because it signifies the extent of the Centre's concern with the responses of youth, as mediations of material experiences, as opposed to the structured, material, class based experiences which give rise to these varied responses in the first instance. This was to give rise to a number of problems, not least because the Centre, in opposition to its own self-proclaimed "materialist" standpoint, was taking isolated ideological responses and working back from these to their material, class based determinants. This was an approach which was to be later called into question in terms of its validity as a "materialist analysis" while also raising serious problems for the ongoing development of the research group.<sup>51</sup>

In terms of the Centre's work these problems were to become manifest in a number of ways. For example, while the new sub cultural theory accentuated the importance of Cohen's notion of mediation it did so only in terms of the working class experience of the world of leisure and the wider cultural sphere of which this formed a part. While such studies are of undoubted importance it has been argued (Frith and Corrigan 1976 and Murdoch and McCron 1976) that the area of leisure forms but one part of the totality of the youthful experience and, hence, that we must turn our attention to other areas in which the youthful

experience is mediated. These must necessarily include an analysis of the experience of school and work. Once again retaining and incorporating a notion of mediation but allowing for a broader spectrum of utilisation Murdoch and McCron have pointed out that,

A class analysis must therefore begin by examining the ways in which class relations are experienced and negotiated in particular work and non work situations.

The most powerful and pervasive mediations of class occur within the work situation, at the point of maximum articulation to the system of production. Although within the education system this articulation is displaced rather than direct, schools remain basically work situations . . . . However, since they (youth) are not in a position to exercise much control over their work situation, their response to these experiences are largely displaced into the sphere of leisure where class is mediated in more diffuse forms and where the areas of choice, autonomy and control are correspondingly greater. Leisure behaviour cannot be fully understood, therefore, without a prior understanding of how the work situation is experienced and negotiated. 52

A further problem which emerges as a consequence of the concentration upon ideological responses in general and leisure activity in particular has been that the large majority of youth have been excluded from the analysis by virtue of their cultural invisibility. In short, sub cultural theory has produced a model in which the articulation of youth sub-cultural responses have been studied at only their most extreme points. The majority of young people, the ordinary kids in the street, are excluded from the analysis. In the same way that women have been rendered invisible in delinquency theory the majority of youth fall through sub-cultural theory's theoretical net. The approach therefore excludes those people who share a similar class location but do not

belong to this or that particular sub-cultural group. Clearly, for example, while most skinheads may have been working class in origin it was never true that most working class youths were skinheads.

The problem, then, seems to be one of not only explaining why this or that sub-cultural group emerged when they did but to question why other youths in basically the same class location adopted other forms of negotiation and resolution. This question can only be answered by going beyond the general characteristics of class location and examining the detailed variations in the mediation of class within specific work and non work situations. What is needed precisely is an analysis of the institutions within which the differential class experiences of young people are mediated. (The school, work, the family and so on). To this extent the remainder of our study will be directed towards an analysis of the relationship between working class young people and the educational apparatus.

### Conclusion

In this chapter we have traced the recent history of youth cultural theory. Beginning with psychologist Stanley Hall we have argued that youth theorists have consistently presented analyses in which young people have been considered as both a homogeneous and oppositional group. For this reason the discovery of variable characteristics among adolescents from different class backgrounds caught Hollingshead by surprise in his study of "Elmtowns Youth". In spite of this discovery the mythical notion of a homogeneous youth culture survived until the mid-nineteent fifties when Albert Cohen established a firm basis for a class

analysis of youth. Cohen's emphasis upon the role of the school in the reproduction of class inequalities and of its importance as an institution of class mediation paved the way for more comprehensive class conscious, analyses of youth cultures.

In 1962 David Matza extended Cohen's formulation and located it within a framework which assumed the existence of both a dominant and subordinate adult culture. This was to reinforce Cohen's attack upon the notion of a 'unified' youth culture while stressing the importance of the triangular relationship between working class youth culture, their "parent" culture and the dominant or "hegemonic" culture. Consequently, the work of Cohen and Matza has provided the springboard for contemporary class analyses of youth. Our critique concludes that Cohen's notion of mediation can be usefully adopted in a reconstituted materialist analysis of youth. We therefore stress the importance of analyses of class mediation within specific work and non-work situations. Having placed youth at the centre of our analysis we now go on to discuss the relationship of young people to the institution of the school, both in a historical and a contemporary setting.

#### FOOTNOTES

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4. The older literature aimed at youth had been directed at the 18-30 age range. See J. Kett, "Adolescence and Youth in Nineteenth Century America". Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2. Autumn 1971; 283-298.
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8. Bennett Berger "On the Youthfulness of Youth Cultures" in Looking for America. New Jersey: 1971; p. 69.
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11. Kett, Report on Youth, op. cit., p. 25.
12. See for example, W. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl: With Cases and Standpoint for Behaviour Analysis. Boston: 1923.
13. Kett, Report on Youth, op. cit., p. 26. For a contemporary example of problems raised by this tradition see Kenneth Kenniston, The Uncommitted: Alienated Youth in American Society. New York: 1966.
14. Reuter, E. B. "The Adolescent World" in American Journal of Sociology XL 111 (1) pp. 82-84. I am indebted for this information to Murdoch and McCron, op. cit., as I am for much of the information used and cited in the rest of this paper.
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47. See, G.C.C.S. Report for 1979.
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49. For example, Media Studies, Cultural production and reproduction, Education and Communications studies.
50. See, Stuart Hall, op. cit..
51. The research group involved with youth studies dissolved around problems connected with the notion of "Resistance".
52. Murdoch and McCron, op. cit., p. 24. (My emphasis).

## CHAPTER III

### YOUTH, THE ORGANISATION OF PRODUCTION AND EDUCATION:

#### THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

##### Introduction

It has been suggested earlier that it is our aim to reconceptualise youth in sociological analysis. This theme will be developed in this chapter in two ways. First we locate young people historically, in terms of their relationship to the organisation of production. In this respect young people will be conceptualised, in sociological terms, as actual or potential labour power.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, we locate young people within an institutional context, that of the school. The school is considered in terms of its historical role as an institution of mediation in the relationship between individuals and the organisation of production (or the social division of labour). In this respect we consider schools as important in the sense that their primary concern is with the production of workers.<sup>2</sup> Hence our analysis includes a discussion of the emergence and development of compulsory schooling in Ontario, Canada in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century.

The emergence and rise of free common schools in Ontario has been considered in a number of studies, both historical and contemporary.<sup>3</sup> Most of these studies, however, have concentrated upon an elaboration of the history of Canadian education in general or of education in Ontario in particular. We consider the emergence of compulsory

education here in terms of its emergence as an important social institution, which necessarily stands in a direct relation with other important and "accredited" institutions (the State, the Family, etc.). The nature of this relationship has been, and continues to be, difficult to establish; school records are unreliable, much of the statistical information which would facilitate a greater understanding of the problem predates the introduction of sophisticated census assessment; and the uneven development of the Canadian social formation has contributed towards a variety of anomalous and often contradictory historical characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

In this sense, our analysis cuts across a number of important debates which concern the introduction and development of compulsory schooling. While we enter these debates to some extent our main purpose here is to discuss the historical implications which compulsory schooling has raised for young people. Here we would broadly agree with Aronowitz when he noted that the real achievement of schools consisted in their ability to train children to accept the prevailing class structure and their lot as workers within the industrial system.

Contrary to the educational myths propounded by the early school reformers and promoted in our own time, schools are instruments not of social advancement, but of social stasis. What is learned in school--even in vocational school--is rarely related to specific industrial or commercial skills. As in the nineteenth century, the content of industrial and commercial occupations is still taught at the workplace. Rather, students learn the skills needed to accommodate to the first requirement of industrial labour: respect for authority, the self-discipline necessary to internalize the values of the labour process, and the place of the worker within the prevailing occupational hierarchies.<sup>5</sup>

Youth and the Organisation of Production in Nineteenth Century Ontario

In grounding our discussion of youth and the organisation of production in both a cultural and historical setting we will outline some of the major social-structural transformations which occurred in nineteenth century Ontario. This will be followed by a discussion of the emergence and development of compulsory education in Ontario during the same period. In this sense some kind of general periodisation will be necessary and we draw here upon the historical distinction formulated by Leo Johnson (1974) for the period between Toiler Society, Independent Commodity Producer Society and Industrial Capitalist Society.

Toiler Society developed in the 1770's as a result of what Johnson has called "A series of misadventures in the British Empire" and existed through to the development of independent commodity production in the 1820's. What was the relationship of the family, and, in particular, young people to the organisation of production during this period? We are told that:

The basic economic unit was the lower class family engaged in autonomous production. Whether on the farm or in the workshop, every member of the family, from the small child to the elderly grandparent laboured to contribute to the family's wealth . . . for the most part the family produced what it needed to consume . . . craftsmanship was primitive and production was low . . . . Within the toiler economic unit the role of the woman was crucial. Not only did she labour directly, but she produced the children whose labour was absolutely necessary to the success of the unit.<sup>6</sup>

There is a clear division of labour here between men, on the one hand, and women and children on the other. While men worked in the fields, women and children worked the area immediately surrounding the

house, working the garden, tending livestock, spinning yarn and preparing meals. Elaborating upon this Johnson points out that:

Although the wife-mother was clearly the leader of the mother-child work unit, there was little, except in skill level, to distinguish the mother's tasks from those of the children of either sex.<sup>7</sup>

The role of children, then, in Toiler society, is central to the productive process. Indeed, young people during this period, as they had elsewhere constituted actual labour.

We now consider the period which followed Toiler society and which heralded the introduction of the organised influence of the state in both the areas of the family and of the labour process. This period has been characterised by Johnson as Independent Commodity Producer Society and, differs from its predecessor in a number of ways:

First the triumph of Britain's capitalist class over the aristocracy completely changed the nature of Britain's interest in its white colonies. Because of England's need for cheap food to feed its working class, England turned to commercial alliances with central European grain growing states, and interest in Canada as a secure source of grain wained. The Corn Laws and the Navigation Acts, the granting of responsible government and the creation of reciprocity between Canada and the U.S. in 1854 signalled not only the fall of the Canadian aristocratic class from power, but the emergence of a Canadian capitalist class whose interests would henceforth shape the Canadian state.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1820's the British government decided, as a matter of policy, to encourage the creation of a proletarian working class in Canada. This led to the extension of its policy of free land grants to working class immigrants while still encouraging their migration to Canada:

By 1850, therefore, a growing scarcity of cheap land and a flood of immigrant Irish paupers created significant pools of proletarian labourers in cities such as Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Hamilton.<sup>9</sup>

Commenting on the same period Rinehart (1976) has pointed out that:

Thousands of landless people were forced into dependent employment as farm labourers or workers on the construction of roads, canals and railways. That many individuals were unsuccessful in the pursuit of land or jobs is evidenced by the high rate of transiency within Canada and by the large scale emigration to the United States.<sup>10</sup>

How were these changes reflected within the family? In his discussion of their effects upon female agricultural workers Johnson suggests that two developments occurred; increased agricultural specialisation which was related to the development of a cash economy and the triumph of the capitalists school programme which, aided by compulsory education, had removed children from the home production teams:

In the new cash economy more and more of the products consumed in the home were purchased while fewer were manufactured. Thus, while the making of clothing and preparation and preserving of food remained as farm household tasks, the care of livestock (now a specialised field in itself) gardening and even such traditional female tasks as carding, spinning and weaving were gradually abandoned. With the removal of the children from the home during the school day more and more of the wife-mothers time was consumed by the routine tasks of household maintenance.<sup>11</sup>

For the first time, then, Canada witnessed the creation of a large mass of proletarian labour and, as Pentland (1959) has described, the transition from feudal to capitalist relations of production.<sup>12</sup> Up until the 1850's most commodity production outside of agriculture had taken place in small workshops owned by independent, highly

skilled craftsmen. These craftsmen hired journeymen who, in turn, attached to themselves apprentices.

As Canada's population grew and internal communications improved the market available to the manufacturers expanded. By 1870 many large establishments had appeared, many employing as many as 500 men. In spite of this growth the essential productive process tended to remain in the hands of the highly skilled journeymen (mechanics as they were called) while the unskilled manual labourers were employed as helpers to the journeymen-apprentice production team as warehousemen or as a source of brute muscle power in menial jobs.

Thus, although the small local workshop was replaced it was replaced by the manufactory based on crafts production, rather than the factory where the crafts worker was replaced by the proletarian labourer.<sup>13</sup>

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw major changes in the structure of the Canadian economy. These were heralded on the one hand, by the growing economic influence of the United States and, on the other hand, by significant developments within the labour process. In general terms we can say that it was during this period that the system of manufacture was replaced by the factory system of industrial capitalism. Between 1870 and 1890 investment in machinery, stimulated by a protective tariff, increased and larger factories emerged.<sup>14</sup> In 1870 there were 38,000 manufacturing units in Canada, by 1880 there were more than 70,000. During these decades firms having a capital of \$50,000 or more almost doubled.<sup>15</sup>

This is not to say that an industrial revolution occurred overnight as indeed Johnson later suggests.<sup>16</sup> Any discussion of this transitional period must, of necessity, remain sensitive to the probability of uneven industrial development both within and between differing geographic locations. We can reasonably expect that such uneven development would find its most visible manifestation within the division

between metropolitan and agricultural areas. This point raises a number of implications for a discussion of this kind. Responses of individuals and groups, for instance, to particular developments within the labour process would be determined to a large degree by their own relationship to the labour process, which, in turn, would be contingent upon social class and geographic location. Specifically, a similar problem emerges when we consider the response of the general population to the imposition of compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century.

Clearly the "new" methods of schooling would be introduced within metropolitan areas first and would spread slowly to the countryside. We would also expect that the response in terms of school attendance would be differentiated on a similar basis. Rural children would continue to constitute an important part of the agricultural production process and hence we would expect levels of attendance to be related to patterns of seasonal growth.

#### Contradictory Relations and Forces of Change

As the preliminary problems mentioned above have indicated, a discussion of the genesis of compulsory schooling must be located within the context of the new and developing social relations of capitalist production. We must, therefore, remain sensitive to the ways in which these social relations generated their own contradictions and forces of change. In particular, we are concerned with the contradictions and struggles which revolved around young people in general and compulsory schooling in particular.

The Expulsion of Women and Children from Socialised Labour

In spite of the disparities which result, as in all developing countries, from the uneven nature of capitalist development, the final decades of the nineteenth century in Canada did witness large changes in the methods of the organisation of labour power. This was to result from specific changes in the organisation of production and was, in turn, to have a strong effect upon the economic relationship between men, women and children. Johnson again:

The key technological innovation of industrial capitalism lay in its organisation of labour; particularly in the replacement of high cost skilled labour by low paid unskilled labour, and the replacement of muscle power by machine power. In this process complex skills were broken down into simple repetitive tasks that could be done by the cheapest available workers . . . . The group of male workers most directly attacked by the introduction of mass production techniques were the highly skilled craft workers. Using the factory system, industrialists seized upon every poorly paid, disadvantaged group as a source of cheap labour. Thus blacks, Chinese, Irish and immigrants of all sorts, women and children were all drawn into the attack upon the mechanics standard of living and status.<sup>17</sup>

These sources of cheap labour posed a serious threat to the skilled male labourers and a number of strategies were employed against them. In particular it was women and children against whom this attack was mainly directed; under the public banner of humanitarianism in the case of children and through the more private and implicit, though no less effective, use of sexism in the case of women.<sup>18</sup>

Middle class, humanitarian, women such as those who comprised the 'National Council of Women' agitated for protective legislation for women and young people. At the same time 'protective' concern was shown by representatives of the labour movement. While it readily engaged in

the humanitarian rhetoric of the time, however, there are clear indications that the labour movement was motivated by a fear of economic competition. One labour organisation, for instance, suggested that, "Women should not be allowed to work in the foundry, as it has a tendency to degrade them, to lower the wages of the men and to keep a number of young men out of work".<sup>19</sup> In this respect the concerns of the labour movement coincided with those of middle class reformers and, under the umbrella of humanitarianism, led to a concerted drive to expel women and children from wage labour.

In practice this relationship was cemented by the new factory inspectors, many of whom had been drawn from the ranks of the labour movement.<sup>20</sup> Klein and Roberts have noted that.

The Factory Inspector and factory legislation in some respects promoted an amalgam of the interests of the middle-class reformers and Trade Union leaders . . . . The task of the Factory Inspector was defined by legislation in the Ontario Factory and Shops Act passed in 1884. By 1901 this act had expanded to include limiting hours of labour for females and children under fourteen, young girls (14-18) or women in cases where their health might be permanently injured.<sup>21</sup>

The effects of this type of male, working class organisation upon women has been widely discussed, particularly with reference to the British context where the historical experience of female and child labour in the textile industry holds remarkable similarities. The point which this historical experience raises, however, both for women and young people, is that it connects up their exclusion from socialised labour with a concept of patriarchy. This point assumes

general importance here for two reasons. First of all it lends historical specificity to the concept of patriarchy while, secondly, it distinguishes the response of a specific section of the working class movement towards female and child labour from those of the state and its middle class "humanitarian" representatives. This suggests the need for a more complex level of analysis than that which usually assumes that women and children were removed from the labour force as a result of pressure from kindly and well meaning liberal-bourgeois "ladies" who found no other way of allocating their leisure hours. Rather it suggests that, in part, the exclusion of women and children occurred as a direct result of organisation on the part of a specific section of the working class movement. In other words it occurred as a result of a definite, concrete, historical form of class struggle. We will not pursue this point further here than to say that it does raise implications for historical analyses which operate within a framework which assumes the existence of a unified historical working class movement.

We have pointed out earlier that the subsequent historical career of women, following their exclusion from socialised labour, has been widely discussed. The same cannot be said for young people despite the similar marginal role accorded them in orthodox historical studies. Historical experiences tells us that, following their exclusion from socialised labour, both from factories and, later, from farms, children became institutionalised in the school. In this respect school became important in the mediation of the relationship between the new 'potential labour power' and the developing capitalist labour market.

Education and the Requirements of the Capitalist Labour Market

In his discussion of the rise of universal schooling, Graham Bleasdale has pointed out that free, state supported, education, "Became a real possibility only when the development of productive forces within capitalism made it an economic and political necessity for the bourgeoisie."<sup>22</sup> The eventual emergence of universal state schooling was to develop for three reasons, all of which are in correspondence with the dictates of capital. First, the necessity to construct a new ideological discipline for children who were destined for the capitalist labour market; secondly, for the use of schools as purely technical institutions to train labour power for industrial capitalism; thirdly, the creation of surplus labour power with the decline of the 'toiler' and independent commodity producing societies and the necessity to create a state institution that would hold this labour power 'in reserve' until required by capitalist industry after the 1870's.\*

As capitalism developed in Ontario, and the social division of labour increased, schooling gradually replaced the family, church and apprenticeship as the basic medium of learning.<sup>23</sup> These developments coincided, not accidentally, with the legislated removal of child labour from the factories and changes in general bourgeois opinions towards universal education. Middle class reformers were not shy to point to the benefits of a general education for all. Horace Mann, the

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\*In this respect the mid nineteenth century saw, not only the rise of the school but of other institutions whose explicit concern was with the control of free labour in general and youthful labour in particular. See D. J. Rothman The Discovery of the Asylum Boston 1971, and A. M. Platt, The Child Savers. Chicago and London; 1969.

renowned secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, who led the movement for the first school system in America made the intended connection between education and capital explicit when he noted that,

It is . . . by accomplishing greater results with less means, by creating products at once cheaper, better, and by more expeditious methods that the cultivation of the mind may be said to yield the highest pecuniary requital. Intelligence is the great money maker.<sup>24</sup>

It was clear that the rising workforce would have to be trained for their new role as 'potential labourers'. The genesis of industrial capitalism had witnessed the introduction of new, and increasingly complex, productive techniques, the success of which would depend upon a particular kind of orientation to work on the part of the labourer. In this sense the school was to be concerned with the introduction of new notions of discipline, punctuality, supervision and external control of the pace of work. Prentice has noted that,

School regulations published during the mid century years stressed punctuality, orderly conduct and industry, while the whole school seemed designed to create order and uniformity where before there had been none. Among the goals of the system were clearly the development of the practical habits and values that were held to be necessary to all working men in an urban, industrial economy.<sup>25</sup>

The importance of punctuality was paramount in the new social order. In a classic paper E. P. Thompson has shown that time itself was transformed by industrial capitalism. Instead of being oriented to tasks that were synchronised with the seasons of the agricultural year, labour became subordinated to time.<sup>26</sup> Punctuality in highly integrated and rationalised manufacturing processes became even more fundamental than the possession of manual skills. But if punctuality

was important it would be of little use unless accompanied by a strong sense of discipline and order. The Reverend George Blair of Durham County noted the importance of discipline in 1858 when he argued that it was "the most important lesson" that could be taught, and one without which all other lessons are "comparatively useless".<sup>27</sup> The new conception of time, then, carried with it the requirements of punctuality, discipline and order. Indeed, at this time, education was virtually equated with the need for restraint. The Reverend William Turner, writing in Newcastle in 1876 recommended that schools should be "a spectacle of order and regularity". And, as Ontario's chief educationist of that time put it, schools were of little value unless accompanied by, "lessons of order . . . . A man cannot teach as he pleases if he cannot enforce his own lessons".<sup>28</sup>

The development of compulsory schooling, then, was intimately related to the emergence of a large reserve army of labour. Furthermore, state control of the national educational apparatus marked a transition which involved centrally planned control, for the first time, of a large supply of potential labour power. Control, in this sense, was twofold. Firstly, the school was to assume responsibility for the socialisation of the 'new' labour power. Secondly, the school was to act in a retaining capacity, absorbing labour power which had become subjected to the ebb and flow conditions of the capitalist labour market. In this way actual labour became converted into potential labour. Looked at from this angle compulsory schooling takes on a new character

exemplified, perhaps, by Ryerson's own description of it as, "a branch of the national police force (designed to) occupy a large portion of the rising population".<sup>29</sup>

### The Development of Compulsory Education in Ontario

We have traced a transition above from Toiler Society, in which the family operated as a self sufficient unit employing the entire family, through to the emergence of independent commodity production and its subsequent transition to Industrial Capitalism, a period in which women and children become subjected to the constant attraction and repulsion of the labour process.

We can assume that in Toiler Society and, to a certain extent, in Independent Commodity Producer Society, education was limited to that provided by the family, supplemented at times by the church, (Nasaw 1979). As a consequence education during this period was characterised by its voluntary and informal nature. Prentice (1977) points out that:

The usual and perhaps the fundamental educational institutions were the household, workshop and field. Hence the majority of children learned most of what they wanted to know from their parents or from adults in other families to whom they were bound as servants or apprentices.<sup>30</sup>

In 1807 the Upper Canadian Legislature voted funds for district grammar schools and in 1816 provided for government aided local common schools. School officials and hours of attendance were generally determined by the parents or guardians of the students. Public schools existed alongside private schools and the resulting mixture of public and private, formal and informal education produced what appears to be a basic literacy for the majority of people in the province, (Graff, 1976)

Much of the voluntarism which had characterised early nineteenth century schooling, however, gradually disappeared. Legislation in 1841, 1846, 1847, and 1850 encouraged municipalities to supplement provincial grants with property taxes in order to make common schools free. Later, by the school act of 1871 the provision of free schools became mandatory and for the first time children between the ages of seven and twelve were compelled to attend school for four months of the year. In what must surely be considered as one of the understatements of the history of youth Prentice points out that,

These developments not only made compulsory in principle what had once been seen as entirely voluntary but also signalled a changing relationship between the school and the state.<sup>31</sup>

#### The Development of the Educational Apparatus

The school act of 1841 created the office of Superintendent of common schools for the United Province of Canada who was in turn aided in Upper Canada after 1843 by locally appointed school superintendents who managed provincial grants on a local level, selected teachers and inspected schools.

From these beginnings further legislation and regulations gradually wore a pattern of tightening controls so that by the 1870's a great deal had been taken out of the hands of parents, lay superintendents and even purely local authorities when it came to the schooling of children.<sup>32</sup>

The choice of courses of study, school work, rules and prayers which had previously been controlled by parents and local school authorities was now, quite clearly, in the hands of the provincial authorities:

Equally lost to parental or purely local control in many cases were the regulation of school attendance, school financing and a host of other items related to the funding and organisation of the schools.<sup>33</sup>

At the provincial level a chief superintendent of education, later to become the Minister of Education, presided over all publicly financed elementary and secondary schooling as well as the training of teachers. In the face of such organised competition, buttressed by legislation, the small household and private venture schools virtually disappeared. State controlled compulsory education, then, did not simply constitute the provision of elementary education to a class that was otherwise intellectually and morally destitute. It was rather a matter of providing a particular form of education to a class which had (however un-systematically) alternative forms of learning available. The experience of education during these early days, then, at least for the working class, was an experience of imposition from above. Why was education imposed and what form did it take?

The debates around education in these early years were dominated by the first Superintendent of Education Egerton Ryerson and his chief supporters. They had at their disposal the growing resources of the education department which they utilised to its maximum effect. It is difficult, however, to separate out myth from reality where Ryerson is concerned. The tendency to dwell on Ryerson stems from the work of John George Hodgins who followed a long career as Ryerson's chief protege in the education department with a second career as chief historiographer of the Ontario department of Education. Ryerson's writings and acts predominate in Hodgins "Documentary History of Education in Upper

Canada from the passing of the Constitutional Act of 1971 to the Close of Dr. Ryerson's Administration in 1976". Written between 1894 and 1910, this work covers 28 volumes. Hodgins was also responsible for the editing of Ryerson's autobiography "The Story of my Life". Hodgins and Ryerson's several other biographers have, as we might expect, tended to exaggerate Ryerson's role in the development of education in Ontario.

It is also important to point out that Ryerson saw the middle and north eastern states of the United States as models for Upper Canada in the educational field. The opinions of school promoters like Horace Mann, first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, were continually quoted in the "Journal of Education"<sup>34</sup> and as a consequence of this we will refer, from time to time, to American sources in our discussion of the introduction and development of compulsory education in Ontario.

We now go on to discuss the Canadian example in greater detail, looking at the context in which educational reforms took place and at the justifying ideology which surrounded them. In Canada, as in the U.S.A., it was a combination of businessmen and middle class reformers who were to lead the way, spurred on in Ontario by Egerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education from 1844 to 1876. Like his contemporary, Horace Mann, Ryerson saw universal education as a way of dealing with the social diseases of industrialisation, poverty and delinquency. But these attitudes reflected not only a moral concern with social justice but the concerns of a class which was intimately bound up with the changes taking place around them. As Prentice has

pointed out,

If rapid growth and change, immigration and urbanisation were the root causes of apathy and social disorder in the province, most educators did not wish to dwell on this fact. These, after all, were the very changes they were busy promoting.<sup>35</sup>

And moving to the American example we discover an intimate connection between the school promoters and economic transformation;

Horace Mann helped push through the Massachusetts legislature bill supporting and assisting railroad construction (and among his colleagues) George Boutwell was a merchant. In Lawrence, Henry K. Oliver, the most vocal school promoter and a leading candidate for appointment as the third secretary of the Board of education, was agent for one of the largest cotton mills in the state. This was the former occupation of Joseph White, fourth secretary of the Board of Education . . . And so it was throughout the Commonwealth. The supporters of education wrote the legislation, invested the money, and ran the enterprises that brought about the economic and social transformation of Massachusetts.<sup>36</sup>

### Ideology and Educational Reform

The ideology surrounding educational reform was bound up with both the values of the reformers and their response to the massive social and political changes which were rocking their world. Rapid social change was not the problem as much as the threat to order that it presented. In part, this problem was overcome by the ideological redefinition of the roles, functions and obligations of a number of specific social forms and social relationships. Predominantly there was a need for the redefinition of the relationship between labour and capital, one which would support the transition outlined by Pentland (1959) from a feudal relationship or dependency between labour

and capital, to one in which labour was freed and assumed responsibility for its own subsistence. Such a transition would necessarily involve changing relationships of dependency and the accompanying ideological supports necessary for their legitimation.

When we consider some of the ways in which this transition was experienced by the school promoters we can begin to understand their responses to them. For evidence of the "panic" response which these changes elicited we need look no further than the "Annual School Reports" and the "Journal of Education". The rhetoric of the arguments spelled out in these journals clearly reflects the problem as the promoters saw it. In an article on the obligations of "educated" men which appeared in the Journal of Education in 1848 Ryerson recalled the "mutual dependency so characteristic of the feudal social order". The principles of mutual obligation, he argued, ought to pervade all ranks and classes of society no less "upon the peasant in his lowly obscurity than upon the sovereign in the magnificence and responsibility of empire".<sup>37</sup>

In a similar fashion Robert Rantoul, a Massachusetts school promoter, had expressed concern over the breakdown of the old social relations. He stressed that he would do nothing:

to encourage that miserable spirit of envy and jealousy, which finds its highest gratification in planting and fostering the most bitter feelings of opposition and hatred between those<sup>38</sup> in different classes into which society is divided,

Both Ryerson and Rantoul, then, were very much aware of the social changes which were taking place around them, as well as the threats

which these changes carried for those in power. It is to the responses to these threats of social warfare, and the resulting implications for youth that we now turn.

The immediate response to such cleavages were to involve the decline, redefinition and introduction of a number of institutions. Central to this process would be the importance of compulsory schooling. Prentice argues that,

More and more class friction was to be contained by institutions structured to take the sting out of face to face contact between the haves and have nots. The school promoters saw themselves, essentially, as the makers of peace. Education would be free and all children brought into the schools. This would bind the classes together in a common enterprise and their children in a common history of having been schooled together.<sup>39</sup>

The swing to compulsory education, however, would not be smooth, and would require solid justification, a justification which was to involve a redefinition of the roles and functions of the schools' counterparts as well as the construction and elaboration of a sound state educational ideology. This process of redefinition would, of necessity, involve a changing view of the role and influence of the state in private life and a critique of the traditional role of the family.

No historical analysis of education can be considered realistic without a consideration, also, of its relationship with the state, (Frith and Corrigan 1976). In the "Annual Report" for 1857 Ryerson makes this abundantly clear:

It is clearly within the province of the state to provide for its own safety . . . and as education is essential to the security of government, the supremacy of public law and the employment of public liberty . . . it becomes the duty of the state . . . to provide for it.<sup>40</sup>

Ryerson's statement indicates two significant views; one which is concerned with the importance of organised education and another which suggests that the state is responsible for providing this education. In this sense education could no longer be the sole responsibility of the family, or even a combination of the family and the church. Within the rhetoric of the debate it was implicitly suggested that the public was now the family and the state its parents. Ryerson again:

The state, therefore, so far from having nothing to do with children, constitutes their collective parent, and it is bound to protect them against any unnatural neglect or cruel treatment on the part of the individual parent and secure them all that will qualify them to become useful citizens of the state.<sup>41</sup>

It becomes clear, then, that the introduction of compulsory education both required and received a redefinition of the role of the state and of its relationship with private life. We now look, briefly at the redefinition of the role of the family during this period. In this case we will see that the process of redefinition resulted, mainly, from a number of criticisms which revolved around its historical function as a unit concerned with the socialisation of the young.

Attitudes towards the mid nineteenth century family were deeply ambiguous. School reformers urged, on the one hand, that it become a protective and private retreat for its members while, at the same time, urging that it abandon its educational functions to the schools.<sup>42</sup>

Hence while the family came to represent a "safe harbour" in an otherwise dangerous world, it was attacked for its educational inadequacy. The problem of truancy, for instance, far from being viewed as a response to the imposition of education, was seen as a reflection of the self

interest of parents. As the "Journal of Education" put it in 1854, there were selfish parents in Upper Canada who, "On the slightest pretext or pressure of business" kept their children out of school, "In order to enrich their own pockets".<sup>43</sup>

In Massachusetts too the family came under attack for its inability to provide an appropriate moral education for the young. Here, the school promoters dwelt upon the division, which by this time had taken place, between the public world of work and the private world of the home. One promoter emphasised the attack when he listed:

The facts to be considered when we estimate the power of the public school to resist evil and to promote good. (These were) The activity of business, by which fathers have been diverted from the custody and training of their children (and) the claims of fashion and society which have led to the neglect of family government on the part of mothers.<sup>44</sup>

The family, then, was thought to be no longer suitable for the provision of an adequate education. It was not the point, however, that the family was no longer capable of providing an adequate education. This was an aside. The important point was that the family was no longer capable of providing children with work. In a later report, in which the promoter mourns the decline of the home, this is brought very clearly to the surface:

As in some languages there is no word which expresses the true idea of home . . . so in our manufacturing towns there are many persons who know nothing of the reality.

Among this group were "magnitudes of children and youth" in agricultural areas, however, "such cases are rare and I cannot doubt that much of the moral and intellectual health enjoyed by the agricultural

population is due to this circumstance".<sup>45</sup> The reason, of course, that agricultural areas remained free from this attack was simple. Unlike the towns in which the family, as a productive unit, had been broken down, the agricultural family remained dependent upon the labour of children for its survival. Hence, children remained an actual and important source of labour power.

Attacks upon the family, of course, necessarily went hand in hand, not only with the construction of a new educational apparatus, but with a new definition of childhood as a distinct (and now important) phase in the life of an individual. (Aries 1962) Children were, increasingly, by virtue of their new relationship to the labour process, differentiated from the adult world. They came to be characterised, for the first time, in terms of their incompetence; hence the frequent use of the word "child" or its derivatives to suggest their inability to attain 'grown up' standards of behaviour.<sup>46</sup> Children could no longer be left to develop by themselves. It was now believed that they needed the benefit of institutionalised exercise and training.<sup>47</sup>

#### The Success of the Schools and the Response of the Students

"The committees saw themselves arrayed against the mass of parents whom they considered uncomprehending and indifferent. School committees were unashamedly trying to impose educational reform and innovation on this reluctant citizenry. The communal leaders were not answering the demands of a clamouring working class; they were imposing the demands; they were telling the majority, your children shall be educated as we see fit".<sup>48</sup>

Our main concern in this chapter has been to elucidate the relationship between young people, the organisations of production and the development

of compulsory schooling. This relationship, as we have seen, was not smooth and harmonious but involved struggles of interest in which the views of some won out over those of others. We view the emergence of universal schooling for working class children, essentially, as an imposition. The extent to which early compulsory educational programmes were experienced as an imposition is evidenced by responses to the school on the part of both working class parents and their children. We have noted earlier that non attendance at schools was a problem from the very beginning, "The children of the poor it seemed, did not come regularly to school, even when schools were free".<sup>49</sup> On this note the Reverend John Cambell reported from Nottawasaga in 1860 that working class children failed, "to avail themselves of the offered boon".<sup>50</sup> While another commentator from Toronto argued that the Toronto common schools had, "failed altogether to bring that particular class of children, in any way at all, within the restraining influence of our schools".<sup>51</sup>

School authorities pointed towards apathetic parents as the cause of non attendance, but the pressing concerns of poverty or the requirements of agricultural production were much more likely to have been behind the problem. It would be difficult, also, to discuss non attendance without a consideration of the schools themselves. The poor of Kingston, concluded Samuel Woods in 1869, were simply uncomfortable in schools, "Not but they can go if they desire it, but they will not; for in such an atmosphere and within such surroundings, they feel that they are not at home".<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, existing school legislation did not apply to children above the age of twelve. With the discovery of 'adolescence' in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the emergence of the new child study movements, attention gradually shifted to older children. Discussing the situations in the United States at this time, David Nasaw concludes that,

Though the elementary schools were not doing their job as well as might be hoped, they were at least keeping upwards of 70% of the school age population off the streets and under proper supervision through most of their tender years. The same could not be said of the secondary schools. As late as 1890 more than 90% of the 14-17 year olds (those potentially dangerous adolescents) were free of any institutional supervision".<sup>53</sup>

The success of nineteenth century school reform, then, was partial and fragmented. While the Ontario Act of 1871 had required compulsory attendance for four months of the year for ages seven to twelve, enforcement was sporadic. Further attempts to improve attendance in 1891 and 1919 were still only partially effective. The Adolescent Attendance Act of 1919 raised the school leaving age in Ontario to sixteen.\* It is important to re-emphasise here that, from the very beginning, the working class has demonstrated a distinctly ambivalent attitude towards compulsory schooling. At the same time this class has indicated a traditional reluctance to accept, unconditionally, the middle class promise of occupational rewards in return for submission to institutional discipline.

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\*The consequent problem of attendance is a matter for historical investigation and will not be considered further here.

### Conclusion

The recent history of youth, at least in western industrial capitalist social formations, can best be understood, in general terms, through a historical examination of the relationship between young people and the organisation of production. In Canada, as in the U.S.A. and western Europe, an examination of this relationship indicates that the most significant historical development, as far as youth are concerned, is the transition in which their role as actual labour power becomes transformed into one which involves an extended role as potential labour or 'labour in waiting'. At the same time it is this transformation which establishes the concept of "youth" as a social, and socially problematic, category.

In specifying this transition, both culturally and historically, we have examined major social and economic transformations in nineteenth century Ontario and have related these to the emergence and development of compulsory, state controlled, education. Our research has indicated that the sociology/history of youth has, like that of women, received only marginal attention as an area of study "in itself". But the similarity does not end there. Our brief historical analysis has shown that the historical experience of young people has much in common with that of women, first and foremost in the sense that both were excluded from socialised labour at the same time. In the same way, both subsequently came to constitute an "Industrial Reserve Army", women as housewives and mothers and young people as schoolkids and students.

In this sense, a revitalised sociology of youth has much to learn from the writings of feminist sociologists and historians.

Veronica Beechey (1976) has suggested, for instance, that women's historical relationship to the organisation of production may be usefully examined with reference to a number of theoretical concepts drawn from the work of Marx. The most important of these being those of the Labour Process and The Industrial Reserve Army.<sup>54</sup> We have touched briefly upon these notions in tracing the creation of youth as a reserve army in the Canadian context. We would further argue that any comprehensive historical analysis of youth and of their relationship to the organisation of production can only benefit from the incorporation and operationalisation of these concepts. The concept of the Industrial Reserve Army, for instance, would be a valuable aid in a demonstration of the functions which young people perform for capital. We have argued, for instance, that a reserve army services capital in two main ways. Firstly, it provides a disposable and flexible population. Secondly, it is a condition of competition among workers in the sense that it both depresses wage levels and forces workers to submit to increases in the rate of exploitation through the pressure of unemployment.

These concerns are, of course, matters which demand concrete historical investigation. We might begin such an investigation, for instance, by looking historically at age-related employment and unemployment statistics and determining to what extent young people are affected, comparatively, by the tendency for capitalist accumulation to both attract and repel labour. Another interesting area of investigation would be a consideration of the role of youth as a reserve army during the second world war, a period in which the state was forced to

re-energise women as a source of actual labour due to the excessive demand for labour power.

The recent history of youth, then, particularly when considered in relation to the emergence of compulsory education, raises a number of interesting questions. What, for instance, were the responses of young people and their parents to the imposition of compulsory education and to what extent were these responses reflected in problems of discipline and attendance?

We have begun to ask these questions here and our findings indicate a distinct ambivalence towards compulsory education on the part of the working class.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. See, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling Capitalist America. New York: 1976.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. See, J. G. Hodgins, Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, from the passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791 to the close of Dr. Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876. Toronto: 1894-1910.
4. Alison Prentice and Susan Houston, (Eds.), Family, School and Society in the Nineteenth Century. Toronto: 1975.
5. Stanley Aronowitz, False Promises, New York: 1973; p. 74.
6. Leo Johnson, "The Political Economy of Ontario Women in the Nineteenth Century". In Acton, J. (Ed.), Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930. Toronto: 1974; pp. 15-16.
7. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
8. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
9. Ibid..
10. James Rinehart, The Tyranny of Work. Ontario: 1975; p. 25.
11. Johnson, op. cit., p. 24.
12. H. G. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalist Labour Market in Canada". In, Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science XXV (4) 1959; pp. 450-461.
13. Johnson, op. cit., p. 26.
14. Ibid., p. 28.
15. Rinehard, op. cit., p. 31.
16. Johnson, op. cit., p. 28.
17. Ibid..
18. Ibid., p. 29.

19. Cited in Acton, op. cit., p. 220.
20. Alice Klein and Wayne Roberts, "Besieged Innocence: The "Problem" and Problems of Working Women: Toronto, 1896-1914". In, Acton, op. cit., p. 225.
21. Ibid., p. 222.
22. Graham Bleasdale, "Towards a Political Economy of Capitalist Educational Values". In Nelsen, R. W. and Nock, D. A. Reading, Writing and Riches. Ontario: 1978; p. 13.
23. See Pentland, op. cit.,
24. Cited in Michael Katz, School Reform: Past and Present. Boston: 1968; p. 35.
25. Alison Prentice, The School Promoters. Toronto: 1977.
26. E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism". Past and Present 42: 1963.
27. Cited in Prentice, op. cit., p. 131.
28. Ibid., p. 33.
29. Ibid., p. 132.
30. Prentice, op. cit., pp. 16-17.
31. Ibid., p. 17.
32. Ibid., p. 18.
33. Ibid..
34. The Journal of Education for Upper Canada. A major vehicle for Education Department propaganda.
35. Prentice, op. cit., p. 59.
36. Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform. Boston: 1968; p. 35.
37. Cited in Prentice, op. cit., p. 90.
38. Cited in Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform, op. cit., p. 24.
39. Prentice, op. cit., p. 120.

40. Ibid., p. 179.
41. Ibid., p. 17.
42. An imposition that was not accepted passively by the working class family.
43. Cited in Prentice, op. cit., p. 61.
44. Cited in Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform, op. cit., p. 42.
45. Ibid..
46. For negative uses of the word "child" see, "Annual Report for 1842", In Hodgins, J. G., Historical and other Papers and Documents Illustrative of the Educational System of Ontario, 1842-1861. Toronto: 1912; volume 4.
47. Cited in Prentice, op. cit., p. 30.
48. Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform, op. cit., p. 47.
49. Prentice, op. cit., p. 156.
50. Ibid., p. 156.
51. Ibid., p. 157.
52. Ibid., p. 159.
53. David Nasaw, Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States. New York: 1979.
54. See Veronica Beechey, "Some Notes on Female Wage Labour in the Capitalist Mode of Production". Capital and Class Number 3, 1977.

## CHAPTER IV

### YOUTH: A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In this chapter we consider youth within the context of contemporary Canadian society. In this sense we continue to pursue our goal of a reconstituted sociology of youth in locating youth within a materialist analysis while at the same time laying the foundations around which the latter part of this study is constructed.

As in the previous chapter young people will be considered in terms of their role as actual or potential labour and also in terms of the way in which these roles are structured by the relationship between the institutional settings of the school and workplace. (Frith and Corrigan 1976).

Within our discussion we will be particularly concerned with young people in the 15-24 age range. This group assumes significance here for a number of reasons. It is usually within this period, for instance, that young people undergo the transition from the institutions of full time education to those of the labour market, or, from school to work. Given that, outside of the family, school and work represent the most significant and long lasting structured experience of young people, an examination which focusses on this age range allows us to consider two key areas of investigation: Firstly, the relationship between these institutions and their combined effect in

structuring the material experience of the youthful population. A consideration of the relationship between education and the labour market will necessarily involve a discussion around the patterns of youth employment and, more importantly, youth unemployment. It will therefore respond, in part, to the call made in the conclusion to the previous chapter for an examination of the age related experiences of youth and their relationship to the labour market. A surface statistical reading of labour force figures indicate that the 15-24 age group represents the highest single group of unemployed persons (with the exception of women) both in historical and contemporary terms.<sup>1</sup> This reading holds particular implications for young people in this age range and lends added significance to a discussion of both its causes and effects.

Secondly, an analysis of the institutional effects upon young people within this age range will allow for consideration, in the next chapter, of the age related experiences of youth within these settings and of their specific responses to the related problems of compulsory schooling and the later threat of compulsory unemployment.

In locating youth within a contemporary context it will be useful to consider some related statistical information. As a source for this data we have consulted a number of Statistics Canada publications, notably, Out of School-Into the Labour Force. It is from this publication that the majority of the following data is drawn.

We are initially concerned with placing age variations within the youthful or school age population into some sort of perspective. In this sense we begin with a brief outline of variations in the age

composition of the general population. This is followed by a discussion of educational attainment, youth unemployment and the relationship between education, unemployment and social class.

### Age Variations

To put age variations in the school age population in perspective the projected age composition of the entire Canadian population up until 2031 is shown at ten year intervals. (Table 4:1). The population is divided into age groups with particular relevance given to age-related societal institutions, education, the labour market, etc. The relative size of each group will determine, in part, the conditions they will each face in specific historical situations. As the authors of

### Out of School point out:

For example the size of the older age groups indirectly affects the education system, especially the post secondary level. Government expenditures on education must be balanced against those necessary in areas such as old age security and other health and welfare programs.<sup>2</sup>

An expansion of births following the second world war, which was succeeded by a rapid contraction, produced a population bulge that will eventually work its way through all age groups. In any given historical period the group which contains this baby boom generation will have a high growth rate while other groups grow at a slower pace or even decline. As this baby boom passes through the various stages of life they will always encounter a high rate of competition for goods, services and activities appropriate to those stages, whether it be buying a house, competing for jobs or receiving aid from the state in terms of pensions or allowances.<sup>3</sup>

Table 4:1

Population Distribution by Broad Age Groups, Roughly Corresponding to Major Life-cycle Stages, Canada, 1921-2031

|                      | Age span    | Actual              |       |       |       |       |       |       |       | Projected* |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                      |             | 1921                | 1931  | 1941  | 1951  | 1961  | 1971  | 1976  | 1981  | 1986       | 1991  | 1996  | 2001  | 2011  | 2021  | 2031  |
| ALL AGES             | Years       | 8.8                 | 10.4  | 11.5  | 14.0  | 18.2  | 21.6  | 23.1  | 24.6  | 26.1       | 27.5  | 28.7  | 29.8  | 31.7  | 33.1  | 33.9  |
|                      |             | Numbers in millions |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| ALL AGES             |             | 100.0               | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0      | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
|                      |             | Per Cent            |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Pre-school           | 0-3         | 9.6                 | 8.2   | 7.4   | 9.8   | 10.0  | 6.6   | 6.0   | 6.2   | 6.3        | 5.8   | 5.2   | 5.0   | 4.9   | 4.6   | 4.5   |
| Less than 1          | 0           | 2.4                 | 1.9   | 1.9   | 2.5   | 2.5   | 1.6   | 1.5   | 1.6   | 1.6        | 1.4   | 1.3   | 1.3   | 1.2   | 1.1   | 1.1   |
| Day care             | 1-3         | 7.2                 | 6.3   | 5.5   | 7.3   | 7.5   | 5.0   | 4.5   | 4.6   | 4.7        | 4.4   | 3.9   | 3.7   | 3.7   | 3.5   | 3.4   |
| Elementary-secondary | 4-17        | 30.4                | 29.5  | 26.2  | 25.1  | 28.8  | 29.1  | 25.7  | 21.9  | 20.1       | 20.0  | 19.9  | 18.9  | 17.1  | 16.8  | 16.3  |
| Kindergarten         | 4-5         | 4.9                 | 4.3   | 3.6   | 4.7   | 4.7   | 3.7   | 3.1   | 2.9   | 3.1        | 3.0   | 2.7   | 2.5   | 2.5   | 2.4   | 2.3   |
| Elementary           | 6-13        | 17.9                | 17.1  | 14.9  | 14.4  | 17.3  | 17.2  | 14.4  | 11.9  | 11.3       | 11.7  | 11.6  | 10.7  | 9.7   | 9.6   | 9.3   |
| Secondary            | 14-17       | 7.6                 | 8.1   | 7.7   | 6.0   | 6.8   | 8.2   | 8.2   | 7.1   | 5.7        | 5.3   | 5.6   | 5.7   | 4.9   | 4.8   | 4.7   |
| Adulthood            | 18-64       | 55.2                | 56.7  | 59.7  | 57.4  | 53.5  | 56.2  | 59.7  | 62.6  | 63.8       | 63.6  | 63.8  | 64.8  | 65.7  | 62.8  | 60.0  |
| Post-secondary       | 18-24       | 11.7                | 12.7  | 12.9  | 10.8  | 9.4   | 12.5  | 13.5  | 13.8  | 12.2       | 9.9   | 9.3   | 9.7   | 9.5   | 8.6   | 8.8   |
| Maturity             | 25-44       | 28.5                | 27.3  | 28.2  | 28.9  | 26.7  | 25.1  | 27.2  | 30.0  | 33.1       | 34.5  | 33.4  | 31.2  | 27.8  | 27.8  | 26.7  |
| Middle age           | 45-64       | 15.0                | 16.7  | 18.6  | 17.7  | 17.4  | 18.6  | 19.0  | 18.8  | 18.6       | 19.2  | 21.1  | 23.9  | 28.3  | 26.4  | 24.5  |
| Old Age              | 65 and over | 4.8                 | 5.6   | 6.7   | 7.7   | 7.7   | 8.1   | 8.6   | 9.3   | 9.8        | 10.6  | 11.1  | 11.3  | 12.3  | 15.8  | 19.2  |

\* Assumptions: total fertility rate = 1.80  
annual net migration = +100,000

From: Out of School-Into the Labour Force.  
Statistics Canada, 1978, Page 86.

The post war baby boom, then, produced a bulge which will maintain visibility as it passes through each stage of the life cycle. In the present period the baby bulge has reached the period of its adolescence. It is represented by youth. As a purely demographic feature the present location of this bulge holds a number of implications for our discussion and will be related in the following analysis to both education and unemployment.

Following the annual increase in births after world war two, increasing numbers of young people have been emerging from educational institutions since the early sixties. The children born around the peak year of births (1959) are now (1979) twenty, an age at which many will be actively seeking work.\* In 1976 60% more former students entered the Canadian workforce than in 1966. For Canada as a whole the number peaked in 1977, 18 years after the 1959 high in births at an estimated 615,000. By 1986 a decline to roughly 508,000 is expected, which, if accurate, means that roughly the same number of young people will be entering the labour market in the middle eighties as there were in 1970.<sup>4</sup>

#### Educational Attainment

While the annual number of labour force entrants is likely to fall in the future their overall educational standard, in terms of the acquisition of qualifications will steadily increase. This should come as no surprise, however, and can be considered as more the extension

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\*A forthcoming O.E.C.D. education statistics yearbook shows that the average age of school leavers in 1974 was 18.9.

of a recent historical trend. In 1966 only 18.5% left the education system with at least some or completed post secondary education. In 1976 this figure had increased to 35.9% and is expected to reach 42% by 1986. (See chart 4:1).

According to the authors of Out of School the rise in educational qualifications is attributable to three factors:

1. A large increase, throughout the 1960's in the proportion of young people who, out of choice or coercion, entered post secondary education.
2. In the early and mid seventies, the large number of baby boom children of post secondary age (18-24) boosted enrolment.
3. The projected decline in the late seventies and early eighties in the 14-17 age group. This will lower secondary enrolment relative to post secondary enrolment and consequently decrease secondary leavers relative to post secondary leavers.

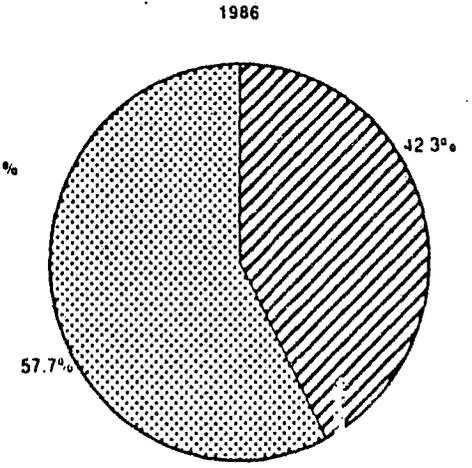
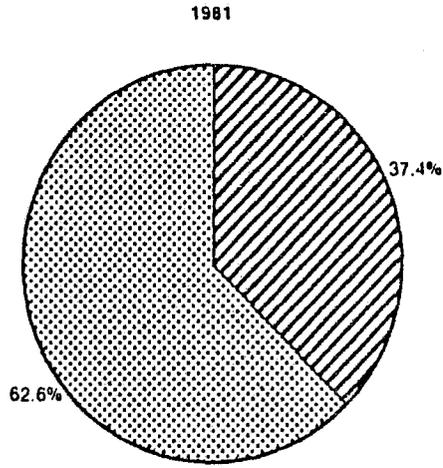
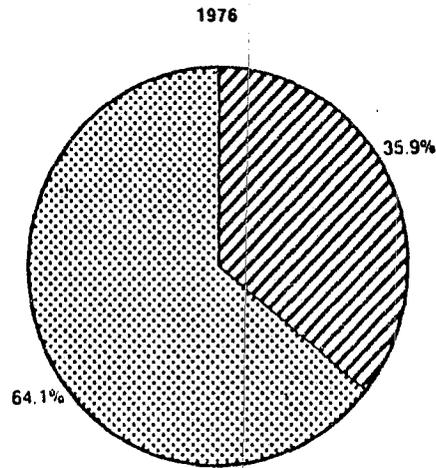
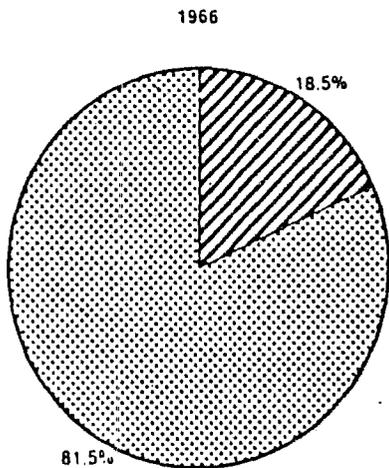
As table 4:2 demonstrates, the educational qualifications of ~~young people who are looking for work will undergo radical changes~~ within the next decade. The number with post secondary education continues to rise slowly into the 1980's. (see chart 4:2). By 1986 the supply of secondary educated labour force entrants will have contracted to the 1966 level while the number of labour force entrants with a post secondary education will be 220% above the total for that year. (See table 4:2).

Chart 4:1

Potential labour force entrants from the Canadian education system: Percentage distribution by level of schooling, selected years.

Historical

Projected



 Post-secondary (some or completed)

 Secondary graduation or less

From: Out of School-Into the Labour Force. Statistics Canada. 1978. Page 45.

Unemployment

With larger number of potential labourers entering the job market a corresponding rise in employment opportunities is necessary if unemployment is not to increase. In demonstrating the relationship between labour force growth, employment opportunities and unemployment the overall unemployment situation in general and that of youth, as a specific group, in particular, requires a brief examination.

Table 4:2

Potential labour force entrants, by level of schooling, selected years

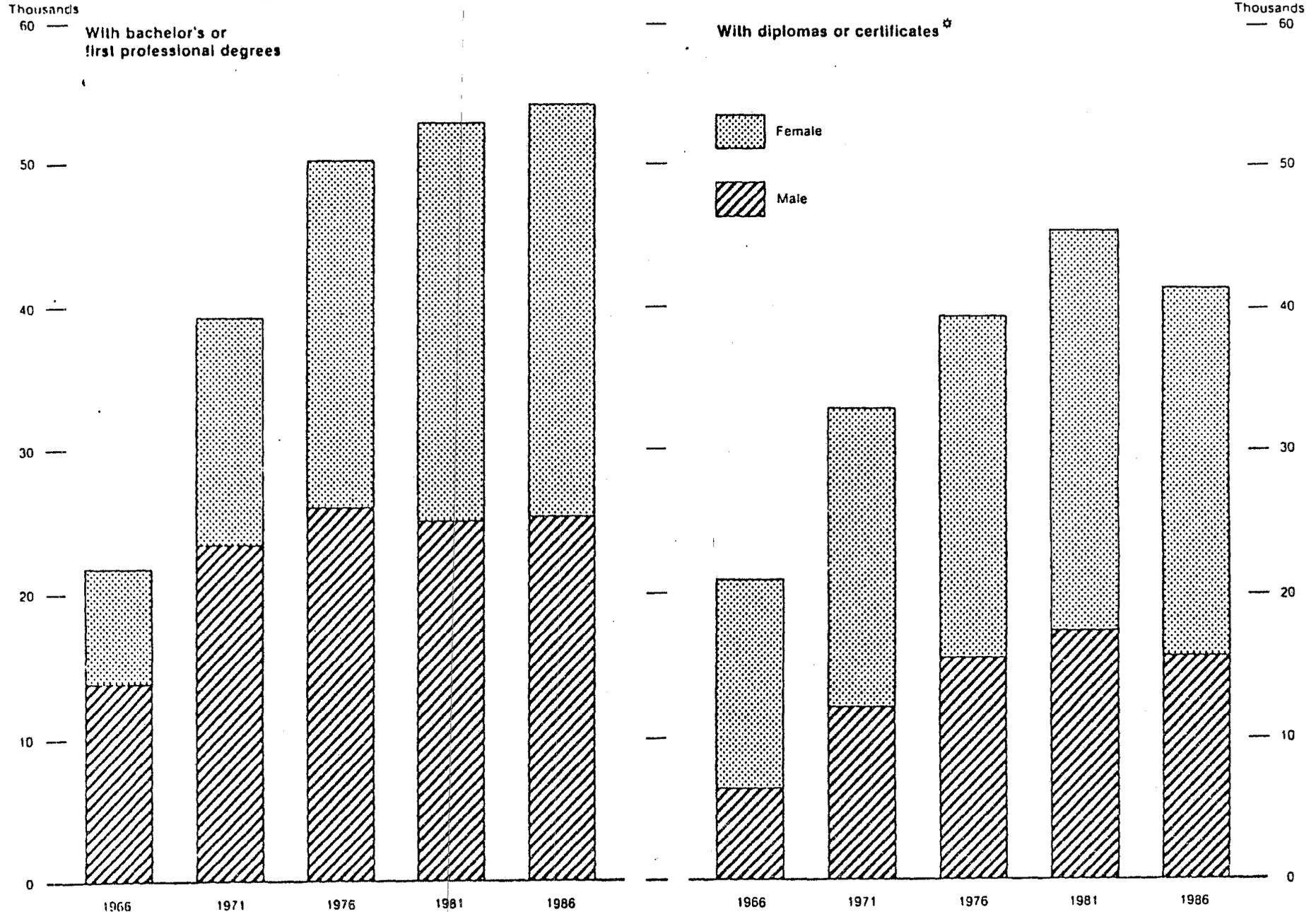
|      | <u>Secondary</u><br><u>graduation or less</u> |                   | <u>Post-secondary</u><br><u>(some or completed)</u> |                   | <u>Total</u> |                   |
|------|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
|      | Thousands                                     | Index<br>1966=100 | Thousands   | Index<br>1966=100 | Thousands    | Index<br>1966=100 |
| 1966 | 293.7   | 100.0             | 66.8  | 100.0             | 360.5        | 100.0             |
| 1971 | 367.8   | 125.2             | 150.3   | 225.0             | 518.1        | 143.7             |
| 1976 | 371.5   | 126.5             | 208.0   | 311.4             | 579.6        | 160.8             |
|      |   |                   | Projected   |                   |              |                   |
| 1977 | 405.6   | 138.1             | 209.7   | 313.9             | 615.3        | 170.7             |
| 1980 | 372.1   | 126.7             | 217.9   | 326.2             | 590.0        | 163.7             |
| 1983 | 328.0   | 111.7             | 222.0   | 332.3             | 550.0        | 152.6             |
| 1986 | 295.5   | 100.6             | 212.6   | 318.3             | 508.0        | 140.9             |

1. Leavers with secondary school are roughly 16-19 years old, while those with post-secondary education are 21-25. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number of 16-19-year-olds will be declining while the number of 21-25-year-olds continues to rise. Hence, the number leaving school with a secondary education (who are 16-19) will be falling relative to the number leaving with post-secondary education (21-25-year-olds).

Chart 4:2

Potential labour force entrants from the Canadian education systems, selected years

From: Out of School-Into the Labour Force. Statistics Canada, 1978. Page 136.



\* Excludes graduates from university transfer programs

High growth in the labour force over the past decade, an annual average of 3.4%,<sup>5</sup> has been caused by the large numbers of young people leaving full time education and seeking employment for the first time. This has coincided with relatively high levels of immigrant and female labour force participation. In such a period, as has been noted above, the rate of jobs created must equal the growth in labour force participation if unemployment is not to increase. With reference to this the Economic Council of Canada noted that:

The Canadian economy has been unable to generate enough jobs to match the total growth in the labour force and achieve the stipulated target of a lower unemployment rate through conventional means.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1976 and 1977 the labour force grew from 10,308,000 to 10,616,000, or 3%. However, during the same period only 182,000 'new' jobs were created, many of which may well have been filled by a redistribution of the existing labour force participants. As a result the number of unemployed jumped from 736,000 to 862,000 and the unemployed rate from 7.1% to 8.1%.<sup>7</sup>

The problem of the increase in labour force participation, then, is compounded by the significant lack of job creation on either a temporary or permanent basis.<sup>8</sup> The levels of job creation needed to achieve certain rates of unemployment have been estimated by Statistics Canada:

1. For unemployment to remain at 8% until 1980 and decline to 6% by 1986, annual average job creation would have to be 250-285 thousand by 1980 and 225-270 thousand by 1986.

2. For unemployment to drop to 7% in 1980 and to 5% by 1986, annual average job creation would have to be 305-340 thousand to 1980 and roughly 230-270 thousand to 1986.
3. For unemployment to drop to 6.5% in 1980 and to 4% by 1986, average annual job creation would have to be 335-370 thousand to 1980 and 230-270 thousand to 1986.<sup>9</sup>

Employment growth in recent years puts these numbers into context. From fewer than 100,000 in 1970 annual job creation rose to 439,000 and 383,000 during the strong expansionary period of 1973 and 1974--the highest rates since the early sixties. Then, during the 1975-77 period, total employment increased by only an average 190,000 jobs a year. Thus yearly growth since 1970 has been about 260,000 jobs.<sup>10</sup> (See Table 4.3)

Using these labour force figures as a basis, calculations suggest that a large number of new jobs would have to be created over the next decade to significantly reduce unemployment. However, the Economic Council of Canada is not overly optimistic of this possibility. One of the conclusions of its Fourteenth Annual Review was that

Even with the measures recently announced by the Minister of Finance, the unemployment rate will be very high, despite a projected growth rate. (In the GNP) that, by international or historical standards, is quite good . . . .

The solution is more jobs . . . . The economy's natural advantage lies with resource based industries, but these are not labour intensive . . . . While manufacturing is more labour-intensive, employment there has in fact been diminishing . . . the growing demand for services--the sector that has provided most of the new jobs over the past decades--depends on continued increases in real incomes, which result mainly from rising productivity in the primary and secondary industries but also from government spending, which is now constrained.<sup>11</sup>

Youth and Unemployment

Unemployment among young people (15-24) has traditionally been higher than among those who are 25 or older. (See chart 4:3). In 1960, for instance, approximately 22% of the labour force was under 25 and yet they constituted 35% of the unemployed population. Even in the mid sixties when unemployment rates were relatively low the "youth" unemployment rate was almost twice that of the 25+ age group. (6.1% versus 2.8%).

Table 4:3Labour force, employment and the unemployment rate, 1963-76-Annual averages-

| <u>Labour force</u> | <u>Employed</u> | <u>Annual increase in employment</u> | <u>Unemployed</u> | <u>Unemployment rate</u> |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| -----Thousands----- |                 |                                      |                   |                          |
| 1963                | 6811            | 6472                                 | 340               | 5.0%                     |
| 1964                | 7015            | 6713                                 | 241               | 4.3                      |
| 1965                | 7207            | 6949                                 | 236               | 3.6                      |
| 1966                | 7494            | 7242                                 | 293               | 3.4                      |
| 1967                | 7747            | 7451                                 | 209               | 3.8                      |
| 1968                | 7951            | 7593                                 | 142               | 4.5                      |
| 1969                | 8194            | 7832                                 | 239               | 4.4                      |
| 1970                | 8396            | 7919                                 | 87                | 5.7                      |
| 1971                | 8643            | 8107                                 | 188               | 6.2                      |
| 1972                | 8918            | 8363                                 | 256               | 6.2                      |
| 1973                | 9321            | 8802                                 | 439               | 5.6                      |
| 1974                | 9704            | 9185                                 | 383               | 5.3                      |
| 1975                | 10060           | 9363                                 | 178               | 6.9                      |
| 1976                | 10308           | 9572                                 | 209               | 7.1                      |
| 1977                | 10616           | 9754                                 | 182               | 8.1                      |

From Out of School-Into the Labour Force. Statistics Canada, 1978.

Chart 4:3

From: Out of School-Into the Labour Force. Statistics Canada. 1978. Page 165.

Canadian unemployment rate by selected age group, 1955-77

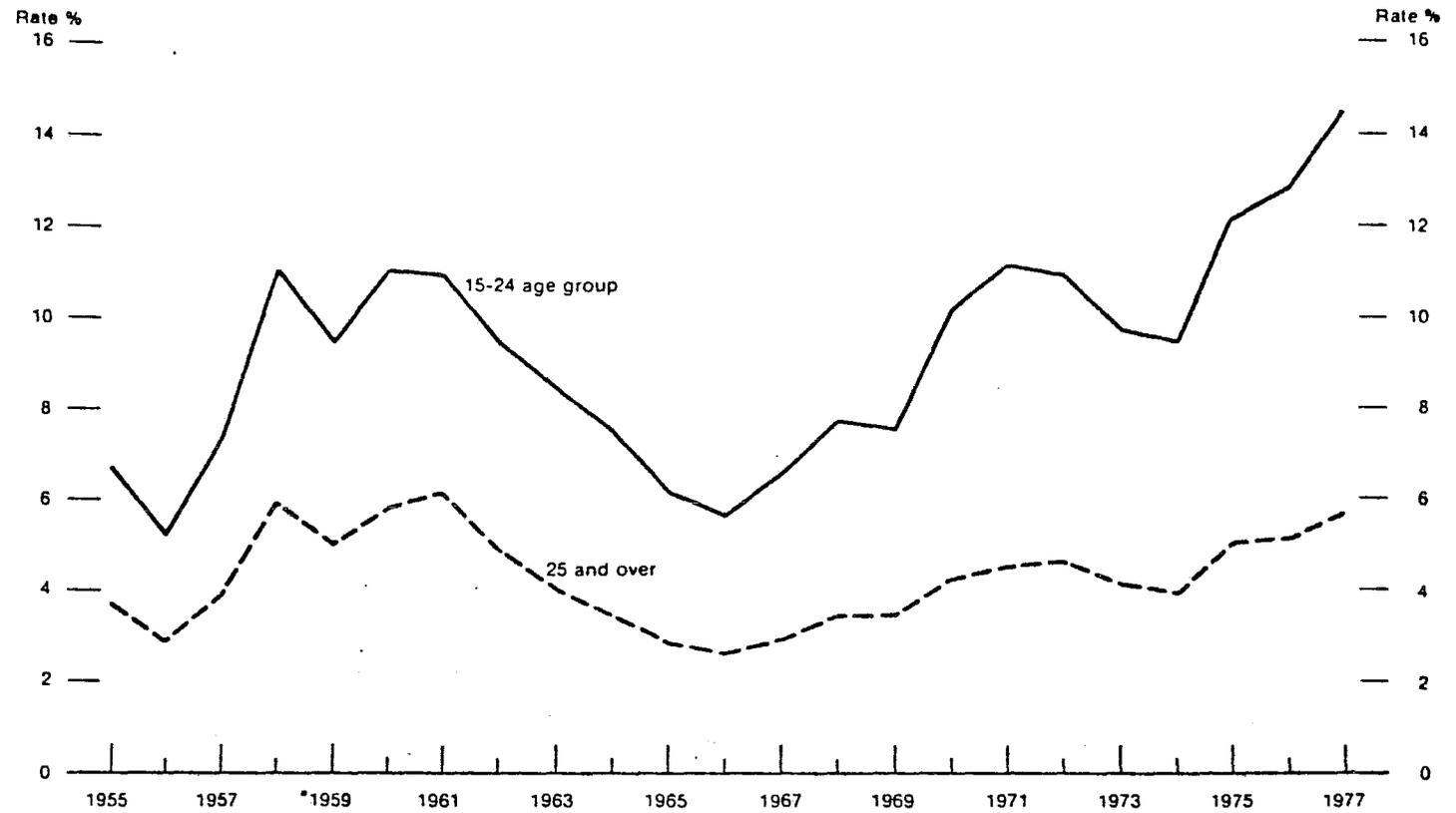
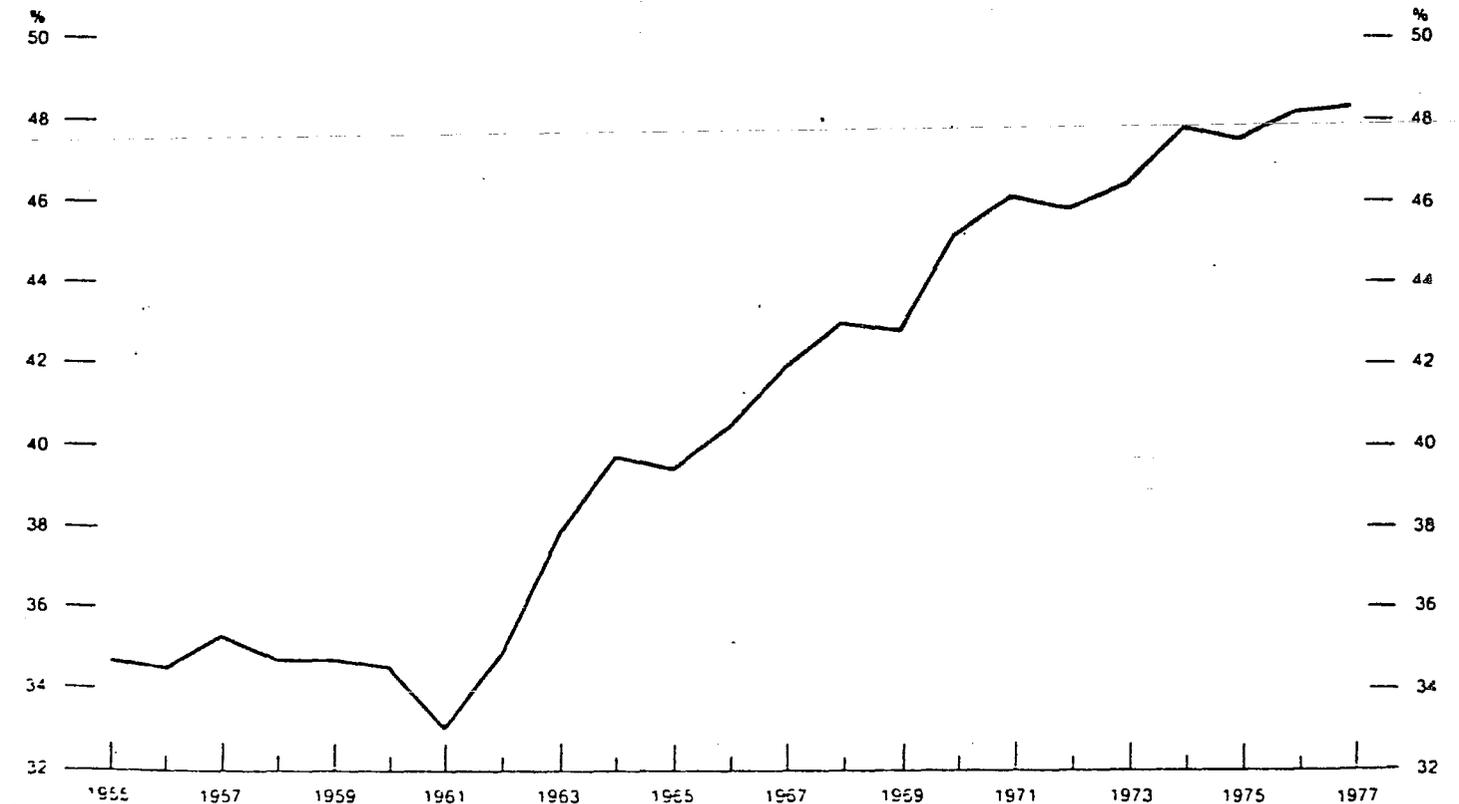


Chart 4:4

Unemployed in 15-24 age group as a percent of all unemployed, Canada, 1955-77



Source: Labour Force Survey Division, Statistics Canada

Since the end of the sixties the number of young people entering the labour market increased rapidly and, consequently, unemployment among this group rose at a higher rate than for older labour force members. Today (1979) the 15-24 year old group constitutes 27% of the labour force, while, at the same time, almost half of those who are unemployed fall within this age group. (See Chart 4:4).

The 1977 unemployment rate of those in the 15-24 age group was 14.5%, or two and one half times the 5.8% rate of those 25 and older. Much of this increase is due to the large growth in the number of 15-24 year olds relative to other age groups in the labour force, a difference which has been noted by the Economic Council of Canada:

Compared with 1961 when unemployment rates were equally severe (as in 1977) the burden of today's unemployment lies less heavily on adult males, whose relative numbers have increased the least, and more on secondary earners--young entrants and women aged 25 and over--whose numbers in the labour force have increased the most.<sup>12</sup>

The slow growth of employment among the young (an average of 16,000 jobs a year from 1974-1977) will result in increasing unemployment.

The unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group, for instance, rose from 9.4% in 1974 to 14.5% in 1977.<sup>13</sup>

In the early 1980's the number of 15-24 year olds in the labour force will start to decline and the gap in unemployment rates between young people and adults may begin to close. Substantial changes, however, in the rate of youth unemployment will not occur before the late 1980's, when it is projected by Statistics Canada that it will decline at approximately 2.5% annually.<sup>14</sup> In spite of this projection the

tendency for youth unemployment to exceed that of adults may well persist. The authors of Out of School note that:

It will certainly mean that with fewer young people entering most industries, the work force will be "older". It also seems reasonable to suggest that youth unemployment will be less of a problem. But whether available jobs will match the qualifications of young people seeking work is, of course, another question.

As the baby boom children mature, the employment difficulties many of them have had to confront may not totally disappear. Labour market competition among older people (e.g., 25-35) may be considerable as the number of workers of these ages swells. This could, for example, affect their unemployment rate. Moreover, it is possible that although securing employment may be easier for the young in the mid to late eighties, the army of slightly older, experienced workers, who will be relatively well-educated, could inhibit young people's advancement.<sup>15</sup>

#### Education and Unemployment

While statistics about youth unemployment are highly informative they tend to obscure important differences about young people. In terms of this analysis one factor of particular concern is education. Traditionally there has been a strong negative correlation between education and unemployment: The higher the level of education, the lower the unemployment rate. Table 4:4 and chart 4:5 indicate that this has been true of the recent past. Between 1974 and 1977, for instance, the average annual spring unemployment rate of workers with elementary education was highest at 10.1%. The rate was lower for those with secondary education, (8.2%) and lowest for university degree holders, (2.4%). Among the young (15-24) the pattern was

Table 4:4

Spring unemployment rate by educational level, Canada, 1969-77

|   |  | <u>Elementary</u> | <u>Secondary</u> | <u>Some post-<br/>secondary</u> | <u>Post-secondary</u>     |        | <u>All<br/>educational<br/>levels</u> |
|---|--|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------|
|   |  |                   |                  |                                 | Diploma or<br>certificate | Degree |                                       |
| ----- Percent -----                     |  |                   |                  |                                 |                           |        |                                       |
| <u>A. Total labour force (all ages)</u> |  |                   |                  |                                 |                           |        |                                       |
| Jan. 1969                               |  | 9.6               | 5.1              | 2.4                             | -----0.7-----             |        | 5.9                                   |
| April 1972                              |  | 10.2              | 6.5              | 6.7                             | 2.5                       | 2.3    | 6.8                                   |
| April 1974                              |  | 9.3               | 6.1              | 5.2                             | 2.4                       | 1.9    | 6.0                                   |
| April 1975                              |  | 10.3              | 8.0              | 6.0                             | 4.2                       | 2.3    | 7.2                                   |
| April 1976                              |  | 9.8               | 8.6              | 5.9                             | 5.5                       | 2.7    | 7.6                                   |
| April 1977                              |  | 11.2              | 10.2             | 7.8                             | 5.0                       | 2.9    | 8.8                                   |
| Average<br>1974-77                      |  | 10.1              | 8.2              | 6.3                             | 4.4                       | 2.5    | 7.5                                   |
| <u>B. 15-24 age group</u>               |  |                   |                  |                                 |                           |        |                                       |
| Jan. 1969                               |  | 18.3              | 8.9              | 4.3                             | -----3.1-----             |        | 9.6                                   |
| April 1972                              |  |                   |                  | not available                   |                           |        |                                       |
| April 1974                              |  | 18.1              | 10.6             | 8.9                             | 4.4                       | 5.7    | 10.4                                  |
| April 1975                              |  | 26.5              | 13.1             | 7.9                             | 6.2                       | 4.8    | 12.3                                  |
| April 1976                              |  | 23.9              | 14.0             | 8.3                             | 6.8                       | 4.7    | 12.8                                  |
| April 1977                              |  | 25.0              | 16.0             | 12.6                            | 7.9                       | 7.3    | 15.1                                  |
| Average<br>1974-77                      |  | 23.2              | 13.5             | 9.5                             | 6.3                       | 5.4    | 12.7                                  |

C. Number unemployed, by educational level, Canada, April, 1977

| -----Thousands-----            |  |     |     |    |    |    |     |
|--------------------------------|--|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|
| Total labour force (all ages), |  |     |     |    |    |    |     |
| April 1977                     |  | 211 | 536 | 79 | 59 | 29 | 914 |
| 15-24 age group,               |  |     |     |    |    |    |     |
| April 1977                     |  | 40  | 294 | 44 | 19 | 7  | 404 |

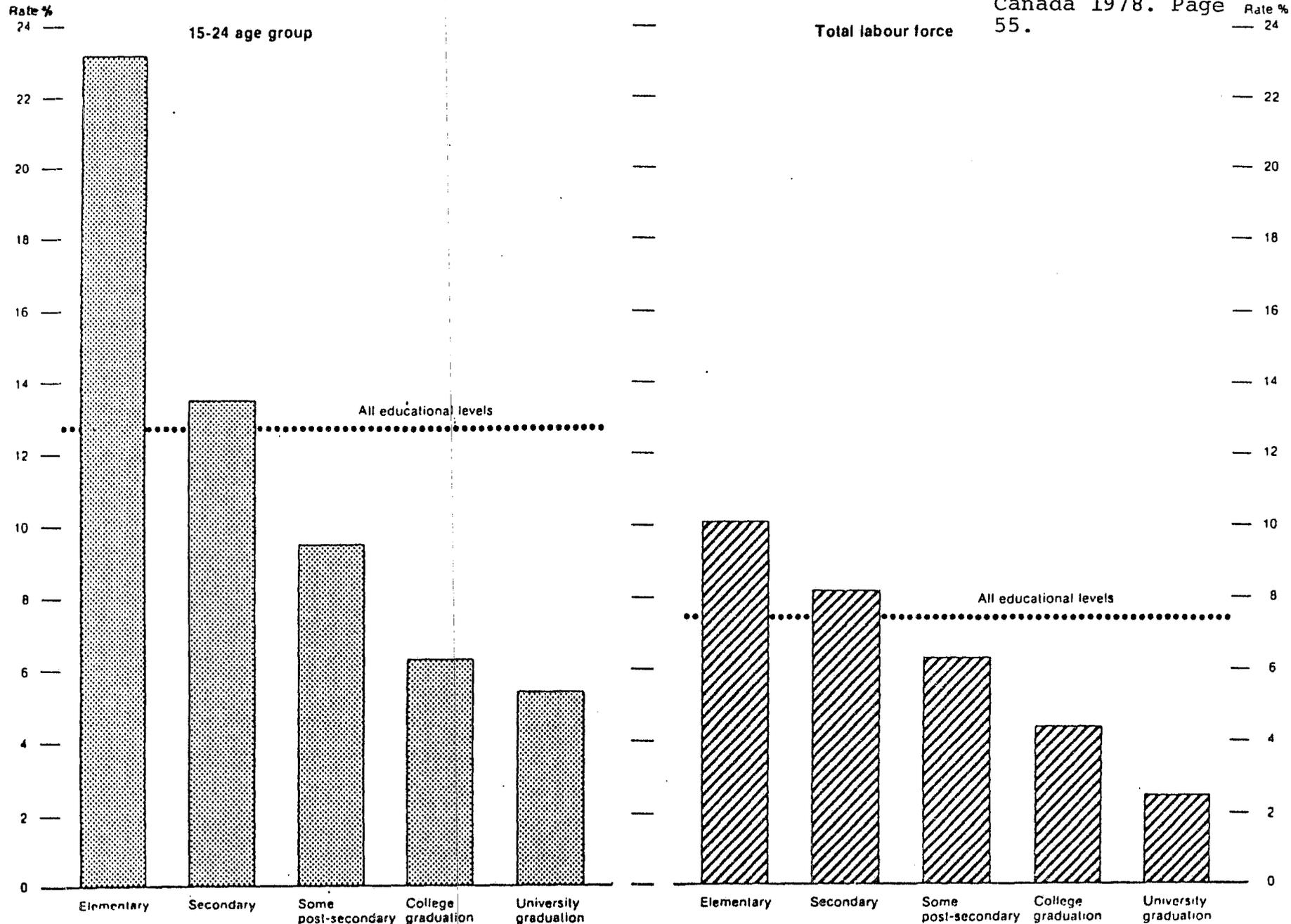
From Out of School- Into the Labour Force.

Statistics Canada. 1978. Page 169.

Chart 4:5

Average spring unemployment rate, by educational level, Canada, 1974-77

From: Out of School-Into the Labour Force. Statistics Canada 1978. Page 55.



Source: Labour Force Survey Division, Statistics Canada

similar, but all unemployment rates were higher, 23.2% for those with elementary education, 13.5% for those with secondary education and decreasing to 5.4% for degree holders.

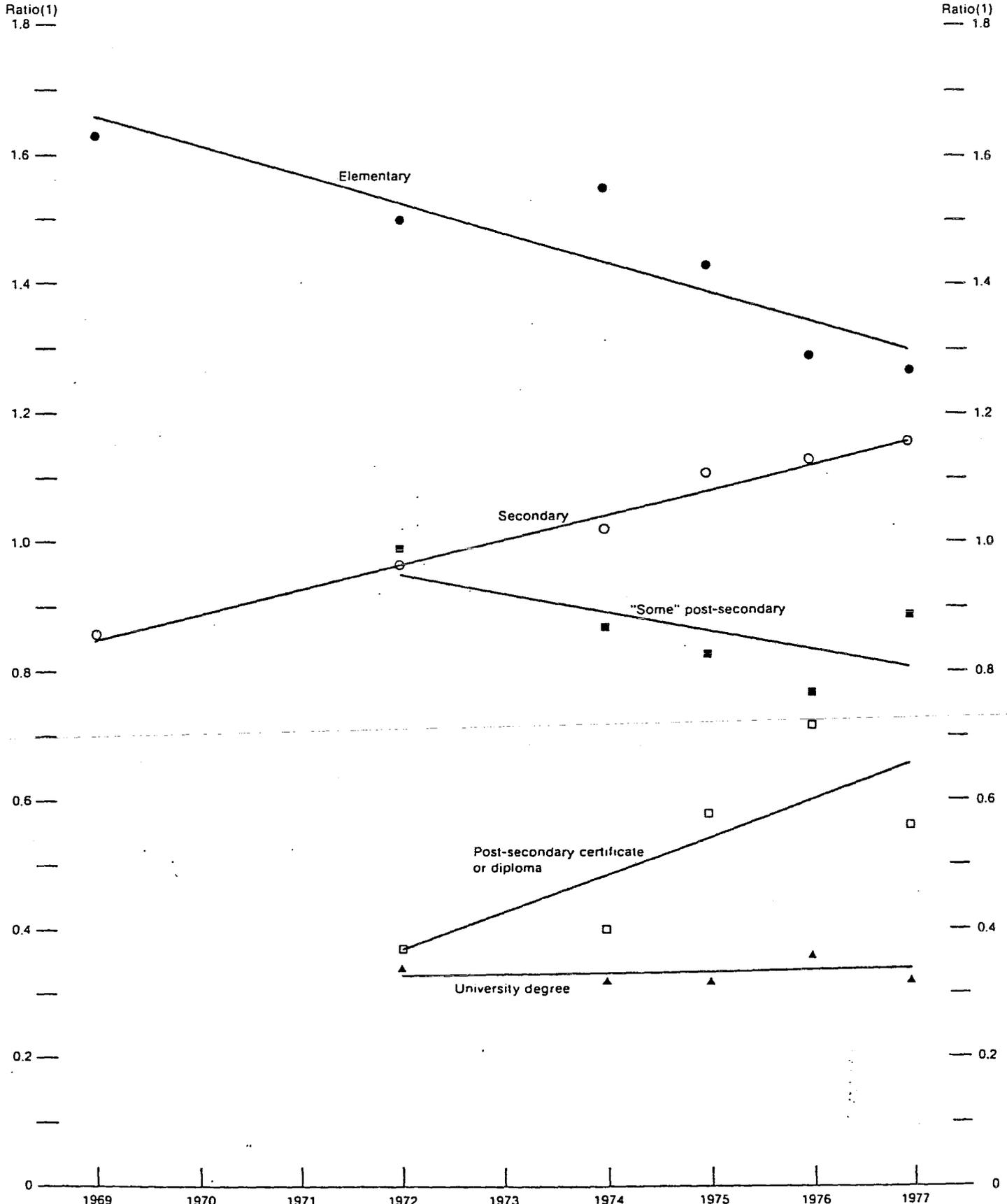
Those job seekers, then, with a low level of education have traditionally encountered greater employment difficulties than those with a higher level. However, this relationship may be modified in the future by the rapid expansion of more educated job seekers.

We have established that unemployment for every educational group rose between 1969 and 1977, (Table 4:4). A closer examination, however, reveals a more rapid increase for some groups than others. Chart 4:6 shows relative employability according to education, i.e. the rate of increase of unemployment in each educational group relative to the increase for the labour force as a whole. Unemployment among those with secondary education grew more quickly than overall unemployment between 1969 and 1977. Thus their relative employability declined. In 1967 their unemployment rate was lower (.86) than the overall rate, but by 1977 it was 1.15 times the latter. At the same time the relative employability of elementary educated people improved. In 1969 their unemployment rate was 1.6 times the overall rate but declined to approximately 1.3 by 1977. In this sense the relative employability factor of elementary and secondary educated persons has converged. The authors of Out of School suggest that this may be the result of two phenomena: Displacement of the secondary educated by persons with more education in some types of jobs; and/or the rapidly decreasing proportion of the labour force with only elementary education, which could improve their employment prospects.<sup>16</sup>

Chart 4:6

Unemployment rate by educational attainment related to the overall unemployment rate, Canada, spring, 1969-77

(see text for explanation)



(1) Ratio of unemployment rate for a particular educational level to rate for the labour force as a whole

The figures also indicate that the relative employability of those receiving post secondary education did not change even though they came to constitute a larger proportion of the total labour force.<sup>17</sup> This supports the suggestion made earlier that many obtained jobs formerly filled by secondary educated people. This tendency could keep unemployment low among the highly educated while worsening the relative position of those with secondary education. The nature of the labour force has, then, changed significantly in the past two decades. There now exists a large supply of labour force entrants with an unprecedented level of training and general education. The supply of jobs, however, has not kept up with the demand for them. There now exists an excess of post secondary graduates and dropouts relative to the available number of jobs, and there exists an even greater number of unemployed Canadians with secondary education and less. In 1976, 35.9% of the officially unemployed had a post secondary background, 64.1% had secondary or less. The strong negative correlation between education and unemployment therefore remains. The higher the education the lower the unemployment rate.

#### Education and Social Class

It can be demonstrated that youth as a group constitute the largest and most significant layer of the unemployed population. (With the exception of women) This group can be further broken down on the basis of educational attainment and its relationship to employability. How are these findings related to differences in social class?

One of the main features of a modern industrial society is the extent to which entry to a large range of occupations is increasingly dependent upon the acquisition of the necessary educational qualifications. Blau (1974) for example, has pointed to the growing relationship, in the United States, between occupational differentiation and the growth of educational qualifications. Data "on more than sixty countries similarly show that a society's occupational differentiation exhibits substantial positive correlation with the level of education (.73) and with the proportion of the male labour force in professional and related occupations (.55)".<sup>18</sup>

Studies of social mobility have also demonstrated the importance of educational attainment. Glass's study in Britain, for example, showed quite clearly the advantage of a grammar school education for people of working class origin. They were much more likely to be socially mobile than those who had received no more than an elementary education. Similar findings have been reported for the United States.<sup>19</sup>

A further relationship which assumes importance is that which may be determined between social class and educational differentiation. The concept of class is not a particularly straightforward one and there are many differences in the precise coding or classifications employed in different studies. This makes for a number of problems in sociological work, both in terms of its theoretical and methodological procedures. Not least of the problems arising out of this is the problem of comparison, especially where cross cultural comparisons are involved. Commenting upon this, with reference to the relationship between education and social class, Olive Banks has pointed out that:

There are sufficient common factors to allow rough comparisons to be made, provided it is remembered that the basis of classification is often not identical. It is usual, for example, to take father's occupation as the main basis of classification and to group the manual occupations as "working class" and the non manual occupations as middle class. Most classifications are sufficiently close to this pattern to make it workable, provided all the limitations are kept in mind.<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of this type of model some general patterns may be distinguished from a number of studies. When secondary education is of different types, for example, working class children have been shown to be less likely to enter the more academic schools and, once there, to be more likely to leave early. (Little and Westergard, 1964) In most western european countries the pattern has been found to be similar. Working class children are less likely than middle class children to enter the more academic types of secondary education and even if they do they are less likely to complete the course. A survey by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had demonstrated, across a wide range of societies, not only the extent of social class inequalities of this kind but also of their persistence over time.<sup>21</sup>

There are also considerable class differences in access to the universities. These have been recently demonstrated by Halsey (1975) who has shown that in spite of post war improvements in equality of access, children of the upper middle classes are three times as likely as the lower middle class to reach a university and the lower working class have less than half the chance of the lower middle class.<sup>22</sup>

In Canada these findings have been supported by Porter (1961) who has demonstrated the existence of a clearly class differentiated

educational system<sup>23</sup> and by the finding of the Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education that "People from families below average in economic status are likely to be drop outs and more likely to be early dropouts".<sup>24</sup>

### Conclusion

Within the officially unemployed population youth as a group may be separated out as constituting a disproportionately high percentage. Within this group we can distinguish a relationship between employment and relative employability in that unemployment correlates negatively with educational attainment. We have demonstrated that this relationship operates along clearly distinguishable class lines. In this sense, differential access to educational institutions and, as a consequence, to academic qualifications, may be related in Canada, as elsewhere, to social class background.

In this sense, working class young people are doubly disadvantaged. First of all they are part of a group which, in both historical and contemporary terms, has been hardest hit by the problem of unemployment. Secondly, within this group, working class youth are, by virtue of their own particular kind of relationship to the educational apparatus, disadvantaged in terms of access to the educational qualifications which would increase their relative employability.

In a very real sense, then, it is increasingly young, working class, people who are the most seriously affected by the present problem of unemployment and the high rate of competition for what few jobs become

available each year. In the following chapter we will consider some responses, from a sample of this group, to the structural pre-conditions which determine their future prospects as part of the Canadian labour force.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Out of School - Into the Labour Force: Trends and Prospects for Enrolment, School Leavers and the Labour Force in Canada - The 1960's through the 1980's. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1978.
2. Ibid., pp. 86-87.
3. Ibid., p. 84.
4. Ibid., p. 133.
5. Ibid., p. 157.
6. Economic Council of Canada: Into the 1980's, Fourteenth Annual Review. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1977; p. 81.
7. Out of School, op. cit., p. 157.
8. For a discussion of the inability of established, state controlled, job creation programs to deal with this problem see, Discussion Paper on Unemployment, National Union of Students Seventh Annual Meeting, Vancouver, May 1979.
9. Out of School, op. cit., p. 159-160.
10. Ibid., p. 160.
11. Cited in Out of School, ibid., p. 162.
12. Economic Council of Canada, ibid., p. 9.
13. Out of School, op. cit., p. 163.
14. Ibid., p. 167.
15. Ibid.,
16. Ibid., p. 170.
17. The relative position of those with "some" post secondary education improved, declined for those with diploma or certificate, while the position of university graduates remained at the highest level in the labour force during the 1970's.
18. P. Blau, "Parameters of Social Structure", American Sociological Review XXXIX, 1974; pp. 627-628.

19. D. V. Glass, (Ed.), Social Mobility in Britain, London: 1954; pp. 291-307. And, R. Centers, "Education and Occupational Mobility", American Sociological Review, Volume XIV, 1949; pp. 143-146.
20. Olive Banks, The Sociology of Education, London: 1976.
21. Development of Secondary Education: Trends and Implications. O.E.C.D., Paris: 1969. See also the data for France in R. Clignet, Liberty and Equality in the Educational Process, New York: 1974.
22. A. H. Halsey, "Sociology and the Equality Debate", Oxford Review of Education, Volume 1, 1975; pp. 14-15.
23. John Porter, "Social Class and Education" In B. R. Blishen, (Ed.) Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives. Toronto: 1961.
24. "Two Years After School: A Report of the Canadian Research Committee on Practical Education". In Canadian Education VI, March 1951; p. 34.

## CHAPTER V

### A CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG STUDENTS AT A HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL

#### Introduction

At the outset of this study we indicated that we were interested in the relationship between class and age and in the ways in which age acts as a mediation of class. We further emphasised the importance of locating any sociological analysis of young people within the institutional context of both the school and work.

Our study so far has been concerned with an examination of the historical relationship between young people, the organization of production and the development of compulsory schooling. Within this discussion the school has been viewed as an institution whose concern is with the mediation of the relationship between young people, as potential labour power, and the social division of labour in the capitalist mode of production. While the role of the school has not been discussed in any great detail we have argued that it is important, first and foremost, in the sense that schools produce workers.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of locating youth within both a structural and historical analysis was two-fold. First, we wanted to 'situate' young people within a general framework of analysis. We did this by considering the historical relationship between young people and the organisation

of production. This was important in the sense that it represented what we consider to be a useful way of 'looking at' and understanding young people in both historical and contemporary analyses. Secondly, our analysis traced, with reference to a specific historical and cultural context, the transformation in which young people came to constitute a distinct and separate social category; in a cultural sense as 'youth', and, in a material sense, as potential labour power or 'labour in waiting'. Fundamentally, then, we have pointed towards the importance of locating analyses of youth within a specific historical and cultural context. Within this we have argued that a class analysis of young people must begin with an examination of the institutions within which young people are located.

In the preceding chapter we located young, working class people in the Canadian context within a contemporary institutional setting. Here we considered the central relationship between the school and the labour market in structuring the material experiences of the youthful population. This involved a discussion of the relationship between education, employment and unemployment. We demonstrated that young people experience a disproportionate amount of unemployment. Within this group, however, the young people of the working class are even more likely to experience unemployment as a result of their relatively lower levels of educational achievement. We have demonstrated therefore, a clear connection between social class, educational attainment and employability.

In this chapter we examine the responses of a sample of young, working class, high school students to the institutional experience of

compulsory education. At the same time we consider the attitudes of our sample towards the relationship between school and work. We are moving, then, from a structural and historical analysis to one which is concerned with the attitudes and experiences of young people within a contemporary institutional setting. This is not to say that our historical analysis will be discarded. On the contrary, we argue that a contemporary analysis of young people and of their experience within schools can only become intelligible when related to the historical and structural relationship between the school and the organisation of production. For example, while school buildings and school curricula have changed, two important elements of compulsory education remain. Firstly, the school remains legally compulsory and, secondly, its central concern remains that of providing discipline to an emerging potential labour force. In this sense we consider the responses of high school students to the experience of compulsory schooling as part of a distinct historical process. A process which involves particular types of responses, truancy, disorder and so on, to the equally specific experiences of compulsion and discipline.

### The School and Ideology

The fact that young, working class people passively accept their location at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy has led to the assumption that the transmission of a particular kind of ideology occurs within the school. This has, in turn, led to a number of functionalist interpretations of the role of the school and of its relationship to the labour market. Quite simply, the school has been seen as a black box,

within which young people are quietly transformed into model workers for the production line.<sup>2</sup> If this were to be the case we would expect to find a high degree of correspondence between the official values of the school and the degree of acceptance of these values on the part of school students. This is, of course, is not the case, as a number of studies have shown. Indeed, if we were to point to the one major contribution made by ethnographic studies of the school or the workplace it would be that of having revealed, to various degrees, the existence of oppositional tendencies towards these institutions among both students and workers.<sup>3</sup>

Our own analysis is located within a line of ethnographic educational studies which have attempted to connect up the responses of students with the dimensions of work, class culture and subordinate cultural forms. In this sense we are informed by a number of school ethnographies which have been produced, both, in England and North America. The specific work in England is David Hargreaves' Social Relations in a Secondary School. The main finding of this work and, more generally, the main finding of school ethnographies is that school sub-cultures exist within the school. Hargreaves, in particular, demonstrates the contours of student sub-cultures which arise in response to the school dividing them, importantly, between conformist and non-conformist. Those who did, to some extent, believe in the values of the school and the anti-school group who did not accept school values and had developed their own particular brand of oppositional culture. This finding is relatively commonplace, it occurs in most ethnographic studies of the school and has been related, in a number of cases, to wider class forms and to other societal institutions.<sup>4</sup>

We do not expect, then, to find homogeneity or consistency in the attitudes of our sample towards their experience of school. In fact we assume the possibility of there being as many different responses to the school as there are students in our sample. How then can we make sense of these responses? One of the central ways in which we approach this problem is to distinguish between students on the basis of Hargreaves' model of opposed student sub-cultures. In this sense we will employ the method of typologisation, but we do so with certain reservations. Peter Armstrong has pointed out that,

Confronted with individuals in structured situations, (the sociologist) tries to delineate the structure of their social thought and find how the structure and content of the one fits the other. Since it is most unlikely that those studied will in all respects share an identical situation, or will be pre-occupied to the same degree with exactly the same ideas and issues, no one-~~least~~ of all the constructor of typologies- would claim that his resulting typologies perfectly reflected<sup>5</sup> the social perspectives of all the individuals studied.

While we adopt Hargreaves' typological model, then, we do not assume that this or that student fits perfectly into one or other of the available categories. We remain sensitive to the possibility that respondents may hold quite contradictory attitudes towards the school in responding to different questions. In this respect we accept that respondents may be conformist in their attitude towards some aspects of the school while adopting an oppositional strategy in relation to others. We further argue that seemingly contradictory responses may be determined, to some degree, by the ways in which questions are posed. In brief, then, we want to remain sensitive to ideological inconsistencies

both within, and between, the responses within our sample. In a similar vein Theo Nichols has argued that,

To hold that this is a class society means that this society is structurally flawed by major contradictions; to hold, that is, that it doesn't completely make sense. Given such an assumption there should be no cause for surprise at all in discovering within the population of such a society-or indeed within individuals-divided (and inconsistent) strains of thought.<sup>6</sup>

### Contradictory Relations and Contradictory Responses

As an inroad to our understanding of the responses within our sample we distinguish, at a general level, between a dominant culture and the subordinate culture of the working class. Within this we introduce the notion of class mediation.\*

In relation to the hegemony of the ruling or dominant class, the working class is, by definition, a subordinate social and cultural formation. While the experience of the working class is fundamentally one of subordination, it does develop its own characteristic institutions, social relationships and values. As a consequence, the dominant values of the ruling class are not so much rejected by the subordinate class as modified or accommodated, leading to what Parkin (1972) has called a "negotiated version" of the dominant value system. In this sense Parkin argues that the subordinate class draws upon two distinct levels of normative reference, the dominant value system and a "stretched" or negotiated version of it. While we have quoted from Parkin in our introductory chapter we feel that his theoretical statement upon this question is important enough to repeat.

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\*These ideas have received attention in our opening chapter.

We can perhaps add to this formulation by suggesting, further, that which of the two frames of reference is actually drawn upon will be situationally determined; more specifically, it could be hypothesised that in situations where purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version- or the subordinate value system- will provide the moral framework . . . .<sup>7</sup>

Parkin's theory provides a partial explanation for the seemingly contradictory responses which emerge from respondents within a similar class location. It helps to explain, for instance, why authority which is embedded in major societal institutions may be accepted at an abstract level while, at the same time, rejected when experienced directly. On the one hand, then, the dominant value system will remain fairly constant while we can expect that negotiated responses will be variable and determined, to a large degree, by structural, cultural and biographical experiences and influences.<sup>8</sup>

While our analysis in this chapter is, once again, concerned with presenting an example of what we consider to be an important way of 'looking at' young people sociologically, it does raise some more general theoretical implications. Fundamentally, it points to the fact that it is possible for seemingly radical or oppositional ideas to co-exist with others, which are, in appearance, quite different in nature. As Nichols (1976) has argued, this raises the important matter of "loose ends" in peoples thinking, loose ends which merit investigation in their own right.<sup>9</sup>

## Methodology

We begin here with a brief review of the methodological organisation of the study, its setting, problems encountered and the mode of analysis employed.

Our overriding aim in this study was to understand the ways in which working class students mediate their experiences of the school and the extent to which these connected up with their expectations of the labour market. Clearly, this would involve an extended piece of research in which a wide range of research techniques were employed. Our initial research design therefore included a proposal that we carry out a pilot study among students with a questionnaire which was designed to separate out, with mostly open ended answers, major themes in the experiences of the students. This was to be then followed up with both informal interviews with students and participant observation in the classroom. We relied here upon the generally accepted notion (Phillips, 1971) that the open ended question, because it puts very few words in the mouth of the respondent, is more effective in revealing his or her own definition of the situation. In addition "The phrasing of the open ended question is closer to that used in ordinary conversation and, as a result, may encourage spontaneity on the part of respondent as well as reinforce his motivation to communicate effectively and thoroughly."<sup>10</sup> At this point the more specific and uniform responses which a closed/fixed answer questionnaire would give were not important as we were prepared to allow the major themes that emerged from the pilot study to specify the direction of our consequent research.

### Access: Making the Connection

Connections inside of the educational apparatus proved to be, initially, as important to us as they were later found to be to the students in their own situations. Local Education Board policy excluded people not employed by the Board from research in the schools under their jurisdiction. In spite of this, approval for research was given after an application was made to the board on our behalf by a high school principal who was sympathetic to the study. Once this approval was acquired the major barrier of access was overcome and it remained only for us to satisfy the subjective requirement of the officials within the particular school chosen for the analysis.

### The Setting of the Study

The setting of this study was Hamilton, the third largest city in Ontario. Large and mostly industrial, Hamilton, or the "Steel City" is the largest producer of steel in the country and has consequently ~~gained recognition both in historical and contemporary terms as a~~ "working class town".

The school chosen for the study, which will not be named, is situated in Hamilton's "north end", an old and traditional working class district. Its catchment boundaries extend from Main Street in the south to the bayfront in the north and from Wentworth Street in the east to Queen Street in the west. The school is generally recognised both by its own employees, the Board of Education and high school teachers throughout Hamilton as a core, inner city, working class school.

The school itself, recently rebuilt, has the outward appearance of a fortress. It has a bare minimum of dark "plexiglass" windows and has obviously been designed in keeping with recently published anti-vandalism specifications.<sup>11</sup>

It has a strong atmosphere of authoritarianism, marked by a clearly demarcated system of boundary maintenance which distinguishes between students and employees of the school. These take their most visible form before one even enters the school. In the car park there are "Staff Only" signs while "Out of Bounds" placards surround the building at various entry and exit points.

On average the enrollment of the school begins each year at around 1350 but due to a high drop out rate, is usually as low as 1200 before the year ends. Approximately 90 per cent of students are enrolled in four year streams, while another 10 per cent are enrolled in five year streams.

In terms of social history we relied upon interviews with the principal of the school, an experienced teacher who had taught in the area over the past two decades. According to the principal, class and ethnicity have interacted within the school in a number of ways. In the 1960's the school was predominantly attended by Polish and Serbian students. These, reportedly, were "good" students with a high motivation and "high work ethic". In the 1970's these have been replaced by a predominantly Italian and Portuguese student population, whose interest in school is low.

The principal also indicated that the separate (Catholic) schools cream off the high potential 5 year students from the youthful population.

In the past when separate schools were limited, they were only able to appropriate the elite of Catholic students. This was now, however, no longer the case and the principal added that his school was left with those Catholic students who had been rejected on the basis of low ability by separate schools. Historical forces then, which involve changing ethnic groupings and the expansion of separate schools in the Hamilton area have coincided. The school has a large percentage of low achieving, "poor" students and this is compounded by problems related to ethnicity.

#### Problems

By far the largest problem encountered in this study was that which involved a time factor. Notwithstanding personal deadlines, the infinitely more practical deadline imposed by the structure of the academic year imposed overwhelming constraints upon the study. While we had proposed to follow up the questionnaire with more extended and elaborate research techniques, it was the onset of exams and, finally, the ending of the academic year which imposed the final limits upon the study. In the final outcome the questionnaire material represented the sole data base around which the study was organised. Nevertheless, the results did appear to be substantial and most students replied at length to a majority of the questions. While our data base was by no means as extensive as initially expected, therefore, we believed that it was substantial enough to continue with the study.

The Study

Our sample, comprised of 86 students who were completing their last year or two at high school (51 in Grade 11 and 35 in Grade 12). Fifty-three of the students were enrolled in a four year course while the remainder (31) were five year students. The sample included both male (47) and female (39) students and its average age was 17.2 years. (See Appendix B)

As the charts below show, a large majority of our sample have parents who are engaged in occupations recognised broadly as "working class": Manual, Semi-skilled or Skilled labour in the case of fathers, and home work or manual unskilled labour in the case of mothers. While 8 of the respondents in the sample had one or the other parent who was engaged in a professional or managerial occupation, no attempt was made to distinguish between the attitudes or responses of this group and the rest of the sample. In this sense the study does not provide comparative information. The class basis of the group was further compounded by the distinctly low level of general education attained by parents. One third of fathers and over one quarter of mothers had not completed an elementary education while 76.7 per cent of fathers and 90.6 per cent of mothers had not received an education beyond high school.

Table 5.1 Parents' Occupation

| <u>Occupation</u> | <u>Fathers</u> |    | <u>Mothers</u> |    |
|-------------------|----------------|----|----------------|----|
|                   | N              | %  | N              | %  |
| No answer         | 13             | 15 | 8              | 9  |
| Retired           | 6              | 7  | 0              | 0  |
| Deceased          | 5              | 6  | 0              | 0  |
| Unemployed        | 3              | 3  | 0              | 0  |
| Manual            | 29             | 34 | 16             | 19 |

Table 5.1 (Cont'd.)

| <u>Occupation</u>            | <u>Fathers</u> |     | <u>Mothers</u> |     |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
|                              | N              | %   | N              | %   |
| Skilled                      | 11             | 13  | 1              | 1   |
| Service                      | 9              | 10  | 5              | 6   |
| Clerical                     | 0              | 0   | 3              | 3   |
| Sales                        | 2              | 2   | 1              | 1   |
| Proprietary<br>or Managerial | 3              | 3   | 3              | 3   |
| Professional                 | 5              | 6   | 3              | 3   |
| Housework                    | 0              | 0   | 45             | 52  |
| Total                        | 86             | 100 | 86             | 100 |

Table 5.2 Parents Level of Educational Attainment

| <u>Education</u>                     | <u>Fathers</u> |     | <u>Mothers</u> |     |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
|                                      | N              | %   | N              | %   |
| No answer                            | 6              | 7   | 6              | 7   |
| None                                 | 1              | 1   | 2              | 2   |
| Some Elementary                      | 28             | 33  | 23             | 27  |
| Completed Elementary                 | 9              | 10  | 16             | 19  |
| Some High School                     | 19             | 22  | 24             | 28  |
| Completed High School                | 9              | 10  | 13             | 15  |
| Technical or Business                | 6              | 7   | 3              | 3   |
| Some University                      | 1              | 1   | 0              | 0   |
| University Graduate                  | 2              | 2   | 2              | 2   |
| Graduate or Professional<br>Training | 5              | 6   | 1              | 1   |
| Total                                | 86             | 100 | 86             | 100 |

### The Experience of School

As an introduction to the study we provide an analysis of data which was designed to determine, in a relatively simple manner, the ways in which the school is experienced by students. We first of all asked students "Why do you come to school?", and then asked whether or not they found school to be an enjoyable experience. While possible answers to these initial questions were fixed or structured, additional comments

were encouraged and space was provided for them. Responses are indicated below.

Table 5.3 Why do you come to school?

| Response           | N  | %  |
|--------------------|----|----|
| No Answer          | 12 | 2  |
| No Choice          | 19 | 22 |
| For Qualifications | 55 | 64 |
| For Training       | 42 | 49 |
| Parent Pressure    | 6  | 7  |

Note: Where no totals are shown students have responded to more than one of the available answer choices.

While qualifications and training stand out as important reasons for coming to school on the closed part of the question, their marked invisibility within the open ended part of the question (designed for additional comments) suggested that these were seen as the officially prescribed reasons for attending school. Supplementary comments suggested that students themselves had very different reasons for coming to school. There was a clear indication, from additional comments, that school represented an important area of social activity where students either meet and socialise with friends on a daily basis, or meet new ones. Examples of this feeling were:

"Because I enjoy being with people."

"I like coming to school because I have many friends here and most of everybody's social life is at school."

"Because of my friends, most of my social life has developed from school."

It was also noted that even those who had stressed the educational importance of school also stressed the social aspect, as one respondent

pointed out, "I like coming to school to learn but mainly to meet people. After all, school is where young people are."

Other students stressed the notion of compulsion as an important factor influencing their attendance, these comments lent specificity to the attitudes of those who had selected "No Choice" in the fixed part of the question. Examples of these were:

"I really don't like school but without it I'm lost, because there is nowhere else to go."

"Because there is nowhere else to go."

"Because society says you must."

"I can't go to work younger than grade 12."

"I don't want my mother to lose her mother's allowance."

On the question of enjoyment, the social nature of school activity again gained predominance. For these students school was inextricably related to their friends and social life, this was strongly in evidence in the majority of responses.

Table 5.4 Do You Enjoy Coming to School?

| Response                 | N        | %        |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Like Very Much           | 22       | 25       |
| Like                     | 34       | 39       |
| Neither Like Nor Dislike | 22       | 25       |
| Dislike                  | <u>8</u> | <u>9</u> |
| Total                    | 86       | 100      |

Examples of these responses are:

"It's enjoyable, also I have many friends here."

"It's fun because of your friends."

"If it were not for the people I would not enjoy it as much."

"Yes, because my friends go to school."

Two further themes emerged at this point, both of which were to recur later in the study. The first involves a notion of school as something that you "put up with" despite its many difficulties and drawbacks. This feeling was exemplified by one respondent who added that, "The kids are okay and you can enjoy it if you make the best of it."

The second and connected notion was similar but more specific in terms of a "problem". This was related to certain types of teachers, and was indicated by remarks such as:

"I guess it's all right sometimes but the teachers get to be a real drag."

and

"I can get by most of the time but some teachers are a bit weird and hard to get along with."

The notion of problem teachers then and of the experience of "getting by" are connected in the experience of these students and in fact recur with a marked frequency throughout the study. We discuss this in greater detail below.

When asked what they liked best about school on an open ended question, students again stressed the importance of social activities.

Table 5.5 What Do You Like Best About School?

| Response            | N  | %  |
|---------------------|----|----|
| No Answer           | 3  | 3  |
| Social/Friends      | 37 | 43 |
| Schoolwork/Teachers | 36 | 41 |
| Job Training        | 3  | 3  |
| Sports              | 16 | 19 |
| Nothing             | 14 | 16 |

Examples of this theme were:

"Being with my friends."

"I like fooling around with my friends and making new friends."

"I like meeting people."

"Meeting a lot of people."

The importance of social activities was also linked to other factors chosen by students, particularly schoolwork:

"I like the subjects and also being with my friends."

"The good time you have with your friends and some of the courses."

Other respondents pointed towards skills training (3), girls (4), and learning a trade (3) as important and enjoyable aspects of school life. Fourteen or 16.2 per cent of respondents commented that they like nothing about school life, while 16 or 18.6 per cent emphasised sport as a prime factor in their enjoyment of school.

#### Table 5.6 What Annoys You Most About School?

When the responses to this open ended question were roughly categorised the school administration in general and the teachers in particular emerged as major sources of annoyance. The responses were:

| Response         | N  | %  |
|------------------|----|----|
| No Answer        | 9  | 10 |
| Teachers         | 46 | 53 |
| Exams/Schoolwork | 28 | 32 |
| Other Students   | 18 | 21 |

In general students were concerned about the authority held by teachers and their consequent ability to enforce discipline. In a more particular sense respondents felt, for example, that "Students do not

have many rights and teachers have too many" or that, "Teachers have too many rights and are too strict". In some cases a direct analogy was drawn between the experience of discipline at school with the teacher and at work with the boss. One respondent spoke of, "The way that teachers think that they are your boss. They feel that for the 70 minutes they're with you, they own you." Or, as another respondent put it, "When teachers won't let you do things on your own time."

For others the experience of discipline was more direct. One respondent complained about, "Sitting in one place all day" while another complained about, "Being treated like a child." For some, the authoritarianism of teachers is seen to result from an individual personality trait, for example, in the case of those who are referred to as, "Ass-hole teachers", "Nagging teachers" or "Stupid and incompetent teachers". Others situated teachers within the wider structure of the school, an institution whose concern was with order and discipline. For these students it was bureaucratic rules and procedures which defined their relationship of subordination, not only to teachers, but to employees of the school in general . . . . "There are too many rules and schedules" or, (The thing that annoys me is) "The office personnel. They're a bunch of nags, the slightest thing that you do wrong and you get called down. Don't tell me they care about us because they don't. They just have a set of rules and they follow them to the exclusion of everything else."

The respondents in our sample, then, have a very real sense of their relationship of subordination to the structured authority of the school and its employees. There is a strong sense of both an ordered

and disciplined environment; indeed, one which is not far removed from that hoped for by an early school promoter in 1876 when he argued that schools should be, "A spectacle of order and regularity."<sup>12</sup>

### What are Schools For?

Despite the predominance of social activities in earlier responses, when students were asked 'What are schools for?', there was a marked change of emphasis. 48 or 55.8% of respondents agreed that the main functions of the school were those of providing education and/or qualifications. 25 or 29% of these added that schools were a preparation ground for integration into the world outside, for instance, "To prepare us for society" or "A training ground for jobs and life." Once again however, there was an obvious disjunction between what most students accepted as the official role of the school in society and their own personal experiences of its role in their everyday lives. This provided for some interesting, and, sometimes contradictory, responses, many of which connect up with the experiences of subordination and discipline discussed earlier. Examples of these were,

"They encourage a sense of responsibility and provide education, and they keep us off the street."

"To keep people off the street, to prepare you for the future."

"To make us qualified for future employment and to keep kids off the street."

"A baby sitting service"

"To keep kids off the streets"

One of the interesting points to emerge from this question, then, was the description of school as a holding institution within which students, "Pass time" or as, "Somebody's idea of how to keep kids off the street."

Table 5.7 What Do You Think Schools Are For?

| Response                     | N  | %  |
|------------------------------|----|----|
| No Answer                    | 6  | 7  |
| Education/Qualifications     | 48 | 56 |
| Meet People/Social Function. | 4  | 5  |
| Repressive Functions         | 11 | 13 |
| Societal Integration         | 49 | 57 |

Note: 25 or 29% of respondents connected the educational function of the school with those of Integration.

In this section we have provided a brief introduction in which we have discussed the attitudes of our sample towards the experience of compulsory schooling. We have demonstrated that, for the most part, the experience of the school is, in reality, an experience of compulsion and discipline. This experience is tempered for a number of students by the social nature of school activities, with friends and sport being seen as central to the enjoyment of school.

At the same time, we have been able to distinguish, importantly, between that which students regard as the official role of the school and their own personal experience of its role and meaning in their everyday lives. This provided for some seemingly contradictory responses. While some students, for example, saw the school as being important for educational purposes they were equally prepared to point towards its repressive role in "keeping kids off the streets". In making sense of

these responses we would refer to the distinction made by Parkin (1972) between the 'dominant value system' and the 'negotiated' version of the dominant value system.

In this sense, where abstract evaluations of the school are called for the dominant value system will provide the frame of reference from which responses are drawn. Hence, when asked about the purpose of the school in society, students will more than likely construct a response which includes elements of the dominant ideological interpretation of the role of the school in society, i.e. that it provides for the preparation of young people for their future lives. However, when students are asked about their own concrete experiences within the school their own, situationally determined, frame of reference will provide for an answer which is drawn from a negotiated version of the dominant value system.

The 'negotiated' version of the dominant value system, then, will be situationally determined. In this sense it will be determined by the structural, cultural and biographical experiences of the respondent. In this instance, these influences may result in a close or loose "fit" between the ideas of the respondent and dominant, societal, notions concerning the role of the school in society. While dominant assumptions about the school will be held fairly constant, negotiated versions of these assumptions will be highly variable. We would point out at this stage, then, that while it is possible to distinguish between dominant themes or patterns within our responses we must remain sensitive to the possible emergence of contradictions not only between particular kinds of responses but within them also. We refer, of course, to the possibility of ideological inconsistency.

Having considered, briefly, the experience of school in the lives of students in our sample we now move on to consider the ways in which our sample respond to these experiences.

### Problems and Responses

Responses by students to the compulsory and disciplinary environment of the school are not, as some would have us believe, a purely contemporary phenomenon. Indeed they must be viewed against the background of a historical process. Katz, writing of the imposition of compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century has pointed out that,

By itself, separation from younger children failed to make the older ones more obedient, and discipline was frequently a problem in the high school. Attendance and tardiness were two issues related to the problem of discipline. Indeed irregular attendance or truancy were the most persistent and common complaints of school committees, and, in some towns, the worst offenders were high school students.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of their obvious historical precedents such responses have assumed increasing significance, most often in connection with their effects upon the school as an academic institution. More recently the problem has entered the "field of social vision" with what appears to be a preponderance of news editorials, public forums on vandalism and reports published by the Ministry of Education, mostly relating to the problem of violence.<sup>14</sup>

Causes of oppositional responses within schools have been offered in a number of explanations, both sociological and psychological, over the past twenty years. The 1950's saw a large amount of research which concerned the relationship between the working class school and home. Many of these, including the work of Cohen (1955) operated from

within a "delinquency" perspective, seeing the key problem for working class students as one of adjustment to the middle class values of the school. Working class students responded by appropriating the hedonistic values of the leisure world, which stood opposed to the conformity, subordination and future oriented goals required by the school. Our attempts to understand the oppositional nature of responses cited by our sample were influenced by the work of two theorists; David Hargreaves, who had drawn upon and extended Cohen's notion of "opposed sub-cultural values", and, more recently, Paul Corrigan, who had chosen to reject this formulation and to concentrate upon an analysis which revolved around the unequal distribution of power within the school. We shall consider each of these in turn.

In, the now classic, "Social Relations in a Secondary School", written in 1967, David Hargreaves provided an explanation for the development of school counter cultures and discussed the ways in which these counter cultures develop around working class students. For Hargreaves, working class students were situated at the bottom of the educational hierarchy and responded to their accompanying sense of failure by rejecting the goals and values of the school. The analysis led Hargreaves to posit the now common model of opposed school sub-cultures. The following extract from "Social Relations in a Secondary School" demonstrates the author's position.

The lower stream subculture, embodied in the leadership of Clint is characterised by values which are negatively oriented towards the school. The lower streams take the upper streams values and turn them upside down and thus form an example of what Cohen terms a negative polarity. The differentiation of values, through a continuum, is focussed in the

opposite poles of attraction which produce a gap in the friendship choices of B and C streams. We shall term these two suggested subcultures "academic" and "delinquent". "Academic" indicates that the values are oriented to those of the school and the teachers. "Delinquent" indicates that the values are negatively orientated towards the school, and in the direction of delinquent values, though not of course being synonymous with delinquency.<sup>15</sup>

In a more recent study, again involving working class students, Paul Corrigan (1977) has criticised Hargreaves' emphasis upon values as a guide to action. Instead, "The crucial parameter to explain classroom interaction seemed to be much more to do with the power differential between teachers and pupils."<sup>16</sup> Corrigan's work indicates that the resulting relationship of authority and subordination stands at the centre of the student's experience of school. The majority of students in Corrigan's sample, for instance, experience teachers as people who are quite different from themselves and only brought into contact with them by their work. Thus, the interactions of the classroom are seen by Corrigan as financially compulsory for the teacher and legally compulsory for the student.

Within our analysis the interpretative models constructed by Hargreaves and Corrigan will be used as an aid to our understanding of two distinct, but inter-related aspects of the student experience. We have already discussed the student's experience of school in a general sense with reference to the notions of subordination and control. These can be clearly subsumed under Corrigan's "power" model. As we move on to a more specific analysis of students' responses, however, we will refer, from time to time to Hargreaves' model of "opposed student subcultures". This will allow us to distinguish between sub-cultural

responses, in their many and varied forms, while, at the same time, they are viewed against a generalised backdrop which assumes the existence of differential relationships of power between students and school employees.

As an introduction to this section we elected to ask students about what they perceived to be the major problems which they confront while at school. This was succeeded by a question in which students were asked first in general and later in particular about their responses to these problems.

Table 5.8 What are the Biggest Problems That You Face at School?

| Response             | N  | %  |
|----------------------|----|----|
| No Answer            | 2  | 2  |
| No Problems          | 16 | 19 |
| Too Much Work        | 21 | 24 |
| Work Not Interesting | 39 | 45 |
| Boredom              | 36 | 42 |
| Feel Trapped         | 13 | 15 |
| Relations With Peers | 3  | 3  |
| Other                | 1  | 1  |

In response to the question on problems, students pointed overwhelmingly towards uninteresting work (39 or 45.3%) and boredom (36 or 41.8%). In a number of cases (24 or 27.9%) boredom was connected to problems related to schoolwork, either on the basis that there was too much of it, or, that it was uninteresting. Examples of these were, "There is a combination of a few things such as boredom and too much work" and, "Boredom and uninteresting work go hand in hand".

Teachers emerged, yet again, as a source of discontent. In 23 or 25% of cases, teachers were related to uninteresting work or to boredom. As one respondent put it, "I wish the teachers would make the courses more interesting and not keep teaching the same thing year after

year" while another indicated that, "Teachers could probably find more interesting ways of teaching if they tried".

In terms of power and authority, familiar responses emerged around the theme of "us" and "them", most of which involved a sense of subordination and powerlessness on the part of students. Many respondents referred to teachers who, "Try to push us around" or, in other cases, to "Teachers who act tough". There was a very real sense of antagonism here between some students and teachers with continual references to the notions of "us" and "them". As one respondent pointed out, "I will not take any bullshit from teachers, because if you do they've got you".

The notions of "us" and "them" and of being "pushed around" are common in relationships involving subordination and authority. In this sense we would argue that these notions have to be understood in terms of the context, not only of the school, but of its relationship to the wider society. Paul Willis (1977) has suggested that this type of experience can only be fully understood in relation to the experience of the working class as a whole and to the futures expected by the students themselves as representatives of that class. In this sense we would argue that the experience of school is understood and negotiated with reference to a specific class cultural understanding of relationships of authority and subordination, both at school and in the work place.<sup>17</sup>

### Responses

We have discussed the way in which the student's experience of school is determined, mainly, by his or her relationship of subordination

to the structure of the school in general and the authority of the teacher in particular. Having established this as a general theme we now go on to consider responses to this particular type of structured relationship. In this sense we begin to distinguish between different student sub-cultures and their respective mechanisms of response.

In distinguishing, broadly, between pro-school and anti school sub-cultures we decided to offer each group its own particular type of question. We, first of all, asked students how they responded to the "problems" outlined in the previous question. Presuming that students had adopted an oppositional stance in responding to the "problems" question we could assume that they would follow up these sentiments by discussing the ways in which they responded to them. At the same time we expected that students who had not described problems which had led them to adopt an oppositional stance would ignore the question concerned with "responses" unless, of course, they were to adopt a distinctly pro school position.

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This question was followed by one which moved away from an enquiry concerned with personal responses (How do You Respond to These Problems) and which, instead, referred to the responses of others. Here we simply asked, What do you Think are Some of the Main Causes of Violence Within Your School? This question was designed to be more general in order to attract elements of both pro school and anti school sub-cultures, hence allowing pro school students the opportunity to discuss the responses of anti school students. At the same time it would be useful in determining the extent to which violence was a problem within the school.

Table 5.9 How Do You Respond to These Problems?

| Response                      | N  | %  |
|-------------------------------|----|----|
| No Answer                     | 23 | 27 |
| Do Nothing                    | 22 | 25 |
| Daydream                      | 21 | 24 |
| Alcohol/Drugs                 | 6  | 7  |
| Wait until evening or weekend | 27 | 31 |
| Skip School                   | 14 | 16 |
| Vandalism                     | 8  | 9  |
| Other                         | 1  | 1  |

As expected, the rate of non response on the first part of the question was high, in fact 23 respondents declined to answer, representing the highest rate of non-response for the entire questionnaire. It may have been assumed at this point that we had broadly distinguished between Hargreaves' "two cultures" but this was not in fact the case. A cross referenced analysis indicated that those who did not respond to the question were as likely as any other respondents to have displayed oppositional tendencies in their discussion of the previous question on school "problems". This is not to say, however, that the theme of "oppositional sub-cultures" did not emerge, it is more a comment upon our methodology. A brief analysis of comments made by students in response to each of the questions clearly indicated the existence of two, distinctly opposed sets of attitudes towards the school.

We first of all present evidence for the existence of a distinct pro-school culture within the school, with reference to each of the questions asked in this section. (How do you Respond to these Problems? and What do you think are the main causes of violence within your school?) We then consider, in more detail, the various types of anti-school

responses within the school, this time dealing with each of the questions in turn.

The majority of, what we shall term, "Pro school" replies to the question dealing with "responses" involved problems of "peer pressure", "classroom disorder" and "lack of discipline". One respondent referred to, "A lack of strictness--a lot of disturbers who know that the teacher is not always around". Responses to these types of problems would involve "working harder" or "trying harder" and ignoring the "troublemakers". Examples of these were,

"I try my best to ignore them, look away from them and concentrate upon my work".

"They are just not interested in their work".

Responses by these students to the question concerned with the causes of violence again revolved around what was clearly seen as anti-school or oppositional behaviour. In some cases the distinction between "us" and "them" is made clear,

"A lot of students think of themselves as king.  
I like school, get along with teachers and friends.  
Some people put this down because they are opposite,  
but this is no real problem, they learn the hard way".

In other cases the legitimacy or validity of oppositional behaviour was called into question. Not only did accusations of this kind rely upon the "pathological" or "developmental" model so frequently used by educationalists, (Immaturity, stupidity, loss of control, etc.) but also called into question one of the most commonly cited problems, for many students, that of boredom . . . "Violence occurs when people try to break the so called monotony".

The polarity of the opposed cultures of the school becomes clear here then, and, at times, approaches the "us" and "them" quality of the more, highly generalised, teacher-student relationship. The attitudes of what we have characterised, as the "pro school" students within our sample approximate, quite closely, those described in similar studies. (Hargreaves 1967, Willis 1977, Stinchcombe 1964)

### Oppositional Responses

In the first instance we were looking, in this part of the study, for evidence of overt or aggressive responses within the school. The most important indicator to emerge here, however, pointed to a surprising lack of evidence of frequent occurrences of violent responses within the classroom.<sup>18</sup> It became necessary, therefore, to distinguish between problems of violent or aggressive behaviour inside the classroom and of vandalism or cases which involved student peer pressure outside it. A survey of the many recent reports relating to vandalism indicated that the majority of damage inflicted upon school buildings occurs outside of school hours. They further indicated that damage is mostly caused by trespassers or "intruders" from outside the school. In our case this evidence was compounded by the fact that in 1977 the major problem connected with vandalism at the school was "burglary", damage from which amounted to \$1,764.00 for the year.<sup>19</sup>

Our focus, then, was to be upon oppositional responses which occurred inside the school, and in particular, within the context of the classroom. In this sense we found it necessary to distinguish further

between overt or aggressive oppositional responses and those which involved, what we will categorise as, non aggressive non conformity.

### Non Aggressive Responses

By far the most common of the responses mentioned were those which involved, what we have categorised as, "Non Aggressive Non Conformity". We distinguish, here, between two types of non aggressive response; those which involve a physical withdrawal from the school itself; truancy or non attendance, and those which involve particular kinds of non aggressive, in class negotiations, of the school experience.<sup>20</sup>

### Truancy

Truancy or non attendance has clearly constituted the most visible and well documented historical response by students to the institution of compulsory schooling. In the contemporary period truancy is still widely recognised, both at the local and provincial level, as a serious problem, and one which has increased in severity during the past decade. One report cites a professional journal which has noted that,

Student absenteeism continues to be a serious problem for the secondary school administrator. In 1973 and again in 1974 NASSP members rated poor attendance as their 'most perplexing student problem' by a ratio of two to one over discipline, the second most frequently mentioned difficulty with students.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the fact that only 14 or 16.2% of respondents in our sample admitted to "skipping school" we can reasonably expect that this represents a consistent figure throughout many classrooms in many schools. In the case of our school, truancy is recognised as a serious problem.<sup>22</sup> At the same time there is a clear indication that the

students who admit to "skipping school" engage in it frequently. Occasional truants regard it as such a common practice, particularly on "pleasant days", to be beyond comment . . . . "It's so easy to skip school that everybody does it when it's a nice day".<sup>23</sup>

In Class Negotiations: Doing Nothing, Daydreaming and Doodling

Evidence cited earlier points to the fact that a distinct oppositional feeling towards the school exists within our sample. We know that this orientation involves the holding of particular attitudes towards both the school and its employees, but we also know that it does not result, for the large majority of students, in an overt display of visible oppositional behaviour. As Table 5.9 shows, 43 respondents cited either "doing nothing" or "daydreaming" as their main medium of problem resolution.

In practice "doing nothing" and "daydreaming" are closely related as the notion of "doing nothing" refers, in most cases, to the practice of non participation in the interactions of the classroom. "Doing nothing" then, refers to doing nothing that is officially prescribed by the school.<sup>24</sup> Many respondents made references to "Just sitting and waiting" or, (I) "Just sit and do nothing". This was connected in most cases to boring or uninteresting classes and to "drifting off" or "daydreaming". Examples of these were,

"I think about certain things".

"I daydream, there's not much else to do".

"I think of something interesting while something boring is going on" or, "I just sit and doodle".

Again, the now familiar notions of "putting up with it" and "getting by" were closely tied to a number of responses, for example, "In boring classes I usually daydream because if its boring I can't get interested in it. I just have to put up with it".

We know that in our specific sample the notions of "putting up with it" and "getting by" are closely related to both the physical constraints imposed by the school, "Having to sit in one place all day", and to the experience of domination by teachers and other employees of the school in a structured relationship of authority. An increased understanding of these particular types of resolution would again necessitate that we move outside of the context of the school and connect them up with wider class cultural forms of resolution and negotiation.

Clearly, the notions of "getting by" and "putting up with it" are not forms of resolution which occur solely within the context of the school and neither can they be fully understood with reference to this context only. They will emerge again for these students within the context of the workplace, be it on a production line in a factory or in domestic labour within the household. We are arguing again then, that the experience of working class students in the context of compulsory schooling, must be understood, not only in relation to the historical structuration of youth as an age category but, more importantly, to the experience of the working class as a whole.

Agressive Responses

On the question of the causes of violence within the school we find a return to a more general type of response with the majority of respondents relating overt oppositional behaviour with the authoritarian structure of the school.

Table 5.10 What Are The Main Causes of Violence in Your School?

| Response                   | N  | %  |
|----------------------------|----|----|
| Teachers                   | 20 | 23 |
| Peer Pressure              | 13 | 15 |
| Looking Big                | 19 | 22 |
| Individual Problems        | 11 | 13 |
| Lack of Discipline         | 7  | 8  |
| Boredom and/or Frustration | 30 | 35 |

Thirty or 34 per cent of respondents connected cases of aggressive behaviour or vandalism to problems of boredom or frustration. These respondents, however, referred mostly to incidents involving aggression which occurred outside of the context of the classroom, as did those who connected aggression with peer pressure.

~~"Some people are bored or have problems at home so they vandalise things", and,~~

"People get fed up with the boredom and want some action".

were typical of responses which related to this theme.

While it is clear that boredom and uninteresting work stand out as problems for these kids, the connections between boredom inside the classroom and violent or aggressive responses outside are difficult to establish and we would hesitate before drawing to any firm conclusion here. We would point out, however, that it has already been demonstrated that the majority of oppositional stances adopted by students, inside the

classroom assume a much more subtle, complex, and in their terms, effective form than that of violent or irrational behaviour.

Responses which pointed to in-class confrontation (20 or 23.2%) again singled out teachers as particular sources of frustration. Two related themes emerged around this problem. The first was connected, once again to the structured relationship of authority in which students meet teachers and to their consequent experience of domination. One woman spoke of "Teachers pressuring and the extra pressure from the office, the principal and his friends act like gangsters." Other examples of this feeling were:

"As I said before they use their authority in the wrong way".

"Teachers trying to overrule the students".

"Pushy teachers".

"When teachers push students".

A second theme revolved around what we would describe as a feeling of being misunderstood or neglected. This was described by both individuals who saw themselves as victims of this problem and by students who, as detached observers, saw it as a problem but not for themselves. Some complained, for instance of "not enough understanding by some teachers" and of a "communication gap" which resulted in teachers having "no respect for students" and students "having no respect for teachers". One observer pointed out that "teachers pay no attention to students' problems", while another agreed that "a lot of the kids are always on the defense . . . no one helps you". In one case, lack of understanding on the part of teachers is connected to the class background of the

students, providing a clue, perhaps, to the feeling of being "misunderstood" . . . "Teachers don't understand the kids, they cut them down because they are from the North End and I feel this isn't right".

#### A Final Note About Teachers

A great deal of work has been carried out around the problems of cultural clash between teachers and working class students. Writing about working class students in a similar area, Mays has argued that,

The teachers in the school find themselves at the nexus of two distinct cultures with a correspondingly difficult role to play. Being themselves mainly conditioned by the grammar school tradition and the middle class system of values, they have to make a drastic mental re-adjustment to be able to deal sympathetically with the people whose attitudes and standards are so different. Even those teachers who have themselves risen from working class backgrounds, do not, contrary to what is generally supposed, always find it psychologically an easy matter to adopt a sympathetic, uncondemnatory attitude towards the less favoured representatives of their own social class."<sup>25</sup>

Mays' argument sheds possible light upon one of the sources of misunderstanding on the part of teachers and of the resulting frustration on the part of students. Again, however, we would hesitate before drawing a clear line of connection between these problems and a notion of "class cultural conflict" within the school. Hargreaves has demonstrated that although such connections may in fact exist they are cut across by differential attitudes towards teachers which are closely related to this or that particular student's attitudes towards the school. This is in turn related to academic achievement . . .

The tendency for the higher stream boys to be more favourable towards teachers is very marked . . . The boys in lower streams not only regard the teacher

less favourably, but also perceive their relationships with teachers as much less adequate."<sup>26</sup>

While we did not control for responses on the basis of grades or other achievement criteria, we did ask students directly how they would describe teachers. Twenty-seven or 30.3% replied "as Friends" while a further 15 or 17.4% described them as "having students' interests at heart". While a question of this kind was designed to encourage students to discuss teachers outside of their official roles, it does show, nevertheless, that the connection between cultural clash and student attitudes towards teachers cannot be easily regarded as a general one. We would therefore suggest that teachers-student relationships are best considered with reference to a more general interpretative schema, specifically one which assumes that the interactions which take place between these two groups is based upon an unequal distribution of power within a highly structured institutional context.

#### Education, The Labour Market, and Unemployment

In the last chapter we demonstrated that within the nexus of age and class it is young, working class people who experience a disproportionate amount of problems when they enter the labour market. We saw that young people constituted the largest group of unemployed people and that within this group, working class youth were likely to suffer more than others. With these facts in mind we attempted to measure, or at least identify, student attitudes towards their future prospects in the labour market. Initially we had hoped to distinguish between the aspirations and expectations of the students in relation to their projected careers and to connect this to sub cultural, oppositional

responses within the school. This was not possible or practical, however, as it, firstly relied upon the notion of an implicit frustration-aggression hypothesis, and secondly, and simplistically, excluded the possibility of oppositional responses taking more varied and subtle forms than those which involve aggression. Each of these problems was compounded by the constraints imposed by the narrow data base at our disposal.

We chose instead to start at the very beginning and to attempt to distinguish whether or not students actually see unemployment as a problem.

Our second concern was to determine student attitudes towards the relationship between education and employment. We have already argued that employability across all age level correlates negatively with unemployment. Another argument however, popularised by Berg (1971), suggests that, in fact, the relationship between education and jobs is no longer tenable. In a more recent article Graham Bleasdale has pointed out that . . .

A so called revolution of rising expectations created by the rapid post war economic growth rate, has conflicted with the unequal division of labour and prestige in capitalist societies. To put the issue bluntly the old equation between education and jobs has broken down.<sup>27</sup>

While these two positions seem to contradict one another, they are, when applied to working class students, in fact complementary. Berg and Bleasdale are concerned with occupational expectations and the "fit" between educational qualifications and jobs, rather than the question of employability per se. Given the relationship between

employability and educational attainment we can reasonably expect that the recent "spiralling" of educational qualifications will have a disproportionate effect upon working class young people who, after all, stand at the bottom of the educational hierarchy. In this sense then we are concerned with the measurement of student attitudes towards both their low employability factor and the uneven fit between their level of education and their employment prospects.

In order to determine the extent to which young people regarded unemployment as a problem we referred to the spate of recent news reports which have highlighted the problem.<sup>28</sup> Of the 79 respondents who answered this question, 23 or 26.7% were not convinced that unemployment was a real problem; rather, they thought that high unemployment figures were caused by idleness on the part of job-seekers or people who just did not want to work. On the other hand the remaining 56 respondents or 65% thought that news reports were accurate and unemployment was a problem. Five respondents added that they saw old people who continue to work past retirement as partly to blame for their dilemma.

Table 5.11 There has been a lot of talk in the newspapers recently about young people being the hardest hit by unemployment. What is your reaction to this?

| Response   | N  | %   |
|--|----|-----|
| No Answer  | 7  | 8   |
| It's true  | 51 | 59  |
| It's true, there are too many old people at work | 5  | 6   |
| Disagree   | 23 | 27  |
| Total  | 86 | 100 |

A total of 56 or 65% of respondents regard unemployment as a real problem. Five of these added that old people, beyond the age of retirement, should move out of the labour market to make way for young people.

Examples of those who thought unemployment not to be a problem were:

"I think young people can find work anywhere. They just don't want to work so they make up excuses like too many hours or lousy pay".

"If you really want a job you can find one. I find most teens really don't want to work anyway. They just want the money".

"They don't look hard enough".

"Too picky about kind of job".

"If I want a job I'll go out and get it. Some think the jobs will come to them but it's not so".

"Bullshit, if you really want a job you can find one, it's just that some people are too lazy to look".

"There (sic) just too fuckin' lazy".

The attitudes of these students suggest that they believe high unemployment figures to be a result of young people just not looking for a job or not trying hard enough, in spite of the fact that 41 or 47.6% of respondents have direct experience of unemployment.\* They also indicate that students must be prepared to accept work, whatever its nature and hence overlook the gap between what is expected with a high school education and what is realistically available. At the same time, however, it seems likely that a proportion of these respondents have not

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\*See table 5.14.

themselves looked for a job yet. This is indicated both by their general optimism in stating that young people can find work anywhere and the fact that most of the respondents who saw unemployment as a problem have looked for work and failed to find it.

Examples of students who thought unemployment a real problem were:

"I agree 100%. I've been looking for a job since April."

"True, I've been looking, I can't find a job."

"It is pretty bad when university graduates do not have a job. They expect people with experience, yet don't want to give us experience."

"It's true, it seems that we are going through all this school to find nothing waiting for us at the other end."

"It's true, my boyfriend just completed a welding course at Mohawk (a community college) and he didn't find a job for 4 months."

"It's true, because there are a lot of old men and women working over retirement age, they take the jobs and we bum around."

"All jobs are full, too many young people for the same jobs, women employment counts out students' employment."

"It's true, you can't get a job without connections."

The majority of respondents, having looked unsuccessfully for work, agree that unemployment is a real problem. At the same time, however, they cite a variety of reasons as possible causes. Some cite lack of experience, which lends specificity to age variations in unemployment statistics. Others, point to the employment of other age groups, particularly the old, and one respondent accurately points to women, as a competing reserve army of labour. One of the more interesting features to emerge from this question, however, was the importance of "connections"

in finding work. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

As a supplement to this question we asked students about their career ambitions and of the possibility of their attainment. The table below shows the occupational groupings favoured by respondents. The high percentage within the "Professional" group results from the inclusion of teachers and social workers under this category. These were popular choices, especially among women in the sample.

Table 5.12 What Career Are You Interested In?

| Response              | N         | %          |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| No Answer             | 6         | 7          |
| Undecided             | 4         | 5          |
| Unskilled             | 14        | 16         |
| Skilled               | 16        | 19         |
| Service               | 9         | 10         |
| Clerical              | 2         | 2          |
| Sales                 | 1         | 1          |
| Proprietor or Manager | 7         | 8          |
| Professional          | 27        | 31         |
| Total                 | <u>86</u> | <u>100</u> |

When questioned on the possibility of attaining the types of work chosen, forty or 46.6% of respondents felt that they would succeed, while 14 or 16.2% expected to fail. 24 or 17.9% were undecided.

Examples of those who believed that they would not get the job they wanted after school were,

"No, because the unemployment situation is very bad."

"No because I have no work experience and it is a big strike against me."

"I don't think so because there is a lot of competition in the job market!"

"No, because of the rate of unemployment, it's scaring me."

"No, too expensive."

"No, too many pre-requisites and money involved."

"I'm not sure, there are too many people in the working class."

There is an explicit acceptance, here, of a highly competitive labour market and of the objective reality of unemployment. Within this, respondents point to lack of experience as a distinct disadvantage in the job market. Importantly, two respondents also point to financial constraints as a barrier to their ambitions, an indication of the acceptance of an implicit connection between educational attainment, employability and social class.

Examples of those who expect to be successful in attaining the jobs of their choice were,

"I should be able to, if not because of lack of connections."

"Yes, I have friends in both fields I would like to go into."

"Yes, because my brother works in the same field as I want to and his employer said that I could have a job when I finish school."

"Yes, I will look for a job that is not popular."

"Yes, there is a high demand for machinists."

While some respondents spoke of doing work which was not popular and others cite their prospective occupations as being in high demand, the re-emergence of connections, as an independent variable, again assumed importance here. The overwhelming assumption is that without connections work will be difficult to find.

Table 5.13 Will you be able to get the job that you want when youLeave school?

| Response  | N         | %          |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| No Answer | 8         | 9          |
| Yes       | 40        | 47         |
| No        | 14        | 16         |
| Undecided | <u>24</u> | <u>28</u>  |
| Total     | <u>86</u> | <u>100</u> |

Having looked at students' attitudes towards the labour market and possibilities for employment, we looked at responses towards the problem of unemployment. These were considered in two ways. First we asked students whether or not they expected to be unemployed during the next ten years. This was supplemented by a second question which enquired into the respondents' experiences of unemployment, both within their family, and among friends. Expectations about future unemployment are shown below.

Table 5.14 In the next ten years will you be unemployed or living on welfare?

| Response       | N         | %          |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| No Answer      | 4         | 5          |
| Definitely yes | 5         | 6          |
| Probably yes   | 4         | 5          |
| Undecided      | 16        | 19         |
| Probably no    | 16        | 19         |
| Definitely no  | <u>41</u> | <u>48</u>  |
| Total          | <u>86</u> | <u>100</u> |

57 or 66.9% of respondents felt that they would either definitely or probably not experience unemployment within the next ten years. On

the other hand, only 9 or 10.4% of respondents expected to be unemployed. This led us to conclude that many of those who had earlier indicated that they would not get the job hoped for when they left school (14) or of the 24 respondents who were undecided, expected to find work of some kind, even if it was not that originally desired.

In spite of the objectively high rate of unemployment among young people, then, and of the marked acceptance of unemployment as a problem by 59.3% of respondents, only 9 or 10.4% of our sample expect to face unemployment themselves.

In the second part of our question we sought to determine the degree of unemployment actually experienced by our respondents. They were unlikely, however, to have direct experience of unemployment in their own lives and so we asked, instead, about the experiences of family and friends.

Table 5.15 Have any of your friends or brothers and sisters received welfare?

| Response     | N        | %        |
|--------------|----------|----------|
| No Answer    | 5        | 6        |
| Yes          | 24       | 28       |
| No           | 57       | 66       |
| I don't know | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Total        | 86       | 100      |

Table 5.16 Have your parents received Unemployment Insurance payments within the last ten years?

| Response     | N         | %          |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| No Answer    | 5         | 6          |
| Yes          | 23        | 27         |
| No           | 41        | 48         |
| I don't know | <u>17</u> | <u>20</u>  |
| Total        | <u>86</u> | <u>100</u> |

In fact, 41 or 47.6% of respondents had knowledge of unemployment either among their own family, or among friends. This made the optimistic attitude of students towards their future employment status all the more difficult to understand. It could be argued that the effect of the knowledge of unemployment among either family or friends would act as a motivating force upon students to secure employment of whatever kind. Among our sample, however, this did not seem to be the case, as 8 out of the nine respondents who expected to be unemployed in the future also had experience of unemployment among family and friends.

#### Education, Employment and Jobs

We have earlier demonstrated the relationship between educational attainment and employability. With this in mind the final task for our project was a consideration of students' perceptions of this relationship. In this sense, we simply asked students, Why do some people get better jobs than others?

Not surprisingly, this question produced a variety of responses. What was surprising, however, was that while education constituted the most popular choice as a factor which influenced employability, it was closely followed by both individual motivation and the now frequent variable of connections. Six respondents linked connections with education, while a further six linked individual motivation with education. Examples of these three main variables are listed below.

#### Connections

"Connections, relatives, luck."

"Some students are lucky because they might have friends

or parents working at a good job and have a better chance of getting that job."

"They have connections."

"Because they are lucky and probably had some sort of connection."

"Connections, positions opening up which only a few people know about."

"Because of connections, you have to know someone these days."

### Education

"Better education or they know someone who works there."

"Some have better marks and experience."

"Some know more people, some have a better education."

"Because some have a better education and some try harder when they look for a job."

"Because they are older or have a higher education or they know someone who is working there and you don't have a chance."

"Because of their pulls, experience and the courses and grades they received."

### Individual Motivation

"Some don't even care."

"Some are lucky, some try harder, some don't give a shit."

"Some students are lazy and take what they can so they will have time with friends."

"They try harder."

"Some work at getting a good job, others are satisfied with anything."

Education, then, is not as significant in relation to job opportunities as we would expect, at least in the perceptions of our sample.

Only 33 or 38.3% of respondents connected education directly to employment opportunity, and, as can be seen in the transcripts above, it was often mentioned as supplementary to the more popular variable of connections.

The predominance of connections in the lives of school students suggests that their own insights into the problems which face them in the labour market have forced them to look beyond the promise of work through the medium of education alone. For working class students, who stand at the bottom of the educational hierarchy, a high school certificate, or even a year at a community college, will not be sufficient to generate employment in a situation in which qualifications no longer bear any relation to employment level. In the contemporary period, therefore, in which competition for jobs is high, the traditional medium of "informal connections" takes over, at least in the lives of our sample, from the more official medium of qualifications.

Table 5.17 Why do some people get better jobs than others?

| Response              | N  | %  |
|-----------------------|----|----|
| No Answer             | 11 | 13 |
| Connections           | 25 | 29 |
| Individual Motivation | 26 | 30 |
| Education             | 33 | 38 |
| Experience            | 8  | 9  |

#### Conclusion

We have considered, in this chapter, the responses of a sample of working class high school students to their experience of compulsory education and to their projected future in the labour market. Rather than reproducing our findings on a point to point basis we feel that

it is important to make some general comments here upon the relationship between our theoretical framework and our research material.

We indicated at the outset of this chapter that we would locate the responses from our sample within a theoretical framework which assumed the existence of both a 'dominant' or 'official' value system and a negotiated version of this or, what we called, a 'subordinate' value system. We assumed, following Parkin (1972) that when abstract evaluations were called for respondents would draw upon the dominant value system as a frame of reference. On the other hand, when asked to evaluate their own concrete experiences respondents would draw upon a negotiated version of the dominant value system. Let us now consider how this worked out in practice.

It was clear from the outset that we could distinguish, within student responses, between official notions of the role of the school in society and their own 'situated' experiences of the school and of its practices and meaning in their everyday lives. While dominant or official notions concerning the school were held fairly constant, however, negotiated or 'mediated' versions of these notions were highly variable; being determined, in part we would suspect by specific structural, cultural and biographical experiences. This precluded any simple typologisation or categorisation of the responses from within our sample. At best we were able to point to particular themes which emerged from the data while remaining sensitive to both the complex and contradictory nature of responses.

In the context of our study two themes were to emerge and assume importance, each of which resulted from a rejection of dominant

ideological notions concerning the school or the labour market or the relationship between them. Firstly it was clear that a number of students rejected the official ideology and values of the school. Secondly, respondents did not appear to recognise the important connection between education and the labour market. In this respect it was indicated on a number of occasions that education would not be important in the search for a job. We will now outline the implications raised by these findings and will conclude by discussing the possibility of relating attitudes towards the school to attitudes towards the labour market and work.

#### The School: Oppositional Sub-cultures

We were able to conclude that, for a variety of different and sometimes contradictory reasons, a significant number of students rejected the ideology of the school and its accompanying notions of discipline and conformity. These students collectively resembled what has traditionally been labelled an 'oppositional school sub-culture' (Hargreaves 1967). Despite its fragmented, and often contradictory, form, this group or 'sub-culture' was accorded a central place in our study. We were able to determine, for instance, the various types of mediation which occurred within this group in response to the school. In this sense we were able to distinguish, importantly, between active and passive forms of resistance. This raised the whole question of what exactly it is that equals 'resistance' or 'opposition' within a highly structured institution such as the school and to what extent sub-cultural behaviour really constitutes resistance in a political sense.

At the outset of the study we had expected to discover a considerable number of oppositional responses which involved overt or

aggressive behaviour. In practice, responses of this kind did not appear to occur with any significant frequency and, as a consequence, our attention was shifted towards particular forms of non-aggressive resistance. In selecting out non-aggressive responses, in particular, those which involved the notions of 'doing nothing' or 'daydreaming' we diverged from the course taken in traditional sub-cultural, analyses of 'oppositional' behaviour. This was partly in an attempt to make sense of what appeared to be common practices of negotiation within our sample. In another sense however, our analysis represents an important approach that may have much to offer to analyses of 'failure' among working class students. Some studies, for instance, have viewed aggressive, oppositional behaviour as a substitution for the official values of the school and have pointed towards the relationship of this behaviour to academic failure. (Willis 1977) Our study has indicated that such responses may, in fact, constitute only the most visible aspect of oppositional behaviour. One obvious way to resist the ideology of the school is to deny intellectual work. In so doing students defy the scales which are designed to measure their ability. A consideration, therefore, of non-aggressive forms of response leads us to conclude that they may be at least as oppositional or resistant as their aggressive counterparts while, in fact, assuming a more complex, concealed and possibly more effective form. In this sense the implications raised by these practices and by their relationship to student failure becomes an important area for investigation.

While we have, at various points, labelled sub-cultural responses within our sample as resistant we do not regard them as oppositional in

a directly political sense. Indeed the peculiar feature of student resistance within schools lies within the contribution that it makes to the reproduction of the relationship between the educational system and social division of labour. While students actively or passively reject the ideology of the school, they engage at the same time in the objective construction of their own academic failure. In this sense, while the imposed official forms of ideology are clearly rejected by 'oppositional' student sub-cultures the requirements of the labour market (which of course includes a need for unskilled manual labour) are nevertheless secured.

#### Education, Employment and Unemployment

The majority of students in our sample accurately regarded unemployment as a real problem in the contemporary situation. While only nine of the respondents in our sample actually expected to experience unemployment in the future their tensions around the question of jobs were further reflected by the fact that less than half of our sample expected to obtain the job of their choice after leaving school.

Education was regarded as important in the search for jobs only in so far as it was connected with other, seemingly crucial, variables. Here the notions of connections or contacts assumed importance alongside individual character traits. Here again then the dominant or official notion of the school and of its relationship to the labour market was rejected in favour of the equally important, yet unofficial medium of connections.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling Capitalist America, New York: 1976.
2. An implicit assumption here is that subordinate classes are coerced and manipulated, in every area of their lives, by a dominant alien ideology. An excessive statement of this particular viewpoint is to be found in Herbert Marcuse's One Dimensional Man, London: 1968.
3. See, for example, David Hargreaves, Social Relations in a Secondary School, London: 1967. And Goldthorpe, J. H. et al., The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour, Cambridge: 1968.
4. See, for example, Paul Corrigan, Schooling and the Smash Street Kids (Forthcoming).
5. Theo Nichols and Peter Armstrong, Workers Divided, Glasgow: 1976, p. 48.
6. Ibid., p. 128.
7. Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order, St. Albans: 1972; pp. 92-93.
8. For an interesting discussion of this question see Chas Critcher, "Structures, Cultures and Biographies", in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, (Eds.) Resistance Through Rituals, London: 1976; pp. 167-173.
9. Nichols and Armstrong, op. cit., p. 128.
10. Bernard S. Phillips, Social Research: Strategy and Tactics Canada: 1971.
11. See J. White and A. Fallis, School Vandalism: Problems and Responses. Ministry of Education, Ontario; 1979.
12. Cited in Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform, Boston: 1968; p. 87.
13. Ibid..
14. See, Hamilton Spectator, "Too Costly to Ignore", July 7th, 1979; Hamilton Spectator, "School Police Predicted", March 29th, 1979; Toronto Globe and Mail, "Student Suspensions Soar in Ontario, Many for drinking and fighting", December 8th, 1978.

For examples of official reports see, An Analysis of Vandalism in Hamilton Wentworth, Published by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and District. And, Report of the Administrative Committee on Violence in the Schools, Published by The Board of Education for the Borough of North York, June 1978.

15. Hargreaves, op. cit., pp. 161-162.
16. Corrigan, op. cit., cited from draft copy.
17. Paul Willis, Learning To Labour. London: 1977. Willis argues that the school is viewed by many working class students as "the place before work".
18. A claim which had been made by school officials at the outset of our research.
19. Cited in a report to school principals in the Hamilton area from The Board of Education for the City of Hamilton, January 1979.
20. Equally subsumed under each of these categories are the 27 or 31% of respondents whose responses to the problems of the school are displaced within the leisure sphere, either after school or at weekends.
21. See Report of the Attendance Recording Procedures Task Force Department of Education, Ottawa: May 1979.
22. Administrators concerned with attendance at the school indicated that truancy is a major problem, especially among older students who are allowed to complete their own attendance slips.
- ~~23.~~ With reference to the figures cited in this study for rates of non-attendance a school administrator noted that, "Those are probably the ones that skip a whole day or two days at a time, most of the kids skip at least one period each day".
24. When high school principals were first contacted and questioned about the problem of violence in their schools they indicated that the largest problem, by far, was that of non participation in educational activities. For a further discussion of "Doing Nothing" and its wider cultural meaning for youth see Paul Corrigan, "Doing Nothing", in Hall and Jefferson, op. cit., pp. 103-106.
25. J. B. Mays, Education and the Urban Child, Liverpool: 1962; p. 186.
26. Hargreaves, op. cit., p. 89.

27. Graham Bleasdale, "Towards a Political Economy of Capitalist Educational Values", in Nelsen, R. W. and Nock, D. A., Reading, Writing and Riches, Ontario: 1978.
28. See, Hamilton Spectator, "January Jobless Blues Hit Again", February 6th, 1979.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

This thesis is a contribution towards the reconsideration and reconstruction of sociological theories of youth. As such, it is located within, and informed by an established tradition of sociological work. Increasingly, a number of commentators are recognizing the importance of restoring a notion of class to the centre of analyses of youth. In Britain the process of reconstruction began with the extension of analyses developed within the sociology of education and deviance theory. In recent years this perspective has been further influenced by themes derived from cultural studies, social history and communications research. In this sense current sociological work on youth is characterized by a considerable range of interests and methodologies. From within this multidisciplinary setting a comprehensive class analysis of youth is now beginning to emerge.

Placing emphasis upon a class analysis does not mean that we have excluded age from our analysis. Clearly age plays a large part in determining the social situation of young people. Rather we have been interested in examining the relations between class and age and, more particularly, the way in which age acts as a mediation of class.

As Murdoch and McCron have argued, young people experience class relations primarily in the mediated form of the concrete social relations which they are involved in at school, at work, in the family and in their

local neighbourhood. In this sense a class analysis must begin by examining the ways in which class relations are experienced within these institutions.

Our study has been concerned with an attempt to make inroads into this type of analysis. Drawing upon the "new" youth cultural theorists, we have presented what we consider to be a theoretical framework within which sociological analyses of youth might be located. This is, of course, an overly ambitious project, but one which we nevertheless feel to be of crucial importance.

Given the massive scope of such a project we have confined our discussion to a number of key problems which revolve around a sociological consideration of youth. To this extent our end product is not so much a tightly-knit consecutive narrative as a series of chapters which revolve around a set of closely connected themes.

We have first of all, considered young people, in sociological terms, as actual or potential labour power, and hence in terms of their relationship to the organisation of production. We have secondly located young people within the institutional setting of the school. This has allowed for a consideration of the extent to which age acts as a mediation of class within an institutional setting and of the role of the school in the structuration of the material experiences of youth.

We have argued that both the relationship of young people to the organisation of production and their experiences of, and, responses to, the school can only be properly understood when considered historically. In this respect we have outlined the nature of the relationship between

young people, the organisation of production and the development of compulsory schooling in nineteenth century Ontario.

While this discussion remained undeveloped in many respects we do feel that it represents a useful example of the way in which young people might be considered in sociological analyses. We pointed out that in many respects the historical experience of young people has been similar to that of women. In this sense studies of youth have much to learn from the recent work of feminist sociologists and historians. In particular we stressed that a historical understanding of the relationship of youth to the organisation of production can be aided by the incorporation of the notions of the "Industrial Reserve Army" and the "Labour Process," both of which are outlined in Volume I of Marx's Capital.

We argued that as a reserve army of labour, young people have historically served capital in two ways. Firstly in providing a disposable and flexible population and secondly, as a form of cheap labour, and hence, as an element of competition among workers. In this sense our discussion raised a number of questions which, although unresolved here, demand historical investigation. To what extent for instance, are young people affected, comparatively, by the tendency for capitalist accumulation to both attract and repel labour? We have indicated that this question may be probed with reference to specific historical situations, in particular during the second world war, a period in which the labour power of women was re-mobilised by the state when demanded by the conditions of the labour market.

Another problem raised by our discussion concerned the somewhat contradictory relationship between the emerging reserve armies of working

class women and children, middle class reformers and skilled male labour. A thorough analysis of this relationship which is both historically and culturally specific is long overdue. We have argued that a study which looks at the consequences of this relationship for young people and which incorporated a notion of patriarchy would be as good a place as any to start.

Within the context of our study, the historical analysis provided an important backcloth against which our contemporary analysis of youth was presented. Central to this was our discussion of the emergence of compulsory schooling, and its relationship to the organisation of production. While certain aspects of the school have changed since the nineteenth century, for instance, two important aspects of compulsory education remain. Firstly it remains legally compulsory, and secondly, its central role is that of providing discipline and training to an emerging potential labour force.

Our contemporary analysis locates young working class people, in the Canadian context, within a contemporary institutional setting. We have considered the relationship between the school and the labour market in structuring the material experiences and opportunities of the youthful population. While young people experience relatively more unemployment than other age categories, this problem is compounded for working class youth by their lower level of educational attainment. A clear connection is therefore demonstrated between social class, educational attainment and employability.

In Chapter Five our focus has shifted from a structural and historical analysis, to one which considers the attitudes and responses

of a sample of working class high school students to the institutional experience of compulsory education. At the same time we have considered the attitudes of our sample towards their expected future in the labour market and the relationship between education and employment. We strongly emphasise that this does not constitute a 'break' or discontinuity in our analysis. It is our contention that a contemporary analysis of young people and of their experience of compulsory schooling only becomes intelligible when related to the historical and structural relationship between the institutions of education and the organisation of production. In this sense we considered the responses of high school students towards the experience of compulsory education as part of a distinct historical process. A process within which students draw upon existing forms of oppositional response, truancy, disorder and so on in their attempts to come to terms with the reality of the school. This was to emphasise that oppositional responses within the school are not a modern phenomenon. Nor, for that matter, are they all the result of individual pathological disorders, as educationalists would have us believe. Rather than these, we would point to the distinct historical forces which have given rise to these forms of negotiation and urge that they be understood against precisely that background.

Our analysis was informed by a line of ethnographic educational studies which have attempted to connect up the responses of students in the school with the dimensions of work and class culture. While our sample was drawn from a working class school we did not assume that we would find homogeneity or consistency in the attitudes and responses of students. In this sense we followed Hargreaves (1967) in distinguishing

between the opposed sub cultures of the school. Those who, on the one hand, accepted the values and norms of the school, and those who chose to reject these and construct their own oppositional or alternative value system. While we adopted this typological framework we did not assume that students would fit neatly into one or the other of the available categories. In this sense we remained sensitive to the possibility of ideological inconsistency both within, and between the responses from within our sample.

As a guide to, at least, an elementary understanding of these inconsistencies we distinguished, along with Parkin (1971) between a dominant value system and a negotiated version of the same, or what we called a subordinate value system. We assumed that when abstract evaluations were called for, respondents would draw upon the dominant value system as a frame of reference. On the other hand, when asked to evaluate their own concrete experiences, respondents would draw upon a negotiated version of the dominant system.

Our findings indicated that we could distinguish within student responses between dominant or official notions concerning the role of the school and their own 'situated' experiences of its meaning for them in their everyday lives. While dominant notions concerning the role of the school were held fairly constant, however, negotiated or mediated versions of these responses were highly variable. We suggested that these would be determined, to a large degree, by structural, cultural and biographical experiences.

Two themes emerged from our study, each of which resulted from a rejection of dominant notions and values related to the school and its

relationship with the labour market. Firstly, a number of students rejected the official ideology and values of the school along with their accompanying notions of discipline, conformity and competition. Secondly, there was no explicit recognition, on the part of students, of the relationship between education and employability.

Our analysis of responses towards the school indicated that we can usefully distinguish between active and passive forms of negotiation and resistance. We have further suggested that passive forms of resistance may be equally as important in their oppositional content, and in their relationship to student "failure" as their overt and aggressive counterparts.

No attempt has been made in our analysis to connect up particular kinds of attitudes towards the school (oppositional or otherwise) with attitudes towards work. This consideration has been omitted for two reasons. Firstly, the qualitative nature of our research precluded the utilisation of 'sophisticated' cross tabular programming. Secondly, given the obviously fragmented, open ended and contradictory nature of responses such an analysis would have seemed impractical.

While we have distinguished, thematically, between pro and anti school sub-cultures within our sample, it could not be said that these groups possess any one particular set of identifying characteristics. If indeed we were to characterise these groups in any one way it would be with regard to the contradictory nature of their attitudes towards both the school and one another. In this respect an attempt to compare particular types of attitudes towards the school with those of work

would assume a homogeneity of attitudes towards the school which do not really exist.

One of the implications raised by this finding is that it seriously calls into question the use of typologisation in ethnographic analyses. While, for instance, we were able to determine the existence of an 'oppositional sub-culture' within our sample we would argue that this group might as easily be characterised by its differences as by its similarities. This points to the complexity of our respondents' subjective forms of articulation and negotiation and connects up importantly with the problems of ideology and inconsistency mentioned earlier. Our findings indicate that the Althusserian notion of the school as an Ideological State Apparatus which simply reproduces the "dominant" ideology is far from adequate. As a consequence we are obliged to suggest that analyses which accept such a notion uncritically necessarily engage in the ongoing reproduction of what is, in our consideration, an essentially functionalist problematic.

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We have shown that ideology works not merely as a result of its 'dominance', nor in the sense that it successfully constructs a finely spun web of confusion around unwilling and unsuspecting victims. Indeed, we emphasise that ideology works precisely because it is loose, unfocused and fragmented. Ideology, therefore, allows for contradictory accommodations and ideological inconsistencies; hence its strength is to be found in both its versatility and its pliability.

Cutting across the feature of ideological inconsistency within our study was the fact that our sample, unlike those adopted by Hargreaves and Willis, included members of both sexes and a number of

different ethnic groups. Given the situated nature of mediated or negotiated responses towards the school we can fully expect that the attitudinal responses within our sample were further complicated by variables related to both gender and ethnicity.

Our findings, then, point to the problems involved in a consideration of the relationship between age and class in sociological discussions of youth. In this respect they indicate the necessity of not only considering age as a mediation of class but of remaining sensitive to variations and contradictions within specific class-cultural formations and, where applicable, including the important variables of gender and ethnicity. While we recognise that our own analysis has remained undeveloped in this respect we feel that it has at least raised and partially discussed the problem of explaining why individuals within the same objective class location adopt dissimilar and sometimes contradictory forms of negotiation and resolution.

Providing answers to these questions will be crucial in the development of a comprehensive sociological analysis of youth. While placing class at the centre of their analysis such studies must remain sensitive to the complex levels of mediation through which class inequalities are experienced and negotiated. This would have much to offer, not only to a reformulated sociology of youth, but to an ongoing analysis of the changing class structure of the advanced capitalist societies.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please supply the following details:

- 1) What grade are you in?\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Is it a 4 or 5 year course?\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How old are you?\_\_\_\_\_ 4) Are you male or female?\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is your father's occupation?\_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What is your mother's occupation?\_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Please indicate your father's level of education. Place a circle around the appropriate answer number.
  - 1) No schooling
  - 2) Some elementary
  - 3) Completed elementary
  - 4) Some high school
  - 5) High school graduate
  - 6) Technical, business school or other non-university after school
  - 7) Some university
  - 8) University graduate
  - 9) Graduate or professional degree after university
- 8) Please indicate your mother's level of education.
  - 1) No schooling
  - 2) Some elementary
  - 3) Completed elementary
  - 4) Some high school
  - 5) High school graduate
  - 6) Technical, business school or other non university after school
  - 7) Some university
  - 8) University graduate
  - 9) Graduate or professional degree after university

Please circle the appropriate answer numbers. If you feel that it would be necessary to circle more than one answer feel free to do so.

2. WHY DO YOU COME TO SCHOOL?

- 1) Because it provides qualifications for future employment
- 2) Because knowledge is important
- 3) Because its compulsory (if you are under 16)

4) Because it is very difficult to avoid

Any others? \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT SCHOOL?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. WHAT THINGS ANNOY YOU THE MOST ABOUT SCHOOL?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT SCHOOLS ARE FOR?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. AT WHAT LEVEL DO YOU EXPECT TO LEAVE FULL TIME EDUCATION?

- 1) Grade 11    2) Grade 12    3) Grade 13    4) Community College
- 5) University

7. WHY WILL YOU LEAVE AT THIS LEVEL? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TEACHERS?

- 1) As people who control you while you are in school
- 2) As friends
- 3) As 'just doing a job like anyone else'
- 4) As people who have your best interests at heart

5) As intelligent people from whom you have much to learn  
Anything not included here?  
Anything not included here?  
Any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE LENGTH OF TIME YOU SPEND AT SCHOOL?

- 1) It should be a year or two longer
  - 2) Its about right
  - 3) It could be a little shorter
  - 4) Its far too long
- Any comments on this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THAT YOU FACE AT HOME?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THAT YOU FACE AT SCHOOL?

- 1) No problems
  - 2) Too much work
  - 3) Work not interesting
  - 4) Boredom
  - 5) You feel trapped
  - 6) Other Students not working
  - 7) Relationships with other students
- Any others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO THESE PROBLEMS?

- 1) Just do nothing
- 2) Daydream
- 3) Use alcohol or drugs
- 4) Wait until evening or weekend
- 5) Skip school

6) Vandalism or 'horsing around'

Any others? \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DO? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. HOW DO YOU SPEND THE MAJORITY OF YOUR LEISURE TIME? IS LACK OF MONEY A PROBLEM? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE SOME OF THE MAIN CAUSES OF VIOLENCE WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF TALK IN THE NEWSPAPERS RECENTLY ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE BEING THE HARDEST HIT BY UNEMPLOYMENT. WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THIS? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. WILL YOU BE ABLE TO GET THE SORT OF JOB THAT YOU WOULD REALLY LIKE WHEN YOU LEAVE SCHOOL? IF NOT WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS SO? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. WHAT CAREER ARE YOU INTERESTED IN? \_\_\_\_\_

19. DO YOU THINK THAT SCHOOL PROVIDES YOU WITH A GOOD ENOUGH TRAINING FOR A CAREER OR JUST WITH THE QUALIFICATIONS (GRADES ETC.) NECESSARY TO GET A JOB. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS WILL LEAVE SCHOOL THIS SUMMER. SOME WILL GET BETTER JOBS THAN OTHERS. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT THIS IS SO?

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21. Two people were talking, the first one said that in Canada too many people work at boring jobs. Some people have too much money to spend and others too little.

The second one said that anyone who really wanted to could get an interesting job in which he or she could accomplish something worthwhile and also earn enough money.

WHO DO YOU AGREE WITH MORE?

- 1) Definitely the first person      4) Probably the second person  
 2) Probably the first person      5) Definitely the second person  
 3) Undecided

22. IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS, DO YOU THINK YOU WILL SOMETIMES BE UNEMPLOYED AND LIVING ON WELFARE?

- 1) Definitely yes      2) Probably yes      3) Undecided  
 4) Probably no      5) Definitely no

23. HAVE ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS OR BROTHERS AND SISTERS RECEIVED WELFARE IN THE LAST YEAR OR TWO?    1) Yes    2) No

24. HAVE YOUR PARENTS RECEIVED UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PAYMENTS IN THE LAST TEN YEARS?

- 1) Yes      2) No      3) I don't know

25. WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE TYPE OF MUSIC AND YOUR FAVOURITE PERFORMER OR BAND?

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26. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF "DISCO"?

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This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Selection and Social Profile

The school selected for this study is located in a low socio-economic area of Hamilton, Ontario. It is generally regarded by both its employees and Board of Education members as a core, inner city, working class school. We were particularly interested in young working class people who were completing their last year or two at high school. Appropriate groups of respondents were selected on the basis of our own criteria by teachers who had agreed to co-operate in the project. Data was collected by questionnaire and by limited informal discussion with students both inside and outside of the classroom.

There were a total of 86 students in our sample, 47 of whom were male and 39 female. The sample may be broken down, on the basis of grade, course and age, as follows:

Grade 51 students in our sample were completing grade 11 education while the remaining 35 were completing grade 12.

Course 53 students in our sample were enrolled in four year courses while the remaining 33 were enrolled in five year courses.

Age The age distribution among our sample was as follows:

| Age     | Number of Students |
|---------|--------------------|
| 16      | 25                 |
| 17      | 27                 |
| 18      | 23                 |
| 19      | 7                  |
| Over 19 | 4                  |

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