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WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN'S

EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN GLASGOW

BY

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SUMMARY

This study investigates women's experiences of unemployment in Glasgow and will contribute to a literature in which there are very few studies on women's unemployment. The thesis seeks to challenge the marginality of women's unemployment in sociological discourses.

The research is based on interviews with forty unemployed women and sixteen women engaged on Employment Training schemes in Glasgow.

The research questions the assumptions and discourses of the mainstream sociological literature on work and unemployment. It highlights the ways in which these sociological discourses draw upon and give legitimacy to existing gendered ideologies about female roles.

Contrary to the dominant sociological paradigm which marginalises the importance of women's unemployment, the evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates that waged work is a central and valued part of women's social identity. The data shows that in unemployment women lose their economic identity and this has a detrimental impact upon their social and domestic identities. Women's domestic role did not compensate for the loss of their paid employment. Rather, the experience of unemployment made women value waged work more.

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INTRODUCTION

The consequences of women's unemployment are little understood because of the lack of general recognition that women can be unemployed. When women lose their paid employment it is generally assumed that they return to their domestic role as wives and mothers and become fully occupied within the home. The availability of an alternative social role and identity is thought to mitigate the social, economic and emotional impact of unemployment for women. In this way women's unemployment is not seen to constitute a problem. It is this social and ideological construction of women's unemployment which the thesis seeks to challenge.

1. Women's Unemployment in Glasgow

There is a lack of concern about women's unemployment generally but the marginality and invisibility of women's unemployment has a particular resonance in Glasgow. This is partly related to the changing nature of Glasgow's industrial base as much as it is to do with gender ideology. Traditionally Glasgow has been dominated by heavy manufacturing and primary industries, shipbuilding and engineering in particular. These industries, which have been an important source of employment for men, have been in decline and male unemployment has risen accordingly. At the time of embarking upon the research in 1989, male unemployment in Glasgow stood at 24%, compared to 12% for

women. (Glasgow District Council, 1989) Whilst the number of male employees has fallen, women's employment has increased. The increase in female employment can be primarily attributed to the changing patterns of women's employment and the expansion of the service sector in Glasgow. The general increase in women's employment is characterised by the shift to a bi-model employment pattern with women working before children are born and returning to work in ever increasing numbers as children grow up. The shift in the industrial base of the city from manufacturing towards light engineering, electronics and the expansion of the service sector has facilitated the increase in women's employment. As a consequence of this shift in the industrial base, with the attendant increase in female employment and decline in male employment, attention has been focussed on male unemployment in Glasgow whilst women's unemployment has been marginalised.

There is however evidence to suggest that female unemployment needs to be taken more seriously than at present. The shift in the industrial base of the city is characterised by the gender restructuring of employment. The growth of women's employment in Glasgow has been allied to the consignment of women to the service sector where three quarters of all women are now employed. (Breitenbach, 1989) These new areas of expansion are dominated by 'branch' systems of production which rely heavily on the 'flexibility' of female labour. Evidence suggests that the decline in heavy industry and the emergence of new

industries in the service sector are part of the same process - the movement towards new forms of exploitation through the operation of branch-type production. (Watt, 1982) The attendant forms of labour which this mode of production necessitates are cheap, semi-skilled, flexible workers. Whilst women's employment has been increasing, the increase is in low paid sectors characterised by part-time work, poor prospects and non-existent trade union organisation. The very nature of these jobs makes women increasingly vulnerable to unemployment. There are then good reasons for demanding that greater attention be paid to women's unemployment in Glasgow.

2. Structure of the Thesis

In focussing on women's experiences of unemployment this thesis aims to challenge the marginality of women's unemployment in both academic and public discourses.

Chapter One lays the theoretical foundations for the empirical analysis in Chapters Three, Four and Five. The chapter is primarily concerned with sociological and feminist discourses on work and unemployment. The literature review is treated as part of the theorisation process. In part one a critical review of the sociological literature in these fields is undertaken. The ensuing critique highlights the ways in which sociological discourses draw upon and give legitimacy to existing gendered ideologies of male and female roles. The

relationship between women's exclusion from unemployment research and their marginality in the sociology of work is theorised. In the second part of the chapter a review of feminist literature on women's work and unemployment is undertaken; the conclusions of which challenge the findings of mainstream sociological accounts. The ensuing analysis addresses the problems with feminist discourses on work and unemployment, in particular drawing attention to feminisms pre-occupation with sexual power relations to the exclusion of a consideration of 'race' and class divisions between women.

Chapter Two continues with the theme of power relations by focussing attention on the research process itself. The chapter begins with an examination of the factors which influenced the choice of research topic and determined the research design. By reflecting on the way in which this research was conducted, the chapter seeks to problematise some of the central tenets of feminist thinking on method and methodology. It outlines the dangers of feminist research becoming too prescriptive and demonstrates the limitations of feminist research which fails to recognise differences between women at the level of methodology.

The way in which women's unemployment is conceived is predicated upon women's commitment to waged work. **Chapter Three** aims to determine unemployed women's orientations to waged work in two ways; first an examination of the social, economic and psychological meanings that waged work holds

for women is undertaken. Second, the chapter focuses on the material, social and ideological constraints which shape women's orientations to waged work. The chapter demonstrates that waged work is a central and valued part of women's social identity.

The consequences of the loss of this identity are explored in **Chapter Four**. The chapter examines the extent to which the availability of an alternative social role mitigates women's experiences of unemployment. The chapter explores the extent to which women identified themselves as unemployed and looks at the impact which the loss of paid employment has on women's identities. It is argued that women do not readily 'return' to their homemaker role when unemployed. Rather, unemployment increases the dissatisfaction felt with the homemaker role and makes women value waged work all the more.

Chapter Five considers the extent to which Employment Training is a solution to women's unemployment. Drawing on case study material of three Employment Training schemes in the East End of Glasgow, the chapter considers the concept of training and looks at the way in which gender ideologies underpin training courses.

CHAPTER ONE

THE UNEMPLOYED MAN AND HIS WIFE: THE DILEMMAS OF GENDER, 'RACE' AND CLASS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND UNEMPLOYMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to lay the theoretical foundations for the empirical analysis in chapters three, four and five. The literature review itself is treated as part of the theorisation process. The chapter is primarily concerned with mainstream sociological and feminist discourses on work and unemployment and is organised in two parts accordingly. In the first part of the chapter a critical review of mainstream sociological literature on work and unemployment is undertaken. The critique highlights the problems of sociology written from the standpoint of men and the ways in which sociological discourses draw upon and give legitimacy to existing gendered ideologies of male and female roles. The relationship between the marginalisation of women from sociological research on work and their exclusion in sociological research on unemployment is explored. It will be shown that the marginalisation of women in both fields has a chronological basis. Sociological studies of work and unemployment conducted in the 1960's and 1970's tend to neglect issues of gender altogether or marginalise the significance of gender divisions. The sociological analysis in such studies proceeds along sex differentiated lines. It

will be shown that this approach pervades abstract theoretical thinking and empirical work, directing the focus of the studies, influencing the selection of samples and the research questions asked. More recent studies of unemployment, tend not to be as gender blind as their predecessors. However, it is argued that they still fail to utilise gender as a central organising feature of their analyses. This 'adding on' approach leaves male definitions and concepts intact and does little to enhance our understanding of women's unemployment and the ways in which it might differ from men's experiences of unemployment.

The 'malestream' bias within the sociology of work and unemployment has been seriously challenged over the past decade by feminist researchers. Part two of the chapter serves a dual function; in reviewing feminist literature on work and unemployment it seeks to demonstrate that contrary to the findings of the 'malestream' literature, unemployment is a problem that confronts women and not just men. Second, it addresses the perceived inadequacies of feminist discourses on women's work and unemployment. In particular, the critique highlights the problems with feminism's continued pre-occupation with sexual power relations to the exclusion of a consideration of other types of power relations. It is argued that if we are to fully comprehend the meaning that unemployment holds for women then feminist research needs to consider the differences *between* women. To that end, the emerging perspective is one which will

analyse the ways in which social class interacts with gender in structuring women's experiences of unemployment.

PART I

2. SEXUAL SEGREGATION IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The issue of gender has until recently been neglected in mainstream sociological research on unemployment. In order to understand why women have been systematically excluded from this area of research I believe it is necessary to consider the treatment of women in the sociology of work. A brief review of the literature in both fields will therefore be undertaken. The most common approaches will be illustrated by considering the variety of ways in which women have been treated in the textbooks in the sociology of work and unemployment. Given the large volume of literature in both fields my discussion will be necessarily selective. Nonetheless, generalisations made on the basis of the reviewed literature apply to much of the literature which I have been unable to cover in the context of the thesis due to the limitations of space. The selected literature will be analysed from the perspective of whether and how women are discussed and the criticisms made on this basis do not necessarily imply more general criticisms of other sociological issues broached in the literature.

2.1 Sexual Segregation in the Sociology of Work

Research in the sociology of work has focussed primarily on men's paid employment and men's orientation to waged work. Research has focused mainly on four areas: attitudes to work; orientations to work; motivations to work; and alienation from work. (Dex, 1985) Action theorists for example, have given priority to the meanings individuals attach to their actions and question why people tolerate boredom and lack of control in working experiences. They are also concerned with orientations to work and how far these are influenced or formed by prior socialisation, technological change or workplace experiences. Other sociologists have been interested in workers attitudes towards their work as evidence of their class consciousness, for the political implications such attitudes might have, or for the differentiation of segments within labour markets. For the most part such discussions have taken place in 'unisex' terms. (Brown, 1976)

The Unisex Worker

Much of the theory in the sociology of work is based on the assumption that one can generalise and theorise about organisations without making reference to the sex of the members and to the significance of sexual divisions in industry. Reference is made to 'the worker' or 'worker's orientations' when in fact most of the research during the 1950s to the 1970s was conducted on samples of men. Indeed the central studies in sociology have been carried out in industries in which very few women are employed. Thus the

classic studies are of coalminers (Henriques et al., 1957); fishermen (Tunstall, 1962); printers (Cannon, 1967); affluent workers (Goldthorpe et al., 1968) lorrydrivers (Hollowell, 1968); car workers (Benyon, 1973); shipbuilders (Hill, 1977); and farmworkers (Newby, 1977). Most of these studies throw no light upon the expectations and actions of women as employees.

The Neglected Worker

Some empirical examples of workers do contain women, but often their only mention is in the initial description of the characteristics of the workforce. Very little analysis is then made of the differences between men and women and the significance of this difference for the generalisations which are made is never explored. Take Benyon's Working for Ford (1973) as an example. Benyon describes and analyses the work experience of working class men in the context of the organisation, managerial practices and the economic relations of the Ford motor company. However it is a limited perspective excluding much of the lives of working class women. Indeed we are not told until half way through the book that women actually constitute part of the Ford workforce. Benyon, like many sociologists of the time, works within a one-dimensional class based stratification system and subsequently fails to analyse the way in which sex inequality accentuates class inequality. Other studies whilst recognising that gender is a potential source of variation, make no further use of the point when it has been made. The studies by Lupton (1963) and Cunnison (1966)

include both male and female factory workers in their samples. Gender distinctions however are ignored and consequently the opportunity to contribute to an understanding of the sexual division of labour was missed. (Dex, 1985) Nevertheless their findings are presented as having equal applicability to the unisex worker. Similar omissions are to be found in Goldthorpe and Lockwood's (1968) affluent worker study. The authors come to the conclusion that the life-cycle position of men influences their orientation to work. A highly instrumental orientation to work is linked to a number of social correlates. One of these is the life-cycle stage of the male workers who were of a similar age, marital status and with dependent children. As Dex (1985) points out, the results demonstrated the influence of women in male workers orientations and showed that orientations are determined outside the workplace and not through the experience of work itself as had been previously thought to be the case. This important point is lost in the ensuing analysis. The importance of women and the family in men's orientations to work were not taken up by Goldthorpe and Lockwood.

The Problematic Worker

Yet another way in which women are dealt with in the literature on work is to analyse the position of women in the labour market through a 'problems' framework. Sociologists have seen the problems of employers, trade unions, husbands and children as the problematic outcome of women's employment. Discussion is focused primarily on the

extent to which married women go out to work, on their motivation and on the problems they and their employers face as a consequence. Take for example Brown (1962) where the appropriate entry in the index reads:

Women Workers: exclusion from jobs; lack of mobility; extension of opportunities; protective legislation; as a reserve of labour; wage differentials; waste of abilities.

As I will later demonstrate such studies are based on the assumption that there is something problematic about women in employment which is not problematic in the case of men. This approach has served to obscure the problems of women workers and attributes to them the responsibility for their work situations.

The Unacknowledged Worker

As well as being neglected as a subject for study within the workplace, the research on women workers has gone relatively unnoticed and unrecognised by sociologists of work. Dex (1985) notes that many important studies of women workers were conducted within the Human Relations School. Here the focus was on the subjective psychological perceptions of workers and their environments. Studies were undertaken on topics such as fatigue, monotony and boredom at work, the effects of the menstrual cycle, effects of lifting heavy loads on women's capacity to work and sickness in different working conditions. Dex argues that the work is important because of the 'human factor' which was injected into the image of industrial workers as opposed to the mechanistic

robot model which preceded. That this 'human' image was derived from studies of women has gone unacknowledged.

Summary

From the 1950s to the 1980s research in the sociological field of work generally neglected to study women, or treated women as unisex but male', or portrayed women as a social problem', or failed to recognise studies of women workers. The tradition is based upon sexist assumptions and deductions about women and their role in society. As I will demonstrate later in the chapter, the feminist literature on women's unemployment has suffered as a result of this masculine tradition. First, it is necessary to give a brief overview of mainstream unemployment research in order to determine the ways in which women have been treated therein.

2.2 Sexual Segregation in the Sociology of Unemployment

I now want to extend the critique of the sociology of work to the sociology of unemployment. With the notable exceptions of Callender (1985); Coyle (1984a: 1984b: 1984c); and Walby (1985a: 1985b: 1988: 1989a: 1989b) feminists have given little consideration to the malestream literature on unemployment. On the whole feminists have been preoccupied with the literature on work. However, as I will now proceed to demonstrate, the treatment of women in the mainstream unemployment literature has been similar to their treatment in employment research; women have been incorporated into

analyses but not discussed; on occasions they have been analysed but thereafter ignored; or alternatively, they have been considered briefly as the wives of unemployed men.

Man as Ex-Worker

Sociologists have moved away from an earlier focus on the personal and individual characteristics of the unemployed and are now more concerned with the social injustices associated with unemployment. Sociologists are divided about the consequences of unemployment and a plethora of models offer different accounts of the social transition that is associated with unemployment and redundancy. The analyses often cross the boundary of sociology into psycho-sociological approaches to the experience of unemployment. In this field the psycho-social transition that is associated with job loss is explored. It has been suggested that the experience of unemployment progresses through a number of phases. Indeed in some accounts the unemployed experience is portrayed as a condition of almost pathological disorder:

"First there is the shock, which is followed by an active hunt for a job, during which the **individual** is still optimistic and unresigned, **he** still maintains an unbroken attitude. Second, when all efforts fail, the **individual** becomes pessimistic, anxious and suffers active distress: this is the most crucial state of all. And third the **individual** becomes fatalistic and adapts **himself** to **his** new state with a narrower scope. **He** now has a broken attitude." (my emphasis)

This description of the psychology of unemployment found in Eisenberg and Lazarsfield (1938) assumed the status of

orthodoxy in the 1930's and continues to exercise a powerful influence on unemployment research today. The same 'shock - optimism - pessimism - fatalism' formulation is to be found in the work of Jahoda (1972); Briar (1977); Hayes and Nutman (1982); Hill (1982); and Marsden (1982). As I will later illustrate, the basic assumptions which underpin the model render it inapplicable to women's experiences of unemployment. Despite the differences of perspective within and between the sociological and psychological literature on unemployment, they share one common feature; both deal almost exclusively with men. The models and theories of unemployment are based on an 'economic model of man' or 'man as ex-worker'. The discussions however often take place in unisex terms. Reference is made to 'the unemployed' when the research has in fact been conducted on samples of men. The quotation cited earlier in the text by Eisenberg and Lazarsfield (1938) is a good example of the unisex tradition. The apparently sexless unemployed 'individual' who is referred to throughout their work is at last unmasked and 'his' true identity is revealed. The assumption behind the Unisex Model is that women's experiences of unemployment are similar to or the same as men's. This is a tradition which still finds expression in the more recent work of Daniels (1972); Hayes and Nutman (1981); Marsden (1982) Merritt (1982) and Daniels (1990). These studies of the 'unemployed individual' are not entirely gender blind. They refer to women, but they do so momentarily; in a passing sentence or at best a chapter in a book. Once referred to in this fleeting way, the generic 'he' assumes ascendancy

and the reader is left in no doubt that the real concerns of these studies is with *male* unemployment.

In the sociological discourse then, the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to the norm which is male. As we have seen this finds its clearest expression in the generic use of the term 'he' to encompass all humankind. Simone de Beauvoir (1961:25) describes the effect for women this way:

"A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man. The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal paper. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas women represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria without reciprocity."

Until recently one has had to look very hard at the material on unemployment to find any reference to the experiences of jobless women.

The Unemployed Man and his Family

The mainstream unemployment research published during the 1980s has generally attempted to take the differential effects of 'race' and class into account, thereby challenging the idea that 'the unemployed' are a homogeneous entity. (Rhodes and Braham, 1981: Thomas, 1984: Ullah, 1985: Warr, Banks and Ullah, 1985: Jenkins, 1985; 1988: Ohri and Faruqi, 1988) Whilst not gender blind, the gender variable

in these studies is still not examined in any depth. Instead those analyses which do consider women, do so in one of three ways: First, the consideration of women in such studies is often confined to 'the unemployed man and his family' model. The working titles of the research articles illustrate this point: McKee and Bell (1985) "Marital and Family Relations in Times of *Male Unemployment*"; or Morris (1985) "Renegotiation of the Domestic Division of Labour in the Context of *Male Redundancy*"; and Cooke (1987) "The Withdrawal from Paid work of the Wives of *Unemployed Men*". (emphasis mine) Whilst this body of research affords primacy to considerations of unemployed men's relationships within the context of the family and community, the emphasis nevertheless remains on *men's* unemployment and the impact this has on family and community relations. Women are considered only briefly as the wives of unemployed men and never as unemployed in their own right.

The Additive Approach

Second, women are 'added on' to accounts of male unemployment. Sinfield's (1981) work is a good example of this approach. Women's experience of unemployment is considered in one small section of a chapter in his book and gender is not a central organising feature of the ensuing analysis. Similarly, Marsden (1982) talked to a range of unemployed people for his research but only one of the reported case studies in his book is that of a woman. The 'workless' in Marsden's study are men. The only visibility women have in the book is in chapter seven - 'Pressures in

the Home: Worker or Housewife?' - which once again considers the impact of male unemployment on the household. The best example of the additive approach however is to be found in the work of Daniels (1990). The reader is informed that the reasons for including women in his study of The Unemployed Flow were because of "the political pressures" which "overwhelmed any technical issues concerning the feasibility and desirability of doing so". We learn that "the women proved in many ways to be an *unsatisfactory sub-group*, as we feared would be the case, since we selected our sample from the register and many unemployed women do not register". (Daniels, 1990:7; emphasis mine) The way in which Daniels expresses the problems with the sampling frame, a problem by no means unique to his study, suggests that unemployed women are the problem - an 'unsatisfactory sub-group' - when in fact it is widely recognised that official definitions of unemployment are problematic in their continued exclusion of unemployed married women from the unemployment register. (Callender, 1985; Allin and Hunt, 1982; Perkins, 1983) Thus it is one feels, with a grudging and almost apologetic acceptance that Daniels donates a chapter in his book to women's experience of unemployment.

The Homogeneous Approach

Finally, other unemployment research such as Sheppard and Belitsky (1966); Daniels (1974); Daniels and Stilgoe (1977); and Marsden (1982), contain samples of women but fail to explore the gender differences in the data. Marsden's (1982) work is a good exemplar of this. To take one

example, Marsden recognises that whatever the overall level of unemployment, its burden falls more heavily upon women. This insight however remains unexplored, because gender differentiation is not central to his analysis.

Women then have been and continue to be largely neglected from mainstream sociological studies of the unemployed. Within the mainstream literature there has been no comparable discussion about the impact of women's unemployment on community and family relations to the extent that there has been of men. One has to look to the small but developing body of feminist literature on unemployment, as exemplified by Coyle's (1984a; 1984b; 1984c) work, to find concerns of this kind addressed. There are then striking parallels in the way in which women have been dealt with in the fields of employment and unemployment research. Sociologists in both fields have either ignored gender differences altogether and treated women as identical to men; alternatively, women have been treated as a problem - or, as in the case of unemployment, perceived as not having a problem at all. More recent studies tend to 'add' women onto male analyses. The failure to utilise gender as a central organising feature of analysis leaves male concepts and definitions intact. Such approaches therefore, do little to enhance our understanding of women's unemployment and the ways in which it might differ from men's experiences of unemployment. It is an indictment of 'malestream' research on unemployment that the conclusions reached by the

Equal Opportunities Commission (1977: para 3.43) some fifteen years ago remain valid today:

"We know virtually nothing about the effects of unemployment on women. Research into unemployment and its effects has been in reality research into male unemployment and its effects."

It is to the question of why women have been and continue to be under-represented or misrepresented within mainstream discourses on work and unemployment that we now turn.

2.3 Androcentrism in the Sociology of Work and Unemployment

I shall now proceed to speculate upon possible reasons for the systematic neglect and/or the marginalisation of women's economic activity and unemployment in the mainstream sociological literature. I shall demonstrate that the neglect of women in one area is related to their treatment in the other. My argument is that the neglect of women in unemployment research is partly attributable to the assumption that men and women workers are different and are assumed to react differently to unemployment. I shall move away from the specific points of analysis which characterised the initial part of this chapter and look more generally at emergent patterns and assumptions in the literature.

The first of the patterns to emerge is the use of **sex segregated models of analysis** in both fields of research

such that the study of work and unemployment have proceeded along sex differentiated lines. I have already demonstrated the ways in which women are rarely studied as workers or as unemployed. Such biases are I believe related to two principle models which underpin many of the analyses in the sociology of work and unemployment: the job model and the familial model. (Feldberg and Glenn, 1979) (1) The job model has been applied principally to men and has been used to explain their behaviour in employment and unemployment. The analyses of men's relationship to employment concentrate on job related features. The job model treats the work that people do as the primary variable and tends to overlook familial relations. Male unemployment is also seen to be affected by conditions and experiences in the workplace. The familial model has been applied primarily to women. When it is studied at all, women's relationship to employment is treated as a derivative of personal characteristics and relationships to family situations. From this perspective, women's paid employment outside the home is treated as problematic. This is in part a consequence of the belief which underpins the familial model; that women's proper role is in the home caring for 'the family'. Subsequently, women's unemployment is viewed as unproblematic for it is assumed that women unlike men have an alternative role and social identity to go back to; that of wives and mothers. Having outlined the main principles behind the job and familial models I will now proceed to explore in greater depth their operation in the context of the sociological literature on work and unemployment.

It is apparent that it is the divisions between home and work which underpin the job and familial models. They are based on assumptions about the 'conventional' woman who is married and remains at home and the 'conventional' man who goes out to work. Views of masculinity and femininity underlie the models and are bound up in the dichotomy between home and work. Thus men are constructed as 'the workers' and 'the breadwinners' and women as 'wives' and 'mothers'. It is assumed that all male-female differences originate from this dichotomy. These sex-differentiated frameworks lead to gendered questions being asked in the research process. As I have stated, research in the sociology of work has been primarily concerned with men's employment. The underlying assumption is that men are always employed. Consequently, researchers have ignored questions of why men work and have focused instead on the meanings men attach to their work. However, given the 'problem creating' nature of women's paid employment different questions are asked of women; the most obvious example being why women work at all. Conversely, if men are 'naturally' assumed to work then it becomes relevant to ask questions about their experience of unemployment. Given that women are not expected to work such questions are deemed to be inconsequential. (Dex, 1985) Reliance on the job and familial models thus guides the analysis into stereotypical moulds. However, not only do the models bias the questions asked, they bias the direction of the research. The job-familial paradigm determines what is studied. The models direct attention towards certain issues

by defining them as problematic. I have previously illustrated the way in which this operates by defining unemployment as problematic for men and employment as a problem for women. The dichotomy created by the job and familial models, between home and work and thus between unemployment and employment, means that both are treated as separate fields of sociological inquiry. As a consequence the interrelationships between the two are neglected.

The mainstream sociological literature generally portrays women who fall outside the confines of the models as deviants. The man who is not engaged in paid work is either ill or a victim of harsh economic circumstances and not as Delamont (1980) suggests, a deviant. However women who are engaged in paid employment are judged as either mad or bad, that is, deviant or sick. The effect of this labelling is to dismiss the importance of women's paid employment and to further marginalise it. There is also a sense in which data which does not fit the prerequisites of the job and familial models is overlooked and ignored. As we have seen, gender differences in the data which violate the models' assumptions is often discounted or de-emphasised in the interpretations and the significance of gender difference for the overall argument is rarely explored. (Feldberg and Glenn, 1979) Additionally, there is the possibility that when an alternative explanation could be invoked the explanation which is most consistent with the job and familial models is favoured. So for example, Beynon and Blackburn (1972) explain similar behaviour of men and women

workers differently. The male workers concern with social aspects of their job is explained by the alienating employment conditions and lack of opportunity for mobility which is subsequently seen to turn the men's interests away from job concerns. The women workers interest in social aspects of their job is interpreted as a product of low commitment to waged work resulting from the women's primary commitment to their familial roles. The fact that employment conditions and opportunities for mobility are far worse for the women is not invoked as a reason for the women's alienation from work. Similarly Beynon (1973) interprets the striking Ford women's refusal to return to work at the managements request as a consequence of their family commitments and the low priority they place upon their paid employment. Had it been the male workers at the Ford plant who had refused to return to work one can see the way in which this act would have been interpreted as an act of defiance on their part against their capitalist employers. So the danger lies in the fact that the job and familial models offer ready-made explanations which mean that alternative interpretations are not sought. The use of sex segregated models of analysis means that women's participation in spheres other than those prescribed to them by the models is not recognised. Thus women's paid employment is ignored and consequently their unemployment is also neglected within the sociological literature.

2.4 Gendered Modes of Analysis

I now want to move away from the specific concern with sex-segregated models of analysis to consider other reasons for women's omission from the sociology of work and unemployment. I shall begin by addressing my comments to the sociology of work in the first instance.

I believe it is necessary to question what sociologists actually mean by the term 'work'. The writing of Raymond Williams (1976) is useful in this context. Williams argues that the notion of work has become specialised over the last century so that it refers primarily to paid employment. He claims that to be in work or out of work is to be in a definite relationship with some other who had control of the means of production. Work then partly shifted from production itself to the predominant social relationship in society. Williams argues that it is only in this sense that a woman running a house and bringing up children can be said not to be working. Here Williams raises one of the central flaws in the mainstream sociological literature: it focuses on paid employment to the exclusion of unpaid domestic labour. Thus the very concept of work as employed by sociologists neglects women because a large proportion of their labour is of an unpaid nature in the home, outside the immediate capitalist relations of production. Given that 'work' and 'home' are dichotomised by the job and familial models, unpaid domestic labour is typified as 'non-work'. Thus women are implicitly defined as non-workers. Even when women are employed their employment is regarded as

'atypical' and secondary to their domestic and reproductive roles. Women then are constructed as a secondary and marginal labour force. The development of separate job and familial models rests on a conception of work which segregates paid employment from other types of work and in the process identifies paid employment as the only viable form of work. This narrow conception of work leads sociologists to ignore much of the work conducted by women.

We can also relate the neglect of women in the literature to the traditional focus on manual work in manufacturing industries. Women have been a small minority of that workforce. As I implied earlier in the text, the occupations studied in the sociology of work have been largely 'woman free' and until recently there has been no questioning of why this is so. The 'classic' studies that I cited earlier are of hard, dirty, 'masculine' work' of an 'exciting' kind. (Delamont) Exciting that is for those who *write* about it, whether it is experienced as such by those who *perform* manual work is open to question. These are the occupations in which the heroic battles of working class men pitted against capitalist employers are romantically portrayed by middle class academics. As Delamont (1980) notes, it is hard to imagine creating such an aura around the industries in which women are confined. Titles such as 'Shoes are our Life'; 'The Shirtmakers'; or 'Working for the NHS', do not capture the imagination in quite the same way as the original projects. Compared with men's work, women's work is characterised as routine, monotonous, undynamic and

unimportant. Delamont argues that the focus on men's work is also illustrative of the way in which sociologists concentrate on public, dramatic role players and ignore the less dramatic, private spheres of life. The sociology of work and unemployment portray women as passive and subsidiary characters. So for example, women are not recognised as unemployed in their own right but rather the focus is on the meaning that *male* unemployment holds for women. (Marsden, 1982; McKee and Bell, 1985; Cooke, 1987) So whilst women are allowed to become part of the scenery they are never allowed to become part of the action. Men however are seen as occupying multiple roles in different spheres of society. They are constructed as 'action men'. It is no coincidence that even in unemployment the locus of concern has been with men's *activity* in the informal economy, as exemplified for example in Ray Pahl's (1981; 1984) research. This is in contrast to the portrayal of women who are seen to passively accept redundancy and retire to the home to resume their 'proper' role of wife and mother. As Barron and Norris (1976:56) state:

"We might expect women to accept redundancies more readily than men because of the lower degree of attachment to work as a career and because of financial support of husbands."

We can see the way in which assumptions about male employees are built into the above analysis. In arguing that women tend to accept redundancies there is the implication that men tend to reject them. However no such generalisations can be made on the basis of redundancy studies past or

present. Research conducted by Wood (1981) and Coyle (1984a; 1984c) challenges such gendered assumptions. Wood argues that the smooth nature of some redundancy situations cannot be explained by women holding docile or passive attitudes either because of their primary socialisation or their family role. Of crucial significance for Wood is the way in which management structure redundancy situations. In describing women's response to redundancy, Coyle (1984c:20) argues that their passivity must be understood in terms of "a mesh of social relations, production, the family and gender and not in terms of some simple notion of femininity or of a woman's domestic role". Coyle's study demonstrates that paid employment was a route out of the constrictions of family life and the financial dependence this entailed. Such was the importance of waged work to the women in Coyle's study that redundancy was experienced as a return to a restricted way of life and not to the 'natural' way of life depicted by Barron and Norris (1976).

Women have also been neglected in employment research because they are not thought to be serious workers. Mainstream sociological discourse of the 1960s and 1970s is premised upon the two-phase or bimodal model of women's employment which emerged during the 1960s. (Hakim, 1979) This is characterised by high activity rates amongst younger women which declined throughout their 20s. From the age of about 35 activity rates increased again until by the 40-50 year age group they equalled the activity rates of the youngest women. The second peak in activity rates was

largely composed of women returning to the labour force once their children were of school age. However more recent evidence suggests that younger cohorts of women are moving beyond the bi-modal model and are returning to work between births. (Dex, 1984) The total period spent out of the labour force during child-rearing has decreased. Despite this change in the patterns of women's labour force participation, their association with reproduction rather than production and their responsibility for childcare and housework continues to permeate considerations of employment. Domestic ideology defines women's primary role not as a waged worker but as an actual or potential wife and mother, economically and legally dependent upon a male breadwinner. (Allen and Barker, 1976) By reflecting and partly constructing these misconceptions about the place of women in British society, sociologists have played their part in marginalising women's employment. To quote an example:

"Women...accept routine jobs that are unlikely to lead anywhere. for most of them matrimony is their principle objective or interest and work is regarded as temporary or indidental, rather than central to their lives."

(Mumford and Banks, 1967:21)

"Work does not have the central importance and meaning in their [women's] lives that it does for men, since their most important roles are those of wives and mother."

(Blauner, 1964:87)

These quotations demonstrate the way in which women are constructed either as non-workers or as secondary workers. The role of 'wives and mothers' however is not recognised as 'work'. Clearly it is the ideology of the male breadwinner and dependent wife which underpins such thinking. By viewing women only as housewives, sociologists effectively deny women rights to formal employment and training.

The construction of women as 'non-workers' has an adverse effect on women's training opportunities. It is assumed that women are not interested in training because their prime concern is to get married. This is reinforced by the assumption that women will withdraw from the labour market on marriage or with the arrival of children and thus any investment the employer makes in them would be lost. Freeman (1982) in her study of the links between women's childcare responsibilities and their position in the labour market, notes the following comment from the personnel manager of an electronics factory which employed 100 women:

"I always go into it in some depth if anyone with young children applies. Some don't give it enough thought - they might take on a job on a temporary basis irrespective of the training we put into them, and then leave when the summer holiday comes up".

(Freeman, 1982:151)

Even when women enter the labour force they are not generally thought of as requiring training because they are not seen to do 'skilled' work and it is skilled work for which training is required. (Wickham, 1986) Thus as Wickham

(1986) notes, government proposals on training consistently fail to address women's training needs. In the few instances when women's training requirements are acknowledged they are rarely acted upon. The belief that women are not interested in training or that it is wasteful to invest resources in training women is underpinned by the idea that women's place is in the home.

2.5 Gendered Modes of Analysis: Unemployment

In a similar vein the prevailing attitude towards women's unemployment within the mainstream sociological literature point to the predominant assumptions about the role of women in society. Women's unemployment is denied by treating women as non-workers. Conversely, women's right to work is undermined in the sociology texts by refusing to give equal consideration to women's unemployment. Just as there are problems with sociological definitions of work, so too there are conceptual problems in defining unemployment. Who is counted as unemployed rests on the definition of what constitutes unemployment. The problem with sociological research is that until recently it has taken on board official interpretations of unemployment. By relying upon the registered unemployed, research such as that conducted by White (1982) and Daniels (1990) cannot claim to be representative of the entire population of unemployed women. Their samples, by their very definition, are biased. Underpinning official definitions are erroneous assumptions

about women's financial dependence upon men. Dex (1985) notes that from the earliest days of the unemployment records in Britain the measure and definition of unemployment has been linked to the eligibility for national insurance benefits. Married women are particularly affected because their assumed dependence upon a man means that they are either ineligible for benefit or are not allowed to claim benefit in their own right. This has acted as a disincentive for married women to register as unemployed. It is in this way that they are omitted from the official figures. This undercounting of women in the official statistics may have been partly responsible for the lack of attention by sociologists to women's unemployment.

Furthermore, in the sociology texts 'real' unemployment is often defined in terms of the length of single periods of unemployment and the perceived social consequences arising from this. I believe that the preoccupation with long term unemployment reflects concerns about the potential this holds for social disorder. This is the message behind Gilbert's (1989) analysis of unemployment trends during the 1980s. In an interview with Keith Harper, for The Guardian newspaper, Gilbert warns of the consequences should the Conservative Government continue with its complacent attitude towards the unemployed:

"Progress must be made soon if the modern equivalent of Chartism and Luddism that might arise in the inner cities and depressed communities is to be avoided...To let unemployment continue to rise is dangerous".

The locating of 'active' men in the 'home', removed from their 'natural' sphere of waged work with the unstructured time that unemployment affords, is perceived as a potentially explosive situation. In unemployment women however are thought to return to their 'natural' sphere. It is women's employment, particularly the employment of married women, rather than their unemployment which is considered to be a problem because it implies the neglect of familial duties. Women's unemployment then is not seen as dangerous in the way that male unemployment is and is subsequently ignored. Again we can see the way in which the job/familial models root men's experience in their work situation and women's experience in the family. This construction of unemployment also has implications for women's training opportunities. In both public and sociological discourse employment training is often regarded as the panacea to the potential threat of social disorder that mass unemployment is thought to invoke. However, because the problem of unemployment is one that invokes men rather than women, women are not seen as a political problem and thus the solutions to the perceived problem, such as the instigation of training programmes, are directed at men. (Wickham, 1986)

The assumption that 'real' unemployment constitutes long term unemployment also underpins the psycho-sociological model referred to earlier. The psychological changes that the unemployed individual reputedly experiences, occur over a prolonged period of time; the unemployed person is seen to

move from optimism following the initial shock of job loss, to disappointment and frustration at repeated rejection, to eventual resignation and apathy. The psycho-sociological approach offers little understanding of women's experiences of unemployment. Labour force data shows that during the 1980s women's unemployment rates were generally higher than men's but that women experienced a faster rate of return to the labour market than men. In other words women's unemployment tended to be shorter in duration than men's. Thus the psycho-sociological model may not adequately explain women's experiences of unemployment.

The job/familial models then, hold the key to explanations of women's marginalisation in the mainstream unemployment literature. Male unemployment is regarded as such a problem within the sociology literature because of the way in which work has been constructed as the most important area of men's lives. Unemployment for a man is considered a social and economic loss which brings hardship to him and his family as well as a loss of output to the economy. But as Coyle (1984a; 1984c) notes, the problems are not purely economic. Given that work is seen to dominate men's sense of themselves as men, unemployment is seen to hit men's masculinity. Coyle argues that unemployment represents more than the loss of a wage as income, rather it represents the loss of a 'breadwinner' wage as well as an economic and social role in the world of men. Unemployed women are not seen to suffer anything like the same problems as men. Ashton and Field (1976:102) describe the differences thus:

"The frustrations of careerless work creates more problems for the men than for the women...This is because women can escape from work - even if only temporarily - as they start a family...Similarly, prolonged unemployment is likely to pose less of a problem for women. In the first place...work is not usually as important to them as it is for the men. Secondly, the women can contribute to the effective running of the household through taking over household tasks of various kinds."

Similar assumptions are to be found in the work of Giles Merritt (1982:81):

"...the discouraged are often people who can move easily from employment to household work without suffering intense personal problems. Working wives who are forced back into being housewives may have financial problems but at least they also have a role to revert to. For those who have no substitute role, being put out of work can have devastating side effects."

It is assumed that women can move easily and unproblematically from the world of paid employment to the household for two reasons; first because "[waged] work is not usually as important to them as it is for men"; second, because "they have a role to revert to" - "the effective running of the household". Whilst it is conceded that women may suffer financially as a result of their unemployment, they are not seen to experience an *identity crisis* in the way that unemployed men are thought to. Women are assumed to have few problems with unemployment because they can become housewives. It is precisely because women combine paid work and unpaid work in the home that their experience of unemployment has been constructed whereby they 'return' to the domestic and are not seen to suffer in the same way

that men are assumed to with unstructured time. (Coyle, 1984c) This idea is encapsulated in Merritt's (1982:81) use of the term '*working wives*'. Even in the sphere of employment women are defined first and foremost by their domestic role. Women's domestic role is defined as more important than their waged employment. It is in this way that women are constructed as '*returning*' to the home; women are not rendered unemployed, rather they are "*discouraged workers*" who "*withdraw* from the labour force". The term '*working wives*' also implies that '*wives*' who are not engaged in paid employment outside the home do not '*work*'. Thus the unpaid domestic work women conduct in the home is not constructed as '*real*' work. It is also assumed that the loss of a woman's wage will not have the same negative economic effects on her family as the loss of the male '*breadwinners*' wage. Moreover, the loss of the unemployed woman's productive output is not regarded as economically damaging as the loss of the man's because her paid employment is viewed as secondary to his. Thus in the sociology of unemployment as in the field of employment, the familial model comes to the fore to interpret women's experiences.

One of the major problems with studies which rest on the familial model is the way in which they mask complex ideological conflicts about women's experiences of employment and unemployment. Pollert's (1981) analysis suggests that women live an unresolved conflict. She argues that women's concrete experience of work, their self-image

and self confidence as workers is constantly undermined by their awareness of being women and of their role in the family. Women's confusion about their right to employment has consequences for the ways in which they conceptualise their unemployment. Cragg and Dawson (1984) undertook a study of this very problem. Women who were not engaged in paid employment were asked whether they considered themselves to be unemployed. The women's self assessment was not found to correlate with conventional definitions of unemployment. Of the 'non-working' women in the sample only 55% who would officially be defined as unemployed thought of themselves this way. Cragg and Dawson argue that the women failed to perceive themselves as unemployed because they were often actively engaged in housework and in most cases did not receive unemployment benefit. The National Survey on Women and Employment conducted by Martin and Roberts (1984:84) similarly concluded that "many women, despite looking for work rejected the idea that they were unemployed explicitly because they have too much to do, though they did not know what to call themselves." These definitional problems will be explored further in chapter four. The point that I seek to illustrate here is the way in which conventional definitions build upon commonly held societal views that the state of unemployment applies only to those who fill a 'breadwinner' role. That some women do not regard themselves as unemployed is another factor which contributes to their non-registration on the unemployment register and leads to their neglect in unemployment research.

2.6 Summary

I have attempted to show that the neglect of women in unemployment research is partly attributable to the assumption that men and women workers are different. It is this assumption which underpins the job and familial models employed by sociologists in the fields of work and unemployment research. The 'economic model of man' underpins employment studies and the notion of 'unemployed man' underlies studies of unemployment. I have demonstrated that the very concepts of 'work' and 'unemployment' used in sociological discourse fail to take into account women's position in paid and unpaid labour. I have argued that the concept of unemployment has developed as a male breadwinner concept. As such it serves to reinforce the sexual division of labour and gender roles. It is my contention that the sociology of work and unemployment have rendered women invisible. Through the familial model women are conceived of only in terms of their family lives and in their dependence on men. The use of such models has led sociologists to neglect and misrepresent the roles that women play in society. The sociology of work and unemployment have treated gender divisions as natural and unproblematic and have uncritically adopted the ideological prejudices of the surrounding society. I do not believe it to be the case that gender has been omitted from the research fields by default. Rather I believe that the treatment of women within both fields is partly related to the sex and class of the researchers. With few exceptions the most prominent figures in employment and unemployment

research are white middle class men. The sociology of unemployment has largely been written from the standpoint of this select group of men. One sex and one class predominates in debating and developing sociological ideas. (Smith, 1988) It is this groups' concerns, interests and experiences which inform the sociology of unemployment. It is white, middle class men's' views of the world that are expressed in the literature. The dominance of their perspective is built on the relative silence of women. It is in this way that a one sided standpoint comes to be seen as natural and general. Let us be clear, we are not just talking about prejudice or sexism as a particular bias against women, or about a negative stereotype of women. We are talking about the consequences of women's exclusion from a full share in the making of what becomes treated as our society. (Smith, 1988)

The gender biases of the mainstream sociological literature on work and unemployment have been seriously challenged over the last decade by feminist writers. It is these feminist critiques of 'malestream' sociology and feminists attempts to construct new ways of knowing based on women's world views that the remainder of the chapter will address.

PART II

3. WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYMENT: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF OPPRESSION

This part of the chapter sets out to challenge the misconceptions of the mainstream sociological literature in its inference that unemployment is a problem confronting men rather than women. The myths will be challenged by undertaking a critical review of feminist literature in the area of women's unemployment. In the latter part of the chapter I will take issue with what I perceive to be the inadequacies of this body of knowledge. In particular I will stress the need for feminists to interrogate the differences in the causes and experience of unemployment *between women*.

3.1 Women and 'Work'

For feminists unemployment is intrinsically related to the value and nature of employment. The recent focus on women's unemployment therefore, has to be viewed in the context of a reaction to mainstream employment and unemployment research which denies the importance of waged work in women's lives. Just as sociologists have understood male unemployment in the context of the meaning of work in men's lives, so too feminists have argued that unemployment poses a serious problem for women because waged work plays a vital part in their lives. Feminists have sought to challenge the assumptions of the familial model by demonstrating that women's unemployment cannot be understood simply in terms of

their domestic role. It is necessary then to take a brief look at the conclusions of the feminist literature on women's work.

The debate on women's employment has been primarily concerned with analysing why women's paid work should be structured as different from that of men. Earlier research was aimed towards correcting the distortions created by applying the gender model to women. Thus the first step in getting women's work to be taken seriously has been to ask similar questions of women as had been asked of men. The major focus of this research has been on women's orientations to work. Studies have taken place within the local labour market context (Cousins et al, 1982); within factories (Pollert, 1981; Westwood, 1984); within occupations (McNally, 1979) and within the family (Hunt, 1981). These studies have shown that the stereotypes of the malestream employment literature are mistaken or, at the very least, incomplete accounts of a more complex set of results. Coyle's (1984a; 1984c) and Cousins (1982) research for example, illustrates that whilst marriage and children are basic to women's orientation to work, paid employment is also integral to women's conceptions of their lives and their identities. Employment was found to be above all else a means of supplementing the family income. But Coyle (1984a; 1984c) also found that the social side of work was valued. So whilst women were found to view their work in terms of their family commitments, it was found that most women do not judge paid employment as unimportant or even of

secondary importance, as implied by the familial model. The early studies then tend to stress the *similarities* between women and men's orientations to employment. Women have been found to be more instrumental than that implied by the familial model. Additionally, women's orientations, like those of men, were found to be influenced by a number of social correlates: non-work factors, work related factors, work history experience and the character of the local labour market. (Dex, 1985) Whilst feminist researchers recognise the inadequacies of the familial model they tend to overlook the shortcomings of the job model. There seems to be an implicit assumption that the model used to study men is valid for all workers. I suggest that this is a further example of the tendency to use men as the standard to define 'normal' human behaviour.

More recent developments in research into women's employment have gone beyond the job model to suggest changes in the conceptual apparatus. The household is now being explored as a potential site for the origin of orientations to work rather than the workplace and notions of skill and productivity are being examined as social constructs. Hunt (1984) for example treats the home as a production unit instead of a consumption unit and thereby attempts to integrate industrial and domestic production. Recent research into the nature of women's employment has begun to establish that women's conditions, perceptions, expectations and experiences of waged work are in fact *different* in many respects from those of men. The importance of women's dual

role in determining these differences is seen as crucial. The sexual division of labour also means that women are over-represented in lower status and lower paid occupations with less chance of upward mobility than men. Women have also been found to be important participants in the secondary sector of a 'dual' or 'segmented' labour market. (Barron and Norris, 1976) Moreover, many of the jobs women do reflect prevailing norms about women and their social role since they are located in caring, 'feminine' occupations which reproduce women's traditional tasks within the home. Feminists have also demonstrated the way in which training programmes reproduce and reinforce gender inequalities in paid employment. (Clarke, 1991) Gender stereotyping has been shown to take place on the Youth Training Scheme (Cockburn, 1987), TOPS courses (Payne, 1991), and in further education (Sammons, 1983). Women have been shown to predominate in training programmes dealing with typing and clerical work, food preparation, cleaning and hairdressing; that is in those areas where women predominate in employment. Feminists have also focussed on the narrow conceptualisation of training which operates in both academic and public discourses on training in Britain. Wickham (1985; 1986) has shown that training is based upon a masculine model of waged work. It is viewed as a period after schooling, mainly for men and rooted in the transmission of technical knowledge. Wickham (1986) argues that this conceptualisation does not fit in with women's work patterns and therefore mitigates against women's effective participation in training. Thus the sexual

division of labour has come to be understood as a set of economic, social and power relations between men and women, manifest in the material relations of waged work and not necessarily confined just to the relations of production. (Coyle, 1984c) The differences between male and female workers are not seen to derive from a 'natural' biological essence as implied by the familial model but rather are viewed as socially and historically constructed. Where women have been found to differ from men, feminists have argued for a more positive view of the differences than has been the case in the sociology of work. Feminists then have made the domestic sphere a valid and important context in which to conduct industrial sociological research, alongside workplace studies. They have demonstrated that men's work cannot be understood without reference to women and similarly women's work, both paid and unpaid, cannot be understood without reference to men. Feminists then have been instrumental in the move towards an *integrated* model which takes into account the interaction between job and familial factors.

I will now proceed to review the main findings of the feminist literature on women and unemployment.

3.2 Women and Unemployment

Feminist research in the area of women's unemployment has shown the assumptions underlying the familial model - that

women are cushioned from the effects of unemployment by their dependence upon men and the availability of an alternative social role - to be false. The research illustrates that unemployment is often experienced by women as a crisis of autonomy and a loss of independence. Here women's domestic role is no compensation. In both Wajcman's (1983) and Coyle's (1984a) studies, the unemployed women complained of isolation and boredom. It is clear that work is more than a wage, it provided social meaning to the women. Not that the loss of the woman's wage was unimportant. Coyle (1984c) notes that even with a man around there was not a household in her sample that did not notice the absence of the woman's wage. Similarly, the report by the Haringey and Lewisham Employment Project (1982) identified the loss of income as the greatest difficulty in women's experience of unemployment. Thus another assumption underpinning the familial model is exposed as false; that women's earnings are of little significance to the household budget. Research has also dispelled the myths about women's acquiescence in redundancy. In the case of Wajcman's (1983) factory, the female employees took active steps to retain their jobs by setting up a co-operative. In Coyle's (1984a) clothing firm the women were prepared to strike in defence of their jobs but the union was not in favour of them doing so. Recent findings on women's unemployment then challenge the job and familial models by demonstrating that housework is not the root of female identity. As Coyle (1984c) points out, if women believed the ideology that women's place is in the

home the impact of the loss of paid work amongst women would be minimal. Feminist research however has consistently demonstrated that it is not. None of the research studies cites a woman who welcomed unemployment or found it an easy experience. Rather what emerges is the fundamental importance of waged work in women's lives.

In recent years we have seen the emergence of distinctive pockets of material, as yet non-comparable, which tend to focus on specific areas within the 'unemployed household': domestic labour, control of household finance and resources, power in decision making and self-provisioning. An attempt is being made to theorise the relationship between the household, unemployment, employment and social networks. Preliminary studies suggested that the traditional distinctions between men's work and women's work in the home were breaking down in the context of high levels of male unemployment (Pahl, 1984). Subsequent research however has shown that unemployment, far from creating innovations in relationships within the household, has acted as a conservative force and strengthened the traditional sexual division of household labour. Morris (1985) notes that before and after the redundancies at the Port Talbot steel plant in 1980 men's participation in childcare, in order to free their wives to take up paid employment, was minimal. Similarly Binns and Mars (1984), in their study of social relations among unemployed families in a Glasgow housing estate, found that it was the women who retained overall responsibility for home management with the unemployed

husband taking on jobs of a limited and irregular nature. In particular, the key tasks of childcare and food preparation remained outside men's ideas of male activity. McKee and Bell (1985) confirm that the unemployment of husbands does little to create new opportunities for women workers but instead is restrictive and perpetuates male/female inequalities in the labour market. Interestingly they argue that full-time working wives were seldom seen as providing a permanent solution to male unemployment because of the discrepancies in the earning potential between men and women. Finally, research conducted by Morris (1988) and Ratcliff and Bogdan (1988) suggests that unemployed social networks act not just as a vehicle for information on employment opportunities but also reinforce perceptions of an appropriate sexual division of labour. The evidence to date suggests that unemployment has had a minimal impact on the tenacity and rigidity of beliefs about male economic provision and female dependence. Nonetheless, recent research into women's unemployment is forcefully challenging the misconception that unemployment is solely a male concern.

3.3 Problems with Feminist Research on Unemployment

I now want to elucidate what I perceive to be problematic areas within the feminist discourse on unemployment. I will concentrate on three areas; in the first instance attention will be directed to the use of male models of analysis in

feminist research on women's unemployment. It is my contention that the central concerns of mainstream sociology of unemployment underpin feminist analyses in this research area. Second, I will explore the inadequacies of feminist research on unemployment which is based upon theories of sexual difference alone. It will be argued that if we are to fully understand the meanings that unemployment holds for women, then feminist research on unemployment needs to move beyond its present preoccupation with gender relations and consider the differences *between* women. In other words, feminist research has to consider the ways in which race and class interact with gender in structuring women's experience of unemployment. Finally, I will draw attention to the apparent contradictions between the research findings on women's employment and unemployment. In taking on board difference between women's experiences of work, research on women's orientations to waged work suggests that unlike their middle class counterparts working class women have low orientations to waged work. The implications of this for working class women's experience of unemployment will be addressed. The contradictions between these findings and those on women's unemployment which demonstrate women's strong orientations to waged work, will be drawn out. It will be argued that such discrepancies arise from the tendency to treat employment and unemployment as two distinct areas of research.

I. The Prevalence of Male Models of Analysis in Feminist Research

With the notable exception of Coyle (1984a; 1984b; 1984c), feminist research in the field of unemployment is still primarily concerned with the implications for households when *men's* attachment to the labour market is broken. As I have illustrated, the central issues addressed in the literature are the extent to which the loss of the 'economic provider role' results in changes in the domestic division of labour and the way in which the lives of women and children are affected by this. I am not denying the importance of these issues, it is just that women's unemployment is once again marginalised as male unemployment assumes greater prominence within the context of the literature. Women are not viewed as unemployed in their own right, rather they are relegated to the sidelines as male concerns once again take centre stage. This is another instance of the job and familial models determining the focus and direction of research and the questions addressed therein. Moreover those studies which focus on the household as the unit of analysis draw attention away from the oppression of individuals within the household, particularly women's subjugation. As Walby (1986) notes, it is necessary to place analyses of the household division of labour and work strategy within a theoretical framework adequate to understanding gender inequality. Much of the existing theory does not provide this. Additionally, the preoccupation with the internal characteristics of the household has resulted in the neglect of external influences

in many studies. In addressing the question of why role reversal is uncommon for example, it is I believe necessary to look beyond the confines of the household for an explanation. It seems essential to examine the position of the household and its members in the context of the local labour market and to uncover the way in which that position is influenced by relationships within the home and by social networks outside its boundaries. (Morris, 1986) Finally the implications of the growing emphasis on the domestic economy within the unemployment literature makes me rather uneasy given that feminists have struggled for so long precisely to avoid women being seen to be confined to the domestic sphere.

Another problem which features in the literature is the way in which feminists have, perhaps unavoidably, inherited the unresolved dilemmas relating to definitions of work and unemployment. Much of the literature fails to distinguish between *work* sufficiently clearly from *employment*. Feminists have correctly insisted that women's unpaid domestic labour be seen as work in its own right. As a result whether they be engaged in the relations of production or not, women everywhere are to be found working. (Marshall, 1984) The problem however is that unemployed women are squeezed out between the spheres of waged work and unwaged work. This ambiguity is most apparent in the Reserve Army of Labour Thesis. Beechy (1977) suggests that in times of declining employment opportunities women are more likely than men to leave paid work and instead perform

unpaid work in the household. However whilst Beechey recognises women's *dismissal* from paid employment she does not recognise this as *unemployment*. Rather women are seen to unproblematically swap paid work in the labour market for unpaid work in the home. It is not difficult to see the connections between this conclusion and the assumptions underpinning the familial model with regards to the status of women's unemployment. The concept of work then remains problematic for many feminist analyses because of the way in which its use renders women's unemployment invisible. Other concepts borrowed from the mainstream sociological discourse provide similar problems when added onto feminist analyses. Some of the unemployed household studies adopt sociological concepts of work and leisure in their comparisons between the amount of work men and women do in the home. But as Smith (1988) notes the work/leisure paradigm applies to employment. The social organisation of the roles of housewife, mother and wife do not conform to the divisions between being in waged work and not being in waged work.

A further point of contention within feminist analyses of unemployment is the way in which attention is focused on describing and analysing the *similarities* between men and women's experience of unemployment. Many studies are keen to demonstrate the operation of a similar set of variables which influence both men's and women's experiences of unemployment. This is something of a paradox given that feminists have recently been at pains to stress women

workers' diverse experience from men. When feminists deal with unemployed men and women it is as though their common status as unemployed somehow eradicates their previous diversity. (Marshall, 1984) However I suggest that there are good reasons to suppose that there are differences in the experiences of unemployment between men and women, comparable to and arising from the differentiation in their employment experiences. My argument is that in order for unemployment to be fully understood it has to be related to the general experience of waged work in which it is located. Given the different working experiences of men and women there are I believe good grounds for suggesting that women's responses to unemployment will differ from their male counterparts. In the first instance sexual segregation in the labour market locates women in vulnerable part-time or temporary employment, often of an 'unskilled' nature in the lower reaches of the occupational hierarchy. Women's position in the labour market determines their experiences of unemployment and the way at which they arrive at such situations. Second, many women have to withdraw from paid employment on a temporary basis for reasons associated with childrearing. Thus women's work histories tend to be more chequered than men's: they lose and gain jobs and have spells out of waged work. As a consequence their experiences of and relationships to unemployment will be different from those of men. Third, ideologies about the family, sexual relations and the role of women play an important part in the treatment and response of women in unemployment. I have already noted the way in which married

women are denied employment benefits and I have exposed the ideological assumptions underlying this denial. Another related issue is the way in which ideologies concerning domestic roles and the sexual division of labour are maintained to help sustain the flexibility of women workers, making women's employment less secure.

Finally, studies have shown that in unemployment women suffer greater personal hardship than men. The Domestic Labour Debate demonstrated that unpaid labour in the home has the effect of subsidising the money brought into the home by the main wage earner. The argument put forward is that the lower the level of domestic income the harder the household member responsible for domestic duties has to work. (Morris, 1984) Given that the sexual division of labour assigns the majority of domestic tasks to women, then in poverty it is women who bear most of the burden. Similarly, Morris (1984) argues that low income encourages unitary control of finances and that given the sexual division of labour this control falls to women. Morris's research shows that in unemployed households the concentration of resources in the hands of women is a source of stress rather than power as some feminists have suggested. It is the women who are faced with the sheer enormity of meeting everyday needs on inadequate benefits. So we can see that in unemployment there is unequal responsibility and suffering between women and men. As one female respondent in McKee and Bells' (1985:395) study

comments, "you've got to work at being unemployed if you want to survive." (emphasis mine)

Summary

There is then an extent to which the concerns of mainstream sociology continue to structure feminist research on women's unemployment. There is a pre-occupation with male unemployment in research on households to the detriment of a considered analysis of female unemployment. Feminists have also inherited the dilemmas relating to the conceptualisation of work and unemployment which pervade mainstream sociology; the effect being the marginalisation of women's unemployment. Finally, in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of unemployment for women, some feminist researchers have tended to over emphasise the similarities between male and female experiences of unemployment rather than explore gender differences.

Difference in Unemployment: The Dilemmas of 'Race' and Class

I now want to proceed to address what I conceive to be the most fundamental problem with feminist analyses of women's unemployment; that is the pre-occupation with gender relations and the resultant neglect of other power relations in feminist analyses of women's unemployment. My argument is that feminist theories of unemployment have failed to take account of racial and social class disadvantages. This

race and class blindness is in part due to feminisms' general pre-occupation with theorising sexual power relations to the exclusion of a consideration of other power relations. This often means that within feminist accounts women are treated as a homogenous entity. I shall demonstrate however, that unemployment is not a singular experience. As Pahl (1981) acknowledges, unemployment means different things to different people in different times and in different places. This is true for women. Women do not constitute a homogeneous group and the differences between women's experiences of unemployment as well as those differences between men and women need to be interrogated. In order to demonstrate the inadequacies of analyses of unemployment which are predicated upon theories of sexual difference alone, I will draw upon labour force data to analyse the differences between Black and white women's experiences of unemployment in Britain.

II. Women, 'Race' and Unemployment

'Race' and gender have been shown to play an important part in peoples' chances of becoming unemployed. Officially women make up about one-third of the registered unemployed but the rate at which women have become unemployed over the last decade has been twice as fast as that for men and there is evidence to suggest that nearly one half of unemployed women are not registered as such. (2) As I have maintained throughout the chapter, it is necessary to explain the

gender distribution of employment in order to explain the gender differentiation of unemployment. In doing so it becomes apparent that both Black and white women in British society share some common experiences; both form a clearly disadvantaged social group in terms of their occupational distribution; they are confined in low paid, 'unskilled' 'women's work' in a narrow range of industries and occupations, generally making them vulnerable to unemployment. (Newnham, 1986; Phizacklea, 1988) The existence of gender segregation in the labour market means that Black and white women share a fundamental discrimination on the grounds of sex. Further, gender ideology is used to interpret the experience of unemployment of both groups of women and in so doing denies their experience. Despite such similarities in experience a wide range of evidence bears testimony to the fact that Black women's unemployment rates are consistently and disproportionately higher than those of white women. Labour Force Survey data for 1987-1988 shows that ethnic minorities constituted 4.7% of the population of working age. Unemployment figures however, illustrate that in no age group do the levels of Asian or West Indian unemployment fall below the white level. In 1985, 19% of the Black female labour force was unemployed compared with 10% of the white female labour force. (Brown, 1984) Whilst official sources report a fall in the rate of unemployment since the mid-1980s, the 1991 Census shows that the ethnic minority unemployment rate remains almost 2.5 times higher than the white rate for women; 16% and 6% respectively. (Owen, 1993)

(3) Further, the proportion of Black unemployed women who are long term unemployed is estimated to be over double that of white women. (Owen, 1993) Moreover, a broader range of Black women workers are found to be at risk of unemployment. Whereas for white women workers unemployment tends to be concentrated among the unskilled, Smith (1981) found Black workers to be at risk across all categories of occupation. So although Black and white women experience sexual discrimination in the labour market, the disaggregated unemployment figures suggest that Black women are more vulnerable to unemployment than their white counterparts. Why? It is to those theories which seek to explain the specific causes of women's unemployment that I now turn. I will use data based on Black and ethnic minority women's experiences within and out with the labour market to demonstrate the flaws in these theories.

I shall concentrate on two main theoretical approaches utilised by feminists to explain women's vulnerability within the labour market. First, there is the general theory that women's situation in the family explains the ease with which employers are able to shed female rather than male workers in times of a declining demand for labour. Drawing upon Marx's concept of the Industrial Reserve Army of Labour, Beechey (1977) for example regards married women as a reserve army of labour who are drawn into waged labour when the economy is in an expansive phase and expelled in times of economic recession. Beechey's analysis has been found to be theoretically flawed (Anthias, 1980: Walby,

1985a; 1985b). I will not endeavour to summarise the various critiques here but rather assess the Reserve Army of Labour thesis in the light of black women's experiences in the labour market. The first point to note about Beechey's theory is the implicit assumption that it is women's dependence upon a male breadwinner which makes them vulnerable to dismissal in times of economic recession. However if we take into account the experience of women of West Indian origin in Britain, we find that for a variety of socio-political and historical reasons they are not likely to live with their children's fathers. Some 31% of Black women of West Indian origin lived in female headed households in 1982. (Brown, 1984) The male breadwinner/dependent wife model upon which the Reserve Army of Labour thesis is premised is not applicable to many Black women experiences. Furthermore, the Reserve Army of Labour thesis is unable to explain why, given that women are such a cheap source of labour, capital does not continually employ them in preference to the more expensive labour power of men. More significantly for our purposes, if the demands of capital are primary then why are the more expensive white women workers not shed before Black women workers? Evidence of pay differentials in London by sex and 'race' show that once regional differences and working-hour differences are allowed for, white women earn 23% more per hour than Black women. (London Living Standards Survey, 1986) (4) If the Reserve Army of Labour thesis were correct, Black women would be experiencing full employment instead of an unemployment rate twice that of white women because 'capital

logic' would necessitate their employment as the cheapest available labour. Capital however is neither sex nor colour blind; it encounters individuals who are already sexually and racially stratified. (Phillips and Taylor, 1980) Beechey (1977) fails to account for racial discrimination within and out with the labour market which ultimately determines the opportunities open to Black women.

Having cast doubt on the proposition that women's movements out of employment and their subsequent unemployment can be explained solely by reference to their position within the family, I will now consider those theorists who look to the labour market itself for explanations of women's unemployment. Given the existing critiques of Dual Labour Market Theory and Segmented Labour Market Theory, I shall restrict my discussion to the more recent work of Irene Bruegel (1979) and Sylvia Walby (1985a).

Breugel (1979) argues that women's concentration in the service sector has protected women from unemployment. The sex typing of occupations is, according to Breugel, too rigid to allow for the substitution of one sex for another and so women have not been removed from their jobs and replaced by unemployed men. Thus occupational segregation, which usually operates to the detriment of women, is believed in this instance to have protected women from unemployment. How then are we to account for the high unemployment rates among Black women? If we deconstruct the concept of 'women's' employment a more complex picture

emerges than that alluded to in Breugel's theory. There is a distinctive racial as well as gender pattern across industrial sectors and occupations. It is apparent from the aggregate labour market data that Black women are not generally concentrated in the service sector. Labour market data shows that Black women are disproportionately represented in the manufacturing sector; 21% of Black women compared to 14% of white women. (Brown, 1984) The over-representation of Black women, especially Asian women, in manufacturing (in particular their concentration in the textile and clothing trades) has rendered them more vulnerable than white women to redundancy since it was this sector that bore the brunt of the recession during the 1980s. On the other hand, women of West Indian origin are shown to be over-represented in the health service and local authority bodies; 50% of West Indian women compared to 25% of white women. (Brown, 1984) Once again these sectors suffered disproportionately during the restructuring of the labour market in the 1980s. (Mama, 1986) This industrial distribution of Black women within the labour market represents what Phizacklea (1990) calls an 'ethnic niche' within the traditional sectors of 'women's work'. Although white women are disadvantaged in the labour market as a consequence of sexual discrimination, nonetheless **Table One** demonstrates that a higher proportion of white women are on more rewarding rungs of the job ladder than either Asian or West Indian women. The figures show a substantial occupational gap between Black and white women workers within the manufacturing sector. The proportions in lower

non-manual jobs are 38% of white women, 66% of West Indian women and 82% of Asian women. Only 7% of Asian women and 19% of West Indian Women have non-manual jobs compared to 40% of white women. (Brown, 1984) Thus even within industrial sectors there is an occupational gap between Black and white women workers. Indeed the PSI Survey (Brown, 1984) concludes that women of Asian and West Indian origin in Britain remain largely confined to the jobs available to them or their mothers upon arrival in Britain. Black women are not therefore concentrated in the service sector. The gap between Black and white women's unemployment rates is then partly related to these occupational inequalities. The existence of such inequalities between women in the labour market can only be explained by taking into account the part played by racial discrimination and racial disadvantage both within and out with the labour market in locating Black women in the most disadvantaged sectors and occupations. Breugel's theory does not account for this differentiation in the labour market positioning of Black women and hence cannot adequately explain Black women's vulnerability to unemployment.

In an adaptation of Breugel's theory, Sylvia Walby (1985a) argues that whilst women do not constitute a reserve army for male typed occupations they do constitute a reserve army for female typed jobs. If one considers the effects of racial discrimination and racial segregation in the labour market this proposition must also be questioned. Given the

existence of Black women's 'ghettoisation' in the labour market (Phizacklea, 1983); that is Black women's confinement to racially and sexually categorised jobs, it would seem that Black women do not act as a reserve army for white female typed jobs. Thus it is clear that sexual segregation in the service sector did not protect Black women from redundancy. To explain why, one needs to consider the racial disadvantage experienced by Black women. Of the theories discussed thus far not one accounts for this.

Finally, I will take issue with Walby's (1985a) Patriarchal Systems approach. Here Walby argues that patterns of women's unemployment are not reducible to either capital or the family, rather she sees women's vulnerability to unemployment as the result of patriarchal structures within the labour market. Walby identifies three structures in the labour market which she considers to be important in determining men's and women's chances of unemployment. First, she cites the division between full-time and part-time work: the latter is occupied almost exclusively by married women who experience worse conditions of employment and poorer rates of pay than those in full-time work. Walby claims that part-time workers are more vulnerable to unemployment than full-time workers. Second, Walby notes the segregation of men and women into different and unequal occupations. This segregation she argues either protects women from unemployment if they are concentrated in a sector less hit by a recession, or may confine women to jobs that are unstable thus increasing the likelihood of unemployment.

Third, Walby notes the existence of patriarchal practices in the labour market, the effect of which she argues, is the dismissal of women before men in redundancy situations. These include the practices of 'last in, first out' and the dismissal of part-time workers before full-time workers.

With regards to Walby's first assertion about the vulnerability of part-timers to job loss compared with their full-time counterparts. If we disaggregate the figures and look at women's part-time and full-time work as a proportion of employment by ethnic group, we find that the ratio of full-time to part-time workers is very different for the three ethnic groups. Some 45% of white women are part-time workers compared to 29% and 16% for West Indian and Asian women respectively. (Brown, 1984) The data demonstrates that Black women are more likely to be in full-time paid employment than are white women. In 1982, 41% of black women of West Indian origin were in full-time paid employment compared to 21% of women of Asian origin and 21% of white women. (Brown, 1984) Despite their concentration in full-time work, which according to Walby should afford them more job security compared to part-time employees, Black women's unemployment levels remain higher than those of white women who are concentrated in part-time work. Second, given that I have already discussed the problems with the theory that sexual segregation protects women from unemployment, let it suffice to reiterate that such a theory does not account for Black women's unemployment rates. Whilst Walby's contention that sexual segregation confines

women to unstable jobs appears more plausible, her theory is ultimately premised upon a *white* model of women's employment. She fails to examine the ways in which sexism combines with racism to confine Black women to the most unstable sectors at the very bottom of the labour market, thereby rendering Black women more vulnerable to unemployment than white women.

This brings us to a consideration of Walby's third point. Whilst agreeing that sexist practices determine that women workers are dismissed before male workers, it is systematic sexist *and* racist practices which determine that Black women workers are often dismissed before white men and women and Black men in redundancy situations. Ohri and Faruqi (1988) have argued that the 'last in, first out' rule has been used to discriminate against Black employees. Dex (1983) also illustrates the patriarchal and racist practices which determine that it is Black women who are ahead of white women in the firing queue and behind white women in the hiring queue. In failing to consider institutional racism in the British labour market, Walby is unable to account for the differences in the unemployment ratios between Black and white women. Furthermore, Black women's unemployment ratios cannot simply be regarded as a consequence of racist and sexist labour market practices alone. As Phizacklea (1988) notes, consideration has to be given to the ways in which racism and sexism confine Black women to a subordinate position *prior* to their entry into the labour market. Racial discrimination in the labour market further increases

the chances of Black women losing their jobs when compared to white women.

Both sets of explanations, those which look to women's position in the family and those which look to the labour market in an attempt to explain women's susceptibility to unemployment, do not address themselves to the position of Black women in Britain. The theories of Beechey (1977), Breugel (1979) and Walby (1985a) are underpinned by a homogenous notion of 'woman', or more specifically 'white woman'. The theories are ethnocentric. White women's experience of the labour market is universalised whilst Black women's experience is subsumed into white women's patterns of employment and unemployment and ultimately ignored. No attempt is made to deconstruct the notion of 'woman' and to explore the differences between women's experiences. In failing to account for Black women's experiences the analyses are at best partial explanations of the causes of women's unemployment. Moreover, the preoccupation of the aforementioned theories is with patriarchy. Male domination is examined whilst other forms of power relations and systems of oppression are ignored. So it comes to be that sexual segregation is given as the primary factor in accounts of women's unemployment. However by failing to recognise labour market segregation along racial lines the theories are unable to account for Black women's experience of unemployment and to explain the disparities between Black and white women's unemployment rates. The analyses render Black women's unemployment

invisible. Have we not been here before with 'malestream' theories of unemployment which rendered women invisible? This critique is not to argue that considerations of gender relations in the labour market are unimportant in determining the causes and experiences of women's unemployment. They are of crucial importance for both Black and white women alike. But an analysis of gender relations must not be at the expense of a considered analysis of other power relations, including those based upon 'race'. The interrelationship between Black and white women's labour market experiences and the ways in which race and sex stratifications mediate these is of crucial importance. Indeed a number of studies have shown that in times of structural crisis, racial discrimination may be of greater significance than sexual discrimination in determining the job opportunities open to black women. (Dex, 1983; Jenkins, 1985; Newnham, 1986; Phizacklea, 1988)

Summary

I have demonstrated that the causes and experience of unemployment are not the same for Black women as for white women. Racism and racial discrimination can be shown to explain virtually all the variance in Black and white women's unemployment rates. However most feminist theories of unemployment have failed to account for racial disadvantage, partly because of their preoccupation with sexual difference to the exclusion of considerations of

difference along other lines. Power however inheres in difference and is a dynamic of control and lack of control between women just as it is between men and women. Whilst feminists have been correct in demonstrating that unemployment is a problem which confronts women and not just men they have failed to recognise that unemployment affects varied groups of women in different ways. Unemployment is another disadvantage endured by those groups who are already socially disadvantaged. Thus the private troubles of unemployed women need to be rooted and analysed in terms of broader frameworks about class inequality and racism.

III. Class Dilemmas in Women's Orientations to Waged Work

As I demonstrated in the first part of the chapter the mainstream literature on waged work is premised upon the ideological assumption that women harbour different orientations towards paid work from men and unlike men are uncommitted to working outside the home. Waged work is not regarded as part of the female role. I have argued that this has consequences for the way in which women's unemployment is regarded; either women are not recognised as unemployed at all since they are not seen to be workers, or their unemployment is viewed as unproblematic since upon redundancy women are thought to resume their domestic roles in a full-time capacity. Feminist research on employment and unemployment has generally challenged such assumptions

by demonstrating the importance of waged work for women. Nevertheless it is my contention that research conducted by women, including feminist research, tends to reinforce the dominant male assumptions where working class women's orientations to work are concerned.

The existence of such views has been noted in the writing on women's history (Gordon, 1990) where it has become common practice to argue that waged labour for working class women ended with marriage and that waged work was only something to be endured until that time. In the historical literature (Roberts, 1984; 1988; Davey, 1986) it is argued that because working class women preferred domestic life they worked only when economic circumstances dictated. As Stephenson and Brown (1990:7) note "waged work is characterised as a temporary and economically necessitated interlude to a dominating domesticity in successively the parental and marital homes". Furthermore, waged work itself is portrayed as a negative experience and of little personal value to working class women.

Similar views are to be found in sociological and feminist research on working class women's orientations to work. Such views have crystallised into an orthodoxy which, however unwittingly, reinforces and legitimates dominant male thinking, albeit in relation to working class women only. There are two main characterisations of working class women's work which can be identified in the sociological and feminist literature both of which, despite their different

starting points, draw similar conclusions about working class women's orientations to waged work.

In the first instance waged work is regarded as an oppressive and negative experience for working class women. This truism is then used to explain working class women's low commitment to waged work and their apparent orientation to domestic life, from whence it is argued they primarily derive their social identity. Dex (1988:154) for example argues that "given that women's jobs, especially when they are part-time in Britain, are low skilled and have poor conditions, it is not unreasonable to argue that work may well not be intrinsically attractive to many women". Similarly Agassi (1982) suggests that women possibly respond to bad experiences at work by using it to reinforce a traditional justification for the domestic maternal role. She goes on to suggest that if women who have such unfavourable experiences at work go on to compare their two roles, finding their occupational role wanting, they could then decide that any efforts to improve their occupational role would be fruitless or unnecessary. Morris (1990:141) also argues that in working class occupations work of itself is unlikely to be fulfilling or to become the focal point of life and thus "we should not be surprised by evidence which supports a family orientation among women in such occupations". Empirical evidence is found in Pollert's (1981) and Westwood's (1984) studies of female factory workers. In both studies waged work is characterised as a temporary phase in the young working class women's lives.

According to Pollert's analysis the women's real motivations are to end work and escape into marriage and have children. Even in Sharpe's (1984) analysis which recognises the importance of waged work for women's independence and identity, we find the same overtones as regards working class women's orientations:

"Relatively few jobs provide intrinsic satisfaction, and most working class men and women are not in these sorts of jobs. The quality of the experience of working and being at home are therefore quite distinct, and the family is often the most inherently rewarding."

(Sharpe, 1984:227)

Sharpe is correct to note that working class men's work is not so very different from that of working class women, but what she fails to recognise is that it is written about differently compared to the way working class women's employment has been written about. Working class men's work is written about positively and the enriching aspects of the work such as the skills and status are stressed as well as its overall importance to men's self esteem. (Stephenson and Brown, (1991)

Similar views are to be found in survey research. Martin and Roberts (1984:64) for example, argue that a greater proportion of women in higher level non-manual occupations have an intrinsic orientation to work than women in other occupations, particularly those in semi-skilled factory work who, they claim, found little intrinsic attraction in work.

In the second characterisation, working class women are seen to be more domestically orientated than their middle class counterparts and to derive more satisfaction from their domestic roles than their employment roles. In the event they are regarded as having a low commitment to waged work. In research on women's domestic labour for example, it is commonplace to argue that discontent with the role of housewife is a middle class prerogative. Mydral and Klein (1956:151-152) for example claim that the psychological dilemmas of women's two roles affect only middle class women. In their account of kinship in a South Wales town, Rosser and Harris (1965:208) make a similar assertion, that "for a variety of reasons the 'domesticity' of working class wives is higher than that of their middle class counterparts". Mira Komarovsky (1967:49) in her study of American blue collar marriages reinforces the general consensus when she says:

"The discontent of the housewife is often attributed to contemporary values, she chafes, it is said, because of the low prestige society attaches to her role...Such an explanation of discontent may perhaps apply to educated middle class housewives but we find little evidence of status frustrations among working class wives".

In her study of working class 'housewives' relationship to the world of work, Porter (1982) concludes that however much the working class women in her sample worked outside the home, they saw their primary focus as the home. Porter claims that the only reason the women sought paid employment was to earn money to make their task in the home easier.

Oakley (1974:68) too concludes that working class and middle class women's orientations to the housewife role differ. She argues that working class women's orientation is on the whole more positive than that of her middle class counterpart. Oakley contends that there is a strong motivation on the part of working class women to declare a personal identification with domesticity and that this in turn leads to a search for satisfaction in housework. Conversely she maintains that the middle class tendency is towards a "disengagement from the housewife role". In attempting to explain these apparent social class differences Oakley draws on the orthodox explanation that housewifery as a role for women is more positively evaluated in traditional working class communities than in middle class social networks. In other words the dominant norm in working class communities is that of "feminine satisfaction with housework" (1974). Oakley (1974:67) uses Bernstein's theory of linguistics to explain the differences arguing that they are partly based on class differentiated linguistic codes, the argument being that the working class women in her sample (and by implication all working class women) were unable to articulate their feelings about housework:

"...The working-class women who said they liked or didn't mind housework but show evidence of being dissatisfied with it use a speech mode which makes the presentation of individual feelings difficult. The linguistic style of the middle class-housewife more easily permits her to describe individual feelings about housework than does that of her working-class counterpart".

This is a highly contentious, classist and to my mind particularly offensive interpretation. It begs the question for whom the presentation of individual feelings is made difficult. I suggest it is made difficult for the middle class researcher. That Oakley had little difficulty in comprehending the middle class housewives in her sample is no coincidence since she shares the same speech mode and background. That the working class women are able to articulate their feelings about waged work but are less able to do so when discussing housework is not seen as significant by Oakley. However other commentators (Stephenson and Brown, 1990: Gittins, 1982) have noted that working class women's accounts of waged work tend to be detailed and elaborate while responses to questions concerning family life are far less so:

"Perhaps the clearest indication of the role of work in respondents' lives comes from the lengthy answers given to interviewers' questions on their employment, in contrast to the short answers regarding their married lives. Testimony on work was in most cases twice the length of testimony on other aspects of post-school life".

(Stephenson and Brown, 1990:24)

This concurs with the findings of this study in which women's accounts of work have a clear predominance over their accounts about family and domestic life. The women respondents recalled and articulated in greater detail more recollections from their experience of employment than from their domestic routine.

In a recent development of this position Catherine Hakim (1991) argues that women's work commitment in Western industrial societies is lower than men's. However she notes that working women comprise two qualitatively different groups; one group has work commitments similar to those of men, leading to continuous full-time work in high status, high earning jobs. The second group has little or no commitment to paid work and a clear preference for the homemaker role. Paid employment for this group of women is a secondary activity which, Hakim argues, is taken in order to earn a supplementary wage and is in low-skilled, low-paid, casual and temporary jobs. Hakim sees the sex differential in work orientation, work commitment and job satisfaction disappearing in higher-grade, male dominated professional and managerial occupations, that is those jobs occupied by middle class women. The greatest differentials are to be found in lower grade manual jobs, that is those jobs predominantly occupied by black and working class women. Hakim then alludes not only to differences in work commitment between men and women but to class differences between women, although her argument is not explicitly conceptualised in class terms. It is not just that working class women are less committed to waged work than their middle class counterparts, Hakim also suggests that despite their concentration in the lowest status and lowest paid occupations, working class women are disproportionately satisfied with their jobs. According to Hakim they are satisfied with their jobs because waged work is not a priority in their lives, rather working class women give

priority to their homemaking role. Hakim argues that 'convenience' factors explain women's high satisfaction with low status and low paid jobs; women are likely to accord low priority to pay and job prospects against convenience factors such as flexible working hours which are necessary if they are to fulfil familial duties. Finally, Hakim claims that women actively 'choose' the jobs they do in line with their work orientations, implying that women have the freedom to choose between homemaker and career roles:

"Women make choices as often as men do, and those choices have real effects. Those who choose domesticity, the marriage career and hence a large degree of economic dependence are self-made women just as much as those who choose, and stick with, an on-going employment career and all that entails...The persistence of job segregation from now on should be regarded as a reflection of women's own preferences and choices...rather than the outcome of patriarchal systems and male social control".

(Hakim, 1991:114)

In positing the rational choice argument Hakim argues against those theories which look to social structure to explain women's position in the labour market. Indeed she calls for labour market research to be more 'unisex' in its theories and methods. I have highlighted the problems with unisex models earlier in the chapter. Suffice it to say that such models do not account for the complexity of differentiation between actors which is necessary if we are to understand the exact nature and functioning of inequalities within the labour market. Indeed the model of work commitment which Hakim uses is the male model of work; continuous life-time, full-time employment. It is this

model by which women's commitment to waged work is judged. It is therefore hardly surprising that women are found wanting. Hakim unquestioningly uses the male model as the norm. However with the restructuring of the labour market during the 1980s and the attendant economic recession, continuous life-time employment is no longer assured for men either.

The research on both domesticity and work orientations then suggests that working class women have different orientations to the homemaker role and waged work. The findings and conclusions are underpinned by the assumption that waged work is a negative and oppressive experience for working class women because they are generally located in low paid, low status jobs in predominantly unskilled or semi-skilled work. It is through this negative evaluation of their work that working class women are unproblematically defined as domestically orientated. It is in this way that working class women's waged work is constructed as being done only out of financial necessity. Their employment is constructed in such a way that there are seemingly no other benefits to be derived from it. Alternatively, working class women are seen to be more domestically orientated than middle class women and deemed to have a lower commitment to waged work. In this instance working class women are constructed as 'grateful slaves' (Hakim, 1991), content with low paid, low status jobs because their commitment and orientation is to the homemaker role and not waged work. Both of these positions have implications for the way in

which women's unemployment is constructed. Following these modes of argument the availability of an alternative social role, that of homemaker, could not be expected to mitigate middle class women's unemployment. One would expect that middle class women, with their high commitment to waged work, would be more likely than working class women to experience dissatisfaction with unemployment. On the other hand working class women, characterised by their low commitment to waged work, are less likely to experience problems with unemployment since unemployment affords them the opportunity to prioritise their homemaker role. Working class women's unemployment then is conceptualised as unproblematic because their waged work is constructed as marginal to their domestic roles.

4. CONCLUSION

It is this conceptualisation that the thesis seeks to challenge. It raises the question of the extent to which the availability of alternative social identities mitigate women's experience of unemployment. To what extent does being a wife/mother/homemaker ameliorate the problems of unemployment? The answer to this necessitates an examination of how unemployed women define themselves in relation to their economic and domestic roles. A much neglected aspect of the analysis of women's work and women's unemployment is a focus on the value women themselves, particularly working class women, place on their work. The

theoreticism which has characterised the debate on occupational segregation for the last decade is greatly removed from the experience of women's lives. One of the key ideas of this research is the need to move beyond the preoccupation with theoreticism and pay more attention to how women themselves see their roles. The emerging perspective then is one which seeks to examine the interaction between women's subjective meanings of waged work, domesticity and unemployment and their ideological and material underpinning's. It is a perspective which also seeks to address the differential experiences of unemployment between women. The approach will move away from the homogeneous notion of 'woman' deployed in so many feminist analyses and seek to explore the ways in which social class structures the experience of unemployment. (5) It is an approach which seeks to recognise women's unemployment in its own right. For to recognise women's unemployed status is to recognise women as independent beings who want employment. Such a perspective challenges the myth of male dependency which underpins mainstream sociological analyses of work and unemployment. It also challenges the idea common to feminist and non-feminist analyses that working class women do not really want waged work. The recognition of women as potential waged workers leads back into a consideration of women's unemployment and to an exploration of the solutions to that unemployment; solutions such as Employment Training which would ideally grant unemployed women access to better positions in the labour market. Employment and unemployment therefore are

conceived as a continuum and not separate spheres of analysis.

ENDNOTES

1. The basic principles of the concepts employed here are derived from R.L. Feldberg and E.N. Glenn (1979). However I have taken the liberty to redefine the concepts in my work. Feldberg and Glenn use the terms 'job model' and 'gender model'. I find the latter too wide ranging and instead have adopted the concept of 'familial model' as I believe it more appropriately expresses the assumptions which underpin the sociological literature: that women's primary role is situated in the family. Moreover, I have extended the use of the concepts to analyse the unemployment literature, whereas Feldberg and Glenn utilise them only in the context of the sociology of work.

2. Labour Research (1989) for example demonstrates that in March 1989 the official number of unemployed claimants in Britain comprised 1,399,855 men (8.4%) and 560,855 women (4.7%). The official unemployed total of 1,960,220 or 6.9% of the workforce was estimated to exclude about 550,000 people who would have been counted before changes in the computation of the unemployment figures were made in 1979. In addition the number of claimants was thought to have been reduced by over 100,000 by the stricter administration of benefits which began in 1988.

3. The Census data is somewhat limited. A very important part of inequalities in employment is accounted for by differences in the types of jobs held, in terms of skills and responsibilities. The Census however does not report the occupational breakdown of employment by ethnic group; nor does it provide an industrial breakdown by ethnic group. For this reason I have had to rely heavily upon PSI data (Brown, 1984) most of which relates to ethnic minorities' labour market position during the early 1980s. It should be noted that doubts have been expressed as to the accuracy of the picture which the PSI data presents. In particular the data tends to under-record black women's economic participation rates and overestimate the pay and job levels of black women. (Breugel, 1989) Similarly, the Labour Force Survey has been shown to under-record the number of black-and female-headed households in the population. (Morris, 1987)

4. The figures for the London Living Standards Survey (1986) show that the average weekly earnings of full-time white women workers are £160.1 compared to £124.5 for black women. White women were found to have an hourly rate of £4.3 and black women £3.3 per hour.

5. Whilst there are Black women included in the sample their numbers are not sufficient to make racial diversity an organising feature of the thesis. For this reason I am unable to offer a satisfactory comparative analysis of black and white women's experiences of unemployment.

TABLE 1**The Jobs Black People Do**

	<u>Men</u>			<u>Women</u>		
	White	Asian	West Indian	White	Asian	West Indian
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Professional Employer Manager	19	13	5	7	6	1
Other Non-Manual	23	13	10	55	42	52
Skilled Manual/Foreman	42	33	48	5	6	4
Semi-Skilled Manual	13	34	26	21	44	36
Unskilled Manual	3	6	9	11	2	7

(Thomas, 1984)

CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICS OF POWER AND INEQUALITY IN FEMINIST RESEARCH

"I must write about the world I know best, the world of the working man and woman, their trials, loves, hates, suspicions, generosityies and loyalties. I feel somehow that - well, it's a contribution - I am doing what I love best for a class that needs it now."

Joe Corrie (1985)

1. INTRODUCTION

The sociological imagination demands that we reflect critically upon the taken for granted aspects of our practice. (Mills, 1959) Feminism goes further by insisting that the inquirer 'place' herself or himself in the process of knowledge production. Feminist analyses insist that the inquirer should try to recover the entire social relations of the research and locate the inquirer in the same 'critical plane' as the subject of the research. (Harding, 1987a) This placing occurs in two ways; first, the researcher should explicate the reasoning procedures utilised in conducting the research. Second, at a 'reflexive' level, the researcher should analyse his or her effect upon the process of research; that is the researchers class, race, sex, age and cultural background and the ways these structure the research process and analysis. This

chapter allows space for such self reflection. Due to the limitations of space I am not able in this instance to recover the entire research process for scrutiny. Instead I shall limit my discussion of this research project to three substantive areas. I shall begin the chapter by reflecting upon the ways in which my structural position as a white, working class Glaswegian woman influenced the choice of the research topic and determined the research design. Second, I shall discuss my failure to implement the collaborative research strategy upon which this research was initially grounded. In so doing I seek to demonstrate the limitations and question the appropriateness of what is considered to be the orthodox way of doing feminist research. It will be argued that collaborative, qualitative forms of research may be preferable but they are not always a feasible way of investigating an atomised social constituency. It will further be argued that such methods are not conducive to doctoral research. Finally, I will reflect upon my experience of interviewing, particularly on the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched. In this case we are considering a white woman from a working class background interviewing both working class and middle class women. I want to question some of the central tenets of feminist models of interviewing; I will argue that whilst feminists' refinements of the interview method have a practical and political significance, ultimately such measures do not temper the exploitative tendencies of the interview. It is argued that issues of power in research and the inequalities embodied in it are not just a question

of feminist methods or methodology, but rather power inequalities are embedded in the politics of research for research is essentially a privileged activity. This chapter then is concerned with issues of power in feminist research and the politics **of** research more generally.

2. THE MAKING OF A RESEARCH PROJECT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPERIENCE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND IDEAS

In feminist research the biographical background of the researcher is regarded as important in understanding and interpreting what has been written. There is an awareness that what is known is the product of the historical and socio-economic position of the knower. (Acker, 1980) Thus in today's culture of feminist reflexivity it has become the norm to 'situate' oneself within the research by examining the ways in which the writers class, sex, race, age and cultural background structure what comes to be known. However in many accounts it is assumed that in merely stating such identifications the inquirer has paid respect to 'difference' and acknowledged 'bias'. This is what Bourne (1987) has identified as the 'Who am I?' syndrome. I would argue that more than mere passing acknowledgement to identification is required in feminist accounts. A concrete analysis of the way in which the writers structural position shapes the research process and thus influences knowledge production is required of feminist accounts. With this in mind I wish to explore the way in which my structural

position as a white, working class, Glaswegian woman, influenced my choice of research topic. The processes by which we come to research a given concern is a neglected topic in accounts of the research process and yet, as the ensuing account demonstrates, reflection on such processes can go a long way in helping the reader to situate the inquirer within the research context. With the benefit of hindsight I aim to make sense of the process by which I came to conduct research upon unemployed Glaswegian women and to do so by means of a methodological strategy which owed much to feminist thinking of the time.

2.1 The Origins of the Research: Personal and Academic Concerns

The answer has its roots embedded in my checkered employment history which consisted of jobs ranging from the factory floor to the office drawing board, each job being interspersed with periods of unemployment. In an attempt to escape the series of dead end jobs and the experience of degradation which unemployment brought I applied and was subsequently accepted to do a sociology degree at Portsmouth Polytechnic. It was during these years as an undergraduate that my personal experience of work and unemployment developed into a more cerebral academic interest. In these formative years my structural position began to interact with the sociological literature I was reading. As a working class woman I found myself becoming increasingly uneasy about the disjuncture between different forms of

knowledge about working class people. There was a definite cleavage between my personal knowledge as a working class individual and the community from which I came and what was said to constitute 'working class' in sociology lectures and textbooks. First, as I demonstrated in Chapter One the sociological literature of employment and unemployment dealt only with working class men. Very rarely were working class women the focus of sociological research. In particular there was a distinct neglect of any serious consideration of the employment of women in working class life and a complete silence as regards their unemployment. Was it only my father and his like who comprised 'the working class'? Had I misinterpreted Marx? Was I not part of this class? If the sociological literature I was reading was any kind of indicator it seemed not. Who was **I** then? In the second instance the portrayal of working class men in sociological literature seemed stereotyped. These flat capped, salt of the earth, militant, 'ignorant', 'inarticulate' working class heroes certainly did not inhabit the part of the world I came from. To me such books contained middle class researchers' perceptions of what it is to be working class. Often in such portrayals I felt that the researchers own political goals were projected onto 'the working class'. I also found myself dissatisfied with the type of sociological analysis which transformed individuals with gender and class identities into 'respondents': 'the poor' or 'the unemployed', as though the individuals concerned were a homogeneous entity. There was a similar discontent with the way in which the subjects of research studies were lost in

the process of 'analysis'. The connection between the reality of people's lives and the sociological models used to analyse them seemed a tenuous one as these experiences were reduced to numbers and tables. (Corbin, 1971) In reading such accounts it often became difficult to remember that these tables reflected the results of the subjects experiences. By refusing to let the voices of the subject be heard, middle class researchers reinforced the stereotype that working class men and women were ignorant and inarticulate. This is a catch-22 situation for it is the construction of this very image of working class people which allowed middle class sociologists to determine our interests. If I was angry at the ways in which academic sociologists spoke 'for' us, 'interpreted' our experiences and 'defined' our oppression, I was even more perturbed at the ways in which the power relations at play in such processes passed without comment. Finally, I took a look at what feminism had done with class which was in some instances to dismiss it, this again being structured by a way of seeing working class people; what I refer to as 'working class women as objects of sympathy syndrome'. Many feminists refused to accept class analysis for such an analysis meant coming to terms with the ways in which women are divided from each other. The Socialist-Feminists who did accept some form of class analysis were for the most part engaged in high level theorising about class, little of which at that time was grounded in the experiences of working class women's lives. As noted in Chapter One, the debates conducted during the 1980s on occupational

segregation, and indeed those concerning domestic labour (Sargent, 1981) were highly theoretical and paid little attention to women's own world views.

With the benefit of hindsight it is apparent that this combination of academic and personal concerns were instrumental in forming the framework for the doctoral thesis. It was these concerns which in the long run determined that I would conduct research on women's unemployment and that the research approach would be one which highlighted the subjective understanding of unemployed women themselves. The personal and academic concerns outlined above coalesced with concerns which were more overtly political. These political concerns were largely responsible for the research being conducted in Glasgow.

2.2 Political Concerns

There were three main reasons for locating the research in Glasgow as opposed to more geographically convenient areas such as Coventry or Birmingham. The first reason had to do with the fact that until I headed South for polytechnic, I had lived all of my life in Glasgow and felt a close affinity with the city and its people. As the opening quotation by the Scottish play write Joe Corrie suggests, the working class communities of Glasgow were quite simply the worlds that I knew best.

At a personal and political level I felt the need to give something back to the wider class community from which I came. The second reason was more overtly political in nature and had much to do with the anger I felt at the rapidly increasing polarisation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' which has been accompanying the de-industrialisation process in Glasgow. The 1980s was the decade of the 'consumer society'. If you did not have the money you were excluded from it. Thus the ideology of the eighties served to further marginalise the unemployed. Increasing numbers of unemployed workers were sliding into welfare state poverty. Unemployed men and women on Clydeside, thousands of them, victims of the blind indifference of Thatcherite individualism. In the same way that the material resources are not being distributed equally, so too the right to be heard is not equally distributed. Glasgow is a Labour stronghold not a Conservative heartland but during the 1980s Glasgow was being packaged for outsiders as a kind of yuppie enclave which almost by definition excluded unemployed people. (Damer, 1990; Kemp, 1990) The only voice the Labour administration seemed to be "listening to" was that of the new breed of business managers who have increasingly come to occupy the now fashionable city centre tenements which once housed working class people. It seemed to me that the European City of Culture (1990) was not "miles better" for everyone.

The third and final reason for locating the research in Glasgow had to do with the dearth of research on and about Scotland in general. This is in part related to an unequal distribution of research resources aided and abetted by Anglo-centric attitudes which regard London as the centre of the universe and all outlying regions north of the capital as 'peripheral' and not worthy of academic attention.

Summary

From the outset then a combination of academic, political and personal factors determined that the research remit would be women's unemployment in Glasgow. My own experience of work and employment, of class and gender ultimately proved to be the foundation for this research. The exclusion of working class women from sociological analyses of work and unemployment, their marginalisation within feminist discourses, and the disjuncture between my personal experience of gender and class and the academic portrayals that I read as an undergraduate, led to the formulation of what has turned out to be a key idea for this research; that unemployed working class women deserve attention in their own right and deserve to be listened to in their own terms. This idea played a large part in determining the methodology and methods for the research. It is the thinking behind the adoption of a Participatory Research methodology (Appendix A) and the subsequent problems faced in the implementation

of the research strategy that I shall now proceed to address.

3. CLASS AND GENDER IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The adoption of a Participatory Research Methodology was grounded in feminist critiques of traditional social science paradigms. (Westkott, 1979; Roberts, 1981; Graham, 1983; Mies, 1983; Reinhartz, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Harding, 1987b; Smith, 1988) These critiques point to a fundamental male bias within sociology which structure the knowledge base of the discipline and the social relations of its production. It is argued that gender bias is introduced through the theoretical frameworks and methods by which empirical investigations are conducted. As the first chapter demonstrates this is particularly the case in the Sociology of Work and Unemployment. By adopting a Participatory Research strategy I sought to prevent the repetition of established methodologies which served to maintain and reinforce working class women's subordination:

"Our intention is to minimise the tendency in all social research to transform those researched into objects of scrutiny and manipulation. In the ideal case we want to create conditions in which the object of research enters into the process as an active subject."

(Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1983:425)

I hoped to create these conditions through Participatory Research, the underlying tenets of which were informed by

feminist models of collaborative research (Mies, 1983; Reinhartz, 1983) Until very recently these research models were lauded as the ideal model for feminist empirical studies. They involved elaborate collaborative research projects which combined a variety of methods. Several themes underpinned these research models. First, feminist research values women's experience and this experience is seen as valid in its own right. Second, feminist research should generate its central problems from women's experience and emphasis is placed on experience and subjectivity as the route to theory. Third, as already acknowledged, feminist researchers must be self reflexive about their own perceptions and biases which they bring to the research. The fourth theme is the reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience between the researcher and the researched. Here it is demanded that the research subject have an input in all stages of the research project. The fifth and final feature is that feminist research must have emancipatory potential. As research for women it should "try to take women's needs, interests and experiences into account and aims at being instrumental in improving women's lives in one way or another". (Duelli Klein, 1983:90) It was these tenets which informed the creation of the Participatory Research methodology outlined in Appendix A.

The methodology influenced the selection of methods to a great extent. It necessitated the use of methods which would allow me to investigate the social structures through which unemployment is mediated whilst accounting for the

unemployed individuals. The methods also had to be sensitive enough to allow the categories of analysis to emerge from the data. To this end I was influenced by feminist critiques of quantitative research techniques. Here it is argued that quantitative methods of research translate individuals' experience into categories predefined by researchers, that such methods distort women's experience and ultimately result in a silencing of women's voices. (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991) Smith (1987:93) argues that feminist research methods must not:

"...rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework which extracts from it what fits with ours. Our conceptual procedures should be capable of explicating and analysing the properties of their experienced world rather than administering it. Their reality, their varieties of experience must be an unconditional datum."

I dismissed the survey method at an early stage in the proceedings after reading Peter Townsend's (1979) account of the way in which his survey method depoliticised the nature of poverty. The survey method also seemed to treat gender, 'race' and class as personal characteristics of individuals and not of social structure. (Graham, 1983) I felt that such limitations would inhibit an understanding of an economic and social problem like unemployment by preventing me from locating individuals in the broader socio-historical backgrounds in which they live as well as placing them within their overall life experience. Moreover the survey method, even in its more open ended form, tends to generate data of a quantitative nature and I felt that the true

nature of unemployment could not be captured in statistics. Indeed in their survey of unemployed people, Daniel and Stilgoe (1977) themselves concede that the nature of the survey data prevented them from exploring the relationship between the sexual division of labour and ideologies concerning domestic roles. Their highly structured questionnaire, in offering fixed choices to the respondents, gives little guidance to the subjects' perceptions and feelings and thus the contradictions and subtleties of women's experiences are lost. As Callender (1985:61) notes, "these types of nuances should not be ignored for they further our understanding of women's unemployment". Moreover, after ten years of high unemployment I felt that additional statistics would merely dull the senses; testimony on the other hand still retains a powerful impact. In an article for The Guardian in 1989, the journalist Hugo Young confirmed these fears about the 'anaesthetising' effects that the changes in the computation of the unemployment figures during the 1980s had on the British public at large:

"Before the Thatcherite ascendancy, unemployment was the key indicator for both politics and economics...Joblessness was the measure of success or failure, the harbinger of the electorate's verdict...Thatcherism has de-throned unemployment from this primary place...Up or down, high or low, the jobless figures these days take a negligible place in the political realm...Manipulating the figures is another way of trivialising the problem. If they can be changed twenty times, why should anyone take what they stand for seriously? Thus has systematic untruth become the accomplice of mute and universal acquiescence."

Through a process of elimination then I eventually decided to adopt a qualitative approach to the research and to employ a variety of methods; an approach known as 'triangulation'. (Denzin, 1978) In this way I hoped to gain a more complete and holistic portrayal of women's experiences of unemployment. I decided to establish a diary network; a method which I came across whilst reading a paper written by Peter Fairbrother and John Murphy (1989). My aim was to get a specified number of unemployed women - black and white, working class and middle class - to document their daily experiences of unemployment in a diary for a period of seven days. It was hoped that this method would give the women space to explore issues which were important to them. The next stage was to analyse the diary material and to subsequently conduct in-depth interviews with each of the participants on the issues raised therein. The interviews would not only enable me to check on the validity of the diary data but more importantly would allow me to tap into the rich oral culture by which means working class women in Glasgow have historically communicated their life experiences. Another reason for combining methods lay in the belief that the material elicited in one social context, a diary, was not representative of the range of responses the participant may make in others. (Graham, 1983) All the more so when the individuals concerned are unemployed women whose lives are characterised by discontinuity as they mediate the demands of the public and private spheres. It was also my intention to engage in group work with the participants; the aim being to provide the women with a

space whereby they could gain support and strength from each other with a view to laying the foundations for action. In addition I planned to conduct several case studies of women returners engaged on Employment Training Schemes and educational courses. Periodic interviews, group work and participant observation were planned throughout the women's training period with a subsequent examination of their attempts to re-enter the labour market. I also aimed to return all materials to the participants and discuss interpretations of the materials with them in order that they would have input into the data analysis. It was through this combination of methods that I hoped the subjects would become *active* participants in the research and that the research would provide a structural analysis of female unemployment through giving voice to unemployed women's concerns. In the event circumstances forced me to adopt a more traditional methodological approach, relying almost exclusively upon the interview method alone. It is to the problems that I faced in attempting to implement this Participatory Research methodology that I now turn the readers attention. In so doing I want to broaden the scope of this account and reflect upon the usefulness of the collaborative feminist approach in conducting doctoral research on unemployed women.

4. PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The problems that I experienced in attempting to implement Participatory Research within the context of this study fall broadly into four categories: i) individualism versus collaboration; ii) knowledge for whom?; iii) peer group pressure; iv) collaborative research on atomised social constituencies. It must be stressed that the first three categories are largely to do with the problems of attempting to conduct collaborative research within the context of a Ph.D.

i) Individualism versus Collaboration

The participatory research model exposed the limitations of doing Ph.D research by thesis. One of the rules governing the production of the doctoral thesis is that the end product of the research process be a single authored thesis contributing to sociological knowledge. It soon became apparent that there was a contradiction between the individualism of the Ph.D remit and a collaborative research strategy which requires the collective production of knowledge. Had I continued to adhere to the principles of the feminist research model and produced a single authored thesis I would have been placed in an extremely exploitative relationship to the participants as I alone would have received the credit for their work. As it stands the research student is forced by convention to cast her or himself in the role of 'expert' and thereby placed in a hierarchical position to the research participants.

ii) Knowledge for Whom?

The second and related issue concerns the question of whom the knowledge is being produced for and highlights the problem of dual allegiances. The doctoral thesis is expected to address issues that are within a specified subject area and directed towards an academic body. Whilst my thesis could be situated within the sociology of unemployment, the methodology required that the findings be more accessible than the sociological community. (1) However, the research model required not only that the knowledge be collectively produced and concretely applied but that the audience be the participants *themselves*. But one of the unwritten rules guiding doctoral research is that the research findings be produced for the consumption of the *academic community*. How does one resolve this with the stated goals of feminist research; that the research should be 'for' women, with the ultimate goal of feminist research being women's emancipation.

iii) Peer Group Pressure

The third problem I faced was the conservatism of the academic community itself. Whilst there are no written rules which prescribe the process of doctoral research, my experience demonstrated to me that most academics have pre-conceived notions about how a doctorate 'ought' to proceed. Most of the academics that I encountered in the course of my fieldwork were socialised into a particular way of doing research and subtle pressures were placed on me to conform to their ways of doing things. Without exception the

academics that I met during the early stages of my research wanted to know: "What is your theory?"; "What are the central questions your research seeks to address?"; and "Where is your interview schedule?" (Groans inwardly to herself!). Given that I had forwarded an outline of the methodology to each individual prior to our meeting, each of these questions was met with growing dismay. Had they read the outline, I would invariably inquire. "Yes", came the reply. "And very commendable it is too. But...." and then ensued various reasons as to why I ought to produce an interview schedule. I came to the conclusion that the methodology threatened them, for most were very defensive about their own work and were keen to explain to me why they had adopted 'traditional' research strategies. The more it was suggested that I produce an interview schedule the more determined I became not to oblige. I kept referring to a statement made by C. Wright Mills (1959:232) that "...Since one can be trained only in what is already known, training sometimes incapacitates one from learning new ways; it makes one rebel against what is bound to be at first loose and even sloppy. But you must cling to such vague images and notions, if they are yours, and you must work them out. For it is in such forms that original ideas, if any, almost always first appear." Constant reference to this gave me the strength to continue in those early stages of the fieldwork but the persistent questioning of the research strategy was a demoralising experience and succeeded in eroding my self confidence. When practical constraints forced me to adopt a more traditional methodological

approach I did so with a feeling of abject frustration and defeatism.

iv) Collaborative Research on Atomised Social Constituencies

Practical constraints eventually forced me to rethink the methodology. In the first instance there were no resources available to allow me to transcribe those diaries written in Asian languages. The second constraint was the time factor. After prolonged and lengthy negotiations with a further education college I was denied access to their newly established course on information technology which had been designed specifically for unemployed women and women returners. It took two long drawn out months before I successfully negotiated access to the first of the three Employment Training schemes. The time constraints and inflexibility of the schemes' timetable meant that time and time again I was forced to drop the planned group work and satisfy myself with interviews with a selection of the trainees on the three schemes which agreed to participate. In the end I interviewed 16 women from three different Employment Training schemes in the east end of Glasgow. Given the problems encountered in attempting to do the group work in an institutional setting I became sceptical about the possibilities of bringing non-institutionally based women together for the purposes of group work. Despite extensive networking on my part I could not establish a base amongst unemployed women from which I could initiate the research. It soon became apparent that women generally do not seem to organise themselves around the basis of their

unemployed status. Indeed I came across only one group of women in the locality which explicitly identified itself as an unemployed women's group. They did not however respond to my persistent requests to meet with them. Two pieces of research concerning service provision to unemployed people in the Glasgow area further confirmed my fears. The research conducted by Alan McGregor (1988) and Frances Rickus (1988) suggests that for various reasons women do not generally use the facilities provided by the male dominated Unemployed Workers Centres in the city. Whilst this in and of itself raises interesting questions for the research, if the collaborative approach was to have any chance of success I required a base constituency to work with. The remit I was working with then did not seem amenable to research of a collaborative nature and in the end I found myself deferring to 'authority' as I became increasingly reliant upon the interview method alone.

4.1 Summary

To summarise then. There are times when collaborative research strategies such as those suggested by Mies (1983) and Reinhartz (1983) are inappropriate for the research being pursued. Indeed the collaborative orthodoxy is increasingly being questioned within the feminist academic community. Certainly this particular research project was not amenable to research of a collaborative nature. My experience demonstrates that establishing a collaborative

project with a 'community' may be very difficult, particularly when the subjects of the research are isolated and marginalised with few resources. Further, it is possible that a collaborative research strategy which is conceived to be egalitarian can turn out to be exploitative. I found that in the context of doctoral research the collaborative process was in the end authoritative; doctoral research by its very nature demands an 'authoritative' approach. This is not to question the potential of collaborative research strategies, rather it serves to illustrate the danger of feminist research becoming too prescriptive as regards the research strategies feminists adopt when investigating women's lives. My experience has led me to the belief that feminist researchers must utilise methods and adopt methodologies which best answer the particular research questions confronting them, but to do so in ways which are consistent with feminist values and goals. Indeed some feminists are now beginning to question whether there can be a prescribed set of research methods consistent with feminist values. (Jayaratne, 1993; Kelly, Regan and Burton, 1992; Patai, 1991; Stacey, 1991) As Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1983) note:

"The idea that there is only "one road" to the feminist revolution, and only one type of "truly feminist" research, is as limiting and as offensive as male-biased accounts of research that have gone before."

Despite this recognition and the welcomed movement towards a more pluralistic approach to the utilisation of research

methods, the debates about feminist methodology remain prescriptive. Here "true feminist research" should be non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, and empowering. In no area is this advocated more than in the dialogue about woman-to-woman interviewing. It is to this aspect of my research that I will turn after highlighting the problems I experienced in accessing unemployed women for this study.

5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

I will begin this section by describing my sampling method and explaining the rationale behind it. I shall then proceed to describe the social and economic characteristics of the participants.

The problems that I experienced in attempting to locate unemployed women in the earlier phase of the fieldwork demonstrated that once people are out of the labour force sampling frame they are very difficult to find. This is not a problem unique to this study. Dennis Marsden (1982:6) notes similar difficulties in locating unemployed people for his study of workless men in the north-east of England:

"Who would suppose that with one million unemployed we should initially find it difficult to locate a handful of not too strictly defined families for interview, especially in a high unemployment area like the north-east?...In the end we entered the world of the less-skilled workers in the north-east in the most tenuous of ways."

Marsden eventually used the snowballing technique to locate his sample. Whilst this is suitable for a small sample such as Marsden's which was comprised of only nine families, I sought a larger sample which would enable me to compare both black and white women's experience of unemployment. My previous experience of networking suggested that it would take a long time to get the numbers required by the snowballing method alone. I decided that the best way to proceed was to get unemployed women to come to me. It was thus in November 1990 that I came to place a small advertisement in the employment section of the 'Glaswegian' (Appendix C), a newspaper distributed free of charge throughout Glasgow. The advert requested that unemployed women wishing to participate in the study contact me at my home in Glasgow. Within a week of the advert being placed in the newspaper I had a total response rate of 52 calls. Some callers, not unreasonably, mistook the advert for a job offer. This was partly to do with confusion over the wording of the advert and the fact that it was placed in the employment section. The words "to help with the research" were taken to mean 'help conduct the research'. When the real purpose of the advert had been explained five women declined to be interviewed, leaving me with an interviewing sample of 47 women. Altogether seven of the arranged interviews were cancelled. Four women were not in when I called at their homes at the prearranged time to conduct the interview. When they subsequently failed to respond to my note asking them to get in touch with me should they wish to reschedule the interview, I took their silence to mean that

they no longer wished to participate in the study and did not pursue matters further. After agreeing to be interviewed one woman changed her mind the day prior to the interview taking place. Two women re-scheduled their interviews due to illness and prior appointments, but subsequently failed to reply to my requests to set a new interview date. I can only hazard a guess as to why some women withdrew from the interviews. It may be that some respondents forgot about the interview for it is noticeable that the majority of cancellations came in the final week of the fieldwork; that is some four weeks after the interview was arranged. Some of the respondents did not have a telephone and therefore could not be contacted to remind them of the arrangement. In several other instances it was apparent that the women concerned had changed their minds but did not want to have to tell me personally of their withdrawal. Finally, on at least two occasions I got the distinct impression that a husband's disapproval was behind the cancellation. Thus the original interview sample of 47 women was finally reduced to 40.

One of the problems in conducting research on unemployed women is the difficulty involved in identifying representative samples of women. The most accessible source of unemployed people is the official unemployment register. However as was noted in Chapter One, the register is systematically biased in relation to women, according to their marital status and excludes many from registering. Given this there is no sampling frame of unemployed women

with which to compare my sample. Another of the disadvantages in using this type of sampling method is that the researcher has no control over the nature of the sample. There is always the danger that the sample will be heavily skewed, for example in favour of one social grouping. The sample consisted of 24 working class women and 16 middle class women. 21 women came from the north of the city with the remaining 19 residing in the southside. (Appendix B) The sample comprised mainly white working and middle class women, there being only 2 Chinese women and 4 Asian women in the sample: 1 Pakistani woman, 2 Indian women and 1 Scottish born woman of Indian parentage.

I had envisaged problems in attempting to locate Asian women by this sampling method and so had begun networking amongst the Asian communities in Glasgow as far back as April 1990. Due to tensions between differing academic and political gatekeepers in Glasgow, my access to Asian women was restricted from the outset. Nevertheless with the help of the Scottish Asian Action Committee (SAAC) I contacted a group of first generation Pakistani women. These women met twice a week for the purposes of improving their written skills and learning the English language. Since the Pakistani women could not speak English and I could not converse in Urdu, I was completely reliant upon the tutor to act as an interpreter for the group. This proved to be an unsatisfactory situation for both myself and the group tutor. She, understandably, could not spare the time I required of her to act as interpreter when in interviews

with the women. The communication barriers between myself and the group members were such that it took me three weeks just to establish that there were unemployed women in the group. In an attempt to get around the verbal communication problem I decided to establish a diary network amongst the group, the aim being to get the women to record their daily experiences of unemployment in their own language, in written form. The group tutor was enthusiastic about this idea since she felt it would also help the women improve their written skills. However, it soon became apparent that there would be no resources available to allow for the interpretation and transcription of diaries written in Urdu. As a consequence, the idea of the diary network was abandoned. The granting of access to the three Employment Training Schemes at this time placed further constraints upon my time and I eventually lost contact with the group.

6 Asian women responded to the advertisement placed in the 'Glaswegian' newspaper. Whilst this was more than I had anticipated, the Asian women in the sample remained a small cohort. Given this I could not lay the claim to a comparative analysis between Asian and white women's experiences of unemployment. In the light of this I was forced to drop one of the elements of the research remit; the comparative analysis of black and white women's experience of unemployment and concentrate on an analysis of the differences between working class and middle class women's experiences of unemployment.

Black feminists have rightly criticised some white feminist researchers for their ethnocentrism. However my experience highlights the fact that even when white researchers attempt to take on board these criticisms and respond to them in a positive way, practical difficulties can also circumvent the research process. In the case of this research project, communication problems between the researcher and the respondents caused problems. Whilst these problems need not have been insurmountable, given the lack of material resources available to me, they proved to be and in the end I was forced to drop my plans for the comparative analysis of black and white women's experiences of unemployment..

One further anomaly apparent in the sample distribution is the under-representation of women from 'the schemes' such as Easterhouse and Drumchapel. (2) No respondents from these areas replied to the advert. Curious when one considers that at the time of the fieldwork these areas were recorded as having the highest long term female unemployment rates in Glasgow: Easterhouse 39.65% and Drumchapel 38.24% respectively. (Glasgow District Council, 1989) Two reasons for this non-response present themselves: first, that the edition of the Glaswegian which contained the advert was, for some reason, not distributed to those particular areas; second, unemployed people from 'the schemes' are tiring of being the foci for research projects such as this. This may sound trite but it is the message that I received from community workers when networking in Easterhouse at an earlier stage in the fieldwork. Time and time again I was

informed in no uncertain terms that unemployed people in Easterhouse are tired of being the objects of sociological studies which in the end are seen to do nothing to improve their material circumstances. Unemployed people are quite literally beginning to question the usefulness of such research.

5.1 The Social Classification of Unemployed Women

The assignation of unemployed women to social class categories proved to be difficult. The difficulties I encountered are not unique to this research project. The problems involved in assigning women to conventional social class categories have been rigourously documented over the last decade. (Delphy, 1981; Goldthorpe, 1983, 1984; Stanworth 1984; Abbott and Sapsford, 1987; Murgatroyd, 1989; Roberts and Barker, 1989; Roberts, 1990) The reference person system of classification is clearly inadequate for the purposes of this study. Moreover, the concept of 'head of household' for analysis by social class is problematic since it is usually the male who is conceptualised as head of household and it is his occupational positioning in the labour market which dictates the social class position of each household member. The concept pre-supposes a shared standard of living within the household. (Roberts, 1990) However, evidence produced in this and other studies demonstrates that resources within the household are not equally shared. (Graham, 1984; Land, 1985; Morris, 1990)

Moreover, there were a significant number of households in my sample with no male 'head of household'. Almost half (19) of the sample of unemployed women are either single, widowed, separated or divorced. These problems aside, it was nevertheless important to retain the male partner's occupational classification where applicable, since the data in Chapter Four suggests that his economic contribution to the household makes a difference to the way in which married or cohabiting women experience unemployment at a material level.

The Classification of Occupations Scheme also proved to be problematic for the purposes of this research. The Scheme operates with a narrow definition of 'work'. The definition it utilises is based upon occupation and fails to take into account unpaid household work and those people not engaged in paid employment. The current classification of occupations defines housewives as 'inactive' and thus precludes them from having any social class of their own.

Given that the unemployed women in my sample are primarily responsible for household work I attempted to take this into account by utilising Roberts' (1990) criteria when assigning women to class categories. This however was done in hindsight and I did not have the requisite data detailing the extent of the women's domestic responsibilities to enable me to classify women by this method. Moreover, Roberts' conceptual framework is not entirely adequate for the social classification of unemployed women. Whilst it is

clearly important to take into account women's domestic labour in social classification schemes, the respondents in my sample did not identify themselves as 'housewives', rather they subjectively identified themselves as unemployed. Unlike Roberts' conceptualisation of a 'housewife', the women in my sample wanted paid employment. However, for reasons which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Four, whilst all the women in the sample wanted paid employment many were not 'actively seeking work'. Thus in the current Classification of Occupations some unemployed women would be classified as 'inactive'. Many of the women in my sample therefore fall *between* classifications for they are neither housewives nor are they officially classified as unemployed.

Given the problems with conventional categorisations I resorted to a combination of methods utilised by Martin and Roberts (1984a) and Proctor (19). I used five primary indices to assign the unemployed women to a class category. These were: annual household income; husband/partner's occupation (where applicable); educational qualifications; residential area; respondents occupation prior to withdrawal from the labour market/unemployment (Respondents had to be employed in this job for at least one year). The problem with this conceptualisation is that it remains an occupationally based social class categorisation which fails to take into account women's unpaid domestic labour. Further, because it is occupationally based it operates with a limited conceptualisation of social class and fails to take

life-style into account. I therefore do not make claims to have resolved the problems of current social classification schemes; given the remit of the research this was not my intention. Rather the problems that I encountered in assigning unemployed women to class categories further reflects the continuing dilemmas facing social researchers in assigning women to social class positions.

5.2 The Social and Economic Characteristics of the Sample

i. Age, Class and Family Structure

Based on the criteria outlined above, the sample comprises 24 working class women and 16 middle class women. There are 34 white women; 2 Chinese women; ,1 Pakistani woman; 2 Indian women; and one Scottish born woman of Indian parentage. All forty respondents are aged between 20 and 59 years. Both classes of women are represented in all age groups but the middle class women in the sample generally represent an older cohort than their working class counterparts. The middle class women tend to be concentrated in the mid-thirty to late forty age range, whilst the working class women fall into the twenty to late thirty age group.

19 women are married. Once again there is a class differential with 12 middle class married women and 8 working class married women in the sample, this despite the fact that the working class women represented the larger of

the two cohorts in the sample. The sample further comprised 9 single women - 7 working class and 2 middle class; 6 divorcees; 2 widows; 2 women who had separated from their partners; and 2 cohabitees.

A total of 28 respondents had children. The older cohort of women tended to have a larger number of children than the younger women. As Table 3 illustrates, 11 of the 13 women in the Traditional model have 2 or more children. Further a higher ratio of working class women are found in the Traditional model. Whether the women fell into the C or Non-Traditional model of employment, all women in the sample bore primary responsibility for the care of their children.

ii. Accommodation and Income

All 40 women subjectively defined themselves as unemployed but only 21 women in the sample are registered as such - 5 claiming Unemployment Benefit and 16 in receipt of Income Support. 3 women are claiming Invalidity Benefit; 1 Sickness Benefit; and the remaining 15 women are ineligible for Unemployment Benefit and Income Support. It was primarily the married women in the sample who fell into this last category. The reasons for non-entitlement to social security benefits are discussed further in Chapter Four.

55% of the sample receive less than £5,000 per annum. The vast majority of these are working class women. Disaggregating these figures further according to marital status, it is clear that married, middle class women enjoyed

a higher standard of living than their working class counterparts. Married, middle class women generally lived in households with an annual income of between £15,000-£19,999. Working class households fell into two categories: less than £5,000 per annum for households with an unemployed male partner and £5,000-£9,999 for households where the male partner is employed.

54% of women live in rented council accommodation; 44% are owner occupiers; and 2% occupy private rented properties. This compares favourably with the 1981 Census data which shows that 63% of the population in Glasgow live in rented council accommodation. Given the failure of Government policies to promote the sale of council house stock in Scotland generally, these figures remain comparable. As one would expect there is a class differential in household tenure; the majority of working class respondents in the sample reside in council property, whilst middle class respondents are predominantly owner-occupiers.

iii. Education and Occupation

35 women attended state schools; 3 attended grammar school; and two, private single sex schools. 28 of the respondents had left school on or before their sixteenth year. The older working class cohort of women were more likely than any other group of women in the sample to have left school before the age of sixteen. Economic pressures were most

commonly mentioned as the reason for early school leaving and lack of exam success.

15 respondents had no educational qualifications. These women were overrepresented amongst the cohort of women who had left full-time schooling before reaching the age of sixteen. The majority of women in the sample however had attained some form of educational qualification at school. 22 had attained at least 1 O'Grade (or its equivalent); 16 had at least 1 Higher Grade. A further 8 women possessed first degrees; and 2 hold Masters degrees. Respondents hold a plethora of other qualifications, such as Scottish Vocational Education Certificates (SCOTVECs); City and Guilds; RSA typing certificates; and two women were qualified State Registered Nurses. Generally, the middle class cohort had attained a greater number and higher level of educational qualifications than their working class counterparts.

On the whole, educational attainment was reflected in the type of jobs done by women. Employment histories showed that the vast majority of working class and middle class women in the sample had been concentrated in 'women's work',. Nevertheless, working class women tended to be concentrated in low paid, semi-skilled or 'unskilled' manual work or in low grade white collar jobs. Low grade clerical work was classified as a working class occupation in line with Braverman's (1974) argument that the proletarianisation of office work has brought clerical workers closer to manual jobs in terms of both financial rewards and job content.

Middle class women on the other hand had been engaged in semi-skilled and skilled occupations such as secretarial work, teaching, business administration, nursing and high grade office work. One woman had been self employed and the director of a company. Educational achievement however, was not always related to occupational status. Two Indian women in the sample, for example, held Masters degrees and yet their employment history upon arrival in Glasgow showed a succession of low grade factory and shop work.

Having described the characteristics of the sample I will now go on to reflect upon my experience of interviewing the respondents. In so doing I seek to problematise orthodox feminist models of interviewing.

6. WOMAN-TO-WOMAN INTERVIEWING

Reflection on the research process has led me to think hard about the interviews I conducted with unemployed women and the Employment Training trainees. The interview process raised for me a number of questions about the female researchers experience of interviewing women. Most of the accounts of interviewing are of middle class researchers interviewing members of the middle class (Corbin, 1971; Finch, 1984); or middle class researchers interviewing 'down', that is members of social groupings less economically and socially powerful than themselves (Edwards

1990; Patai, 1991); or alternatively middle class researchers interviewing members of more socially powerful groups, usually men. (Platt, 1981; Scott, 1984; Smart, 1984) As a white woman from a working class background, I found myself placed in a position of interviewing both middle class and working class women, black and white women alike, for the purposes of this research. My structural positioning vis-a-vis the women I interviewed draws out the many faceted complexities of the power dynamics in woman-to-woman interviewing. In this part of the chapter I want to compare my experience of interviewing with what has become the definitive feminist approach to interviewing, an approach which is exemplified in the work of Anne Oakley (1981). I will argue that this alternative model of interviewing is too simplistic to account for the complex power hierarchies in woman-to-woman interviewing. The model suffers from similar inadequacies in its approach as those feminist analyses of unemployment that I outlined in Chapter One; it treats women as a homogeneous entity and fails to account for structural differences between women. It will be argued that the failure to recognise difference at the level of methodology has led to the mystification of power relations *between* women. Differences between women need to be explored at the level of feminist methodology just as much as any other level.

I shall begin with a consideration of Oakley's (1981) approach. Oakley's approach to interviewing arises from a critique of the text book method of interviewing which she

argues is essentially masculinist. Within the masculinist approach the interviewer controls the content of the interview and takes information from the interviewee. The role of the interviewee is to provide information and he/she is seen to gain little from the encounter. The relationship between the two parties is minimal since involvement on the part of the interviewer is thought to bias the 'objective' status of the data provided by the interviewee. It is this instrumentalist attitude to the interviewees which Oakley rightly objects to, for it is one which constructs interviewees as passive data providing objects of the research process. Oakley (1981) argues that the masculinist model of interviewing runs counter to the egalitarian principles of feminism, since the masculine model is premised upon a power hierarchy between interviewer and interviewee. In locating the power with the interviewer Oakley seeks to equalise the relationship between the two parties. She seeks to do this through a non-hierarchical, reciprocal approach to interviewing. Oakley's (1981:41) alternative to the masculine approach to interviewing is one in which "the goal of finding out about people is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship". Oakley (1981:55) argues that because women interviewers and interviewees "both share the same gender socialisation and critical life experiences, social distance can be minimal". Thus Oakley posits an affinity between feminist interviewers and women interviewees. Any potential

power hierarchy between them disappears because both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender:

"A feminist interviewing women is by definition both 'inside' the culture and participating in that which she is observing".

(Oakley, 1981:57)

This egalitarian relationship leads to the reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experience between the researcher and the researched. In this way the woman-to-woman interview is constructed as a non-hierarchical two way relationship which empowers participants and researcher alike. This is juxtaposed to the disempowering one way relationship characterised by the masculine model of interviewing.

The assumptions which underpin Oakley's approach are also to be found in the work of Janet Finch (1984:78) who argues that women sociologists are necessarily 'on the side' of women because they share the same powerless position as those they research. Similarly, Stanley and Wise (1983) argue that feminist researchers have a 'double vision of reality' to their work by virtue of their membership of two groups, the oppressed (women) and the elite (scholars). The alternative approach to interviewing is premised upon the assumption that as both parties share a subordinate position by virtue of their gender, power relations between interviewer and interviewee are equalised. However, in line

with other critics of Oakley's conceptual framework (Edwards, 1990; Patai, 1991; Stacey, 1991), my experience of interviewing demonstrates, same-sex status is not enough to create shared understandings or eradicate power differentials between women. Other statuses arising from public domains sustain and reinforce power inequalities between women in the research process.

6.1 STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES IN WOMAN-TO-WOMAN INTERVIEWING

i) When Sex-Based Trust is not Enough: Interviewing Working Class Women

The feminist model characterises the relationship between women researchers and women interviewees as one predicated on sex-based trust. It is also suggested that white women are more likely to perceive this than black women. Edwards (1990:488) for example, whilst recognising the fallacy of sex-based trust amongst white researchers and black respondents, nevertheless argues that "white working class women are more likely to experience the public world as male (albeit middle class) and therefore feel affinity with other women of whatever class". By reflecting upon my experience of interviewing white working class women on employment Training schemes I seek to challenge these assumptions.

The interviews with the sixteen women on Employment Training schemes were interviews in which the power to control the interview lay entirely with the researcher, this despite my attempts to adopt the egalitarian approach espoused by

Oakley (1981). In all cases the interviews had been conducted on the premises of the training organisations. The interviews were greatly affected by the restraint and reticence of the environment in which they were conducted, with neither interviewer nor interviewee feeling at ease in the training manager's office. I found it extremely difficult to create an atmosphere of informality in such a formal environment, even in those instances where I was acquainted with the trainees prior to the interview by virtue of my participation in their training sessions. This affected the nature of the interviews. I originally intended for all the interviews to be non-hierarchical. Moreover, I knew from my own personal experience of unemployment that it is a sensitive topic for those who have had the misfortune to experience it. Given this, I felt it could not be investigated by means of single direct questions of the kind found in structured interview schedules. (Brannen, 1988) Thus the interview technique I sought to adopt was non-directive. I drew up a list of topic areas rather than questions as a guide for the interviews. The approach was unstructured in as much as it was concerned with the themes of education, family, work (paid and unpaid), unemployment and training in women's lives, from childhood to the present. I hoped to give interviewees space to speak about an issue or event as a whole rather than answer isolated questions. The only structured and predetermined questions were those that I asked of each interviewee at the start of the interview. These comprised of essential biographical details such as

age, marital status, number of dependents, length of unemployment etc. (Appendix D) However given the Employment Training respondents reticence, I was forced to adopt a more structured and formal approach to interviewing than I had intended. The Employment Training interviews took the form of a question and answer format. I was placed in the uncomfortable position of imposing a structure on the interview which I felt left the women very little control over the situation. Subsequently, the Employment Training interviews were shorter than anticipated, lasting only half an hour to an hour in duration. Such conditions undoubtedly affected the quality of the interviews.

It was not only the surrounding environment which affected the nature of the interviews, power inequalities and mistrust on the part of the interviewees also played a large part. This was particularly the case with the interviews I conducted with the eight white, working class trainees from Povall Employment Training. The manager of this organisation did not give me the opportunity to meet with the trainees prior to interviewing them, let alone observe the women during their training. Although I was assured by the manager that the trainees participation in the research was entirely voluntary, it came as no surprise to find that when I came to interview the women they were extremely wary of me. It soon became apparent that the women feared that I was working on behalf of 'the social' (Department of Social Security). All attempts on my part failed to allay these fears; I explained my motivations, revealed personal

information about myself, explained the purpose of the research and ensured confidentiality. The uncertainty about my identity not unreasonably meant that I was treated with an element of suspicion and mistrust. This acted as a barrier between myself and the interviewees. The 'placing' that Oakley (1981) and Finch (1984) argue is necessary to stimulate rapport with women respondents did not occur, even though I suspect I was socially closer to my respondents than either Oakley or Finch were to theirs. I shared many commonalities with the trainees; a white Glaswegian woman from a working class background who had experienced the indignities of unemployment and the ignominy of training schemes, in my case the Youth Opportunities Programme. None of this minimised the distance between myself and the interviewees. Sex-based placing was not enough to counter the women's perceptions of me. I might have (mistakenly) perceived myself as an 'insider' but I was perceived as an 'outsider' by the women interviewees. What they saw was a middle class, university educated woman who possibly had links with the Social Security Department and thus was to be treated with caution. There was no 'reciprocity'; no sharing of knowledge on the basis of a shared gender identity. Despite my intentions these interviews conformed more to the masculinist model so despised by Oakley (1981). I asked questions, I got (restrained) answers. The interviewees gave information, I took it. The following exchange between myself and Angela, one of the trainees, is characteristic of the interaction that took place:

PA: To what extent did your need to get out of the house influence your decision to undertake Employment Training?

Angela: It wis a big influence.

PA: In what way?

Angela: Different ways.

PA: Like meeting people, or what?

Angela: Aye.

Personal involvement with the interviewees was minimal. The women left at the end of the interview and I never saw them again. The whole experience was extremely distressing for myself and I suspect for some of the interviewees. Despite the minimisation of social distance between myself and the interviewees, sex based trust was not forthcoming. Moreover, contrary to Edwards (1990) assumption, the white working class women in this instance did not show an affinity with the woman researcher, even one who was socially close to them.

ii) A White Woman Interviewing Black Women

Oakley (1981) notes that women interviewees talk about key areas of their lives in ways that denote a high level of trust in the female researcher. She argues that this indicates that interviewees expect female researchers to understand what they mean because the researcher is a woman. In reflecting upon my experiences with interviewing Asian women I seek to challenge this assumption.

I noted earlier the problems I experienced in accessing black women to participate in the research. Nevertheless, 4 Asian women and 2 Chinese women responded to the newspaper advertisement requesting participants for the research. During four of the interviews with these women I was made aware of the limitations of sex based equality in the interview process. The list that I had constructed as a guide to the interviews covered a range of topics. However in interviews with three of the Asian women and one of the Chinese women the interviewees showed reticence in talking about all areas of their lives to me in the way that most of the white women in the unemployed sample were prepared to. In particular the Asian and Chinese women directed the topic of conversation to the world of work and education and in particular the racism they experienced in those spheres. They were generally unwilling to talk to me - a white female researcher about their family lives. This concurs with Edwards' (1990) experience when conducting research on mature women's experiences of higher education. Edwards argues that this protective stance is the result of black women's structural position in society. Bell Hooks (1982), Hazel Carby (1982) and Beverley Bryan (1985) demonstrate that black women experience the family as a source of support in a racist society. Thus as Edwards (1990) notes, it may well be that black women wish to keep family relations private, especially to white women in a society where the oppressive public world of institutions is experienced as white. Like Edwards (1990), I too found that 'placing' was not enough. In fact I found it easier to

establish rapport with the women once I had acknowledged cultural and power differences between us rather than same sex similarities. For example, on five occasions the women I interviewed were of similar ages to myself and had been educated to the same level as myself (Masters Degree). We all agreed that it was not by coincidence that I, a white woman, had been given the opportunity to engage in doctoral research whilst my Asian and Chinese counterparts were unemployed. Labour Force Survey Data for the period 1989-1991 shows that white women with higher qualifications have an unemployment rate of 3.6% compared with 4.5% of black women with higher qualifications. (Equal Opportunities Review, 1993) Moreover, despite their qualifications, the only jobs the Asian and Chinese women had thus far been offered had been in semi-skilled manual work in factories or in low grade service jobs in the catering industry. Thus in these interviews my placing was not just as a woman but as a *white* woman. In these interviews I played a much more passive role than in any of the others. This is illustrated by one memorable interview when the woman concerned literally took command of the interview by physically controlling the tape recorder; recording only those aspects of the conversation she regarded appropriate and pressing the pause button when she relayed information which she deemed to be 'off-the-record'. Once again, these interviews were characterised not by their reciprocity based on a shared gender identity, but by reticence and social distance based on structural differences between female interviewer and female interviewees.

iii) Interviewing Women: The Impact of Educational Status

It is beginning to be recognised within feminist research that ethnicity or racial difference between interviewer and interviewee can interfere with communication and understanding. (Edwards, 1990; Patai, 1991) My experience of the interview process however showed that other statuses can create obstacles to identification between women, in particular the educational status of the interviewer.

I learned very quickly that the majority of unemployed women mistakenly assumed prior to meeting with me that I was English. (3) Not an unreasonable assumption given that the newspaper advert alluded to the fact that I was studying at Warwick University. This may appear trivial, but nationalistic feelings were running particularly high at the time of the interviews. In Scotland nationalism is based upon anti-English sentiment and is not defined in terms of a positive Scottish national identity. So the national factor could have been a potential barrier between myself and the interviewees had I been English. However, upon meeting, my accent dispelled any such fears the interviewees harboured. In fact I would go so far as to say that being Scottish, and a Glaswegian at that, may have been beneficial for me for it helped the interviewees to place me.

My educational status was also a source of difference between myself and the white working class women in the sample. This was apparent in the women's comments at the end of the interview. Many told me that they had been

apprehensive prior to the interview; they feared that I would ask them difficult, 'intellectual' questions which they would not be able to understand nor answer. It is no surprise then that all of the women without exception expressed surprise and relief at the way in which the interview was conducted. They liked the unstructured non-directional approach, as often as not commenting that 'it was just like having a conversation'. There was a distinct age difference to the ways in which the working class women responded to my educational status. As far as the older women in the cohort were concerned I was the working class lass made good. In the women's own words I had 'done well for myself' and was told that 'your parents must be proud of you'. Placing however did not close the barrier between myself and some of the younger working class women. For them universities are middle class places which generally exclude working class people. Thus the people who are part of them are perceived to be middle class, as indeed the vast majority are. As I was part of that institution I was perceived to be middle class. This became apparent when in conversation I would relate something of my own experiences of unemployment and I would be told by the interviewee 'its different for people like you, people in your position'. On other occasions interviewees would take great pains to explain a particular aspect of their unemployed experience or of their experience of working in a factory, on the assumption that I could have experienced neither because I was privileged.

Summary

Thus there are other statuses which can create social distance between the female researcher and female interviewees. The impact of educational status remains largely unexplored in feminist accounts of interviewing, as are age differences between both parties. (4) By highlighting some of the multi-faceted complexities of power dynamics in woman-to-woman interviewing I have sought to show, in line with an increasing number of feminist researchers (Edwards, 1990; Patai, 1991; Stacey, 1991), that a shared gender identity between interviewer and interviewee is not enough to assure a common understanding and the eradication of power hierarchies. Despite a shared gender and class socialisation and similar life experiences, the social distance between myself and some of my interviewees was wide and this affected the interview. We cannot begin to understand this unless we take account of race, class and educational differences between women; for power inheres in difference. The knowledge that it is structural differences that inform the power inequalities between researcher and researched leads one to question whether reciprocity and shared knowledge really do empower interviewees. It is to this question and the macro politics of the research process that I now turn.

6.2 Empowering Women

Oakley (1981) argues that ultimately the interviewer role serves those whose lives are being researched. The common feeling is that respondents get something out of the research process; they get the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic listener and to tell their story. In looking at what my interviewees got from their participation in this research project I wish to question whether this is enough. Do reciprocity and 'giving voice' constitute empowerment of the research subject? Or are such mechanisms merely devices which mask the power relations inherent in the research process?

The Adviser

In many interviews I was placed in the role of 'expert' to whom problems were presented. I gave advice where I could on matters ranging from information about training opportunities to advice about benefit entitlements. To this extent there was a sharing of knowledge which I hope benefited the women involved in a practical way.

The Listener

For many women the interview process acted as a form of therapy. Women confided in me about personal troubles, not all of which were related to their unemployment. In such cases I was placed in the role of a sympathetic listener and in all too many cases provided a shoulder to cry on. Some women lived on their own; their isolation compounded by the very nature of unemployment. They needed someone to talk

too. For many single parents with young children this took on the added dimension of having an adult to talk to instead of conversing in 'baby talk' all day. My presence enabled a lot of women to unburden themselves and provided much needed company for others. Many women reported 'feeling better' for having talked with me.

Giving Voice

All of the women found the interview a welcome experience because of the opportunity it presented to give voice to their experiences of unemployment. Women noted that nobody seemed to want to listen to what they had to say. They were pleased that someone actually cared enough to ask them about their experiences and wanted to give voice to their concerns. The women reported that partners, family and friends did not take their unemployment seriously, nor did local and central government. As a consequence the women felt marginalised and angry. This was often the motivation behind women's participation in the research; they wanted the research to highlight their concerns and make unemployed women visible and to challenge the stereotype that women do not suffer from unemployment. Some participants saw the research as a spur to policy change. Moreover, given the isolating nature of unemployment and the lack of opportunities to engaged collectively with other unemployed women many interviewees found indirect support through knowing that there were other women in the study who shared similar experiences to themselves. To this extent the

research could be seen to give voice to a group of women who would otherwise remain silent.

To go back to my original question: does this constitute empowerment of the research subject? Does this equalise the power inequalities between the researcher and the researched? I would argue that it does not, at least not when the macro politics of the research process are considered. Ultimately it is the researcher who retains power and control over the research process. As Patai (1991) notes, it is material inequalities which create the conditions for most research and it is material facts which determine who gets to do research on whom. Women's involvement in the research for example, could be interpreted as an index of their powerlessness. It is apparent that it was the unemployed women's powerlessness that made them such willing participants in the research. Their unemployed status is not taken seriously. Unemployment had consigned them to the privatised world of the domestic sphere where they felt isolated, marginalised and silenced. It was this which provided the conditions in which they welcomed the opportunity to talk to a stranger about intimate aspects of their lives. There is a danger here, which Finch (1984) recognises, of using ones identity as a woman to exploit this powerlessness. The researchers goal is always to gather information and thus the danger of exploitation and manipulation always exists no matter who conducts the research or who interviews whom. Oakley (1981) for example, ultimately believes that by replacing the

masculinist model with the alternative feminist model that the outcome is not only a better research process but also *better research results*. (Patai, 1991) Similarly, Wise (1987:69) advocates using self disclosure to get more information out of respondents:

"I think it likely that a feminist using these principles of interviewing would elicit more information than a non-feminist women interviewer"

Janet Finch (1984:80) acknowledges the power the researcher holds when she says:

"I have also emerged from interviews with the feeling that my interviewees need to know how to protect themselves from people like me".

Issues of power in research are not of course just a question of feminist methodology but concern all research as a privileged activity. Generally, both sociological and feminist research direct their gaze down amongst groups who are less economically, politically and socially powerful than the researcher. Our status as researchers often gives us the power to initiate research; to define the 'other's' reality; to translate other's social lives and language (5) in terms that are not their own; and to place their stories in books to be bought and sold in the market place.

In Chapter One I noted the ways in which the dominant group within sociological discourses, white middle class men, have by virtue of their power within the discipline been able to sustain particular representations of women in their

research. Feminist academics have been slow to recognise their own processes of appropriation. Chapter One drew attention to the way in which white, middle class feminists have the power to sustain particular representations of working class women as domestically orientated. So too black feminists have noted the ways in which black women are routinely excluded from feminist analyses or stereotyped within them. Bell Hooks (1982:138) argues that:

"The force that allows white feminist authors to make no reference to racial identity in their books about "women" that are in actuality about white women, is the same one that would compel any writer writing exclusively on black women to refer to their racial identity. That force is racism."

The suppression of black women's and working class women's voices seems to be a necessary condition for the apparent authority and universality of white middle class feminists. The preoccupation of white middle class feminists for a root cause of male domination reflects a mode of thinking that is itself grounded in particular forms of domination (Weedon, 1987) Feminist research then often reproduces the hierarchies and inequalities it seeks to reveal and transform. Which brings us back full circle to the unemployed women of Easterhouse who exercised the only power available to them; the power of refusal, refusal to take part in this research. These women seem to understand better the power inequalities in social research than most academics. In the final analysis the researcher departs with the data and the researched stay behind, no better off than before. To this extent the researcher researched

relationship is an inherently unequal one, with the balance of power weighed disproportionately in favour of the researcher.

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided space to reflect upon the processes in the making of this research. In so doing it sought to problematise certain tenets of feminist research procedures. It raised the issue of the appropriateness of a prescriptive feminist research method by demonstrating the limitations of collaborative research on an atomised social constituency within the context of doctoral research. I argued for the need for a more pluralistic approach to the adoption of methods within feminist research. Second I demonstrated the limitations of feminist research which fails to recognise differences between women at the level of methodology. In reflecting upon my own experiences of interviewing women, I argued, in line with an increasing number of feminist researchers, that shared gender identity between interviewer and interviewee is not always enough to create common understandings or equalise the power relations between the two parties. Feminists insistence that a shared gender identity is enough may actually mask the power differences between researcher and participants. This is not to suggest that power relations are all one way within a single research project. At the micro political level of

the research process power can be a two-way process. There are many times during the research process when, in my capacity as researcher, I felt completely powerless. This was particularly the case when I interviewed women who, by any social indicators, lived in the direst of poverty. Words cannot express adequately the unease I felt in briefly crossing paths with poor women whose lives I was doing nothing to improve. I would come away from such interviews with an overwhelming anger but also with a crushing sense of powerlessness to make any kind of effective change to their lives. Moreover, the responsibility of doing the material and the women justice is equally terrifying. But at the same time I now have the information and to possess information about someone is to have power over them.

I also recognise that social research is not always concerned to cast its gaze 'down'. At times it researches 'up', looking at powerful political and economic groups in society. Such groups by virtue of their power, are far more able to reject or withstand the researchers' representations of them than are less powerful social groupings. Nevertheless, the researcher by virtue of having the data has the power to make such representations in the first place. Moreover, it is acknowledged that where interviews are non-directive and unstructured power can be exerted by interviewees. Such approaches can provide the opportunity for the interviewee to control the interview and hence dictate data content and form. (Brannen, 1988) Ultimately such measures merely temper the exploitative tendencies of

the interview, they do not eradicate them. The status of researcher usually confers power, the power to initiate research, the power to define and interpret the 'other's' reality. It is testimony to women's powerlessness in society that the very processes which reinforce their subordination are often the only means by which they can challenge their oppression. Given the male biases within social science generally, feminist research is very often the only vehicle through which women's voices are likely to be heard. To this extent feminist researchers' utilisation of their power to enable women to speak in the public domain is important. But this does not detract from the fact that "giving" voice is still embedded in complex power relations between feminist researcher and female participants. Whilst it is right to seek strategies which minimise power between researcher and participant we must not use such strategies to mask the power we have. As Jane Ribbens (1990:590) notes, "groups without power are not in a position to assert power over the research process". It is this which is the essence of their vulnerability and the researchers' power.

ENDNOTES

1. It is recognised that the placing of this study within the sociology of unemployment is paradoxical. The thesis does not sit comfortably within the sociology of unemployment because not only does it embody a critique of existing research within the field, it is part of a wider feminist critique which aims at the transformation of sociology itself.
2. 'The Schemes', as they are colloquially known in Glasgow, refer to the large council housing estates on green field sites around the perimeter of the city; Easterhouse, Drumchapel; Castlemilk; Pollock and Priesthill. Their origins lie in the housing crisis of post-war Glasgow and they were developed as part of the answer to urban decay and dereliction and the subsequent population overspill in central Glasgow. Almost from their beginning Easterhouse and Drumchapel were regarded as 'problem' areas. Both are single tenured one class estates. The majority of the housing is council owned. Until the 1970s the schemes experienced a minimal provision of amenities and community facilities. Although some improvements have taken place, such provision is still seriously neglected. Employment opportunities within the areas are also limited. Long distances, poor services and high fares on public transport remain obstacles to seeking employment further afield. (Keating and Mitchell, 1987) The impact of recession in the 1980s has merely exacerbated the problems of Easterhouse and Drumchapel.
3. After the disconcerting experience of interviewing the sixteen women on the Employment Training schemes I decided to interview the unemployed cohort of women in their own homes. There were three reasons for choosing to conduct the interviews in the homes of the respondents. First, the only base that I had in Glasgow was my parents home and it being a small council house was neither practical nor convenient to conduct interviews in. Second, I felt that it would be more convenient for the women concerned if I did the travelling. The costs of travelling and the inconvenience that some women would have faced in bringing young children across the city on public transport, would I felt have discouraged women from participating. Finally, I felt that by interviewing the women in their own homes they were more likely to feel relaxed and in control of the interview situation than if it had been conducted in a strange impersonal environment as had been the case with the Employment Training interviews.

4. I was very aware of the age differentials between myself and many of the women I was interviewing. For my part I feared that the respondents and gatekeepers would not take myself or the research seriously because of my relative youth. To this end I purposely dressed in a conservative fashion that made me look older in the hope that my appearance would engender people's confidence in my abilities.

5. The traditional approach to the inclusion of respondents speech within the text is to polish the speech, for example, by omitting repetition. There is also a tendency to translate slang and vernacular into standard English so that it reads more smoothly than ordinary speech. It is argued that readers will be prejudiced by speech that reveals lack of education or particular regional or class backgrounds. Whilst I fear that this is correct, it is nonetheless a view I cannot adhere to. It is testimony to the ignorance and intolerance of the classed based system in Britain that such a view has any credence. To continue to translate speech in standard forms of English is to give legitimacy to this form of prejudice and to maintain and reinforce it. Whilst I have omitted repetition in participants speech, I have chosen to reflect the language of the women who participated. For to deny the women their mode of expression is, I feel, to deny them part of their national and class identity. Moreover as Devault (1990) notes it is through such translation processes that women's words are often distorted.

CHAPTER THREE

GENDER IDEOLOGY AT WORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to determine unemployed women's orientations to waged work and to discern any possible class differences in their commitment to waged work. It is important to establish women's commitment to waged work for, as was demonstrated in Chapter One, the way in which women's unemployment is conceived is predicated upon their commitment to work.

Chapter One demonstrated the ways in which sociological discourses in the fields of work and unemployment construct women as having different orientations towards paid work from men. In the sociological discourse waged work, particularly for married women, is not regarded as part of the female role. Women are seen to be uncommitted to working outside the home and more orientated towards their domestic roles as homemakers, wives and mothers. The sociological discourse is informed by gender ideology, in particular the ideology of the family wage, which constructs women and children as the financial dependents of a male breadwinner. (Barrett and McIntosh, 1980) (1) Many of these assumptions also apply to single women. Prior to marriage women are held to give primacy to marital prospects and to

plan a 'career' in familial rather than occupational terms. (Morris, 1990) To this extent then it is the collective position of women which is decisive. Thus when women undertake paid employment, the ideological construction is that they do so for 'pin money' rather than out of economic necessity.

Feminist research has done much to challenge the dominant sociological paradigm about the importance of waged work in women's lives and the prevailing ideological assumptions which underpin it. Nevertheless, in Chapter One I demonstrated the tendency for feminist discourses to reinforce gender ideology where working class women's orientations to work are concerned. Feminist research has generally tended to construct working class women as more domestically orientated and less committed to waged work than their middle class counterparts. I argued that this lack of commitment to waged work is constructed in two ways: First, is the stance found in the work of Agassi (1982); Dex (1988) and Morris (1990) which contends that working class women's waged work is oppressive and this is used to explain working class women's apparent domestic orientation. Second, is the approach adopted in the work of Pollert (1981); Westwood (1984); Sharpe (1984) and Hakim (1991), which posits that working class women are more domestically orientated than their middle class counterparts. Thus when working class women do work it is argued that they are content to put up with poor working conditions since they

have little intrinsic interest in working and lack career commitment.

I noted the implications of the feminist and sociological paradigms for the construction of working class women's experience of unemployment. Both render working class women's experience of unemployment unproblematic, since unemployment is seen to offer working class women the opportunity to prioritise their domestic role. Both the sociological and feminist paradigms operate on the unquestioned assumption that there is something inherently attractive about the domestic sphere and women's role therein, which is lacking in the world of waged work.

The data in this chapter challenges such assumptions and suggests that there are a number of complex and interrelated factors which need to be taken into account in understanding women's orientations to waged work. This chapter focuses on the material, social and ideological constraints which shape women's orientations to waged work, their entry to the labour market and the nature of the jobs available to them. The chapter begins with an exploration of women's orientations to their domestic role and argues that contrary to received wisdom, it is dissatisfaction with this role which is a prime motivator in both working class and middle class women in the sample seeking waged work. The Chapter then proceeds with an analysis of women's orientations to waged work and explores the social, economic and psychological meanings that waged work holds for both working class and middle class women in the sample.

2. WOMEN'S ORIENTATIONS TO THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

2.1 "Housewife Syndrome"

In order to determine women's orientations to the domestic sphere I looked first at the extent to which the married women in the sample were satisfied with the role of housewife and mother. The results show that the wife/mother identity is a demoralising one and the source of much dissatisfaction. Of the sample of 40 respondents 27 women had been married and had children. Four women had subsequently divorced; two had separated from their husbands; two women were widowed; and one woman had divorced and remarried. Of these 27 married women, 15 were working class and 12 were middle class.

The evidence from the interview material suggests that none of the married women in the sample, irrespective of age, class background or ethnic origin, found the role of housewife satisfying let alone intrinsically so:

" Housework is awful. All these housewives who are so bored, who are absolutely up to their gunnels with it and they just keep on doin' it. Psychologists call it Housewife Syndrome."

(Louise)

"In the house you dust and tidy the house but when you're outside you're socialising and gettin' to know people. Like I'd say it's two different kind of lives: one being outside, meeting people, working with people, and the other you just sit in the house doin' nothin'.

(Sarla)

The women, generally reported finding the role of mother a more rewarding experience than that of housewife. However as they were quick to point out, the two roles are inseparable. Domestic tasks tend to be greatest when there are young children in the home:

"I hate being at home with the child. It's terrible. He cries all the time. And he makes such a mess. I feel better when I'm in the shop. I love working."

(Kamla)

In concurrence with Oakley's (1974) conclusions, I found equal numbers of working class and middle class women to be dissatisfied with housework. Despite finding no differences between working class and middle class women's levels of dissatisfaction with housework, Oakley nevertheless argues that middle class women are more likely to perceive the low status of the housework role. She argues that middle class women are therefore more likely than working class women to be dissatisfied with housework overall. I found no such class distinctions between the women in my sample. The comment made by one working class woman is typical of the women's attitudes:

"Bein' in the hoose, it makes you feel less competent. Bein' in the hoose for so many years you loose your identity and that's whit I found I was doing. You're jist a mum, a wife and a housekeeper, and that's it. Everybody takes you for granted. You become a nobody and it gets really depressin'.

(Martha)

The dissatisfaction with the housewife role was not just to do with the nature of housework tasks. Dissatisfaction was also related to the low status conferred by society at large on the roles of wife and mother. Although domestic labour was seen as hard work, particularly when there were young children in the home, it was not seen by the women to be a "proper job". Unlike waged work outside the home, housework was mundane, endless, unpaid and taken for granted and thus conferred little social status upon those who executed it. Housework and motherhood are work. As Sharpe (1984) notes, they are also identity. Work is who you are as well as what you do. All of the women in the sample, working class and middle class women alike, experienced the housewife identity as a demoralising one.

Whilst the role of mother was generally experienced as more rewarding than the housewife role, it too proved to be unsatisfactory. Those women in the sample who were now in their thirties and forties had reached a stage in their lives when their children were relatively independent of them. This moment in their lives provided time for reflection and many of these women found their lives wanting. As with the women in Sharpe's (1984) study, women of this age tended to feel that their lives were almost done with and they had not done anything significant:

"...I think it's an awful frightening feeling when your children get to a certain age and all of a sudden don't need you any more. You're husband's got his hobbies, his career. He's got everything and you're absolutely left with nothing. I mean ma husband'll say to me, you don't have any

hobbies. But what he doesn't realise is that over the years you haven't really had time for hobbies because you've had the children to do different things with. You've had homework, blah, blah: all those different things that have taken up so much time so that when you go to bed you're just literally falling asleep. So you've lost contact with all your hobbies and everything. Then all of a sudden the children are saying, well we're out, or we're getting married or whatever. I mean *what do I do?* And that's quite an upsetting thing because you don't know what the heck to do or where you can go for advice on what you can do. It is, it's a horrible feeling. You can actually envy the sort of women that do have careers."

(Louise)

These findings concur with those of Freeman (1982); Porter (1982) and Sharpe (1984) who found that the experience of motherhood had proved unsatisfactory for both working class and middle class women and that they had no inclinations to return to it. Freeman (1982) found that whilst some mothers with paid work wished they could give up their jobs, it was far more common for mothers at home to wish they had the chance of paid work outside the home.

Neither middle class nor working class women were wholly orientated to the role of wife and mother. The experience of domesticity and motherhood proved to be equally unsatisfying for both working class and middle class women alike. There were no attitudinal differences between the women. However there were differences arising from the material conditions of the women's lives. There was a disparity in the earning potential between the married working class and married middle class women's husbands/partners. The income brought into working class

households fell into the following income categories: less than £5,000 per annum for women whose husbands were unemployed and £5,000-£9,999 per annum for women whose husbands were in employment. Only two working class households had an annual income which fell into the £10,000-£14,999 income bracket. Middle class households in the sample generally fell into the £15,000-£19,999 income bracket and two fell into the £20,000-£25,999 bracket. Even if one assumes equality in the distribution of household finance - and evidence suggests that this is not the case (Morris, 1984; 1990: Pahl, 1983) - the working class married women in the sample had to manage the household on far less income than their middle class counterparts. Working class women on the whole experienced greater personal hardship and faced a greater financial struggle in keeping home and family intact. Morris (1984) notes that the lower the level of domestic income the harder the household member responsible for domestic duties has to work. As we have already seen, the sexual division of labour assigned the majority of domestic tasks to the women in the sample. Given the low income levels of working class households it would seem that working class women bear a greater burden than their middle class counterparts. Whilst the control of household finance lay beyond the remit of this study, research by Morris (1984) and Pahl (1980; 1983) suggests that low income encourages unitary control of finances and that given the sexual division of labour, this control falls to women. The working class women in my sample were more likely to talk about the difficulties they experienced in

'getting by', and of having to 'scrimp and scrape' than did middle class women. Thus it would seem that the concentration of resources in the hands of working class women was experienced as a source of stress since it was the women who were faced with meeting the family's everyday needs on a meagre male income. Furthermore, given the shift patterns and the long hours which the married working class women claimed their husbands worked, the working class women in the sample were more likely to bear a greater burden of domestic labour and childcare since their partners were less likely to be in a position to 'help' with such tasks, even allowing for the fact that they had the inclination to do so. Thus the material inequalities which characterised the lives of many of the working class women in the sample meant that on the whole domesticity was experienced as potentially more oppressive for working class women than for middle class women.

3. CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN'S LABOUR MARKET PARTICIPATION: SUPPLY SIDE FACTORS

All of the women in the sample had been in paid employment at some point in their lives. The single women in the sample had, until their unemployment, higher labour market participation rates than the married women or single mothers. This pattern is confirmed by labour market statistics which show that married women aged 25-49 are less likely to be economically active than single women in the United Kingdom. The aggregate figures for the United

Kingdom for 1988 show that 46% of women with children aged under 10 were in employment and a further 8% were unemployed. In contrast, the employment rate for childless women aged 20-39 was 83% in 1988. (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1991) Moreover, regional figures show that Scotland has one of the lowest employment participation rates for women with children under 10 years of age; 40%, and a higher unemployment rate in this group; 11% (Table 2). (Cohen, 1990) Furthermore, when one analyses the life cycle patterns of the married women in the sample, 13 of the women (8 working class and 5 middle class) fall into the traditional or bimodal employment pattern, and 11 fit the non-traditional model. (2) Given the women's expressed dissatisfaction with the role of housewife and mother how do we explain these employment patterns? In looking at the women's own accounts it is possible to discern the material, social and ideological processes which shape women's orientations to waged work and their relationship to the labour market. I shall begin with a consideration of supply side factors and continue with an exploration of demand side factors.

3.1 Age, Tradition and the Internalisation of Gender Ideology

One of the distinctive features of the sample is the disparity in age differences between the women in the two models. As Table 3 shows, older women generally fall into the Traditional model and the younger cohort of women into

the Non-traditional model. In the Traditional model 8 out of the 13 women are over the age of 40 whilst only two women out of the 11 in the Non-traditional model are over 40. It may well be that the older women hold more traditional views pertaining to gender roles than the younger women and this may partly explain why they did not engage in paid work between the births of their children. This explanation correlates with the conclusions drawn by Jowell and Witherspoon (1985) who found younger women to be less traditionalist than older women in terms of their attitudes to gender roles. Jowell and Witherspoon also found evidence which suggests that the older women's traditional views were generational rather than a life cycle effect; that is, women of a certain generation are more likely to believe that a woman's role is to be at home with her children and to hold this view irrespective of her stage in the life cycle. Similarly, Dex (1988:33), drawing upon evidence from the 1968 and 1984 Women's Employment Surveys, notes a distinct shift in women's attitudes to gender roles. Dex notes that in 1965 78% of women thought that a woman should stay at home if her children were under school age, compared with 60% in 1980. If the woman's children were at school in 1965 20% of women thought that she should stay at home, whereas in 1980 only 11% took this view. Thus attitudes against women with pre-school and/or school aged children undertaking paid employment were still strong in the late 1960's and early 1970's when most of the older women in the sample would have had their children. If Dex's theory is correct, such attitudes would have weakened by the 1980's

when the younger women in the sample bore their children. Dex's interpretation of the statistical evidence is substantiated by the comments made by the older women who, when asked why they stayed at home with their children rather than seek paid employment, would invariably reply with matter of fact statements: "Because that's what every mother does" (Kim); "When I was young it was marriage and family and that was all" (Joan); "No it never entered ma head when I had the children to do anything" (Louise). Nevertheless, I found evidence to support Dex's claim that attitudes to gender roles are changing amongst older women:

"Ma mother has the attitude that women should stay at home and look after the family. She did that and that has been her whole life and now her family are all in their thirties and forties and she's got nothing else. She doesn't do any hobbies...I don't know, she isn't really interested in too many things. Her whole life has been her home and her family. Now she's in a dead end job so to speak. But I feel that if women had worked as well as rearing a family...I think it is possible to do it, not full-time but part-time. My daughter works in an office and a lot of the women work flexi-hours. I think that's great. If only they had that when ma family were younger I probably would've worked in-between."

(Doreen)

Martin and Roberts (1984b:275) demonstrate that the vast majority of all women return to work eventually. They note that the minority of women who have not worked at all since the birth of their first child has decreased from 13% of women with a first birth in 1940-1944 to 5% of those women whose first birth was in 1960-1964 and whose children were all aged over 16 in 1980. Indeed contrary to Dex's (1988) findings that older women are more content than younger

women to stay at home and not go out to work, the older women in my sample were, if anything, keener to enter waged work than the younger women. The internalisation of gender ideology then undoubtedly played a part in some of the women's decisions to forsake paid employment and stay at home with the children. This bears testimony to the potency of the traditional ideology of a 'woman's place' being in the home. This ideology seems to have had an equally influential bearing on the lives of working class and middle class women alike.

To suggest however that the women passively accepted ideological messages about their role in society is too deterministic and simplistic an explanation. Doreen's statement alludes to a more complex and interrelated series of factors pertaining to the older generation of women's decision to withdraw from the labour market and stay at home during their child bearing and child rearing years. It is important to distinguish between the extent to which the women willingly accepted the role of wife and mother and the extent to which other factors influenced their 'choice'. It is apparent from the women's accounts that the persistence of traditional patterns of domestic responsibility were a highly significant factor constraining their labour market participation.

3.2 Peer Group Pressure

From the testimony of the older cohort of working class and middle class women it is apparent that the pressure for women to conform to their culturally prescribed role comes from social networks:

"I couldn't stand being at home and decided to do something regarding getting better work...I got absolutely no backing from ma family. They just thought it was an absolute outrage for me to be doing this. (Highers at Further Education College) 'You're a wife and a mother and that's enough for most women. What makes you feel so different?' There was a lot of resistance...They tried to induce a sense of guilt; you know, me being a bad mother. I just said that I would show them that I wasn't."

(Paula)

In this case Paula had the will to defy the conventions of her social network. Other women were not so assertive. Four of the older women in the sample noted that they had relented in the face of enormous peer group pressure and had given up work when they got married and bore children. These women's employment patterns conformed to the traditional model.

3.3 Dependent Children

A second important difference that can be drawn from Table 3 is the number of dependent children in each model. The number of dependent children belonging to women in the Traditional model exceeds by more than a ratio of 2:1 the number of dependent children belonging to women in the Non-

traditional model. Women in the Traditional model have 38 dependent children between them compared to 17 dependent children belonging to women in the Non-traditional model. What is more significant is the concentration of children to each adult. 11 of the 13 women in the Traditional model have 2 or more children, whereas only four women in the Non-traditional model have two or more children. Research by the Department of Employment (1982); Pahl (1984); Morris (1985) and Witherspoon and Prior (1992), suggests that women still bear the responsibility for the care of children. Given this, it would seem that the amount of dependent children a woman has plays an important part in her decision on whether or not to resume paid work:

"In those days you didn't go back to work. And when I had ma daughters I must admit I don't think I would have had time to go back to work then. It's only now that I would say in the last few years since, you know I've been separated from ma husband for nearly five years, now that I'm on ma own with the children. Both ma daughters are out at school. One goes out at eight and the other half eight and that's them 'til the back of four. There's plenty to keep me going at home but I get bored."

(Ruth)

"I suppose you could call me an old fashioned mother. I just felt that you should stay at home and look after your family. And having four of them; you know, there was one at nursery, one at school, one still at home and the other one was waiting to go to school, so that you really didn't have time to think about having a job at all."

(Doreen)

3.4 Childcare Provision

Related to this is the issue of childcare provision. The women who had children cited inadequate state provision of childcare facilities as one of the most constricting barriers to their paid employment. Despite the present government's claims that it seeks to improve the quality of [nuclear] family life, it has implemented policies which in fact erode this by cutting nursery provision for under-fives and reducing the value of child and maternity benefits. The United Kingdom provides fewer funded childcare services for pre-school children than do most of its European counterparts. Cohen (1990) notes that in 1988 there was only provision for approximately 2% of the country's under-fives. Whilst this represented an increase of 0.3%, this was accounted for by the increase in private provision. Cohen (1990) also shows that day nursery provision (including local authority, private and voluntary provision) in Scotland tends to be lower than that in England: 19% and 21% respectively. Whilst playgroup provision in Scotland is higher than the rest of the United Kingdom, - 34% for children aged 3 to 4, and 13% of children aged 0 to 4 - playgroups are not easily used by working parents because of their short opening hours. In material terms there are 'race' and class inequalities in access to childcare provision within the United Kingdom. Working class women, black and ethnic minority women experience greater difficulty in obtaining access to suitable high quality provision. Nevertheless, I found that the women in my sample, old and young, black and white, middle class and

working class, faced similar problems in combining work and childcare and had similar attitudes and feelings about it.

The only significant difference that I found between the women in relation to childcare was that the women in the Non-traditional model were more likely to accept the help of a relative with childcare and this freed them to participate in the labour market. Although, as we shall see later when we look at women's orientations to paid work, when women have dependent children their job opportunities and the nature of the jobs open to them are severely curtailed even when there is an external source of child support:

"That wis another problem when they wur younger. When a was divorced a couldn't get anyone to watch them. Ma mother didn't keep too well most of the time so I couldn't consider dumping them on her while I went out to work. I mean fifteen years ago there wasn't such a thing as creches. They are happening in some places but they could definitely improve on that. But when a needed them for ma family they weren't there."

(Doreen)

It was noticeable that even when childcare was available to those women who could afford to pay for it, women still faced difficulties in coping with the competing demands of domestic responsibilities and paid employment:

"I did temping years and years ago. The place I went to asked me to come back but I found it wis too much hassle. The children were too small. It wis too hard to arrange. So I only did it for a fortnight and the girl I worked with phoned and asked would I come back, but I felt no, the children were too small so I just left at that point."

Pheobe did want to go out and work but not surprisingly she found it difficult to cope with the competing demands of waged work and six children and a husband. Moreover trying to arrange nursery care and after-school care for her children proved to be "too much hassle". This concurs with the findings of Martin and Roberts (1984a:64) who note that 34% of full-time women workers had difficulty in coping with the demands of home and paid employment, as did 21% of part-time women workers.

My evidence also reveals that even when childcare is available it does not automatically mean that women with children find it suitable:

"I wis actually looking fur work when he [husband] wis still working last year. Amanda's at nursery in the morning, but the timing. Most places want you to start at nine o'clock and she starts nursery at nine. So I would need something that started at half nine. I could have arranged for someone to have watched Clair in the morning and then maybe up to one o'clock ma mum was prepared to watch them. But trying to get a job to suit those hours, it's impossible. It's the hours. When you've got kids, I never realised it before but it is a great burden when you've got kids and you're lookin' fur work and you've got them to think about. It's alright saying have someone to watch them. Ma mum could watch them on such and such an afternoon but she cannae do it every day five days a week on a regular basis. It means you're stuck. You would need to be earning fantastic money to pay someone to do it, child-minding."

(Sarah)

This also demonstrates the extent to which the working day itself is structured around the idea of the worker who does not have responsibility for dependents; these workers are

invariably men. There are then direct links between women's responsibility for childcare, the lack of suitable childcare provision and their labour market participation. Witherspoon and Prior (1992) in their study of women's attitudes to paid work and the family, found that mothers who were not currently in paid work said that they would go out to work, mostly part-time, if more suitable childcare provision was available.

3.5 The Double Shift

The domestic division of labour is also a deterrent to undertaking waged work. Women are still responsible for the bulk of domestic work. Evidence from the Department of Employment (1982) demonstrates that whether in paid employment or not, women do 80% of domestic chores. The British Social Attitudes Survey (1988) found that the traditional division of labour is as entrenched as ever. The Survey found that 50% of women were responsible for shopping compared to 7% of men; 77% of women were responsible for making the evening meal (6% of men); 72% of women were responsible for cleaning (4% of men); 88% of women were responsible for washing and ironing (2% of men); and 67% of women looked after children when sick (2% of men). Similarly, Witherspoon and Prior (1992) demonstrate that most women with full-time jobs outside the home still do the bulk of the domestic work in addition to most of the childcare. For six of the married women with children the

double shift - undertaking housework and childcare upon getting home from their job - proved to be a deterrent to waged work:

"...I know when I used to come in from work my daughter would say to me you've still got your coat on and you're hoovering. And I did that quite a lot; come in from work and think God! And start hoovering and still have ma coat on just coming back from work. I'd be trying to catch up with what I hadn't done before I left the house that day. It got too much."

(Louise)

Pahl (1981) has suggested that women can use their position in waged work to shift the sexual division of labour in the household. Similarly, Becker (1981) argues that men's contribution to domestic labour increases when women's labour time increases. The evidence from this study shows this not to be the case. Even with an unemployed husband in the house all day Eileen, for example, found that she was still responsible for domestic work when she returned home in the evening from her full-time job in a shoe shop:

"...When a wis workin' an' a came back in at half past five, six o' clock at night a hud tae make the dinner, dae ma housework, do a washing. A wis exhausted by the time it wis time tae go tae bed. A wis jist collapsin'. He couldnae manage wi' the kids. If he cannae manage then a get uptight. A got so uptight a hud tae pack it in."

Eileen was subsequently forced to stop work because of her husbands inability or unwillingness to cope with the housework and the children. This accords with findings by

Morris (1985) and with the later work of Pahl (1984). Both studies found no evidence to suggest the overthrow of traditional gender divisions in households with unemployed husbands. In terms of men's and women's attitudes to gender roles and the sexual division of household labour, Witherspoon and Prior (1992) found that men were considerably more likely than women to believe that the husband should be the breadwinner and the wife should look after home and children. Half of the fathers in their study agreed with this view whilst only a third of the mothers took this view. As Witherspoon and Prior (1992:152) poignantly remark, "whatever talk there is of the 'new man' he is much rarer than the 'new woman'. Evidence will be cited later suggesting that paid employment outside the home helps women to reduce their dependence on men at home. But as the weight of evidence from this and other studies shows, ultimately most women do not win complete independence, for their paid employment does not actually help them to shift the burden of domestic responsibilities to any major degree. Inequalities within the household division of labour place constraints on women's labour market participation. In my study this was as true for working class women as it was for middle class women.

There is then compelling evidence to suggest that domestic and child-care constraints are a contributory factor in circumventing women's participation in the labour market. The strength of the supply side explanations is that they highlight, for married women particularly, the constraining

effects of domestic and child care obligations with regards to women's labour market participation. (Morris, 1991) Such explanations challenge the idea that women, particularly working class women, are 'naturally' domestically orientated, by directing attention to the ideological and structural constraints which shape women's relationship to the labour market. However, in focussing on supply side factors we must not lose sight of demand factors.

3.6 Demand side Factors in Women's Orientations to Waged Work

Theoretical accounts of women's entry to the labour market and their position therein, tend to concentrate on the characteristics or conditions of labour supply at the expense of a consideration of the demand for women's labour. Supply and demand factors are however highly interdependent. In understanding the implications of women's domestic role for their labour market participation it is important to focus attention on demand side factors. It is these explanations that I now address.

3.7 The Marriage Bar

The operation of a marriage bar was mentioned by several women as a factor instrumental in locating them within the home. The marriage bar was the rule, jointly enforced by both employers and trade unions, that women had to leave

paid employment on marriage. As Lewenhak (1977) notes this effectively excluded married women from the labour market in Britain for almost a century. The marriage bar was not abolished until 1940 onwards after a campaign by women's organisations against trade unions and employers. (Walby, 1986) Joan for example, recollects that she was forced to leave her job as a secretary to a car dealer in Eglinton Toll when she became engaged to be married in 1957:

"As soon as I got engaged that was it. They knew then that I wouldn't be able to stay on. You weren't allowed to stay on if you were married. It's funny, it's so different today. I'd have liked to have [stayed] but I wasn't allowed to. I had to stay at home. So I had two boys and a big gap and then I started another family with another two. So the gap in-between I thought I'd try to get to university and try to study and then I ended up with the other two so it didn't work out".

The marriage bar was premised upon the gendered ideology that a woman's place is in the home and that married women do not work. So women like Joan had little choice in the matter of deciding whether to continue in paid employment or not. The constraints placed on women's labour market participation often meant that their ambitions were left unfulfilled:

"When I was a teenager it was marriage and that was it. I've done everything in reverse but I've learnt a lot about life. Because you know I went straight from home to being a sort of wife, wife and mother. And my life only started after I left and I became divorced. It opened out. I did different things and I'm not sorry for any of it. But I mean I was always frustrated. I always wanted to be a teacher. I always wanted to work with children."

(Joan)

The operation of the marriage bar undoubtedly curtailed women's labour market participation. Contrary to Hakim's (1991) assertions, in such instances women do not freely choose their commitment to the family. There are other factors, operating *within* the labour market itself, which constrain women's participation.

3.8 Employers Perceptions of Women

Other evidence collected for this study suggests that it is equally important to focus attention on employers' attitudes to and perceptions of women workers, particularly in the recruitment process. The data for this research shows that ideological constructions on the part of employers affect women's labour market participation. The following evidence from the unemployed women's accounts demonstrates that gender ideology, which defines women primarily as wives and mothers and as waged workers only in the final instance, continues to persist in the minds of many employers.

Audrey is married with three children, the oldest being eighteen and the youngest nine. She recalls a recent job interview for the post of a receptionist in an opticians in Anniesland:

"He said are you married? How many kids have you got? Will you be able to do the job? I said they're grown up. I always start with the oldest daughter first because I think it sounds better saying she's eighteen. He asked the ages of the rest. A nine year old, oh! I says but ma mum

stays in the next street and ma husband's in, he's there for the children. I mean they wouldn't ask a man that would they? Naw, they'd presume a man's got a wife. But it's the first thing that a do get asked. I always say they're grown up. But I always get asked who's goin' tae keep your kids. To tell you the truth a wis in yon mind I don't know if a wanted it then because of his attitude."

Pheobe recalls a similar experience. A married woman with six children, the youngest being sixteen, she applied for a job as a receptionist in a newly opened sports centre in Barrhead:

"I went for ma interview and it was a man that was doing the interviewing. So I'm sitting chatting away to this man and he says to me, if you get this job who is going to look after your children? Well I just nearly blew up. I was so angry. I said I beg your pardon. I said do you think I would come here for this interview without having made provision for my children? And I said by the way, if it had been my husband sitting here would you have asked him the same question? He just sort of looked at me as if to say forget it. I was really angry at him. Such discrimination. I couldnae believe a wis hearing it. I just sort of looked at him; how dare you."

Questions of this nature are illegal under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975). Despite this 1 in 3 of the women with children in the sample reported this kind of employer prejudice and discrimination taking place at job interviews. Underpinning such discriminatory questions is the assumption that women are first and foremost mothers and wives and that they will put these responsibilities first. It is assumed that therefore their waged work is of secondary importance. As both Audrey and Pheobe point out, similar questions would not have been asked of a male applicant. It would be

assumed that he is primarily a worker and that he would have a wife at home looking after the children.

Gender ideology can again be seen to be operating in the dismissal of Louise from her post as a secretary in an iron company in Glasgow. A single woman at the time, she had worked in the iron company for three years when she was asked to leave because she was courting one of the junior managers:

"The female boss found out that we were both going together so we had to be split up. So I had to leave my job and go to another. She didn't believe in people in the office going out together...It was just put to me that I leave. He had his career to think of. He was on the way up and he had a better job of course than I did. I was just the secretary, so therefore it would be my position to leave."

Louise's dismissal is not just to do with the fact that the male manager was in a position of authority over her but more importantly draws once again on the gendered ideology that a man's job is more important than a woman's for he will eventually have a wife and family to support. Louise's job is seen as less important because the assumption is that she is only working until she gets married and will then be supported by her husband's income. It is then that her true 'career' as housewife and mother will begin. Until then she is only 'filling in time' and thus her 'job' is of secondary importance to his 'career'. It is apparent from this example that whilst single and childless women may escape the material disadvantage in the labour market entailed by

child care responsibilities, they tend to be treated through discrimination as potential mothers. (Freeman, 1982)

When women do have a career they are cast in the role of deviant, as was the case with Jo. Married at eighteen and divorced six months later, Jo has spent the last nineteen years managing pubs, culminating in her owning and managing her own pub:

"I've found that a lot of employers...I mean it's like going to get HP isn't it? They ask you questions that have nothing to do with the job: What does your husband do? I'm not married. Oh!: Approaching forty and not married, must be something wrong with her."

This case illustrates what Laws (1976) calls the 'career woman freak'. That is the woman who does not conform to her prescribed gender role. Given that only men have careers, the career woman "must have something wrong with her" if she is not satisfied with her prescribed role of wife and mother. Thus the career woman is cast as a 'masculine deviant'.

The women's experiences bear testimony to the fact that gender ideology is alive and well in the Britain of the 1990's. It may be, as Dex (1988) contends, more acceptable for women to enter paid employment but it would appear that any attitude change which has occurred has done so in extent and not in kind. Despite the in-roads women have made into the labour market their waged work is still regarded as secondary to their role of wife and mother.

3.9 Summary

The gender ideology which regards women's waged work as of secondary importance to their role of wife and mother continues to persist. I have demonstrated that even when women's life patterns seemingly accord with the traditional model which underpins the dominant gender ideology in our society, we cannot assume that women primarily identify with this prescribed role or are, even in essence, satisfied with it. Instead I have argued that there are a series of interrelated factors; social, cultural and ideological constraints, which shape women's relationship to the labour market. Contrary to some feminist analyses which depict working class women as more domestically orientated than middle class women, this research finds both groups of women to be *equally* dissatisfied with the housewife/mother role and identity. Indeed I found evidence to suggest that given the material inequalities which characterise the lives of working class women, their experience of domesticity may be even more oppressive than that experienced by their middle class counterparts. Feminist research has to take into account these material inequalities when theorising working class women's relationship to the household. Both classes of women experienced the wife/mother identity as a stigmatised and socially dependent one. It is I believe the dissatisfaction and unfulfillment with this role and identity which is one of the prime motivators in both groups of women seeking waged work. For despite the lack of adequate childcare provision, in the face of the unequal distribution of domestic work, and in defiance of the social

pressures to conform to their culturally prescribed role, working class women and middle class women have gone and continue to go out to work. The Labour Force Survey for 1991 shows that women now comprise 43% of all those of working age (16-59). Over two-thirds of women (71%) are economically active (in employment or unemployed), compared with 63% in 1979. According to the Employment Gazette (1992), a major factor in this increase is the decline, by nearly 40% since 1979, in the numbers of women who are economically inactive primarily for domestic reasons. The question that has to be addressed is not why so few women 'work' but rather why so many work given the barriers they face. It is to an examination of women's orientations to waged work that we now turn.

4. WOMEN'S ORIENTATIONS TO WAGED WORK

The mainstream sociological literature on work and unemployment constructs women as non-workers. Within these discourses women are seen to be uncommitted to waged work. Feminist research has challenged these assumptions. There is however a discernible trend within the feminist analyses of women's orientations to waged work to view working class women as less committed to employment than middle class women. This reinforces and legitimates the dominant gender ideology with regard to working class women and their relationship to paid employment.

The data presented here restates the feminist case for viewing waged work as being of central importance to women's lives and identities. However, in comparing middle class and working class women's attitudes to waged work, the data challenges the assumption that waged work is a wholly oppressive experience for working class women.

Women's Recollections of Waged Work: A Note of Caution

I noted in Chapter One that the women's accounts of waged work had a clear predominance over their accounts about family life. Accounts about employment tended to be lengthy and detailed in contrast to the short responses regarding domestic routines. It is however recognised that these factual accounts are not straightforward. Given that the women are unemployed we need to question how far the quality of life, or lack of it, in the present might determine the way the women remember the past. There may be a tendency to overstate the importance of waged work. The problems of narrative reconstruction are summed up by Gagnon and Simon (1973:13) thus:

"Part of the problem is faulty recall, some of which is located in the problem of inaccurate memories. But another source of error is located in the existential insight that instead of the past determining the character of the present *the present significantly reshapes the past as we reconstruct out biographies in an effort to bring them into greater congruence with our current identities and roles situations and available volcabularies.*" (emphasis mine)

Narrative reconstruction may be more of a problem in those cases where women have been out of the labour market for a sustained period of time. Of the sample, 21 women had been out of the labour market for less than a year; 9 for between 1 and 3 years; 8 between 3 and 6 years; and 2 women had been out of the labour market for 10 years and over. The potentiality of such problems were recognised and taken into account when interviewing women. Where women did not comment on dissatisfactions with waged work, they were specifically asked about unrewarding aspects of their previous jobs. It has to be said that most of the women voluntarily spoke about dissatisfactions with waged work without such prompting. With this in mind I will now proceed to explore the meanings waged work held for the women in the sample.

4.1 Financial Necessity

One of the overwhelming reasons given for working was that of financial necessity. 20 women cited this as a reason for seeking waged work. That economic justifications prevail over non-economic reasons is perhaps not surprising given the wider socio-economic context in which the study was conducted. The economic recession and the recession of the early eighties had a severe impact on the Scottish economy and this was clearly felt by many women in the sample. Of the twenty women who cited financial necessity as a reason for seeking work, 14 are working class and 6

middle class. These statistics largely reflect the economic differences between middle class and working class women; structural differences which are rooted in the fact that working class women's spouses/partners are generally located in low paid jobs at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. I demonstrated earlier that the majority of the married working class women's partners earned less than £10,000 per annum, compared with the majority of middle class women's partners who earned in excess of £15,000 per annum. These disparities in income levels reflect the segmented nature of the labour market which is not only segregated along lines of 'race' and gender (Newnham, 1986; Walby, 1986; Phizacklea, 1988; Crompton and Sanderson, 1990) but also along lines of class. That financial necessity was cited as a prominent reason for women seeking waged work, highlights the fallacy of the male breadwinner wage to support a wife and dependent children. No such differentiation was to be found between single working class and middle class women partly because within this group state benefits tended to equalise income levels. Both groups of single women were equally likely to state financial necessity as a reason for working due to the inadequacy of benefit levels to maintain a decent standard of living.

The economic necessity to work is one which has historic precedents for working class women. Unlike their middle class counterparts, the necessity to work for financial reasons is one which many of the working class respondents

were confronted with at an early stage in their lives. 8 of the women recalled being forced to leave school at the earliest opportunity because their waged labour was required for their family's household economy:

"...There wisnae a lot of money in the house so I felt that I had to get out and earn money...I felt I had to earn money for the family and that's why I just left [school]."

(Catrina)

Martha left school at the age of fourteen and got a job as a chorus girl:

"Well ma mother wasn't very keen [about Martha's decision to leave school] But then we weren't healthy financially because ma mum was divorced and she had two of us to bring up. So going on the stage I was earning more money than an office girl would have got. So it was more financially rewarding...I felt so grown up. And to get money in your hand, I liked that. But the only problem was I had to hand most of it to ma mother. (laughs) I think I got four shillings pocket money, so mother did quite well."

The vast majority of married women and single mothers in my sample, both working class and middle class, clearly saw waged work as a way in which they could provide economically for their families. The women did not regard their earnings from waged work as 'pin money'. Nor did they see themselves working for 'extras' or 'luxuries':

"I'm no' out working fur that money tae go tae Barbados. I'm out tae pay a mortgage and pay ma bills."

(Jane)

However this is not to suggest, as many feminist analyses imply, that working class women are motivated to work only out of financial necessity. In many analyses, reasons for working are usually divided into economic and social reasons (Pollert, 1981; Sharpe, 1984; Martin and Roberts, 1984) What these studies fail to realise is that money itself is also a *social* reason for working. (Porter, 1982) Contrary to domestic ideology which posits the male breadwinner as the provider, married women and single mothers alike expressed the importance of their role in providing for their families needs. The role of provider is as much a social identity as it is an economic function:

"This idea that the man is the provider and in charge of all the money and all that is old fashioned. I think women can do just as well providing for their family, so I don't see why women can't be helped in the job market as well as men. I get angry sometimes when I hear that the government just use women when they need them and then drop them when they don't need them, like after the War...I thought that was a bit ridiculous. You had to stay at home and start multiplying and baking bread. You're good for one thing only. I think that's changing now. Women don't see themselves like that anymore. I think it's only women that's changing it. I don't think men are all that keen on it."

(Doreen)

Women saw themselves as providers despite the differentials between male and female incomes. The New Earnings Survey for 1992 shows that women earned 70.9% of men's gross weekly earnings and 78.8% of men's gross hourly earnings. (Equal Opportunities Review, 1992) (3) Despite this the married women in the sample were adamant about the real worth of their earned income in keeping their families above the

breadline, a view which contrasts to their husband's perceptions of their earnings:

"When I was having all this trouble [bad working relations in the office where she worked] ma husband would say to me, 'well we don't need your money, just stop work'. That was a complete and utter lie because we did. Ma money, even though it wis a little dribble, was actually holding, well I felt, the household together. It was actually just filling that gap between being completely skint, owing the bank money, to being, you know, overdrawn which we are now. So even if it was just a couple of hundred pounds it was the difference between owing the bank and keeping ourselves together...It gave me peace of mind as well because I thought well okay, it was only two hundred and fifty pounds worth, but that carried all my shopping for a month, so the rest was for bills and the mortgage and everything else...*That tiny little amount can make a hell of a big difference*". (emphasis mine)

(Louise)

4.2 Financial Independence

Financial independence was a heartfelt theme amongst both working class and middle class women in the sample, particularly the married women. Despite the fact that most of the women did not earn as much as their partners, that they were contributing financially gave them a degree of power over decisions about how the money should be allocated:

"It's just really to have a bit of money of your own really. Ma' husband's no' mean or anything but it's just nice to say this is *ma* money and I'm going to do such and such with it. Any time I've worked I've really enjoyed that, the financial independence. That's how I like it. I don't mean

doing anything crazy with it but just doing what you want to do with it."

(Pheobe)

Waged work also provided the women with financial independence in as much as they no longer had to ask their partners for money, nor did they have to justify their expenditure to them:

"When a woman's working she definitely feels that she's contributing. I definitely felt that. I felt that I *could* go and buy myself a pair of tights when I wanted to because I used to go and ask my husband all the time; Can I buy this? He used to get angry with me right enough but I did say 'can' because I felt well it's no' ma money, it's *his* money".

So even if you're not earning a comparable wage that doesn't matter?

"No. No it helps a great deal. It's so nice to know that this is *your* money".

(Louise)

Similar conclusions about the importance of financial independence are to be found in the work of Hunt (1980), Coyle (1984) and Sharpe (1984). The importance attached to financial independence demonstrates the extent to which the 'family wage' is in fact 'men's wages'. The majority of married women in the sample had difficulty in regarding their husband's income as their own. This difficulty is noted by other studies, notably Hunt (1980) and Cragg and Dawson (1984). For most women in the sample, reliance upon the 'family wage' meant a lack of independence and a lack of entitlement to money to spend as they chose. As such, the

'family wage' constitutes a power relation of men over women for women's dependency is circumscribed in men's power.

Nevertheless, when one actually looks at the women's spending patterns, one has to question the extent to which an independent source of income granted the women 'independence'. The married women in my sample, particularly those with children, reported spending their income on their children and on household items. This concurs with findings by Cragg and Dawson (1984) and Morris (1987) who found that by far the commonest use of married women's earnings is on household and child related spending. Morris (1991) argues that the explanation of the dedication of women's earnings to household spending lies in patterns of gendered responsibilities which emerge from the traditional sexual division of labour which associates the running of the household with women. In my sample, working class women were more likely to report dedicating their incomes to household spending than were middle class women. This can partly be explained by their partners low income level. Nevertheless, the working class women equated the ability to supplement the housekeeping money with financial independence. The extent to which an independent income confers independence needs to be questioned. Middle class women were more likely to report that they spent their money on their own needs:

"My husband would keep saying, I know you want a job but you really don't need too. I said I know that but at the same time the money was important to me as well because I like to be financially

independent; to know that you have earned that money yourself and to know that money is yours to do with whatever you like. If you want to be a wee bit extravagant you don't have to say to your husband, 'sorry dear I hope you don't mind but I was a wee bit extravagant'. You don't need to feel any guilt about having gone and treated yourself to something that you feel is an extravagance."

(Laura)

Even here one has to question the extent to which this constitutes independence since the low pay which many of the women received for their work meant that they were still financially dependent upon their partners. Paradoxically the women's low proportional contribution to household income was related to their position in the labour market and the pattern of domestic and child-related constraints which shaped this. We have to be careful not to overstate the case for the power which an independent financial income confers. Because most women's pay in the sample was generally low it did not give them complete independence. Rather low pay reinforced the women's dependent position within the family. From the women's accounts it is obvious that low pay encouraged some husband's to view their wives employment as secondary. However the women's accounts do demonstrate that paid employment gives women *relative* independence within the household and helps to *reduce* women's dependence upon men at home. Moreover, evidence suggests that women who continue to do paid work while children are young receive a larger share of the family income than women who withdraw from the labour market (Morris and Ruane, 1989) and have a stronger voice in family

decision making. (Pahl, 1989) Thus the earnings from paid employment did give the women more power and control over the allocation and distribution of resources within the household and conferred on them a social identity; that of provider. As one of the women noted "for your own self respect I think it's important to have your own income" (Dee)

4.3 The Meaning of Waged Work in Women's Lives

Waged work provided the women with an economic identity. That this identity was important is perhaps not surprising given the way in which capitalist society reduces social relations to cash relations. For, as we shall see in the chapter on unemployment, if you have no economic identity in a capitalist society, you have in some real sense no identity at all. Nevertheless, the women in this study gained a number of benefits from waged work apart from economic gains. They talked about growth in self confidence, self fulfilment, the enjoyment they derived from social contact with others in the workplace and the importance of having a separate identity from home and family.

The women reported that waged work gave them a separate and, on the whole, more positive identity than that of the housewife and mother identity:

"You're a mum, you're a wife and that's all you are. It's nice to be somebody else. It's nice to be outside and somebody to say well that's a good job done, that's super or whatever. Somebody just to speak to you about other things other than the house, the kids, being Mrs so and so, or being somebody's mum. It's a lovely feeling to feel that you're *somebody for a change*.

(Louise)

"When I'm working I feel I'm quite independent; I'm a person in ma own right. I'm earnin' a wage, I'm contributing to the house. I'm a somebody."

(Jane)

The women saw work as a place of self-fulfilment. Unlike domestic work, waged work gives you "an aim in life" (Ruchi) and enables you to "make something of your life" (Sarla). Waged work made the women feel 'useful':

"Ye feel that yer doin' somethin' useful. When yer at school or at home yer doin' things but it disnae really make an impression in yer life. But when ye start tae work ye feel that yer useful. Jist better oaf, no' jist financially but sorta in yerself...jist work".

(Bridget)

"I'd just like tae get out of the house and get a job. I want to feel useful.....to myself no' tae nobody else, just to *me*. Just to feel as though I can *do* something. Work makes ye feel useful".

(May)

The social contact that waged work offered was also seen as important after periods of not working outside the home. The role of housewife and mother was experienced by the

respondents as 'isolating', 'mind-numbing, 'claustrophobic' and 'boring'. Many women with young children, in particular single mothers, complained of being at their "wits end" after a day starved of adult rapport, where the only communication was "baby talk". In this context waged work outside the home means a release from the isolation of the domestic sphere, and offered the potential for companionship:

It's boredom sittin' aboot the hoose day in an' day oot. It's mair so now wi' the kids bein' at school. Ma wee lassie just started last year. So wi' her bein' at school an' him, ma boy, bein' at school, yer in the hoose an' ye've git nothin' tae dae and no one tae talk tae. Ye try tae look fur things tae dae but it's borin' and the silence drives me mad. At least when your workin' you've got people tae talk tae".

(Eileen)

"I'm very fed up being in the house. When Andrew came of age to go to school I thought well this is the last child going to school, I'm going to be terribly, terribly bored and also quite lonely because I had nobody to speak to. At work there's never a lack of people to talk too".

(Louise)

Finally, the women enjoyed work. Enjoyment, is not an aspect of work which is cited in sociological and feminist analyses of waged work. It was however a discernible feature in the accounts of the women in this study:

"Well a enjoy it [work] a must admit. Just enjoyin' it. a like it. A just went out and done it...A've never had a job a've never liked. A've always just really enjoyed gettin' out and meetin' different people".

(Lindsay)

"I thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie in the accounting office. I wis in a professional firm and we had great fun and I really enjoyed gettin' out and about and meetin' the employers to do audits".

(Paula)

It is noticeable that the description enjoyment was not used by the women in their accounts to describe their domestic role.

4.4 Good Jobs and Bad Jobs

This final section of the chapter sets out to challenge the dominant constructions of working class women's waged work which are to be found within both mainstream sociological and feminist discourses. As noted in Chapter One, the 'malestream' notion is that women look for different satisfactions in waged work from those which appeal to men. Because women's waged work is constructed as secondary they are seen to tolerate boring and repetitive work better than men. Dual Labour Market theory for example, suggests that women's occupational location in the secondary sector of the labour market is due to the fact that women more readily accept the inferior conditions offered by such jobs. (Barron and Norris, 1976) Moreover, within the dominant sociological paradigm money is seen to matter to women less than social contact. Some feminist analyses also operate with a negative construction of working class women's waged work. Pollert (1981), Westwood (1984) and Sharpe (1984) for example, argue that it is the social relations at work which

provide the most positive aspects of work for working class women. Their arguments are based on the assumption that there is no intrinsic value to be found in 'dirty, routine, manual work'. Given the nature and conditions of work endured by working class women, it is assumed that they work only out of financial necessity. The second construction of working class women's work within feminist discourses is similar to the dominant sociological construction of women's work. It assumes that working class women do not mind monotonous, repetitive, low paid work because their primary orientation is to the domestic sphere wherein they gain satisfaction and self-fulfilment. In all three constructions waged work is regarded as a negative and oppressive experience for working class women. Because working class women are generally located in low paid, low status jobs in predominantly unskilled or semi-skilled work, it is assumed that no inherent enjoyment is to be had from the jobs conducted by them.

For this study the participants were asked to reflect on the type of jobs they had done and to determine what they liked and disliked about their previous jobs. Second, they were asked more generally about the characteristics they considered important in a good job. Their replies go some way to challenging the unquestioned idea that working class women's work is *completely* oppressive. Further, it shows the importance of not treating jobs at the lower end of the occupational ladder as an undifferentiated mass of low paid, low status, drudgery.

i. "Money Isn't Everything"

There is of course a grain of truth in the dominant constructions of women's waged work; I illustrated earlier in the chapter that women's position in the family often obliges them to put familial commitments before waged work. This affects women's relationship to the labour market and partly as a consequence of their familial role, women are forced to accept lower pay and inferior conditions at work. However this does not mean that women are indifferent to monetary reward, as the dominant sociological paradigm suggests. I demonstrated at an earlier point in the chapter the importance of an independent income for women. It provided women with a social identity of provider; it gave them relatively more power within the home; and enabled women to become more independent from their family. An independent wage also conferred status on the wage earner. Both working class and middle class women in the sample did mind about working conditions and pay:

"A good job would be one where you're getting good money for it. I mean even something like pushin' a trolley down the train. I mean that would've been a good job if I'd been gettin' four pounds an hour, I would've done that. But the fact that you got one pound ninety but you got your lunch thrown in as a bonus - a couple of digestives and an awful sandwich. I mean that was meant to make it all worthwhile, but it didn't."

(Claire)

From the working class women's accounts it is apparent that very often the only reason they tolerated 'bad jobs' such as

'unskilled' factory work was because the pay was considered by the women to be relatively good. However this is not to say, as some feminist accounts argue, that working class women are willing to endure poor work only for monetary reward. One of the dominant themes in both working class and middle class women's accounts, is their willingness to sacrifice good pay in a 'bad job' for lower pay in a job which was considered to bring more satisfaction and fulfilment:

"A good job to me isn't necessarily something that's going to earn me a lot of money. It's got to be something that I feel I'm doing well and it's giving me some kind of satisfaction and it's something worthwhile."

(Claire)

"Nursing was a good job even though the pay wis atrocious. It wis a worthwhile job. You were helping people, you were useful to people, you provided an important service. It gave me a lot of satisfaction knowing that I wis doin' a good job."

(Heather)

Good pay was important to all the women in the sample, for it brought status and a sense of worth and self respect. Job satisfaction however, was deemed to be equally important and most women were prepared to accept lower pay for a job which they felt was worthwhile and useful and enriched their lives.

ii. "Tuppence Ha'penny Jobs"

This is not to say that the women did not mind repetitive, monotonous, menial jobs. As Table 5 illustrates, those jobs considered to be 'bad jobs' were jobs in which the work was largely regarded as boring, repetitious and monotonous:

"A worked in a clothing factory and that wis ma first and last experience of factories. I swore I would never work in one again."

What didn't you like about it?

"Depressin'. It's totally moronic and it's robotic stuff. From eight o'clock in the morning to five at night; a wee notch in that end of the material, a wee notch in that end and press it. And you done that wi' reels and reels of clothing. I thought, oh naw! Honestly, I admire people that can go in and dae that I really do, because I wis at screamin' pitch after five days. I just thought naw, this isnae fur me."

(Jane)

Bad jobs' were jobs characterised by workers' lack of autonomy and control; jobs which offered no variety in work tasks; jobs where the work required little thought and in which there was no opportunity to learn new skills. 'Bad jobs' were jobs which offered no self development or career progression. Interestingly, jobs which were characterised as 'bad jobs' were those in which the nature of the work resembled to a great extent that of unpaid domestic work; cleaning, child-minding, auxiliary nursing, catering, waitressing, servicing. By far and away the most detested job was cleaning:

"At one point I was so desperate I even considered becoming a home help. Ma husband thought that wis quite funny. He said somebody elses mess to clear up. Somebody elses bed to change. [laughs] I

said yeah. I thought it might be different if it was somebody else's home to clean. But he's right, it would be a bad job because it's not actually getting you out of your habits. If you're going to clean somebody else's [house] it's just a change of routine in the same system that's all."

(Louise)

"I'd never cleaned anyone's house before. That first morning I started...Oh ma pride! *Cleaning!* I'd aye been a union woman in the factories and here I was going into skivying in somebody's house. The personality I huv, I like tae meet people and work wi' people. I wis too much on ma own going from one house and coming back tae this house, daein the same repetition. It did ma brain in. And the labour a put in and the money a wis paid wis a disgrace. A lot of them took their ounce of flesh off you. It wis jist slave labour."

(Peggy)

It is no coincidence that the most detested jobs were those that replicated unpaid domestic labour. The women themselves tended to place little value on this kind of work as indeed they did their domestic labour. These types of jobs were characterised as "scrappy wee jobs" (Leslie), "fill-in jobs" (Gillian), "tuppence ha'penny jobs" (Audrey). Such jobs were considered to be hard work but as with unpaid domestic labour they did not confer status nor pride and little satisfaction was derived from them.

Nevertheless, even though many of the working class women in the sample had experienced repetitive 'low skilled' jobs, they picked out certain qualities of some of these jobs as satisfying by comparison with housework. These fell into two categories; the social characteristics of waged work and the nature of the work itself. Social contact in a job was

seen as important after periods of not working outside the home:

"In factories, on those assembly lines you don't get the chance tae talk tae people. No, I prefer a job where you can communicate with people, somewhere where you could speak. Even a shop assistant. You see shop assistants can do that so that wouldn't bother me. Anything like that, because you would be meeting the public after being stuck in the house all the time. It's the loneliness of it all, stuck in the house. You'd also be doing a service. But those assembly lines, they're the pits."

(Jan)

"I prefer working in a shop to a factory because you're gettin' to meet people. I mean when you're in the factory you're stuck there it's as simple as that. Although it's harder work in a shop, a mean you're always busy, but at least you're meetin' people and you can have a laugh and a joke, whereas in factory work you're stuck with the same four or five people every day. I just feel you're usin' a bit of your brain in a shop. In a factory it's tedious, it's the same thing day in and day out. In a shop you can use your own initiative more."

(Catrina)

Middle class women were just as likely to note the importance of the social aspects of their jobs as were the working class women in the sample. Meeting the public or serving customers were widely regarded as the appeal of service based jobs. Again this was related to the isolation the women experienced in their domestic role. However it was not only the social aspects of the job which were important. The working class women in particular tended to stress the skills associated with personal service; skills which are largely unrecognised by the dominant discourses.

For example, knowing how to converse with and serve customers with the attention that would ensure sales was regarded as a skill. Stephenson and Brown (1990) note similar findings in their study of working class women's attitudes to waged work.

I am not suggesting that the enjoyment working class women derived from their waged work connotes freedom from exploitation. It would be fanciful to suppose that working class women's work is not oppressive. That the nature of the work is arduous, the working conditions bad, the hours long and the pay low, is not disputed here. What is disputed is the view that working class women regard waged work as a negative or peripheral experience and derive their identity primarily from domestic life. The empirical evidence presented here demonstrates that dependency and low wages do not necessarily mean that women workers define themselves solely in relation to their domestic role or that their responses to work are conditioned only by domestic responsibilities.

iii. The Social Construction of Employment

Nevertheless, even those jobs which the women characterised as 'good jobs' are largely 'women's jobs'. Jobs such as social worker, teacher, counsellor, nurse, and secretary are all jobs which replicate the servicing and caring role of women's unpaid domestic labour. These are jobs where emotional labour is carried out in relation to customers,

caring for customers or servicing their needs. Ideological constructions then affect women's perceptions of suitable work for women. However evidence suggests that gender stereotyping in occupations is not just a matter of women conforming to their gender role. The actual effects of women's domestic role may have a bearing at the ideological level and prescribe the nature of the employment opportunities available to women within the context of the labour market itself. Adkins and Lury (1992) suggest that the institution of motherhood is a set of social relations within which women's caring labour is exploited. They argue that the structuring process of gender is not confined to the domestic sphere but operates in the labour market itself. Emotional labour (caring and servicing for other people) occurs inside the labour market as well as the domestic sphere, and defines the occupations women do. Adkins and Lury argue that emotional labour is often a condition of the jobs women do. Thus the effects of women's domestic roles not only affect their participation rates but affect women at a material level within the labour market itself in prescribing the types of jobs available to them. The extent to which women can be said to freely 'choose' their occupations is severely curtailed. This is all the more so when one considers the effects of class divisions on the gendering of occupations. Ideological constructions also affect the nature of jobs available to different classes and indeed races of women. Rhodes and Braham (1981) and Jenkins (1985) for example, note the relationship between notions of 'acceptability' and the stereotypes of

Black workers held by management. Most pervasive are the assumptions made about the supposed behavioural characteristics and physical limitations of Black people. These stereotypes are used to confine Black people to certain occupations. These effects are compounded by women's perceptions of their own potential. Many more working class than middle class women saw clerical and secretarial work as being a 'good job', particularly the older women:

"If you were a secretary when I left school it was a very, very top job. People would be quite proud to think that their daughter had come that far. Of course none of ma family had ever worked in an office or anything, I was the first."

(Louise)

Working class and Black women then are categorised by 'race' and class as well as gender. For Black and working class women, decisions about their suitability for employment are likely to be determined by characteristics attributed to the various categories into which managers may place them. Racism and classism then interact with sexism in confining Black and working class women to certain occupations. The fact is that most cleaning jobs are done by working class women not by middle class women.

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have sought to challenge the view found within sociological and feminist discourses which depicts working class women as domestically orientated and uncommitted to waged work. There is much evidence to support this standard account of working class women's relationship to waged work, emphasising as it does their subordination, lack of authority, status and control within the labour market. Given the oppressive working conditions endured by working class women, it is suggested in standard accounts that the women seek refuge in domesticity which is seen to be less oppressive. I suggest that this is too simplistic and deterministic a characterisation of women's work experience and that the reality is more complex.

In focussing on the material, social and ideological processes which structure women's lives, it is apparent that neither working class nor middle class women 'choose' to be housewives. Choice by its very definition implies a sense of non-necessity. The social responsibilities women bear are too heavy for them to be able to perceive domesticity as a question of choice. The evidence presented here demonstrates the extent to which women's choice is often predetermined. The results show that both working class and middle class women in the sample found the wife/mother identity a demoralising one and the source of much dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, in a society in which women bear a heavy burden of social responsibility for the family, women cannot readily abandon their identities as wives and

mothers. Women's relationship to the labour market was frequently restricted and determined with reference to their domestic responsibilities. Gender inequality then is produced in the family and reproduced in the labour market stemming from women's position in the family. However the evidence also suggests the importance of recognising gender inequality as an independent variable within the labour market itself. In particular it is important to focus attention on employers attitudes to and perceptions of women workers, and on the gendered processes of recruitment which these produce.

The evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates the extent to which women's relationship to the workforce is circumscribed by their domestic responsibilities, by systems of social organisation and by gender ideology which assumes that women are primarily homemakers. Despite these problems the working class and middle class women in this study had a strong attachment to waged work and a strong commitment to a working identity. The women speaking throughout this chapter have illustrated the importance of waged work to their identity and self images. Working class women do work for money but to dismiss working class women's work as financial necessity is too simplistic. Other aspects of waged work were found to be of equal importance. For the single women in the sample waged work gave them the opportunity to become independent from their family. For married women waged work gave them a sense of independence from domesticity. Waged work gave both working class and

middle class women in the sample a degree of financial independence; the opportunity for self development; a chance to establish personal friendships; it provided them with a sense of status and a social and economic identity; they derived satisfaction and self respect from waged work. These were all attributes which were found lacking in their domestic roles.

Moreover, it was found that working class women do not tend to accept the description of themselves that sociologists and feminists have constructed. Despite their concentration at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy working class women in this sample perceived value and skills in their waged labour which sociologists and feminists alike have tended to downgrade and dismiss. Whilst this does not connote freedom from exploitation, it does suggest that we need to concentrate less on seeing working class women as others see them and pay more attention to how they see themselves. It is wrong to assume that just because working class women are at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy waged work is not important to them. The accounts in this study demonstrate that working class women see themselves as 'workers' as well as wives and mothers and that waged work is as important in their lives as it is in the lives of middle class women. Having established the importance of waged work in women's lives we are now ready to explore the consequences of unemployment for women.

ENDNOTES

1. In this thesis I refer to *ideology* as a system of ideas which justifies or legitimates the subordination of one group by another. In particular gender ideology is seen as a system of ideas whereby gender differences receive social justification. Men and women construct their being with the help of gender ideology. Gender ideology lays down what should happen, even when reality does not tally with ideology. So for example, even when the majority of women engage in waged work, as they do, they feel they have to justify doing so because gender ideology constructs them not as waged workers but as wives and mothers. Gender ideology then imposes its own reality on people.

Discourse(s) involve any structure of knowledge which determines the way in which the world is experienced or seen. Discourses are a body of ideas which do not merely describe the world but are situated within specific power relations and have the power to define and construct as well as describe. For example, I have shown the way in which sociological discourses are predominantly male discourses which have reproduced 'commonsense' ideologies surrounding gender differences in an uncritical way.

2. No information was obtained for 3 of the respondents employment patterns during the years in which they were married. Thus, of the remaining 24 women in the cohort of married women, 13 corresponded to the traditional model and 11 to the non-traditional model. The traditional model of women's employment is characterised by high activity rates amongst women which decline throughout their twenties. From about the age of 35 activity rates increase again until by the 40-50 year age group they equal the activity rates of the youngest women. The second peak of activity rates is composed of women returning to waged work once their children are of school age. The non-traditional model is characterised by younger cohorts of women who return to paid employment between births.
3. Gross weekly earnings include overtime and gross hourly earnings exclude overtime. Gross weekly earnings are the measure of pay which best allows a comparison of men's and women's earnings as it takes into account differences in patterns of working time.

TABLE 2

Employment Rates of Women with Child Aged 0-9 Years by Region, UK, 1988

	% Employed Full-Time	% Employed Part-Time	Total in Paid Employment
Scotland	12.5	27.6	40.1
Northern Ireland	20.5	22.4	42.9
Yorks/Humberside	10.5	35.1	45.6
North	11.9	31.2	43.1
E. Midlands	12.7	33.7	46.4
E. Anglia	11.6	39.5	51.1
South East	14.1	32.5	46.4
South West	10.9	37.4	48.3
W. Midlands	14.2	30.7	44.9
N. West	15.8	32.5	48.3
Wales	12.5	27.4	39.9
TOTAL	13.4	32.1	45.6

Source: Cohen, B. (1990) Caring for Children; The 1990 Report. p11.

TABLE 3

<u>TRADITIONAL MODEL</u>			<u>NON-TRADITIONAL MODEL</u>		
Age	Class Status	Number of Children	Age	Class Status	Number of Children
24	M	1	23	W	1
27	W	2	24	M	1
31	W	3	28	W	1
32	M	1	29	W	2
39	M	2	35	M	3
44	M	3	37	W	3
44	W	4	39	W	1
49	W	5	40	M	1
49	M	6	40	M	1
51	W	2	53	M	2
53	W	1	56	M	1
57	W	3			
59	W	2			

Class Status: M - Middle Class
W - Working Class

TABLE 4**COMPONENTS OF A GOOD JOB**

Good Pay
 Good Working Conditions
 Varied Work Routine
 Job Security
 Creche Facilities
 Status
 Job Satisfaction
 Challenging Job
 Job Confers Responsibility
 Autonomy at Work
 Interesting Work
 Worthwhile Work
 Meet/Work with People
 Enjoyment/Fun
 Scope to Develop Skills/Learn
 Control over Work
 Job which Helps People
 Job which stimulates your Mind
 Power and Authority
 Encourage Equal Opportunities
 Fulfilment
 Good Chances of Promotion
 Good Physical Conditions
 Convenient Work Hours
 Freedom of Movement on the Job
 Good Relations with Employees

COMPONENTS OF A BAD JOB

Boredom
 Repetition of tasks
 Monotony
 Lack of Control
 Supervision
 Lack of Autonomy
 Unsocial Hours
 No Opportunity for
 Advancement
 Not able to Meet People
 Low Pay
 Poor Working Conditions

TABLE 5**GOOD JOBS**

Social Worker
 Teacher
 Researcher
 Secretary
 Nurse
 Publisher
 Counsellor
 Health Service Manager
 Shop Worker
 Banking
 Office Work
 Management

BAD JOBS

Cleaner
 Childminder
 Waitress
 Cook
 Auxiliary Nurse
 Factory Worker/Assembly
 Line Worker
 Routine Office Worker
 Shop Worker
 Computer Operator

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

"Its just the whole experience of being unemployed is so undignified and it's made to be so undignified. I wish they would try and treat unemployed people with a bit more dignity. You feel you're a number in the system. When you loose you job you loose your humanity, you loose all elements of personality. You just become another little digit. I think that's the one thing I wish something could be done about. It's one of the worst aspects of it."

(Heather)

1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter One demonstrated that very little sociological research has been conducted specifically on women's unemployment. The vast majority of sociological studies of unemployment have been based on male samples and the ensuing 'male-orientated' analyses tells us very little about the experiences of female unemployment. This omission partly arises from two central assumptions; first, women are defined in terms which locate them within the domestic sphere in the primary role of mother and housewife, dependent on a male breadwinner. Women are defined as 'non-workers' and 'non-workers' cannot become unemployed workers. In this way women's unemployment is denied and its effects marginalised. Second, the existence of an 'alternative' social role for women is seen to negate the effects of any

unemployment they may experience. Because women combine paid work with unpaid labour in the home their experience of unemployment has been constructed whereby they 'return' to the domestic sphere, to their 'natural' role of housewife and mother. It is assumed that women experience few problems with unemployment because they have alternative social roles and identities to revert to. Women are not thought to suffer an identity crisis in the way that unemployed men are assumed to. Finally, the dominant gender ideology also assumes that the loss of a woman's wage will not have the same economic effects on her family as the loss of the male breadwinners wage, since women who enter paid employment are thought to be working for 'pin money'. Gender ideology not only excludes women from the unemployment statistics it also excludes them from legitimate experiences of unemployment.

Feminist research on unemployment has generally challenged these assumptions by demonstrating the centrality of waged work in women's lives. Feminist research has shown that it is a mistake to regard women's unemployment as peripheral and unimportant. Nevertheless, I have noted the existence of a fundamental contradiction within feminist discourses about working class women's orientations to waged work and women's experiences of unemployment. Research on domesticity and work orientations suggests that working class women are less committed to paid employment than middle class women. These conclusions have important implications for the ways in which working class women's

unemployment is constructed. From the conclusions on women's orientations to work one would expect that middle class women, with their high commitment to waged work, would be more likely than working class women to experience dissatisfaction with unemployment. Conversely, working class women, characterised by their low commitment to paid employment, are less likely to experience problems with unemployment since unemployment affords them the opportunity to prioritise their homemaker role. It is this conceptualisation of working class women's experience of unemployment that I seek to challenge in this chapter.

Chapter Three demonstrated that contrary to conventional wisdom, working class women are just as committed to paid employment as middle class women. Given this does the availability of alternative social roles really mitigate working class women's experiences of unemployment. Are working class women more content than middle class women to revert to a domestic role when unemployed? In analysing middle class and working class women's accounts of unemployment, the commonalities and differences in women's experiences of unemployment will be drawn out.

I shall begin the analysis by exploring the extent to which the women in the sample identified themselves as 'unemployed'. If the analyses on women's orientations to waged work are correct, one would expect that working class women would be more likely than middle class women to assume

the identity of 'housewife' rather than identifying themselves as 'unemployed'.

2. WHO IS AN UNEMPLOYED WOMAN?

Official definitions of unemployment embody a range of ideological assumptions about the role of men and women. These tend to thereby obscure the true levels of women's unemployment. (Allin and Hunt, 1982; Cragg and Dawson, 1984; Callender, 1985; Daniels, 1990) Given this, it was not my intention to confine the research remit to one particular definition of unemployment. Rather, I sought to draw on the respondents subjective definitions of unemployment. In utilising the respondents subjective definitions I sought to explore the ambiguities and subtleties therein.

During the interviews all the respondents were asked whether they identified themselves as unemployed and were invited to explain their responses. Whilst my sample was sought on the basis of an identification as 'unemployed' (Appendix C), the results show a uniformity of answers with all 40 women identifying themselves as 'unemployed'. A common theme running throughout the women's subjective definitions was that unemployment was to be without paid work:

"Yes I'm unemployed. I don't have a boss that a can sell ma skills too. I'm no' able to utilise ma skills for a wage, for enumeration."

(Shirley)

Do you define yourself as being unemployed?

"Aye. Out of paid work. Uh-huh."

(Miriam)

"Yes I'm a person who can't get a job....I know I am semi-retired but I am still looking for work. I still classify myself as unemployed when I can't get a job."

(Rose)

According to the women's subjective definitions, to be without paid employment and to want paid employment constituted unemployment. It was on this basis that the women responded to the advert placed in the Glaswegian newspaper. Nevertheless, many of the women were ambiguous about their 'unemployed' status. First, whilst the women defined themselves as unemployed only 21 women were registered as such. 3 women were claiming Invalidity Benefit, 1 Sickness Benefit and 15 women reported that they were ineligible for unemployment and social security benefits. The single women in the sample were more likely to be drawing unemployment benefit than those women who were married. Some of the married women were ineligible for unemployment benefit because of the interval since their last employment. Most were not eligible for means-tested allowance because their husbands were in full-time paid employment. Four women were not counted as separate claimants because their unemployed husbands were claiming benefit on the women's account. Whilst these women subjectively defined themselves as unemployed they were ambiguous as to whether they could 'officially' be

classified as unemployed because they were not registered as such, nor were they in receipt of state benefits.

The lack of official recognition of women's unemployment is intimately linked to women's disadvantaged position in relation to the social security system. The examples cited above illustrate the extent to which the social security system, despite recent changes, remains based on conceptions of the male breadwinner dependent wife model. (1) Married women's benefits are dependent on their husbands National Insurance contributions. As a consequence many married women have no access to unemployment benefit in their own right. Studies have shown that this lack of entitlement can act as a disincentive to registering as unemployed. (Martin and Roberts, 1984; Cragg and Dawson, 1984) Indeed married women who are not entitled to unemployment benefit were excluded from the official unemployment count in 1982. (Breitenbach, 1989)

Second, I noted in Chapter Three that the amount of time respondents had been without paid employment ranged from a few weeks to over ten years. Women who had been out of the labour market for a long time, those characterised by 'traditional' employment patterns, had not been looking for jobs for the entire time they had been out of paid employment. Most of these women had been working full-time raising families:

When you found out you were pregnant did you still define yourself as unemployed?

"No, because I knew I couldnae get a job. Because a wis pregnant nobody wid employ me."

(Elaine)

At the time you had your son, did you register as unemployed? Did you see yourself as unemployed?

"No, a didn't sign on at all because I wasn't intending to enter the job market. I suppose you could call me an old fashioned mother."

(Doreen)

Now however, these women subjectively defined themselves as unemployed because they were looking for paid work. Nevertheless, this particular group of women felt that they may not formally be classified as unemployed since they had only recently begun to look for work after a protracted time out of the labour market. As Cragg and Dawson note (1984), from a definitional and statistical point of view, the difficulty with these 'domestic returners' is that it is difficult to gauge their date of re-entry into the economically active population. In numerous cases the respondents themselves could not say precisely when they had resolved to begin seeking work. In some cases the women had experimented with jobs which had not worked out and so had withdrawn from the labour market for a period before resuming their job hunt at a latter stage.

Third, there was a trend, particularly among single mothers, to resist the designation 'unemployed'. Under the 1989 Social Security Act unemployed claimants have to 'actively seek work' each week. Some of the respondents noted that

they were prevented from doing this due to the lack of childcare provision. In addition, the availability for work test for people claiming unemployment benefit includes the condition that women with children must have childcare arrangements made if they are to qualify as available for work. (Breitenbach, 1989) The effect of this is to exclude many women from benefit entitlement. Thus some women made a political point by describing themselves not as unemployed but as 'restricted' workers:

"No I don't see maself as unemployed at all because I want to work. I would go out and work but I have a child and I don't have anyone to look after ma child. I've applied for nursery places. I've got a place one day a week and that's it. My parents don't help me. I don't have anyone to watch my child, if I did I would be out working because being in this house drives me nuts. *This is not unemployment, this is just being restricted.*"

(Gillian)

"I'm unemployed as in not having a job. But I'm restricted from having a job because of circumstances, well mainly Karen [daughter]. I feel as though I could be employed, it's not because I can't get a job. I think it's also the fact that the majority of jobs are unsuitable because I've got Karen."

(Lindsay)

Fourth, unlike the findings of Martin and Roberts (1984) and Cragg and Dawson (1984), none of the women in my sample rejected the idea that they were 'unemployed' because they viewed working in the home as a full-time job. This may have been because the women in my sample defined unemployment as being without *paid employment*.

Nevertheless, women did note that just because they were unemployed did not mean that they did not do any 'work'. Chapter Three illustrated the extent of women's domestic work. However it was not just married women with domestic burdens who took this view. Some single women defined themselves as 'unwaged' rather than unemployed:

"I'm unemployed in that I don't have paid work. But I actually now think of myself as being unwaged rather than unemployed because I am employed in doing lots of things. At the moment I do a lot of voluntary work. But unemployment as far as most people see it is just being without a job, without any money."

(Claire)

So whilst all the women in the sample, both working class and middle class, subjectively identified themselves as unemployed, there were ambiguities about whether they could *formally* be regarded as unemployed. I have shown that many women were not eligible for benefits and this was a disincentive to register as unemployed; some women did not receive benefits because their husbands were unemployed and drew benefit on their behalf; other women had only recently begun to seek work after many years out of the labour market; several women were employed in voluntary work; women with dependent children wanted work but were 'restricted' from 'actively seeking work' due to the lack of suitable childcare provision.

Finally, only one woman in the sample identified with the gender ideology which prioritises claims for the preferential treatment of unemployed men:

"I actually think it's a pity so many women want to work. You know, especially if they're married because they're taking jobs which, if they weren't taking them the single women who have to work, or the men who have to work would get the jobs....Men should get the priority. I'm not a women's libber, I think men are the breadwinners, they've got to work. Men get the jobs, especially with married women, they should come second, you know. They haven't always got to work. It's just done out of boredom."

(Miriam)

The majority of women however refuted of the idea that male unemployment was more important than female unemployment:

"I think there's definitely that attitude that it's always much more important that a man has a job than a woman. It's utter rubbish of course."

(Jennifer)

"It's ridiculous but I don't think they view a woman as unemployed that badly as they would do a man. They don't. Especially here [Glasgow]. Women are meant to stay at home and look after the children, they're not meant to work. Unbelievable!"

(Gillian)

These findings go against much existing evidence, particularly Cragg and Dawson (1984) and Martin and Wallace (1984). Results from these surveys show that women perceive a difference between their own situation and that of unemployed men. Despite a desire to return to work themselves the women in these studies perceived unemployed men as suffering more hardship because they were deemed not to have any role to play and male identity was felt to be

stripped by unemployment. The prevailing gender ideology did not stop the women in this sample from identifying themselves as unemployed. All of the respondents, working class and middle class women alike, identified themselves as unemployed whether or not they were officially registered as such. The women were without paid employment and wanted to work. The vast majority of women, that is those who were in a position to do so, were actively looking for work.

3. THE LOSS OF IDENTITY

Unemployed women are not seen to suffer an identity crisis in the way that unemployed men do because it is assumed that in unemployment women 'return' to their 'natural' identity as wives and mothers. Women's unemployment is not seen as leading to the same conditions of hardship, either economically or emotionally because it is assumed that women are supported financially by the family and occupied within it. (Coyle, 1984c:122) In drawing on women's accounts of their experiences of unemployment it will be shown that the loss of identity as a waged worker has a profound impact on women's lives. The availability of a domestic role did not mitigate the effects of unemployment. Rather, for both working class and middle class women alike, domesticity exacerbates the conditions of unemployment. This arises because women are either returned involuntarily to the home, or are unable to escape from a social identity which they experience as the source of much dissatisfaction. I will

begin by looking at the extent to which the women reverted to the role of homemaker. I will then proceed to examine the material, social and emotional consequences deriving from the loss of the women's income.

3.1 The Unemployed Housewife

This section seeks to determine the extent to which the women in the sample reverted to the homemaker role in unemployment.

It is important to note that for the 9 single and 2 widowed women in the sample there was in fact no 'alternative' role to revert to. Moreover, of the 29 women who had children, 13 women no longer had dependent children. These women's families no longer required full-time servicing and thus the role available to these women in unemployment was that of housekeeper/housewife, rather than mother.

The majority of married women in the sample were responsible for domestic labour whether they were employed outside the home or not. Women's continued responsibility for domestic labour does not necessarily mean that they willingly undertake a full-time homemaker role. Contrary to findings by Martin and Wallace (1985) and Coyle (1984c), few women in my sample filled the day by expanding their existing role as housewife. This was equally true for middle class and working class women and irrespective of the length of time out of paid employment. For the vast majority of women,

housework was merely an activity which had to be done and dispensed with as quickly as possible:

"Sometimes I will do it [housework] and other times not: I'll just shut my eyes to the dusting and I'll just do nothing. And then I keep looking and say this is terrible, look at the dust, look at the crumbs. (Laughs) You've eventually got to do it 'cause it won't go away."

(Martha)

"Even when yer daein it [housework] yer no' wantin' tae dae it. Ye'd rather jist sit an' dae nothin'. But ye make yersel dae it. You know if you don't dae it nobody else'll dae it. (Laughs) Ye've got tae."

(Eileen)

"Well I could do housework if I wanted I suppose. You know, to fill up the time, but I sit and look at the dust settle."

(Rose)

Even in unemployment the women's continued responsibility for domestic labour meant that they did have a lot of work to do. However most women reported that they found it difficult to motivate themselves to undertake housework. This lack of motivation towards housework is also noted by Campbell (1984) in her study of unemployed women in the north of England. Only two women in this study, both middle class, expanded their housewife role to fill up the day:

"I find that the work is actually repetitive because when I was working, by eleven o'clock, hell, fire or water, I had to stop. I had to say well that's all I can do just now and go and get showered and changed and be the somebody else that was now going out to work. So no matter if the downstairs wasn't done or the beds weren't made, I had to say, well I've got to be there at a certain time, I've got to be out. But now I find, even though I've got all day to do it, it doesn't look any cleaner. In fact sometimes I feel I'm just doing, doing and doing it constantly and it's

never any better than when I was working anyway. It seems to be a longer job now I'm in the house. I'm still never finished by eight o'clock at night never mind eleven in the morning....I mean everybody copes differently. I just seem to work constantly to try and stop ma mind, because ma mind's like a clock, it just keeps on ticking over and over. So you just constantly work and say well that's lunchtime, that's teatime and let's get this day over as quickly as possible. It's truly depressing."

(Louise)

The majority of married women remained primarily responsible for housework and were by no means 'inactive'. They were not however 'active' in the way alluded to in mainstream sociological research; that is, as full-time housewives. Only a small minority of respondents used housework to structure their day whilst unemployed. Housework was not deemed by the majority of the respondents to be a satisfactory way of structuring the day. As an activity housework merely reinforced and compounded the boredom, isolation and monotony of a life without waged work. Housework, unlike waged employment, was regarded as a never ending and thankless task, deemed to have little value. As the account by Louise demonstrates, housework had the potential to be even more oppressive when there was no time limit put on it. Going out to work meant "hell, fire, or water" the housework had to be fitted into the time available.

Women with pre-school aged children did expand their existing role as mothers to fill in the hours left free by not going out to work. These women structured the day

around activities to keep the child occupied. Children were also the catalyst with which to visit parents and relatives, and helped to keep women's feelings of isolation at bay:

"We never stop half the time. (Laughs) Uch, I go round visitin' a lot of people right enough; all ma in-laws and ma out-laws and relatives an' things. Go along tae ma old work, go along there sometimes and see ma friends. Go swimmin'. We usually go three times a week. In fact the swimmin's just down the road there. Karen likes that. Then we go to a playgroup two afternoons a week as well....It's usually the afternoon by the time we get organised. A just do the washin' an' that; get the house organised before we go out in the afternoon. Obviously a get out. Every afternoon there's usually somethin' we're doin' or else Karen'll get fed up. And I get fed up and lonely in the house too so ye always make the effort to get up, get dressed and get out."

(Lindsay)

In most cases the emphasis on 'getting out' was as much for the women's benefit as it was for the childrens. It gave them the opportunity to engage in adult company:

"During the day a shop or a go and see friends or a go down to the resource centre, or up to the library, or I'll visit ma mum and dad when they're in Glasgow. Or we go swimming. At night when Katie goes to bed I study, read books and watch TV. There's no point the two of us stuck in the house, it's no good fur her, it's no good for me. If money gets tight or whatever I just get into a bad mood and can't get out of it. (laughs) I phone up ma friends an' that, 'bring me some money a need tae get out!'"

(Gillian)

For the majority of women unemployment was characterised by a desperate need to get out of the home environment. Campbell (1984) describes a similar phenomenon of unemployed

women 'crawling up the wall' due to their confinement in the home. Housework was monotonous and boring, it offered little structure to the day and generated little social contact outside the home. As Allan (1985) notes, these are exactly the problems which weigh most heavily on the unemployed. A return to the homemaker role did not mitigate the problems of unemployment it merely reinforced them. All the more so because of the involuntary nature of the women's unemployment.

3.2 Becoming a 'Non-Entity'

The women did not resume the housewife/mother identity upon unemployment. They perceived themselves to be 'unemployed' and this had an impact on their self perceptions and identity. The women talked about the way in which unemployment had eroded the confidence and self esteem which paid employment had given them. Unemployment made them feel useless and worthless. The women described 'vegetating' in the home, becoming 'non-entities' and loosing their identities as waged workers. These feelings were a common theme in the women's accounts, crossing marital, age and class boundaries:

"Being at work makes you feel that you're *somebody* for a change. It's a lovely feeling, really liberating. So when you lose that I think you take it even harder because you've had a little bit of it. All of a sudden you've got a wee bit of money that's yours. You've got a bit of identity again. You can get up in the morning and actually look forward to the day, to going out to work. You make yourself look a bit prettier.

You might find that somebody gives you a complement, says something nice about you. It gives you confidence again. And of course when you loose your job and you come back into the house, you think ugh! Everything's gone again, and I don't think it's so easy the next time to try again and go back out."

(Louise)

Common to all the women was the reported loss of self confidence which was attributed to the loss/lack of paid employment:

"I was never what you'd say a confident person but I was much better when I was out working because you haven't the time to think about yourself; you think about your job and you're talking and thinking about other people. Whereas when you're in the house everything gets exaggerated or unclear. So some days I go quite mad."

(Martha)

"You don't realise you've lost a' that confidence until ye get another job an' ye react different; your like another person. Ye behave different an' yer a happier mair confident person. Ye don't moan as much. (Laughs)"

(Eileen)

The lack of confidence made the return to paid employment that much more difficult:

"When ye huvnae worked ye loose yer confidence. Ye start tae think am a gonnae be able tae dae this. At the beginning it's no' so bad but once it hits a month ye start tae go through a phase; 'Whit am a gaunnae work at?' Then you look through a big job list and the only thing you thought you could do you suddenly think you cannae dae. Ye think if a go fur this is it gonnae fall through or do a huv enough brains fur it. Ye think that ye cannae do it because yer sittin' here an' yer no' usin' yer brain. A mean it's hopeless. Yer as well no' havin' wan. You've got tae keep it active some way. Ye start tae think that ye cannae do things. Ye feel that yer stupid. Ye think how am a gaunnae

get a job and ye truly don't know. A mean ye get tae the stage if it's like months, an' months, an' months, you don't know whit tae dae. Ye get tae a stage where yer brain slows down or stops workin'. Ye find it hard tae think how will a get oot o' that problem, or how am a gonnae get this job. Ye go through a phase like that."

(Bridget)

Many women reported that being without paid employment made them feel 'useless'. Significantly, claims of this nature originated more often from those respondents without dependent children:

"I'd like to feel useful. I'd like to feel that I can do something because you become a vegetable....You forget who you were and what you were and you think you're not capable of doing anything....I forget that I'm a person. I forget that I can do things, that I know things. I feel useless. My brain stops working. *I just feel demoralised, completely and utterly demoralised.*"

(Joan)

"I feel useless. I feel as though the people that I've asked for jobs feel that because I haven't worked for such a long time they make me feel as though they think I couldn't do it, and I know I damn well could if they would just give me the opportunity to try it. If they'd give me the chance to let me show them that *I could do it*....I just want to get out of the house. I want to feel useful.....to myself, no' tae anybody else, just tae me. Just to feel as though I can do something."

(May)

Sometimes ye feel yer oan the scrap-heap. Ye feel as if yer no' servin' any purpose. Ye know when yer sittin' here yer brain's no' active. Yer jist sittin' here daein' nothin'. A like tae be doin' things, I'm no' the kind o' person that sits about doin' nothin' a' day. A hate doin' nothin'. A wid rather dae *any* work, an' a really mean

anythin'. If somebody says a could sweep the streets fur a hundred pound, aye give me it, I'll be useful then."

(Bridget)

Other women felt that they constantly had to justify their usefulness to others and, perhaps subconsciously, to themselves:

"Sometimes if you're in a social situation and people ask what you do and all these people come out with their interesting job descriptions, and then they say what do you do? And I'm like well, I'm unemployed. But I always go, *but* I do voluntary work, *but* I do a course, *but* I do this. I mean it's just justifying myself to other people. I shouldn't really have to do it but I kinda feel obliged. You don't want to be thought of as useless".

(Claire)

In a society where status is measured by occupation, it is not surprising that respondents felt obliged to justify themselves. To be unemployed is to be, in the eyes of society at large, a 'layabout': that is to be condemned as a 'useless' and 'worthless' human being. The housewife role also carries little status in our society, so although many women were in fact producing 'use value' in the home it was not regarded commensurate with paid work. The housewife identity did not ameliorate the feelings of 'uselessness' that were a consequence of unemployment.

3.3 Financial Dependency

With the loss of their income the women were thrown back into a position of financial dependency, either upon husbands or the state. Until very recently feminists have portrayed women's dependence on the state as negative. They have rightly criticised the ideological underpinnings of social policies which define women as the financial dependents of a male breadwinner. Furthermore, feminists have been successful in demonstrating the way in which social policy reinforces gender inequalities by developing policies which disadvantage women (McIntosh, 1979; Pascall, 1986; Ungerson, 1986, Glendinning and Millar, 1987; Callender, 1992). The ideological notions of women's dependency upon men which underpin the social security system, secured the married women's financial dependency upon men when they became unemployed. Single women and those women with unemployed husbands, were placed in a dependent relationship to wider family and kin due to inadequate levels of state support. However, for a third group of women financial dependence upon the state was not perceived to be a negative experience. Evidence from this study suggests that state benefits are an important arena of financial support for unemployed women, or at least for those women who are eligible to claim social security benefits in their own right. It is the complexity of these dependency relationships that I will proceed to explore.

Fifteen women were ineligible for unemployment and social security benefits. This is due to assumptions about the

economic relationship between men and women in the family and the sexual divisions of labour in home and workplace, which underpin social security provision. (Callender, 1992) The effects of reduced National Insurance contributions on women's entitlement to unemployment benefit are well known and documented. (Allin and Hunt, 1982; Callender, 1985; 1992) The latest manifestation of this is the 'full-time exclusion clause' introduced under the 1986 Social Security Act. This determines that if one partner is in full-time employment (redefined as more than sixteen hours per week) the other no longer has the right to claim Income Support. As a result, the number of women eligible for Income Support has been radically reduced. (Callender, 1992) For the majority of women in the sample, the loss of their independent source of income and the loss of the economic provider identity which this entailed, was one of the worst aspects of the unemployed experience. Unemployment forced married women back into the identity of financial dependent:

"When I'm working I feel I'm quite independent: I'm a person in ma own right. I'm earnin' a wage, I'm contributing to the household. And I feel it puts ye right back and ye are dependent on your husband. I don't like that aspect of it. You feel you're living off somebody. He'll say that's stupid and things like that, but you do, you're independence goes".

(Jane)

Financial dependency also brought with it feelings of guilt on the part of some women, guilt about spending money which they felt belonged to their partner and which was not theirs:

"It gives you a good bit of independence your own money, whereas now ma husband and I have the argument about it being his money. He says its our money but I've never actually thought of it that way. When I was working I could say well that half of it is *definitely* mine, so if I wanted to buy myself something I didn't feel so guilty about going out and buying it because it was my money....You feel dependent on them for everything....I feel all the way through ma life I've had to say can we do this, can we do that. Can I go here. Can I buy this, can I buy that. That's the way *I* feel and he gets ever so angry with me. He says to me the money's ours. I said no it's yours, you're bringing it in not me."

(Louise)

The negative feelings about financial dependency were not confined to married women. Several single women also expressed fears about becoming too dependent upon partners or boyfriends:

"It puts a strain on the relationship because he'd be quite happy to carry me but I don't see why he should have to. I keep saying it's only temporary but how long can you say it's only temporary? At times, especially when I'm moaning about the fact that I've got no money and I can't do anything, he points out that if I took money from him it wouldn't be quite as bad as it would be otherwise....It would be very easy for me to let him just carry me. *It would be very easy to totally let him take over because he's got a reasonably good income and he's paying the bills 'cause I can't.* I put money towards the food but that's it, that's about all I can afford to do. He pays the rest of the bills and to me that's more than enough carrying. If I start borrowing money off him, or taking money off him, it just means I'm totally dependent on him. It's very easy to get into that position." (emphasis mine)

(Heather)

In this context sole reliance upon the male wage was seen to represent a power relation of male over female. Many women,

both married and single, felt that by being financial dependents they were in a weaker position to define the terms of their relationship with their partners:

"He's not as supportive of me as a was when it wis his turn [to be unemployed]. Although he's never cast up the fact that I've lost ma job or that we've lost this income or whatever, it's in there. There's certain things I don't even think he's aware of you know. Like he does more negative talk than he ever did before. I'll make a suggestion and he'll say 'no'. I mean I think some of it is conscious, I think he's enjoying the power at the minute. I mean this is the man I love you know. But it's very striking some of the behaviour that's going on and it's hard to contend with. It wis maybe there before but because ma confidence and everything else wis so high when I had a job, I maybe just dismissed it. But right now that makes me feel even more vulnerable than a should."

(Paula)

I argued in Chapter Three that an independent source of income through waged work does not guarantee women complete economic independence. Pascall (1986) notes that even when women are working their husbands are still usually the main earner and therefore women are still dependent upon them. However the evidence cited in Chapter Three indicates that waged work helps to reduce women's economic dependence upon men and grants them a greater degree of autonomy and power in the household. Women perceived their position in the household to be less equitable upon the loss of their wage:

"When you become unemployed all of a sudden your status drops. I mean you go from being quite a confident person in your own right and being a sort of status, to being a wee housewife and a dependent. You loose a say in how things should be run".

(Jane)

A number of women, both married and single, expressed a preference for state support rather than financial dependence upon a man:

"I know he would help out if a wis in dire straits financially. If the Sheriffs Officers wur hammering the door down he'd come to ma rescue. (Laughs) But I like to be independent. Well I say independent but I'm not independent when I'm relying on the state, which I don't like. I would rather get money from the state than get money fae ma boyfriend or anything like that. *It's a semi-independence I think relying on the Social.* (emphasis mine)

(Dee)

In the case of Doreen, a single parent, state dependency in the form of Income Support was preferable to reliance upon an ex-husband for maintenance payments for her and her three children:

"I didn't have any maintenance from ma ex-husband at all for maself or the children. Although I had a court order he never honoured it. In fact I actually took him to court to get the maintenance payments out of him. My youngest who is now eighteen, I haven't had any maintenance from ma husband since he was eight years old, that's ten years ago. Although ma husband does actually have a full-time job he just doesn't bother paying any of the maintenance. And I know that what I would get from him would be the same as I get from the Income Support. I feel Income Support is a more steady income whereas ma husband quite often he was supposed to send it on a Friday and I would receive it on a Saturday, but Monday would come and I still wouldn't have it and I'd have to phone up and make an appointment and I wouldn't have any money. This went on for ages. It was hopeless trying to rear a family with these ups and downs and being financially dependent on ma husband. So I would rather be on Income Support."

(Doreen)

State benefits provide some women with "semi-independence". That state support may in some circumstances reduce women's dependence on men must be acknowledged. As Hernes (1984) notes, dependence seems to change its character when it becomes public. State dependence may have a different character from the unequal distribution of power between men and women in circumstances of private dependence. State dependence for some women then may not necessarily be negative. In line with Wyn's (1991) conclusions, negative feelings about financial dependency were more acute among those women in the sample who had no other means of financial support other than their husbands. In such cases the male wage brought with it the power to decide how the income would be allocated and the women concerned felt that they had little real say over its distribution because it was 'his money'. As the following extract shows, even where the woman was asked for her approval prior to spending taking place, she did not feel she was in a position to refuse because her husband was the sole wage earner:

"He will go and buy what he wants to."

So he doesn't seek your permission?

"No not at all. Unless it's a big item, like something really expensive, something for his car or whatever, a luxury item. Something expensive that I think we can do without. He will come and say to me 'can I get it?' And I always feel that I should let him have it because I think well he brings all his money in. All of his salary comes in and I suppose that's why I, to an extent, feel guilty because it all goes back out again. He doesn't get any of his salary so if he's wanting something I say well why don't you get it, even though I know we can't really afford it, you know what I mean?"

(Louise)

Thus it would seem to be as Pahl (1981) argues that many women need their paid employment in order to be in a position whereby they can renegotiate their previously subordinate place in the household economy.

State support did not alleviate dependency in all cases. Where married women had an unemployed husband, state benefits were claimed by the husband. In these instances state support afforded the women concerned no financial independence within the family. Distributed in this way, state benefits merely reinforced the male breadwinner dependent wife model. Furthermore, the inadequacy of state benefits frequently placed these no-earner households into 'informal dependencies' upon extended kin. Often the wife's family proved to be crucial in terms of supplementary social and economic support. In the majority of cases financial assistance and goods and services in kind were focussed through mother daughter links:

"I've got ma mum along the road so I know I'm no' gonnae starve. If she wisnae there it would be a case of whether we burn the gas and keep the house warm or we eat reasonably well. It would be a choice between one or the other. I'm just lucky that I have ma mum. I know that the kids are gonnae get fed. They're no' gonnae starve."

(Sarah)

Whilst these support networks offered material and emotional support, evidence by Binns and Mars (1984) and Ratcliff and Bogdan (1988) suggests that informal support networks can reinforce social and cultural norms. Parental expectations

of appropriate gender roles can be imposed on domestic situations already strained by economic hardship. I noted instances of peer group pressure to conform to gender roles in Chapter Three. This demonstrates that support networks can have both a positive and negative function as far as women are concerned.

One of the Conservative Governments main aims in reforming the social security system in 1988 was to reduce 'dependence' on state provision. From the women's accounts it is apparent that in practice this dependence has been transferred elsewhere. In the case of the full-time exclusion clause women's dependence has been transferred to men. In the cases cited above, inadequate state benefits forced the women concerned into a doubly dependent position; dependent upon state support mediated by their husbands and dependent upon the goodwill of their extended family.

Married women keenly felt the loss of independence that paid employment brought. Young single women were also affected by the loss of their income. As a result of their unemployment they were forced back into a dependent position vis-a-vis parents at a time in their lives when most young people attempt to establish their independence from their parents:

"Ma mum and dad help but a don't want them to help me I'd rather be able to help myself by getting [more] money from the brew or something like that....A hate askin' them fur a tap o' money because I'm twenty and I still rely on ma mum and dad and by that time you should be able to have

enough money to keep yourself. Ma mum and dad don't mind givin' me the money, it's just that a hate askin' for it."

(Leslie)

"I've got a very caring family but I hate taking. It makes me feel dependent and I don't like it. I always managed when I was employed, but I can't do it now. I really hate it."

(Claire)

Whilst financial support is welcomed it nevertheless places the unemployed recipient in a dependent relationship to the giver. The price to be paid is ones sense of independence. When government ministers speak of dependence as 'an evil to be discouraged' (John Moore), they obviously do not mean women's dependency, for many of the social changes which they have effected in the last decade have contributed to women's increased dependency upon both the state and upon men. Women's loss of income however represents more than a loss of independence. As I will now illustrate the loss of earned income had material implications for the women and their families.

3.4 "Bad Mothers"

A common assumption made about female unemployment is that it does not cause financial hardship in the same way as it does for men. For the women in this study the loss of income had a considerable impact upon them and their

families above and beyond the loss of financial independence. All of the women felt the loss of their income to some degree. Their wages had been an essential part of the household economy and without them expenditure had to be curtailed. Material deprivation arising from the loss of women's incomes was felt most by those women with an unemployed husband and dependent children, single mothers and single women with no other means of support. Here social security benefits did not compensate for lost earnings.

I noted in Chapter Three that working class women are more likely to be in a position whereby they assume responsibility for the day-to-day budgeting of the family finances. Consequently, married working class women along with single mothers were faced with the burden of trying to make ends meet. In Martin and Roberts' (1984a) survey a third of all women defined as unemployed found it difficult to manage financially. Coyle (1984c) also notes that the working class women in her study had difficulty in coping and running a home on a reduced household income. These general findings concur with the evidence found in this study.

The responsibility for 'making ends meet' fell to the women. It was they who devised strategies for saving money:

"Although I don't smoke myself, whenever I have a spare two pounds I buy a thousand cigarette coupons and save them up so that I can buy Christmas presents at the end of the year. And

Family Allowance, I save it up 'til the end of the month because you've got a lump sum of money to buy something. If you lift it each week you just go through it. I don't buy a lot of clothes, I make them myself or buy them in the sales. If you're wanting something for the house you have to save for six months before you can get it, otherwise you have to take something out on HP and pay it in instalments."

(Doreen)

Because most women were unable to pay for goods in a lump sum they were reliant upon catalogues where they could pay for goods in instalments. This brought extra costs:

"I always have to buy clothes through catalogues which are usually twice as dear. But that's the only way I can buy anything new at the moment, so you can just pay a couple of pound a week then. That's the only way I can buy clothing and shoes and things for myself and Hannah. but as I say you pay through the nose for it".

(Lindsay)

Gendered spending patterns meant that women's incomes tended to be spent on items such as food and clothing whilst husband's incomes were spent on larger items of expenditure. With the loss of their income women were placed in the position of having to cut back their family's daily consumption. For many women this produced feelings of being an inadequate or 'bad mother'. Due to the inadequacy of the household income they were often placed in a position of having to say 'no' to their children's wants:

"I know money and treats isnae everything, I know that, but it would be nice to be able to take the kids out at the weekend. I remember one day in particular when we'd no money left, we took them to the park and Karen said how come that wee boy's

got an ice-cream and I've not? It wis really heartbreaking. I felt terrible, I couldn't even buy ma kid an ice-cream. Her friend up the stairs, they've got a car and they are always going away for day trips. Karen always asks 'how come we can't go there?' What can I tell her? It's really hard. That's what upsets me most of all you know, not being able to provide for ma kids. At times they must think they've got a bad mother"

(Sarah)

For many women paid employment was part of being a 'good mother'. Women with dependent children struggled constantly to ensure that their children did not suffer too much because of the loss of income. Often this meant that the women themselves cut down on their personal consumption in order to provide for their children:

"The other day ma mum told me not to worry about Christmas if a huvnae got much for the kids. But I don't care how I do it my kids will have presents. I won't have anybody feel sorry fur them. I don't care if they feel sorry fur me, a mean everybody does. Every now and then I've got dark eyes, and I broke out in spots a couple of weeks ago, it's just being run down. 'Cause if you've only got a couple of pounds and the kids are needing fed you feed them. There's been many a day when I haven't had anything to eat. You've borrowed right up to your limit and you've got two days left until your next Giro and you can't borrow any more so you just go without. It's the same wi' clothes and things like that, the kids come first."

(Sarah)

Evidence by Charles and Kerr (1986) suggests that families who live on state benefits find it difficult, if not impossible, to eat properly. By this they mean the provision of three meals a day, which includes a main meal consisting of meat, vegetables and potatoes. However, my

evidence points to the impact of gender inequalities in the allocation of household resources, such that poverty in the household is born primarily by mothers. From the women's accounts it is apparent that it is they who bear the brunt of poverty within the family; it is they who go without food in order that their children may eat. The importance of women's wages to the maintenance of a decent standard of living is apparent. Even though men's and women's incomes are spent in different ways, it is evident that women's incomes were not spent on the purchase of 'luxuries' which the family could afford to do without.

Summary

All of the women suffered the loss of an economic identity, but not all suffered the same degree of material hardship. Generally, married middle class women whose husbands were in employment did not suffer the same degree of material deprivation as other women in the sample. Nevertheless the loss of income had social as well as financial impact and this affected all of the women, irrespective of social class or marital status. It is the social effects of unemployment that I will now proceed to explore.

4. THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

As Townsend (1979) notes, material deprivation is only one aspect of poverty. A major economy all the women faced, irrespective of social class, was a reduction in their social lives. "Fun was an expensive commodity that many of the women could no longer afford". (Callender, 1992:145) Most working class women could no longer afford social activities and many middle class women had to curtail their social activities:

"I just don't huv the money to go out. Occasionally ma mum will treat me to the bingo or take me to the social club down the road. She'll say, it's alright I'll treat ye. But I don't like it. I don't enjoy it. Well I do enjoy it, but I feel bad at the same time. I just feel as if everybody knows by lookin' at ye that you've no money. That's just the way I feel; as if there's a big arrow above your head saying 'pauper'".

(Sarah)

With the reduction in social activities came a sense of social exclusion:

"I tend to see ma friends less often than I used to. There's the transport costs for one thing and when people invite you to dinner you don't like to think of the fact that you can't invite them back. I know it's silly being like that but you feel you can only accept hospitality from people so often without at least returning some of it. And when you can't afford to you start making up excuses for not going to see people. You don't go out for drinks with people in the evening because you know you can't afford to pay your fair share. There was a couple of friends that I used to have lunch with on a regular basis, I haven't done that now for about two months. So I do tend to see less of people now than I used to."

(Heather)

The social exclusion and isolation which unemployment brought had a profound effect, particularly upon single women:

"I'm more isolated and I'm definitely more withdrawn. I mean I can maybe see someone that I know and I will avoid that person. Ye don't feel like communicating. I was never like that before. I mean what have you got to tell when you've watched TV most of the day?"

(Martha)

"I sometimes feel that I can be in company and I panic and I have to run away 'cause I can't cope. So you start loosing the thread of things. It sounds silly but sometimes I'm scared to go back to the house because I might start thinking too much. And other days I can't go out because I can't cope with people. So it's like a see-saw."

(Joan)

4.1 Summary

In unemployment women lost their economic identity as waged workers. With this they lost the freedom which an independent income allows and the control over its use. Women became financial dependents. They suffered a crisis of autonomy and a loss of independence. The loss of independence was social as well as financial. Unemployment led to loneliness and increased isolation, to feelings of being useless and worthless. The women however did not passively accept unemployment. From their accounts it is apparent that they actively devised strategies in an attempt

to cope with some of the negative aspects of unemployment. It is to these that I now turn.

5. COPING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

By 'coping' with unemployment I refer to the strategies utilised by women to protect themselves from the more unpleasant experiences of unemployment. The women coped with unemployment in various ways. Generally the strategies employed can be divided into two types: practical and psychological strategies. These two categories are merely separated for the purposes of analysis and are not necessarily exclusive. Both forms of coping strategy were utilised concurrently depending on the nature of the problem.

Coping is of course something that women in general are expected to do. For unemployed women in particular, 'coping' is not even deemed to be an issue since unemployment is not thought to be a problem for women. "Unemployment as a day-to-day routine is like being 'just a housewife'". Campbell (1984:184) The respondents in this study did not identify themselves primarily as housewives. They identified themselves as unemployed and thus one would expect their daily reality to differ from that of full-time housewives. Indeed the women's experience bears testimony to the fact that they did suffer problems as a direct result

of their unemployed state. One cannot conflate women's unemployed identity with that of housewives.

The main difficulty with which the women were confronted was unstructured time and the lack of a daily routine. The availability of time differed between the women but for many, time was usually filled by paid employment and/or by familial duties and obligations. In unemployment the nature of time changed. Many women were returning to work precisely because they no longer had dependent children making demands upon them. They were suddenly faced with 'endless time'. I noted earlier in the chapter that the vast majority of women did not expand their housework role to fill in the time left free by not going to a job. Unstructured time is not something which has hitherto been seen to affect full-time housewives, who according to research studies are often engaged in working routines which involve anything from a 40 to a 105 hour week. (Oakley, 1974; Malos, 1980; Mathews, 1987) Unstructured time and routinisation of the day is not in itself a problem for housewives - although the nature of the routine: the monotony of repetitious tasks conducted on a daily basis, is. Establishing any kind of routine in a context where time takes on a new meaning was a problem which confronted most women, but particularly single women without dependent children:

"The typical feeling of unemployment is 'Oh good grief, it's what, nine in the morning, eight in the morning and I've got a day in front of me and I've got nothing in that day. So that's why a lot

of people get up late because it's to try and shorten the day and then they stay up late so then they're more tired in the morning so they can sleep in late. And usually in the evening there are things you can do, be it watching television or with friends up or whatever. So it turns out more of a night life; turning night into day because there's nothing to get up for. I mean you're only just sitting in a chair looking at the wall. People often think when they're unemployed, oh well lots of time for reading and knitting or whatever, but a hobby isn't a hobby if it's all the time. You've got to have something solid to fill your day, and that's the awful feeling for unemployed people; there's nothing solid to fill their week. It's just day after day of getting up and thinking 'What on earth shall I do to occupy my time'".

(Miriam)

Having been 'freed' from the nine-to-five routine of paid employment, afternoons and evenings held no meaning. Since there was no set time for anything many women's lives were characterised by a lack of regularity. Some women expended enormous amounts of energy planning activities which would structure and regularise their day. The structuring of the day was an integral part of the fight against psychological malaise:

"Even though you're unemployed it's more that you structure you're time and you have things to do. Because I mean if you didn't have goals and aims in life you would go under. *I mean it's hard work being unemployed.* I think people in employment think, 'unemployed layabouts' etcetera, 'lounge about and go down and sign on and borrow money and spend it and have a whale of a time'. But it's not like that 'cause there's very few people unemployed through choice, it's usually you've no option or you've been unfortunate or whatever".

(Dee)

"I try to do different things each day so it's not the same routine. I'm goin' to classes and I'm doin' a course. You try to plan your day out so that it is interesting. I think it's when it gets repetitious; doing the same thing every day, going to the shops at the same time, then it becomes monotonous. It's hard work but you can make it more interesting."

(Doreen)

Many women used job hunting as a way of structuring their day:

"The loneliness can get quite bad. It's that feeling that if you weren't there that day who would miss you anyway. I don't sit and feel like that everyday just sometimes, that's when I don't keep maself busy enough. I mean you've got to do things, go out. I usually try to go out every day because if I sat in the house the whole day and the whole night I'd be talking tae cheese plants....I go to the Job Club, that's just across the street; that's four mornings a week. I try and go most mornings. I sometimes go to the Job Centre in Shawlands. I've got quite a few friends round about here and I go for a coffee."

(Dee)

For a great many women television was used as a mechanism to routinise the day:

"I normally fill the day with TV I'm afraid. Because of boredom I end up watching programmes on TV for the very reason that it is a form of routine."

(Joan)

Tuning into certain programmes at a set time each day helped some women to establish a routine and thus give the day some structure. Television also operated as a form of mental escapism:

"...Usually I just sit watchin' TV. It ends up you get really interested in all these really straight programmes. It's like ma friend, she's been on the dole for two or three months now, and me an' her like a' these stupid programmes that nobody else likes, that everybody else laughs about. We sit and watch them a' the time and get dead excited about them. I suppose if you're just sitting watching TV a' the time you do get into these stupid programmes. It's an escape".

(Leslie)

Generally television viewing was not seen as a constructive activity but merely a way of 'escaping' or 'filling in time'. This can be seen from the qualifications made by the women such as "I watch a lot of TV I'm afraid" (Joan), or "I read as well. It's no' as if I just sit and watch the TV. I read as well." (Leslie) Television viewing was seen as symptomatic of the general psychological state of unemployment; of letting ones mental faculties rot. It was regarded by most women as a mindless activity:

"I've basically let my brain go to rot over the last few months. I used to read a lot but now at times I've seen me just sitting on this couch with that television switched on for about six hours, just mindlessly letting it go. I think it's very easy to get into that position, it really is. There doesn't seem anything else you can do. There's not a lot you can do to fill your day when you haven't got much money. I mean if you go out and go for a wander round the shops in town it just makes you more frustrated because there's all these wonderful things that you can't get. And then there's the cost of transport getting anywhere. Even though there's all these wonderful exhibitions on out there that you'd like to go and see, at times the effort of moving to get there is too much as well. So basically you end up filling the day by sitting there and reading or knitting or watching the television."

(Heather)

Some of the strategies that women used for coping with unstructured time tended to be health threatening. Cigarettes and food were used as mechanisms by which to structure the day. 15% of women - 10% working class women and 5% middle class women - reported smoking more than when they were engaged in paid employment:

"The smoking has got worse because before I became unemployed I had stopped smoking. I'd been off it for three years. And now I think I need a cigarette. It's a way of killing the boredom."

(Rose)

There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that smoking is poverty and stress related. (Graham, 1984; Fitchie, 1990; Ben Sklomo et al, 1992) Respondents reported that smoking helped them to cope with everyday life. For some women smoking provided a safety valve; an alternative to letting off feelings of anger and frustration induced by unemployment. Graham (1984) suggests that women smoke not to accompany expressions of frustrations and anxiety but *instead* of expressing these feelings. For women stuck at home all day with dependent children, smoking and eating provided a way of coping with the demands of caring for a child twenty four hours a day. Graham (1984) notes that smoking is a way of temporarily escaping without leaving the room.

8% of women used food as a way coping with unstructured time:

"Ye tend tae eat more, ye do. A don't smoke but ye tend tae eat more. Ye know, uch, I'll have a cup a tea an' I'll have another biscuit. It gives ye something to do. Kills the time".

(Shirley)

"That sort of boredom syndrome definitely does happen. You get bored so you eat. You finish eating so you think what can I do now. And it is you know, it's boredom, but half an hour later you feel like something to eat again. You know it's boredom but it's very difficult to stop yourself. And people I know who smoke have said that yes definitely their smoking increases because again it's boredom."

(Heather)

These strategies were suited to the isolated position in which most unemployed women found themselves. Tobacco and food represented the exception to the women's otherwise tight budgeting strategies. As one woman remarked "It's like a vicious circle: you've no' really got the money but you go through a lot more food 'cause you're in a' day."

(Jane) However the extra food and tobacco consumed by the women were not considered luxuries but necessities. Smoking and eating were a way a imposing structure. These activities helped to shape the day and structure time.

5.1 "Mind Games"

The majority of the women in the sample reported having days when they were unable to cope with their unemployment. These were days when the loneliness became overwhelming and a sense of hopelessness gripped the women:

"I get so closed inside myself....I think I keep too much inside myself. I normally don't like to burden people with ma problems so I put on an air of everything's okay, but you just become a non-entity. It's as if you don't exist. You become unreal....But I don't like complaining. I normally keep everything inside and then when I get someone I meet with it comes out like a waterfall. (laughs) I think it's a balancing thing because now I find I can laugh. I don't get so angry now, because I used to get very angry and frustrated. So I find I either cry, and I don't like anyone to see me crying, or I laugh or I talk too much. It's a kind of pendulum swing, from one extreme to the other. All I want is a balance in the middle. I want to be able to have enough money to be able to live just comfortably and I want to study. I want the Open University thing. It's the only thing that's keeping me sane at the moment."

(Joan)

As with Martin and Wallace (1985), I found a strong association between the decline in social contact and the incidence of self-reported periods of depression:

"...After about a month or so you get really depressed and you can't be bothered getting up, and if you do get up you don't want to put your clothes on 'cause you're no' going out....You see everyone gettin' dressed up to go out or going to their jobs at nine o'clock when you're bumming around the house and things, and eh, there's no point. It's really easy to slip right down, you've got to stand up and fight it."

(Jennifer)

Five of the respondents were receiveing medical treatment for depression. They attributed their depression to unemployment:

"With me what's happening is I'm bothered with depression. I've spoken to the doctor a million times about it and I think it personally has a lot to do with money. I don't think it would totally clear ma depression but I know it causes a lot of

it. When you're sittin' day after day, week after week, month after month, always havin' to watch your money..... The thing is wi' the older I'm gettin' the more I realise I don't want to spend the rest of ma life being depressed, I need a job".

(Audrey)

For some women the only way to overcome the effects of unemployment was to engage in a daily psychological battle with oneself:

"You play mind games with yourself. You do things like that of saying no, I have got something to offer and I'm not useless. You've got to psyche yourself up. I am very fortunate in that respect that I can do that. Somedays you can't. There's some days I'll go round here feeling really pissed off totally so I'll go and look for a nice wee job to do, then when I'm fed up a nice thing that you enjoy doing, you get fun out of."

(Laura)

The fight to retain dignity and self respect in unemployment involved more than a battle against material deprivation. The women were engaged in a daily psychological battle with themselves; a battle against isolation, loneliness and endless, unstructured time. They had to fight hard to retain the *person* within themselves. The women also had to fight the stigmatisation of being unemployed.

6. WELFARE SCROUNGERS AND WORK-SHY LAYABOUTS: THE STIGMATISATION OF UNEMPLOYED WOMEN

In this section I will examine the bearing of stigmatisation on the women's identities. It will be shown that despite the negative stereotyping of unemployed people, the respondents kept their identities as 'unemployed' and did not revert to alternative identities as wives and mothers. It will be demonstrated that the retention of the unemployed identity was in part born out of the experiences of unemployment itself; experiences which made the women more sympathetic to people who had suffered similar misfortunes to themselves.

6.1 The Pathologising of the Unemployed

During the last decade the general ideology of unemployment has been underpinned by (the myth) of the 'welfare scrounger' - the Work-shy who are said to abuse the social security system. The essence of scrounging is that life on the dole is supposedly more attractive and financially more rewarding than paid employment. The myth is perpetuated by sections of the tabloid press who continuously portray unemployed people as 'scroungers', 'spongers', 'dropouts', and 'incapables'. This general view is reinforced in official reports, the essence of which can be inferred from chapter headings such as 'Policing the Work-shy' (Rayner, 1981). The myth is further bolstered by 'advice' to the unemployed who inhabit the 'something for nothing society' to 'get on their bikes' and find paid employment.

'Dependence' on the state is an evil to be discouraged in favour of resourcefulness and self-determination. The pathologising of those unfortunate to be without paid employment helps create a climate of opinion where it becomes easier in ideological terms to blame unemployment on the unemployed themselves, thus allowing social and economic factors to be conveniently overshadowed. By depicting the unemployed as welfare scroungers and work-shy layabouts, unemployed people become marginalised as second class citizens precisely because they are unemployed.

Unlike the findings of the PSI study (White, 1991) which suggests that after a decade of high unemployment feelings of stigmatisation amongst the unemployed are wearing off, the evidence from my sample suggests that stigmatisation of the unemployed, if not prevalent nationwide, is nevertheless prevalent in Glasgow. 15 of the respondents - 11 working class and 4 middle class women - felt they were 'treated differently' by significant others precisely because they were unemployed. In all cases the feelings of stigmatisation were based upon personal experience, although the source of the stigma differed.

Of the 15 respondents all but one was claiming social security benefits. This is reflected in the nature of the women's complaints. The largest number of grievances (47%) were against the treatment meted out to the women by Department of Social Security Staff. As far as 27% of the women were concerned the attitudes of some Job Centre staff

also left a lot to be desired. The claimants argued that they were often made to feel that they had no right to state benefit. The attitudes of some social security staff reiterated and reinforced the women's feelings of worthlessness:

"They jist treat ye like yer nothin', like yer a bit o' paper an' a number".

(Bridget)

"The social security staff, I'm no' saying it just happens tae me it happens tae everybody, but a think they're really patronising. You're only an unemployed person so you're muck".

(Jane)

"Recently I had a run in wi' a girl in the social security. A young girl of about nineteen looking doon her nose at me. Sitting there with her gold chains on, just her attitude annoyed me. I don't remember exactly what it was she said but she was putting across like 'scum'; I'm telling you what you can get, sort of thing. I cannae remember what it wis about but I ended up loosing the place and normally I'm a placid person, I wouldnae say boo tae a mouse, but I lost ma temper that day".

(Sarah)

These feelings of being treated like 'scum', 'muck', as a 'nobody' were common feelings experienced by all fifteen respondents.

A second complaint levelled against both social security and Job Centre staff, was that claimants were made to feel as though they were not trying hard enough to find paid employment:

"You get an interview, a Restart interview every six months, and they'll say to you, 'What are you doing to get work?' It's as if you're not bothering. And I'll say I've been to this interview and I haven't had any luck with it and I've applied for this and that. But they make out as if you're not really trying. I mean some people don't want to work but I wouldn't say there were many unemployed people in that category".

(Doreen)

Here we can see the myth of the 'work-shy' in operation whereby 'some' becomes 'all'. The existence of a small number of 'work-shy' is used to castigate all unemployed people with a similar label.

Many respondents complained of being patronised and treated like 'idiots':

"I didn't find them helpful at all [job centre staff]. I found their whole attitude very condescending and very patronising on the whole. Especially the way they read out the job description. You know, when you bring your little card up and they read out the job description, it would be 'Yes, what..this..job..entails', as though people were absolute idiots. I think being unemployed is enough of a kick to your self esteem without other people adding to it by treating you as though you're not quite all there".

(Claire)

As one respondent remarked: "If you're depressed and frustrated already and you meet with people so insensitive it's difficult, they arouse your aggression". (Lynne) Many of the women were however sympathetic towards social security staff, recognising that they did have a difficult job to do and that some claimants themselves were not courteous:

"Most of the people who work in these offices they get a *little* bit of power and they think they're super executive status, you know? But then a couple of ma friends are social workers and for part of their trainin' they worked behind the scenes and they said it's mayhem; that when people come in they're so rude and everything. It's unbelievable. So I suppose it is difficult for them but they could at least try and be polite".

(Claire)

The claimants experiences are born out by a National Audit Office Report (1988: para 5) which notes that the Department of Health and Social Security identified "a significant level of dissatisfaction with the quality of its service in 1984 and 1985" and that "in general there was no evidence of any improvement since then". There is then a need to treat claimants in ways which do not detract from their dignity instead of setting out to stigmatise and humiliate them.

13% of the women reported feeling stigmatised by attitudes emanating from family and/or friends. The stereotype of the 'work-shy' was often evoked:

"I mean one of my friends still has this attitude that if you are unemployed it's because you're not trying hard enough to get a job. And my sister-in-laws mother's like that as well. Her attitude is that if you're unemployed then you can't really be looking for work. And I think that there are people out there who honestly believe that anyone whose unemployed for longer than a month or two is doing it by choice."

(Heather)

Ideological assumptions about the unemployed underpinned provision for unemployed people:

"It's just the way other people view people on unemployment benefit. Really that's the main thing; that, 'Oh you're on the dole!' and 'What do you do?', that kind of thing. You must be a bit of a waster. And just people's attitude in general at the social security offices or whatever; That it's not worthwhile being courteous or polite to these people, they're on the dole anyway and even if they do complain who's going to listen to them. I've been doing a course for a few days a week and it's funded by the European Social Fund. I mean the thing's a shambles. They're getting a huge grant for it and the thing's an absolute disaster. If I had anything at all to do with the co-ordination of it I'd be severely embarrassed. But their whole attitude is - I mean we're left sitting for four hours doing nothing and it's, 'but you're on the dole, what else would you be doing? Do you not like sitting here in the warmth for a couple of hours?' And it's so *insulting*, it really is."

(Claire)

The impact of unemployment upon the women's identity must not be understated. The women had gone from feeling secure and confident in themselves and their abilities to feeling 'useless', 'worthless', non-entities'. These feelings were maintained and reinforced to a large extent by a prevailing ideology which designates all unemployed people as 'scroungers' and 'layabouts'; members of 'the something for nothing society'. Even in the face of this stigmatisation the women did not resort to calling themselves housewives or mothers. The women continued to positively identify themselves as unemployed.

6.2 The Unemployed as 'Other'

There is evidence to suggest that the general ideological stereotyping of unemployed people did have an impact upon the women's perceptions. Many women sought to distance themselves from the negative connotations implied in the term 'unemployed'. These conflicts became apparent when respondents were asked whether they thought they had anything in common with other unemployed women. The responses proved to be illuminating:

"A don't know. A mean sometimes when I'm watchin' some of these programmes an' *they're* [unemployed people] really depressed and really low and down in the pits, ye know, people who just look a mess and everything. And sometimes I look at *people like that* and I think they're unemployed, but I'm unemployed as well but I don't go about like that. I always try and look kinda smart. And I think but they can't afford clothes, but then neither can I afford clothes, so why do *they* have to go about lookin' like they're unemployed? I feel as though I'm not really in the same category as a lot of *them*. A lot of *these people* I think just give up. They're unemployed and they're quite happy to be unemployed, and they'll be unemployed for the rest of their days I think because of their attitude. A don't think I've got an awful lot in common with *them*. Maybe that's bein' a bit snobbish, a don't know. A just think a lot of *them* haven't got any get up and go in them. They've resigned themselves to the fact that they're unemployed and that's them they're quite happy to mope about being unemployed. Maybe it's the way they've been brought up....Maybe they've been unemployed for years and years so that's why they've resigned themselves to that fact. But the fact that I've always worked, I've always been a worker, a wouldn't just give up." (emphasis mine)

(Lindsay)

The image invoked here is that of the unemployed as 'work-shy'. The constant referral to unemployed people as 'them', as 'these people', suggests a distancing of oneself from the

image which is created. If ones view of 'the unemployed' is as negative as that portrayed above it is not surprising that one should seek to distance oneself from it and see 'the unemployed' in terms of 'other' in an attempt not to be associated with similar stereotyping. In a similar vein the image of the unemployed as scrounger is evoked:

"There should be more discrimination in who the dole money should go to and who should not. I know people who simply have enough kids in the house, they just go on producing and then they go on dole money so that they've got enough money from child benefits and the dole money to cover their families. They have even more money when they're unemployed than when they're employed. I don't feel that's right. They're abusing the system. They go on finding excuses not to work. I know people who resigned from a job to go on dole money and look after family or immediate family for money and at the same time are getting dole money. I don't think that's right, it's really not right. That's what the government should set up, a board to monitor these people, what they do every day. I guess it's just not possible. I think society as a whole doesn't have a concept between right and wrong any more."

(Lynne)

The impact of the ideological stereotyping of the unemployed is rarely considered in explanations of women's reluctance to define themselves as unemployed, rather the focus is on gender dynamics. Evidence from this study suggests that the negative stigmatising of 'the unemployed' as 'work-shy', 'scroungers', 'lazy', affect women's self-perceptions even if, in the final analysis this did not lead to a rejection of the label 'unemployed'. A number of women upon introducing themselves to me prior to the interview immediately announced that they were probably 'not like the

other women that I had interviewed thus far', or that they 'did not fall into the same category as other women', or informed me that they were probably not the type of woman I was looking for because they were not 'typically unemployed'. The women then were all too aware of the general ideological stereotype applied to unemployed people and sought to distance themselves from it almost immediately. In the case of the ideological stereotyping of the unemployed, the existence of a few 'scroungers' or 'work-shy' is taken to mean that all unemployed people are work-shy and/or scroungers; the part is taken for the whole so that 'some' becomes 'all'. (Jones, 1991) It is under these circumstances that the women sought to distance themselves, not from the term 'unemployed' itself but, from the wholly negative and stigmatising resonance with which the term is imbued.

To some extent this distancing was contradictory for, as I shall now demonstrate, the majority of women claimed that their experience of unemployment had made them more sympathetic towards other unemployed people.

6.3 The Changing Experience of Unemployment

A quarter of the women interviewed said that their experience of unemployment had changed their attitudes to other unemployed people. Before becoming unemployed some women admitted to holding negative views about unemployed

people. Having experienced unemployment at first hand, the women reported being more sympathetic towards and more understanding of unemployed people generally. The middle class women in the sample expressed this new found understanding in terms of a growing awareness of "how the other half lives":

"I used to think people unemployed it was their fault. But having been unemployed myself I can see that it can often be circumstances; just one thing leads to another, and I wouldn't say that the person got themselves into it. And also you see how the benefits system works. It's quite interesting to know how the other half lives. And absolutely you value the fact that you could be in work more, whereas before you would take it for granted. You lose a bit of confidence in a way that you can automatically hold down a job. So I think if you've always had a job you can't understand how people get themselves unemployed because you've always had jobs. But you've only got to let go and have a gap in your [employment] record that doesn't look good on an application form and that's you, one thing leads to another."

(Miriam)

"I used to have something of the attitude that I couldn't understand how people could let themselves get to rock bottom and I always felt that people should try and stop themselves goin' right down. But now I can understand how easy it would be for somebody to get there; to let everything get on top of them and just let it all slide. Because I know there have been many times when the effort of getting out of bed in the morning - I mean to do *what*? I mean what's the point? To move from one room to another? And I can understand now how people can get to that. Yes, I'm a lot more compassionate about people who've hit rock bottom than I was before."

(Heather)

The experience of unemployment made the 'respectable' working class women more understanding of the 'rough'

working class and brought with it the realisation of how close the dividing line between the two social positions really is:

It's changed me in many ways. I wis never a snob, but like the way I would look at people who were poorly dressed in the past. I don't like to admit it but you do, people look down their noses at people. I wouldnae do that now. Definitely wouldn't do that now. That and ma attitude to people in general has changed. I've got more sympathy for people, especially [people] wi' kids. It's really hard. I don't know how they expect ye tae live. If I didnae have ma mum helpin' me out who knows what you would do. As I say, I feel really strongly that ma kids won't suffer, so if a didnae have ma mum I really don't know what I'd be capable of doing. I probably would go out and steal or whatever to keep them fed and clothed. I mean I probably would and that's being honest. I don't know if I would have the nerve to do it but if I wis really stuck I might. So it gives you a deeper understanding of how these things happen, whereas before you would maybe say, uch away, nobody's that bad off."

(Sarah)

7. CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to explore the consequences of unemployment amongst women. These are little understood because of the lack of general recognition that women can be unemployed. The lack of concern stems from the belief that unemployed women readily 'return' to their roles as wives and mothers and are fully occupied within the home. Due to the availablitiy of this alternative role women are not seen to suffer adversely from the loss of their paid employment.

The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that both of these assumptions are unfounded.

Single women and women without children do not have an alternative role to revert to in unemployment. For married women, the loss of employment reinforced the conventional sexual division of labour in the household, such that women continued to be primarily responsible for the bulk of domestic labour and childcare. Neither middle class nor working class women freely 'choose' this role. The women were responsible for domestic labour whether they were in paid employment or not. It is then something of a misnomer to view unemployed women 'returning' to their domestic role. In unemployment women do not move from one role to another; their domestic role is always there, they simply lose one role. Unemployment had the effect of reinforcing the domestic role. However, the evidence presented here demonstrates that the women did not fully occupy themselves within the home. They did not enlarge their domestic role to fill the time left by the absence of paid employment. Rather, in unemployment, housework was deemed to be more oppressive. In the first instance women had been forced involuntarily, or were unable to escape from, a role which was the source of much dissatisfaction. Housework was considered by all respondents to be less interesting than paid employment. Second, unemployment led to economic hardship for many women, particularly working class women. The loss of their wage meant married women and single parents had to meet household needs on less money. The

management of unemployment was women's work and the source of great stress and depression amongst women. The inability to provide for children on inadequate state benefits led many women to question their identities as mothers; many felt they were 'bad mothers'. Being a 'good mother' was closely related to paid employment and the capacity to provide for dependents. Thus the housewife role did not compensate for the loss of employment.

The evidence also demonstrates that whilst unemployed women did not suffer a crisis of *gender* identity, they did suffer a form of *identity crisis*. Women lost their identities as waged workers and with it their autonomy and independence. Married women in particular were thrown back into a 'dependent housewife' identity, becoming the financial dependents of men. Young women became the dependents of parents once again. In becoming financial dependents women lost the freedom their independent income provided and thereby control over its use. The relations of dependence caused by unemployment denied the personal and social development of women and reinforced power inequalities between men and women in the household and between parents and siblings in the family.

It is apparent from the evidence that the loss of independence had a social as well as a financial element. Unemployment was characterised by increased social isolation and loneliness, resulting in a loss of confidence and self

esteem. These feelings were compounded by by negative social attitudes towards the unemployed generally.

The availability of an alternative social role did not mitigate the effects of unemployment. The family did not soften the blow of unemployment. Rather the experience of unemployment made women value paid employment even more. Due to the lack of employment opportunities, some women undertook training in the hope of improving their job prospects. The extent to which Employment Training improved women's access to the labour market is the focus of the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

1. The equal treatment rules allow couples some degree of choice as to who should be nominated as the claimant. However evidence demonstrates that this legislation has done little to change the situation whereby the man claims on behalf of the woman. (Breitenbach, 1989; Andrews and Jacobs, 1990; Callender, 1992) Couples' income is aggregated and in most cases the man remains the claimant. Thus many women dependent on Income Support do not have access to benefit in their own right.

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

"ET: Training the workers without jobs to do the jobs without wages."

1. INTRODUCTION

Employment Training (ET) was introduced in September 1988. ET replaced existing programmes for the long-term unemployed, principally the Community Programme and the "New" Job Training Scheme. At the time of its inception Employment Training was heralded by the Government as "the largest and most ambitious programme for unemployed people in the world" and moreover to be "a massive investment in the future of unemployed people". (Department of Employment, 1988:50) ET was marketed as a high quality skills training programme which, according to the Governments own publicity, would "train the workers without jobs to do the jobs without workers". In Scotland Employment Training is the major opportunity offered to unemployed workers to enable them to return to the workforce. In public expenditure terms Employment Training takes the largest slice of the Training Agency's budget for Scotland. Spending on Employment Training in Scotland in 1989-1990 was estimated at approximately £153 million pounds. (CEI, 1990:31) ET claims to "bridge the gap" between what trainees have achieved in

the past and the skills required by employers in the future by providing twelve months of training comprising of on-the-job training with a local employer and "directed" training away from the workplace. Employment Training also offers the opportunity to gain nationally recognised vocational qualifications and to "update" existing skills. (CEI, 1989) Government publicity also assures that equal opportunities in Employment Training are "more than simply a bolt-on embellishment to the programme" and that the "ET Equal Opportunities Code of Practice has gone a long way to establishing a positive equal opportunities climate in ET". (Filby, 1989:4) Given the claims made on behalf of Employment Training and the public resources allocated to it, one has to question the extent to which it really is the panacea to unemployment that the government claims. Through three case studies of women's experiences of Employment Training schemes in Glasgow, this chapter will seek to examine the extent to which Employment Training improved the trainees employability and determine whether the training extended the range and level of opportunities open to the trainees.

Before proceeding to analyse the trainees experience of Employment Training it is necessary, by way of an introduction, to say more about the trainees themselves and the training schemes in which they participated.

2. THE EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SCHEMES

The three Employment Training schemes were established in the period between 1988 and 1989. Workstart and Training Opportunities are both charitable organisations supported by both the public and private sectors. Povall Employment Training began life under the auspices of the Community Programme. Both the Povall and Workstart programmes offered participants directed and on-the-job training over a twelve month period, with the opportunity to gain Scottish Vocational Education Council certificates (SCOTVEC's). The Training Opportunities programme was a Wider Opportunities for Women course (WOW) specifically aimed at women returners. Training Opportunities required trainees to attend for a minimum of ten weeks, four weeks of which comprised work experience in local employers premises. At the end of the training period WOW trainees were given the opportunity to sit examinations for nationally recognised certificates in typing, and word-processing.

Workstart had two Employment Training projects situated in Glasgow with an overall capacity for 30 trainees. The first of the training programmes comprised two distinct sections: one offered training in carpentry, joinery, general benchwork and restoration work. The other section offered training in general clerical and commercial skills such as typing, word-processing, book-keeping and telephone skills. It was from this section that the three Workstart trainees were interviewed. The second project, which was located on

a different site, offered training in various aspects of horticulture and landscape gardening.

The Training Opportunities scheme similarly comprised several courses specialising in both Youth Training and Employment Training. The Employment Training programme consisted of two projects. The first, known as "Foundation Training", offered adult men and women training in 'business' arithmetic, 'business' English, word-processing, computer awareness, office practice and retail training, over a period of one year. As noted above, the second project was a WOW course specifically aimed at women returners. This offered a minimum of ten weeks training in word-processing, typing, office practice and modern office machinery and working procedures. Five women from this course agreed to be interviewed.

Finally, the Povall programme, from which eight women were interviewed, offered 25 trainees training in either elderly care or nursery nursing.

There was an additional training component common to all three schemes, generally known as 'employment preparation'. This covered job search techniques and "social skills" or "personal development" skills, as they were known to the Training Opportunities trainees. The stated goals of all three training organisations is to "provide trainees with jobs". However the trainees who pass through their doors

are "not guaranteed a job at the end of a work placement".
(Training Opportunities promotional leaflet)

3. THE TRAINEES

Employment Training targets specific categories of unemployed adults: The 'Guarantee' group consists of people between the ages of 18 and 24 who have been registered unemployed for between six months and one year. The 'Aim' group are those unemployed people registered for more than two years who fall between the ages of 18 and 49. Finally, there are a number of other groups of unemployed adults who fall into one of the following categories: lone parents in receipt of Income Support for at least 26 weeks and whose youngest child is in full-time education; those unemployed people seeking training in occupations where there is a skills shortage; returners to the labour market (who do not have to meet the criteria relating to registered unemployment). (Clarke, 1991) Of the sixteen women in my sample, the majority fell into the third grouping; five were women returners and eight lone parents. The remaining three women fell into the 'guarantee' group.

The Workstart and Povall trainees shared similar life experiences. Both sets of trainees were young working class women between the ages of 20 and 27 from the Greater Easterhouse area. The trainees were predominately single mothers with pre-school aged children. There were only three single childless women in the cohort of 11. Ten of

the trainees lived in council house accommodation, the remaining trainee residing in a homeless unit. All eleven trainees were financially dependent upon Income Support as their sole means of subsistence. Both sets of trainees shared similar educational experiences, all eleven having left mixed sex comprehensive schools at the age of sixteen with few, if any, educational qualifications. The school to work transition was strikingly similar for both sets of trainees. With few qualifications only three out of the eleven trainees had found employment upon leaving school in the contracted labour market of the early 1980's; two as shop assistants and the other as a machinist in a local factory. The remaining eight women began their 'working' lives on YTS schemes or on Community Programmes. At the time of interview these state training programmes - YTS, Community Industry, Community Programme, Old and New Job Training Schemes, and Employment Training - constituted the women's only experience in the world of 'paid' work. For the majority of trainees these 'training' periods were often followed by spells of unemployment, or withdrawal from the labour market to bear and rear children. All 11 trainees had been unemployed for between one and four years prior to undertaking Employment Training. The women were at various stages in their respective training programmes. The majority were four or more months into their training programmes with only two trainees, one from each of the courses, having begun training two weeks prior to the date of interview.

There were significant differences however between the TO trainees and the Povall and Workstart trainees. In the first instance, as one would expect of a training programme aimed at 'women returners', all of the trainees participating in the WOW course were older than both the Povall and Workstart trainees. The average age of the TO participants was 40 compared to average ages of 20 and 23 for the Workstart and Povall trainees respectively. Moreover, all five TO trainees were married women with children whose ages ranged from eleven to twenty two and whose husbands were gainfully employed with annual earnings exceeding £10,000. Indeed in four out of the five cases spouses earnings exceeded £15,000 per annum. Unlike their counterparts on the Workstart and Povall schemes, none of the TO trainees were dependent upon state benefits but were financially dependent upon their husbands. With gainfully employed husbands the women were not entitled to Income Support (although one woman had been in receipt of sickness benefit prior to the course). None of these women were in receipt of the ten pound Employment Training Allowance which was the right of the trainees on the other training programmes. Related to income capacity is the high proportion of home ownership among the TO women; four of the five women lived in owner occupied accommodation and all but one of them resident outside the Greater Easterhouse area.

The education and employment experiences of the TO trainees also differed from that of the other trainees. The TO trainees were generally better qualified than their

Workstart and Povall counterparts. Two had left school at eighteen having attained Higher Grades, whilst three had left school at fifteen, one with numerous typing certificates and two without formal educational qualifications. Two women had attended state comprehensive schools; a further two senior secondary schools; and one woman had received a private education in a single sex school.

Generally speaking, the WOW trainees had completed their formal schooling and entered the world of paid work during the late 1960's and early 1970's; a time of labour market expansion in Scotland. As a consequence they experienced a more favourable transition from school to work than their younger counterparts on the Povall and Workstart programmes, who at the time of leaving school were confronted with the harsh realities of the recessionary and severely contracted Scottish labour market of the early 1980's. The older cohort of women recollected the transition to work as 'the school gates closing and the factory gates opening':

"In my time there wisnae the same emphasis oan people leavin' school wi' certificates. If ye had a job that wis whit wis important. Getting a job wis important. Most of us at that time left tae work. In ma class they went tae work in the Canda in the Queenslie estate. You seemed tae go right out of school and straight intae the Canda or Templetons the carpet factory. It's no' like the noo. If ye had a job it didnae seem tae matter the same. I honestly don't think there wis anybody at school wi' me sat exams."

(Barbara: Training Opportunities)

In general life-cycle terms, the TO participants fell into the 'Traditional' employment pattern outlined in Chapter Three; they entered full-time employment upon leaving school, withdrew from paid employment upon the birth of their first child and remained at home childrearing for at least two years before resuming paid work on a part-time or temporary basis. Only one woman returned to work between the births of her children. For three of the women Employment Training was their first experience of a training programme. The other two women had been on Community Programmes prior to their recruitment to Employment Training.

All five women began their training in May 1990. At the time of interview all the women had completed the six weeks directed training at the training centre and were waiting to be placed on employers premises for work experience. Whilst awaiting placement the women were using the training centre resources to prepare for their forthcoming exams.

4. RECRUITMENT TO EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

In line with one of the fundamental principles of Employment Training, the vast majority of the trainees had been recruited to Employment Training on a voluntary basis. Overall, eight women had been recruited to ET by word-of-mouth, mainly through friends who were either participating in the training themselves or who had recently completed

training. This type of recruitment strategy was more common to the Povall and Workstart schemes. Four out of the five trainees on the Training Opportunities course had been recruited through an advertisement in a Glasgow free newspaper. Job Centres accounted for the recruitment of a further two trainees. The remaining two women alleged that they had been coerced onto ET by Claimant Advisors via Restart interviews. Angela, a young single woman from Povall Employment Training recounted her conversation with a Claimant Advisor:

Advisor: What about trying Employment Training?

Angela: Naw, No' really.

Advisor: I suppose you do want to keep your Income Support?

Angela: Yeah.

Advisor: Well then what about it?

Angela: I suppose so.

Direct coercion seemed to have been used in the recruitment of two of the trainees to Employment Training. In each case the women concerned had entered into ET through fear of losing their benefit entitlements. This and other evidence attained from research into the recruitment of ET participants, leads one to question the extent to which all recruitment to Employment Training is voluntary. (NAEGS, 1989; CEI, 1990; Finn, 1991) The Naegs (1989:4) survey found that a "significant number of participants on ET had entered it through fear of losing their benefit" and that "many people's perception of the programme is that it is

compulsory." Evidence from my sample of unemployed women suggests that there may be an element of indirect coercion. Some women reported agreeing to participate in Employment Training not through choice but in order to "get the 'SS' (Social Security) off your back". Evidence from Cockburn (1987), CEI (1990) and Payne (1991) demonstrates that forced recruitment onto training programmes does not lay the foundations for a conducive relationship between trainees and staff and creates a situation whereby the trainee is unlikely to be receptive to the training experience.

5. REASONS FOR ENTERING EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

The trainees were asked why they had chosen to enter Employment Training. One of the crucial issues which arose from the evidence gathered in response to this question is the limitations within which the women's 'choice' operated. For the most part the decision to undertake Employment Training was structured by a lack of alternatives. Answers to the question fell into three general categories: instrumental reasons, personal reasons and reasons to do with the organisation of the training programmes themselves.

5.1 Instrumental Reasons

It is important to understand from the outset that what all the trainees desired most at this point in their lives was a job. Had a suitable job been available very few women would

have undertaken Employment Training. Most of the women viewed Employment Training as a means to an end; the end product being a job. Securing employment was mentioned by all sixteen women as the *raison detre* for entering Employment Training. The other reasons cited for entering ET - retraining/brush-up on existing skills (88%), to gain work experience (75%) and to obtain qualifications (25%) - were all linked to the primary objective of getting a job at the end of the training period:

"That's the reason I came on tae Employment Trainin'; I'm on it tae get the SCOTVEC certificates to see if that'll help me to get a job. I think if I can get mair SCOTVEC's I've got a better chance of gettin' a job. If I've got SCOTVEC's I could go fur a job that's a nursery nurse or something like that. Most jobs like that you've got tae huv certificates or NNB's or something. So I think if I get the SCOTVEC certificates I've got a better chance of gettin' a job."

(Angela: Povall)

This is not to say that the women did not wish to be trained. The trainees realised the importance of skills and qualifications in securing employment. Their views of Employment Training however, particularly those trainees from the Workstart and Povall schemes, were influenced by their previous experience of government training programmes. This is understandable given that the majority of the women from the aforementioned training schemes had been engaged in continuous 'training' since leaving school at the age of sixteen. At the time of interview the only employment experience eight out of the eleven trainees had was of low paid, unskilled work on Youth Training schemes and/or

Community Programmes. Recruitment to these programmes was not regarded by the women concerned to be voluntary. With youth unemployment at its peak when many of these women left school, the only 'alternative' to life on the dole in the 1980's was as "slave labour" on YTS. For many of these women recruitment to Employment Training was characterised by the same lack of alternatives as recruitment to YTS had been some years earlier. With the Scottish economy still in the depths of recession, and the local economy faring even worse, there were still no jobs to be found when the young women, some of them now mothers, became too old for YTS. The only 'alternative' to life on the dole in the 1990's was the new adult training programme, Employment Training.

The trainees from the Povall and Workstart schemes did not have employment histories in the way one conventionally thinks of working patterns; rather they had 'training' histories. The women had been training for years and still they could not find suitable paid employment:

"I went tae Carmulloch College, that wis part of ma YTS course. I wis in there fur thirteen weeks an' a got a certificate. A' the job interviews a went tae I've taken that but it's never got me a job. They said that there wis a possibility that we could've got kept on but that they couldn't guarantee you a job. But everywhere a go a take the certificate wi' me an' that's the reason I came on tae Unemployment Training: I'm on it tae get the SCOTVEC certificates to see if that'll help me to get a job."

(Angela: Povall)

"Unemployment Training" - this may have been a Freudian slip on Angela's part but from the evidence gained from the

trainees work patterns it is not far from the truth. In the not too distant future it is possible to envisage sociologists studying the 'transition from school to training', as the transitional process from school to the world of work becomes relegated to the dustbin of history as an outmoded concept. As the unemployment queues grow ever longer, for increasing numbers of people, training schemes are where 'work' experience ends for there are fewer and fewer jobs to move onto. Increasingly, the only alternative is 'progression' to the next training programme. That Angela and others like her have now 'graduated' to Employment Training after years of 'training' on programmes of a similar ilk bears testimony to the consistent failure of Government economic policy and the inadequacies of state training programmes in creating jobs for the increasing numbers of unemployed people who pass through training programmes.

One of the principle reasons then for entering Employment Training was the perceived lack of alternatives open to many of the women. This was particularly true of the Workstart and Povall trainees of whom 8 out of 11 gave lack of jobs as a motivating factor for entering Employment Training. The fact that none of the Training Opportunities trainees gave this reason may be to do with the fact that job opportunities in Easterhouse, as in other 'peripheral' estates, are far more constricted relative to the larger Glasgow labour market.

Thus the first set of reasons for joining Employment Training were largely instrumental. Lack of available employment may have been an influential factor in entering ET in the first place but there existed among the women the hope that the training itself would place them in a better position to compete for jobs when they were available. Employment Training was viewed as a way of getting a foot in the door to possible employment.

5.2 Personal Reasons

Other reasons were given for entering Employment Training, reasons which had less to do with getting a job than with finding some kind of role which would enable the women to escape the monotony and grind of their daily domestic routine and the boredom and isolation of unemployment. 69% of the trainees, the majority of them single mothers with pre-school children, cited the need to get out of the house as an important factor in their decision to undertake Employment Training:

"I'd been in the house fur four year an' a hud tae get oot the hoose 'cause a wis daein' the same routine day in and day out."

What do you mean by that? Housework?

"Aye. Gettin' up in the mornin', giein the wean her breakfast, gettin' her ready, daein the housework, goin' doon tae the shops, come back up fae the shops, sittin' doon readin' the paper. Twelve o'clock makin' the wean's dinner. By the time the wean's finished her dinner ye need tae Hoover again, so ye Hoover again. Stick the washin' machine oan in the afternoon, then make

the supper. Then it's the same routine every night as well."

So it was gettin' to you?

"Aye. It wis as if it wis a time sheet programmed intae ma mind. A wis jist daein the same things over and over again."

(Stacey: Povall)

"You need a break. I mean a wis used tae workin'. A worked YTS right up tae a found out a wis pregnant and then the whole time a wis pregnant a never worked. At first a wis gettin' used tae it, no' workin' an' huvin' long lies an' that but it wis just drivin' me crazy. I went tae the social workers an' that an' they says we cannae dae nothin' fur ye, ye need tae dae it yersel. That's when a moved in here.

(Carol: Workstart)

The desire to escape from the daily grind of the domestic routine was also mentioned by the older cohort of women. However unlike the younger Povall and Workstart trainees, this was often expressed in the light of there being less of a role for them in the home now that their children were older:

"I knew that my day was going to be longer, it was getting boring now. I had less to do in the house and as a say ma daughter had left home so that wis it. And then I thought I would have a go at trying to find a course that would show me and I could fit into and pick up some of the electronic office skills jobs and that's why I'm doing this course. I've sort of fixed myself around everybody else and I've got nothing, so I'm trying for me now."

(Marion: Training Opportunities)

For many of the Training Opportunities women Employment Training was a bridge between the domestic world and the

world of work. It offered a transition from a mother and wife identity to that of a waged worker. Employment Training also provided the space for the women's families to get used to their new identities as waged workers:

"A intended always tae go back tae work when ma second child went tae secondary an' that's just after the holidays. A didn't want to go through the process of looking for work because I thought it would be too difficult because a hud been out of the workforce and this wis just ideal, ye know, tae get me re-trained. There's a discipline in gettin' out of the house and the dividing out of the work now that I'm not there, an' at the same time although I have to be here I've had a number of half days 'cause like someone's been sick or the ironing has piled up. A feel it's given me a kind of transition into the workforce. I know when I go into the workforce I won't be able to have the half days and things, but it's good at the moment while the whole family's sorting out this new role that I'm taking on. A think that's been one of the biggest advantages. A really think if I'd gone straight into a job, even if a could've got one, I think I might have left after a week and said a couldn't do this. Whereas the course has given us all time to sort out what's going on at home. So from that aspect it's a big advantage."

(Anne: Training Opportunities)

Employment Training offered a transition into the labour market enabling the women returners to 'brush-up' on existing skills, learn new ones and resocialise themselves into the world of paid work:

"It wis jist being in the house. The children were out all day. Ma husband wis out all day and there wis nothing to do but watch the television or go tae sleep. And there's a limit tae how often ye can visit people; ye run oot a things tae say after two years. (Laughs) I thought this is terrible. The whole topic of conversation wis Coronation Street, that wis it. You had nothing else tae talk about and I got fed up wi' it. I

wis on Sickness Benefit and it's no' really paying me that much tae go out and work. There's little or no difference in it, but just the same I wanted tae go back oot tae work again, a wis fed up. But I didn't have any certificates or anything to go out after a job. And a lot of the work a wis doing before a didn't know whit it wis called. I done a lot of work on the computer and I did know whit I wis doing but if somebody had said to me when I went fur an interview, have you done spread sheets, I wouldn't have known. I didn't know whit they were called. I wis doing whit a wis told to do but I didnae know whit any of it wis called. Really I came back fur things like that, to learn a bit more about it. Also, every job I looked for they were asking for typing so I thought I'll need to get a bit of knowledge of it or word processing. So I needed training and to get back to meet people again. Because see spending such a long time in the house I didnae realise how withdrawn I had got until I came back oot tae work again. It's only noo that I'm gettin' tae speak tae people. If you'd interviewed me at the beginning I would probably have been 'yes, 'no', because a wouldnae speak tae people. A wis actually gettin' quite withdrawn. So it wis better tae come here first before I went tae work."

(Barbara: Training Opportunities)

Many of the mothers noted that their relationships with their own children had improved as a result of not being tied to children and home all day.

"You need a break. You've got tae get out. I look forward tae seeing the kids noo when a go home but before a didnae. Noo that I'm in here I look forward tae goin' an' collecting them and seeing them."

(Marie: Povall)

Training provided a useful transitional period into the world of paid employment, giving both the women and their families time to get used to their new role as paid workers outside the household. This was an important aspect of the

training programme for the women in a way that would not be for men. Indeed there is no concept of 'male returners' in the way that the term is applied to women, for men everywhere are defined 'to be working'. The need to get back out to work, to escape the boredom of the domestic routine, the need to have a life and an identity outside of the confines of the home, played a determinant part in the decision to undertake Employment Training. ET filled the vacuum left by being an unemployed and/or a 'redundant mother'.

63% of the trainees, the majority from Povall Employment Training, cited the experience of unemployment itself to be a contributory factor in the decision to undertake Employment Training:

"I took it because a wis depressed 'cause a couldnae get a job, that wis the reason. I just took it tae get me oot because a wis sick o' bein' in the hoose constantly day by day daein' the same things. I felt as though a wis cracking, constantly being stuck in the hoose wi' four walls. That wis the only reason I came oan it tae get me oot."

(Angela: Povall)

The isolation of unemployment was also cited as a contributory factor:

"It means you're out and you're meeting new people as well. Everyday there's somebody new'll come into that office and you're meeting new people. When you're in the hoose, that's you in the hoose. If you're goin' oot an goin' up the shoppin' centre, 'cause ye want tae get oot the hoose, or go doon tae yer ma's or whatever. But at least in

here ye meet different people every day. It's good."

So the need for social contact was an important factor in your decision to do Employment Training?

"Aye, that's whit it is. Wance a hud ma two weans I mean that wis me, I gave up ma pals an' a' that. I've no' really got any pals. I can't afford tae go oot. The only social life of ma day is in here. Wance I'm in the hoose a close the door an' that's me in. I'm in bed fur nine, ten o'clock. I'm quite a boring person now. (laughs)"

(Annette: Povall)

5.3 Employment Training

The final set of factors influencing the decision to enter Employment Training had to do with the organisational structure of the Employment Training programmes themselves. 50% of the total sample, and perhaps more significantly, 100% of women with pre-school aged children cited the childcare Allowance as a major factor influencing their decision to undertake Employment Training:

"The childcare allowance is an incentive because you're no' payin' nothin' off of you're money to get somebody to watch your child, so that's good."

(Frances: Povall)

"Without the child minding allowance I wid've had tae get somewan tae watch the wean an' no' take any money aff me. It's only if I could've found somebody like that I could've come oan without the child minding' money."

(Stacey: Povall)

The child minding allowance enable the women to participate in Employment Training but it also had a wider significance. In all cases the women's own mothers looked after their children thereby freeing the women to participate on the training scheme. It was the trainees mothers who were the beneficiaries of the child minding allowance. This was an important source of income for these women since they themselves were dependent on state benefits of one sort or another. The childcare allowance was an important source of support for the extended family economy. Indeed the trainees felt that the major advantage of Employment Training was that it took seriously the women's responsibility for childcare. For not only were childcare costs covered but the hours of work were more suitable for women with children:

"I wanted to do something because I couldnae get a job to suit baby-sitters. Then I heard about this and you didnae start 'til ten and I could get up in plenty of time tae get ready and get a baby-sitter."

(Frances: Povall)

The flexible hours operated by the training programme was also cited as an influential factor in many of the women's decisions to undertake this particular course as opposed to other routes to employment. The hours were flexible and were amenable to negotiation to suit each individual trainees needs. Again this factor was thought to be an important element in the transitional period into the workforce. Another significant factor was that the training

itself was free of charge. The Training Opportunities trainees in particular, cited as an advantage the fact that the training organisation met the cost of their exam fees. Many of the trainees noted that they could not have afforded to pay course and exam fees at college based courses.

Thus the finance of the training and childcare costs as well as the flexibility of hours made it possible for the women to participate in training in the first place. Whilst this was cited as the major advantage of Employment Training, in practice it meant that alternatives which did not offer such incentives could not be considered and were effectively closed to the women. Some of the women for example, had considered doing college based courses in preference to Employment Training but found that they could not afford the course fees and the childcare costs:

"A cannae afford tae pay anybody tae watch ma kid and go tae college. I'd need tae pay somebody tae watch her so a could go tae college and a couldnae afford that aff the Social Security money."

(Helen)

Another factor which influenced the trainees decisions to undertake Employment Training was their school experience. There were alternatives to ET which the women could have pursued such as vocational further education. The various options were discussed in the interviews and the women were asked why they had chosen Employment Training in preference to a vocational education route. 50% of trainees cited 'bad school experience' as a reason for opting for training.

Many of the women professed to having 'hated' school and said that this experience had a direct bearing on their decision to undertake Employment Training as opposed to further education. Given that many of the trainees school experience had been negative, particularly that experienced by the young working class women on the Povall and Workstart schemes, it is not surprising that they were resistant to the further education option since 'college' conjured up images of being back at school:

"The teacher he used tae go oot an' have a whiskey in the toilet, that's whit it wis like. Aboot wance a year he wis sober. We hud him fur two years and wance a year he wis sober. He used tae crack up wi' us because we didnae know nothing. You had tae know whit tae dae but he never taught us anything. So at school you didnae bother. Everybody wis carryin' oan so you were carryin' oan wi' them. The teachers had no time fur us so we didnae bother ourselves. But in here we're learnin'."

(Annette: Povall)

Among the women returners, age proved to be a determining factor in some of the trainees decisions to opt for Employment Training in preference to vocational education. Three of the five women participating in the Training Opportunities programme felt that they were too old for college and further education:

"No I don't think I'd have applied for anything at college. Ma son he goes to college and he'll say the college does this, the college does that. But ma first question always is, is there people the same age as me there? I've got this fear of ending up in a class with a lot of teenagers. He says there's a lot of people your age go. But at the same time no. No. Comin' here wi' a lot of women suited me fine. If there'd been men in the

class that wouldnae have bothered me. Ma last job it wis men a worked wi' a' the time. But teenagers, nothing against them, but I just don't know that I could've worked in a class training wi' a lot of teenagers. I think ye are a wee bit slower as regards to computers because the youngsters have been brought up wi' them."

(Barbara: Training Opportunities)

This fear of being too old for college was also to be found amongst older women in the unemployed sample and it structured their decisions about what kind of training/educational programme to pursue. College was seen to be for young people, it was their domain. Women expressed fears of being made to look stupid compared to the young people who were all thought to have 'quick minds'. There were related fears of not fitting in and of being a social outcast because of age differences. Many of these fears are understandable, for years had lapsed since many of these women had left full-time education.

6. SEXUAL SEGREGATION IN TRAINING

That the training offered by the three ET programmes was sexually segregated can be seen from the numbers of men and women training on the different courses. In general terms women were underrepresented on manual courses such as bricklaying and carpentry and overrepresented in non-manual service training such as clerical and administrative work.

Of the 32 trainees registered with the Workstart scheme only 6 were female. The underrepresentation of women generally at Workstart is in part attributable to the type of training offered by the training organisation. Training in carpentry, joinery, benchwork, and restoration was dominated by male trainees. Only two women were to be found training in these areas, both in carpentry. Moreover, no female trainees were to be found training in the horticulture and landscape gardening projects. The remaining four female trainees were training in general clerical and commercial skills in the administration section. Two male trainees were also training in this area.

Povall had 25 registered trainees, 19 of whom were women, with only six men participating on the training programmes. This gender imbalance can once again be attributed to the type of training on offer: caring for the elderly and nursery nursing.

A similar pattern was discernable at the Training Opportunities organisation. The only training offered to the women on the WOW course was in general office work. Whilst a similar type of course known as Foundation Training, was offered to both men and women, it is interesting to note that the training offered was prefaced by the term 'business'. 'Business' arithmetic and 'business' English were offered alongside retail training and computing. A member of the training staff confided that this course, whilst open to both sexes was aimed at male

recruits, in particular those thinking about setting up their own business.

6.1 Gendered 'Choices'

The reasons given by the trainees for entering their chosen area of training fell into two main categories; it was either an area of work the trainees had always wanted to do, or it had been their previous area of work. The first response was more typical of trainees on the Povall and Workstart schemes. For most of these women Employment Training represented the first opportunity to train in their chosen field:

"I've always wanted to do it [nursery nursing] but when a left school a didnae know how tae go about it so that's how a ended up doin' the machinin' job. But it's no' whit a really wanted. Then when ma cousin told me about this I thought I'll give that a try and see how a get oan and see if a can get anywhere."

(Marie: Povall)

Those women training in caring jobs were more likely than others to note that they felt that this kind of job was 'worthwhile':

"I'm doin' the trainin' because caring fur the elderly is a worthwhile job. I'm daein something tae help other people that cannae help themselves, or have difficulty in helpin' themselves."

(Stacey: Povall)

As many of the women admitted, what is being expressed in statements such as this is not merely a demonstration of the

worth of a particular job, but the importance of feeling that you are needed. As we have seen in earlier chapters, so much of the unemployed experience is about feeling useless, worthless and surplus to requirements. Here, in this type of work, the women felt themselves to be engaged in something worthwhile. What is more, the trainees' clients depended on them. Quite simply, the trainees were valued. In one sense the trainees were as dependent upon the clients they visited or looked after as those clients were dependent upon them. Visiting the elderly for example, was another way of meeting people and escaping the isolation of unemployment. Close friendships were formed with clients during the training period such that many of the trainees planned to continue to visit their clients even when their training had been completed.

The trainees on the Training Opportunities scheme chose to train in clerical skills because they had either had experience of such work before or it had been their main occupation prior to their withdrawal from the labour market. Consequently they enrolled in training with the expressed aim of 'brushing-up' on their existing skills:

"It wis office skills I wanted. I hadn't done word processing before but the rest of it I had and I wanted to brush up on what I had already done. Really that's what I wanted to do. I wanted more or less to brush-up."

(Barbara: Training Opportunities)

"I always managed to find employment. Even when the children were small I did office work. But the new electronic office was coming in then and the computers were taking over and I didn't really have any knowledge of that, so that's why I'm here trying to get the skills."

(Marion: Training Opportunities)

Other women were merely brushing-up on existing skills because they lacked knowledge about alternative employment opportunities:

"It wis office work that a did and there is a need in the workforce for this type of job: accounts, word processing. A really don't want to type though to be honest, a don't want a typewriter. So really that wis all, probably because it wis ma past job. A don't really see what else there is except if ye go for a degree or something. A really don't see what else there is for women."

(Anne)

Part of the reason for gender stereotyping lay with the training organisations themselves. The availability of places on training schemes, particularly Povall, served to limit the women's choice of training areas. Several women on the Povall scheme for example had not been placed in their preferred training area because the places were full. Consequently they were training in areas in which they were not particularly interested. However, a more severe restriction on the women's choices was the limited opportunities given to trainees to experience trial periods on the other training projects. This was a particular drawback for those schemes which offered training in non-traditional areas of employment. Having had no previous experience of carpentry it is unlikely that the young women

on the Workstart scheme for example, would opt for this type of training without encouragement. Whilst a lot of time seems to have been spent in constructing the trainees Personal Training Profile and Action Plan prior to the commencement of training, no time seemed to have been spent on deciding which project the trainee should enrol in. Evidence has shown that it is not enough just to make places available for women to train in non-traditional areas, their participation has to be actively supported and a framework established to enable them to succeed in the area should they so wish to participate. (Wickham, 1986; Cockburn, 1987)

6.2 Employment Training and the Local Labour Market

One of the main reasons cited for training in general office work was that there was a labour market demand for people with these skills. Consequently the women engaged in this type of training felt that they were more likely to find employment at the end of their training period:

"Before a came in here I never knew how tae use a word processor. There's always jobs in the newspaper lookin' fur people wi' experience in that. Noo a know how tae use four word processors. We go tae college an' we know how tae use it. I could type but a couldnae type that well and in here we're gettin' experience in that an' a'. You're no' guaranteed a job but you've got a good chance of full-time job in an office when ye leave here. I think it's good in that sense."

(Debbie: Workstart)

The women on the Workstart and Training Opportunities programmes were generally aware of the kinds of employment opportunities available in Glasgow: low grade clerical and administration work in service sector occupations. The women were training accordingly. For the trainees on the Povall scheme there were fewer job opportunities in their field of training, certainly within the local economy in which many of the women were confined because of transport difficulties and lack of childcare facilities. Many of the women seemed unaware of this constraint. In the event that they had recognised it, the fact is that these same constraints operated to confine them to Employment Training opportunities in the immediate locality and so they had little choice but to take what was on offer.

6.3 Gender Ideology

I observed training sessions at the Training Opportunity programme. The typing class was headed by a female instructor and the computing class by a male instructor. In both classes there was no questioning of the underlying assumptions of the nature of the WOW training: that the women were destined to become clerks or typists was an unquestioned assumption on the part of trainers and trainees alike. Although the women received basic computer training there was no discussion of the possibilities of studying to be a computer programmer or analyst for example. The highest occupational position mentioned in the trainee/instructor

interaction in the classes was that of secretary. The women were not encouraged to think of alternative uses to which they could apply the skills they were learning in Employment Training. In the computing class the instructors tuition was based around the concept of doing certain tasks "for your boss", the boss in question always being the generic 'he'. So the messages the women received reinforced their own limited expectations of what the training made possible. They were not encouraged to think beyond this. This was a double edged sword for the women had come on the course to learn 'office skills' partly because they were unaware of any other options open to women.

At Workstart there were several young men engaged in the clerical training. These young men were the source of much resentment by the three young women I interviewed, not because they were men doing what was largely regarded as 'women's work', but because of the superiority they assumed in the office workshop and the power games they played at the expense of the female trainees. An example of the power play was given:

"The supervisor came in fae Falkirk just fur a couple of days tae see how we wur gettin' oan an' that because we're oan this months trial in the office. She wis younger than him, an' while she wis in he wis tellin' her whit tae dae, but *she's* the supervisor. He's walkin' aboot gaun, ye dae this an' ye dae that. I think she felt oot a place. A think that's how really she didnae want tae come back here. It puts a lot of people off their job when they see whit he's tryin' tae dae, but he's just a trainee like us. He think that he rules that office. Ye think he wis a supervisor."

(Debbie: Workstart)

He commanded authority and assumed control because he was older than the female trainees and had been training longer. By virtue of the fact that he was a man he brought a certain status to the female dominated workshop which none of the women possessed precisely because they were women. He assumes responsibility in the context of a female dominated environment in a way the women did not and indeed were not expected to. He may have been a trainee but he carried 'male' trainee status in an otherwise female environment. This gave him a superiority which the young women lacked. Cockburn (1987) notes similar examples of men carrying their status into women's occupations on the Youth Training Scheme.

However the situation is complicated by class, for whilst these Employment Training Schemes may not have offered the women a way out of traditional gender jobs, some of the younger women felt that office work offered a move up the social class hierarchy. The gendered division of labour, socialisation and limitations of ET and reality of the job market meant that the young women were unlikely to break into non-traditional areas of training. For these young working class women however, training in clerical work was a step up the occupational hierarchy from the previous training they had received in service occupations such as shop work. For these young working class girls office work conferred prestige and status and offered them a chance to escape the kind of work done by their mothers:

"Workin' in shops, everybody works in shops. Ma mum worked in a shop. In here you've got the chance to work in an office and that's great. It's great. But you go to work in a shop and they go so what, everybody works in a shop. You feel mair important because you work in an office. You get mair experience along here than ye dae in they shops."

(Debbie: Workstart)

The young women also appreciated the fact that they were being trained in new skills as opposed to YTS which was deemed to be merely a vehicle for "slave labour" and not about training at all:

"It's better in here than whit it wis in YTS. You know you're gaunnae learn somethin' in here. You're no' gaunnae learn nothin' in a shop except how tae sell a jumper or how tae sell an apple. But in here you're learnin' how tae type, touch type, dae audio, a' different things."

(Sandra: Workstart)

7. PROBLEMS WITH TRAINING

Generally speaking the complaints about Employment training fell into two main categories: those concerned with the general organisation of ET and those relating to the quality of training.

7.1 "The Girls from Workstart"

Several of the trainees associated with the workstart and Training Opportunities programmes complained of the stigmatisation they faced on work placements where they were

generally treated as a dogsbody because of their status as Employment Training trainee. The young women from Workstart were collectively know as 'the girls fae workstart' and treated accordingly:

C: Sometimes when we go tae the placement it's great, other times it's really bad 'cause it's run here, run there, run here, run there, while everybody else sits on their bums doin' nothin'. But other times yer treated just like they ur. sometimes it's, do you want a cup of tea an' a' this.

S: That's a' ye dae though in't it, make the tea.

D: When a got put up tae the main office it wis go an' dae some photocopying, or go an' see if this wan needs you, or go and see if that wan needs ye. Ye feel dead oot o' place though, as if naebody wants ye there beside them. And it's oh ye gaun tae the shop? Gaunnae go fur me an' a'? Sometimes they use ye up there. They dae they use ye, there's nae use sayin' they don't.

This exploitation and stigmatisation was not, as first appears, due to the relative youth of these particular trainees in relation to the permanent staff at the office where they were on work placement. Older women from the Training Opportunities scheme also suffered similar stigmatisation whilst on placement. Two of the women left the placements because they were being treated as the office 'dogsbody'. Whilst these may seem minor incidents, other than to the individual trainees concerned, they are recalled because I believe they have a wider significance. Generally they can be seen to reflect public and perhaps more importantly, employer prejudice against Employment training recruits. There exists a substantial body of evidence suggests that employers actively discriminate against

Employment Training trainees because the nature of the training they receive is believed to be of low quality. (CEI, 1990)

7.2 Training Allowance

The majority of trainees in receipt of the ten pound training allowance did not consider it to be an incentive to participation in Employment Training. Only one woman said that the training allowance had been an incentive to her recruitment to ET. The remainder of the women were scathing about the derisory allowance. In most cases the allowance did not cover the costs incurred in training. Women had to subsidise the cost of doing the training from an already stretched Income Support:

"A spend mair than that a week comin' here. Even though they give us one eighty travelling expenses, we still need tae put the first four pound tae it. By the time a buy ma dinner every day I'm oot a fortune. I'm oot twice as much as I'm gettin' oan the allowance. It's sometimes three fifty a day yer spending."

(Stacey: Povall)

"Sometimes you're oot a pocket 'cause ye come here. 'Cause it's costin' ye mair than a tenner a week fur dinners. Even if ye had tae bring sandwiches in every week it's costin' ye mair than a tenner. An ye think it's no really worth your while workin'. Sometimes I wonder whit I'm daein workin'."

(Debbie: Workstart)

Many of the women also complained that they had to buy 'decent' clothes when they first embarked upon the training. A costly venture for most people, all the more so when one is dependent upon Income Support. This financial outlay was not reimbursed:

"Ye got yer trainin' boots an' that and tops an' things like that. But I mean ye've got tae keep yourself lookin' kind of half decent, but we didn't get any help with that. What we got are things that are just no' essential, you don't need them. We got overalls an' that and they're a way doon tae here [ankles]. They say that they're tae protect ye if any of the weans spill anything. Well that's still goin' through tae your claites. Rain jackets. I mean it's just no' suitable. I think they should dae a wee bit mair than that. I mean we've no' even got protective footwear or nothin' in here, you don't get that. I think that's no' right because we've got tae come in here hail, rain or snow. It's no' fair. They said if we got clothing it comes off yer bonus."

(Marie: Povall)

"Ye need tae be nice in the office, so ye need tae buy yerself claites. Well a needed tae 'cause a didnae really buy maself claites before a started in here. So ye need tae buy yerself claites. So the trainin' costs ye money."

(Annette: Povall)

7.3 The Quality of Employment Training

Concerns were expressed by all three groups of trainees about the level and quality of training they received. The majority of women on the Povall and Training Opportunities programmes felt that the level of training they were receiving was too basic. The Povall trainees in particular

felt that the level of training was such that they would be unlikely to find suitable employment upon completion of the course:

"There's no' much chance gettin' intae an old folks home. Whit we're daein the noo isnae really anythin' tae dae wi' it because you'd huv tae dae mair and we've no' got the experience tae dae that, so ye'd huv tae get mair training. We've only got experience tae go oot tae talk tae them and make sure they're okay. But we've no' got the experience tae work wi' the old folk, you know like takin' them tae the toilet and gettin' them tae bed an' a' the rest o' it...I mean I know wan girl who wis here and she got the chance o' workin' in an old folks home and she couldnae do it. She thought because she worked wi' old folk she'd be able to do it all but she couldnae, she hud tae stop it. It wis good wages, that's whit made her fo fur it because it wis good money and she hud done some o' the things. But because there wis so much to do that she didnae know aboot she hud tae stop it because she couldnae do it."

(Frances: Povall)

Similarly the Training Opportunities women felt that they had progressed in their training far more quickly than the course allowed for and in some areas they felt that they were more experienced than the staff who were instructing them. The women said that they learned more from one and other than they did from the course tutors. One woman was a qualified word processor operator and another an experienced typist. These two women passed their skills onto the other trainees. However none of the women were experienced with computer programmes and it was in this area that they felt they were not being taught enough. Indeed the view was expressed that some of the instructors were not fully qualified and did not know how to operate the computer technology. So although the women generally enjoyed the

training, most felt that the level of training was too elementary. The majority of the participants on the Povall scheme felt that the one year training period was too short and that it should be extended to two years to provide them with a higher level of training in the second year.

Yet another shortcoming of these particular Employment Training courses was the quality of the training. Most of the trainees complained that they had not learned as much as they had hoped to on ET. Both the Povall and Training Opportunities trainees expressed concerns that the instructors did not have the necessary experience to train them:

"A didnae learn much at college. The tutor wisnae a tutor she wis a mid-wife. She wis mair or less learnin' along wi' us. She didnae really huv a clue whit wis goin' oan either. We a' passed it. At least we passed it. But she really didnae know that much. She wis just learnin' the same as us an' that wis really whit wis wrong wi' it. It wisnae really her fault, they should've had somebody that wis experienced in it doing that course wi' us."

(Stacey: Povall)

The trainees also complained that a lot of the material they were taught in the training centre was merely replicated at the college:

"The college course wis only about dementia, that's whit we were already doing in here so it's no' really different. I could've just stayed in here and done it. And the tutor we had in there we had tae complain about her 'casue she wisnae gein us anything, she wis jist gein us worksheets."

(Frances: Povall)

Similarly the TO trainees complained of lack of proper supervision. The women felt that they were left on their own to work without appropriate guidance. Generally the Training Opportunities trainees felt that the course content had been designed with younger and less experienced people in mind. The general consensus among the women was that the training workshop as a whole was geared towards the needs of Youth Training and not adult training. There was the feeling that the centre was merely cashing in on the trend towards women returners without seriously considering their needs.

7.4 The Advantages of Employment Training

Most of the trainees said that they were enjoying their training. However from their accounts there appears to be a differentiation made between 'enjoying the training' and enjoying Employment Training. The women clearly distinguished between their enjoyment of the specific training programme they were engaged in and the political aims of Employment Training generally. The following statement made by Stacey, a trainee on the Povall programme, illustrates this point:

"Employment Training is just a farce tae keep doon the unemployment figures, that's ma point a view anyway. It really is just something tae keep doon the unemployment figures."

So why are you doing it?

"I like the work that I'm daein the noo. Carin' fur the elderly. I feel that I'm daein a worthwhile job. I'm daein something tae help other people that cannae help themselves, or have difficulty in helpin' themselves."

As noted previously, one of the reasons the trainees cited for having considered training at all was the transition it offered back into the workforce. Part of this was getting used to the work discipline:

Yer gettin' up early in the mornin' and if ye get a full-time job it's gettin' ye ready tae get up early an' a'.

(Debbie: Workstart)

The trainees also valued the work experience Employment Training offered:

"I think the placements are important. When we're put out on placements I think they'll help us. I think the fact that you can go to an employer and say I did a twelve week course of which I had to do it in my own time, then at the end of this course I was able to go out and work with an employer for four weeks without any pay for those four weeks. Yeah, the placements are important."

(Marion: Training Opportunities)

Gaining work experience in employers premises and without pay into the bargain was thought to show prospective employers that the women were serious in wanting a job and were not just "dizzy housewives":

"I think the important thing about the course is that we'll be able tae say we came on the course for twelve weeks, we will get some kind of certificate at the end of it, an' a really believe it's gonnae be the work placement that's goin' tae give us the job...I think once you can show an employer that you're not a dizzy housewife, an'

that you've taken a notion tae get a job, a think that will make a difference at the interview."

(Anne: Training Opportunities)

The women were also learning skills on the programme even if they felt that the level could be higher:

"I'm learnin' aboot auld people an' i'm learnin' how tae dae reports an write oot logs an everything."

(Dierdrie: Povall)

"I've got more confidence in maself. Before I came in here I never had any. People always say to you, you're okay you've got three children, but you're not really because you're still learnin'."

(Marie: Povall)

"I'm learnin' tae recognise things aboot the elderly like the signs of dementia and hypothermia. The training has been good, it's learnt me an awful lot aboot the elderly, a lot of things a wis ignorant tae like their needs. I didnae realise that the elderly needed so much done fur them, that they couldnae dae an awful lot fur themselves. Noo a think that a know an awful lot aboot the elderly."

(Stacey: Povall)

And of course the women had gained a certain amount of experience in their chosen occupational fields and most would leave with SCOTVEC certification which they held to be important for future job prospects. All of the trainees felt that Employment Training had given them a renewed sense of self confidence and boosted their self esteem:

"I wouldn't have got this job without coming here. I really don't think I had the confidence to go out and apply for a job...I think just being in the house all the time does get you like that. I

definatly didn't have the confidence to go out and get a job and coming here let me do that. Now I'm going for shorthand and different things like that at night school, that I definatly wouldnae huv done before."

(Barbara: Training Opportunities)

"Before a came oan Employment Training I never had dreamed a being a secretary. There wis a job in the Job Centre I might try fur it. I've got mair confidence in masel than a did...This is ma first job. I've never left the weans before, I've always had ma weans roon me a' the time. Noo I don't think I'll be able tae sit in the hoose because I'm that used tae bein' oot a' the time. 'Cause at the weekends I'm pure bored sittin' about the hoose a' day, or else when we're off oan holiday or something I'm dying tae get back tae work. I would never have thought that a year ago because a wis that used tae bein' wi' ma weans a' the time. It really has helped me comin' oan this. It's gied me a lot mair confidence an a'. I know I can dae something."

(Annette: Povall)

Whatever the drawbacks of Employment Training, it provided a vehicle through which the women were able to escape the isolation of unemployment and meet with other women on the training programme:

"I just look forward tae comin' here. It's no' like the weekends; when a stop on a Friday I think I wish it wis Monday and I could get back tae work. I mean you don't get very many people sayin' that but I like it in here. I've got ma friends and a' the other trainees and the lady who's in charge o' this, she's good tae us as well."

(Amanda: Povall)

Employment Training had given the women a purpose in life. It had given life meaning where once, in unemployment, life had contained very little meaning. Linked to this was the

support and strength the women gained from each other. By all accounts the women had gelled together on their respective courses and in the light of staff inadequacies, frequently pooled their collective experience and learned from each other. They also gave hope and strength to each other:

"One of the trainees is a single parent. She went out to work when her wee boy was three. He's now fourteen and it's quite encouraging listening tae her say, och when he gets sick you just do this and do that. That makes you realise there are women who are doing it fine and they're overcoming the problems and they don't even have a husband to support them. I think, if she can do it so can I."

(Anne: Training Opportunities)

8. CONCLUSION

The women in this study undertook Employment Training because it held out the hope of escaping unemployment. The trainees clearly recognised the importance of training in bringing them access to better jobs and higher levels of pay. For many of the women, training was a stepping stone between home and the world of work. However, from the evidence drawn together in this chapter it is clear that Employment Training did not enhance the women's employability to any great extent.

The trainees themselves showed concern about the quality of the training they received. The women did not receive high

skill training. Instead they were used as cheap labour on employer placements which largely provided no real training. The guarantee given at the launch of Employment Training in 1988, that trainees would receive a minimum of 40% directed training has subsequently been dropped. Employers who take on ET trainees are now under no obligation to provide them with any off-the-job training.

Moreover, within the three Employment Training programmes there was strong occupational segregation, with the majority of trainees in clerical occupations and community services. The gender segregation found at the local level in Glasgow is confirmed by national data which shows that over half of all women trainees in Employment Training are concentrated within clerical and administrative occupations and a further fifth are found in health, community and personal services. (Clarke, 1991; Payne, 1991) Men on Employment Training are shown to have a broader occupational distribution than women.

The types of jobs which characterise Employment Training mirror those which have become increasingly available to women in Glasgow over the last decade. Employment Training then is likely to reinforce women's position in low paid jobs which offer poor conditions of employment.

The Low-tech production processes which have increasingly come to characterise Glasgow's industrial base, require low level training. The chances therefore of developing high skill training within ET look slim. All the more so now

that Employment Training is delivered by Local Enterprise Councils (LECs). These are local bodies directed by a board, 10 of whose 15 members must be senior executives from local businesses. Each LEC has the power to determine local training needs and arrange training provision. Because of the composition of the LEC boards there are likely to be few women members. This trend towards (male) employer-led training provision does not auger well for the provision of training for women. I demonstrated the extent of employer prejudice against women in the recruitment process in an earlier chapter. Moreover, central government funding to the LECs has been severely cut from £1,010 million in 1989/90 to £859 million in 1992/93. (Tonge, 1993) As Green (1991) notes, if employers do not spend enough on training, generally it is women who get the worst deal.

CONCLUSION

In focussing on women's experiences of unemployment this thesis has sought to challenge the marginality of women's unemployment in both academic and public discourses. By drawing upon women's experiences of unemployment in Glasgow the research has sought to challenge the dominant ideological assumption that the availability of an alternative social role and identity mitigates the social, economic and emotional impact of unemployment for women.

In the first instance a critical review of the mainstream sociological literature on work and unemployment was undertaken. This critique drew attention to the gendered ideological assumptions which have underpinned sociological analyses in these fields since the 1950's. The chapter highlighted the ways in which sociological discourses draw upon and give legitimacy to existing gendered ideologies about male and female roles. It was noted the marginalisation of women's unemployment within sociology is premised upon the assumption that women are non-workers. Women's waged work is constructed as secondary to their roles of wife and mother. Women then are assumed to have few problems with unemployment because they can become housewives. In this way women are not seen to experience an identity crisis in unemployment for they are 'returned' to their real identities as wives and mothers.

Feminist research on women's work and unemployment has challenged the gender biases of mainstream sociological literature. In stressing the centrality of waged work in women's lives, feminist writers have forcefully challenged the misconception that unemployment is solely a male concern. It was noted however that feminist research tends to reinforce the ideological assumptions of mainstream research where working class women are concerned. Research on domesticity and women's orientations to waged work suggest that working class women are more domestically orientated and less committed to waged work than middle class women. I noted the implications of this line of argument for the way in which working class women's unemployment is constructed. The danger is that working class women's unemployment can be dismissed as unproblematic since unemployment is seen to afford them the opportunity to prioritise their homemaker role.

In examining the ways in which unemployed women from Glasgow defined themselves in relation to their economic and domestic roles, the thesis challenged the idea that working class women revert to a domestic identity.

Both the sociological and feminist paradigms operate on the assumption that there is something inherently attractive about the domestic sphere which is lacking in the world of waged work. The evidence presented in Chapter Three challenged this assumption. In exploring middle class and working class women's orientations to the domestic sphere the evidence suggests that it is *dissatisfaction* with this

role which is the prime motivator in both working class and middle class women seeking waged work. Working class and middle class women alike, were found to be dissatisfied with the housewife/mother identity. Moreover it was suggested that working class women's experience of domesticity may in fact be *more* oppressive than that of middle class women given the material inequalities which structure working class women's experience of domesticity. In exploring the meanings of waged work in women's lives the data challenged the assumption that paid labour is a wholly oppressive experience for working class women. Waged work was found to give both working class and middle class women a degree of financial independence, a sense of status and a social and economic identity. These were all attributes which were found lacking in their domestic role.

Having clearly established the importance of waged work in women's lives the thesis proceeded to explore the consequences of unemployment for women. It was found that women did not enlarge their domestic role to fill in the time left by the absence of paid employment. Rather, in unemployment the domestic role was experienced as being *more* oppressive. The loss of the women's wage led to economic hardship in the household and the burden of making ends meet on a reduced household income fell to women. The consequent inability to provide for children had a negative impact on the women's identities as mothers. The loss of the women's economic identity had a detrimental impact on women's other identities. Moreover, the loss of an independent income

forced many women back to a dependent housewife identity. The psychological malaise which accompanied this loss of identity was explored. It was concluded that the availability of an alternative social identity did not mitigate the effects of unemployment. Rather the experience of unemployment made women value paid work even more.

Women undertook Employment Training because it held out the hope of escaping unemployment and offered the prospects of better jobs. However it was shown that Employment Training tended to reinforce women's position in sexually segregated, low paid jobs which, paradoxiacally, leave them more vulnerable to unemployment.

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APPENDIX AParticipatory Research Methodology

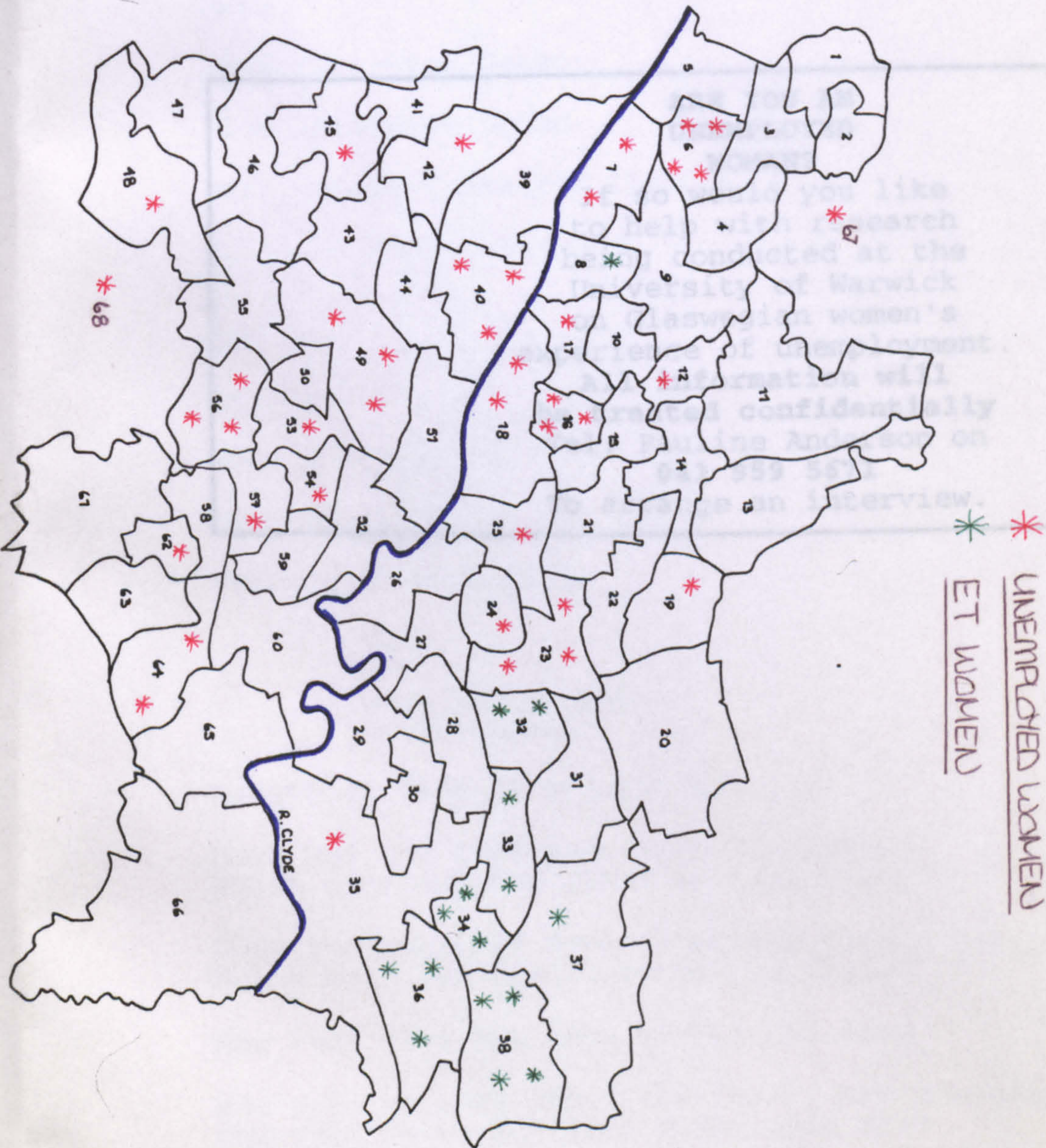
1. Identify with the interests and struggles of unemployed/working class women.
2. Sociological analysis to treat people as primary rather than a secondary concern.
3. Fully account for the power differences in society along the lines of race, class and gender. This stems from the recognition that members of different social stratifications inhabit different social realities.
4. The researcher must recognise the fact that her location in society affects the research relationship. Such social relations must be accounted for.
5. Research to be used as a tool for maximising local human resources to deal with local concerns.
6. The researcher should be involved with the wider educational process of research; teaching, workshops and the production of materials etc.
7. Attempt to break down the division between mental and manual labour. This stems from the recognition that whole areas of experience and knowledge are hived off from working class men and women and is controlled by 'experts'. Researcher and participants must therefore share control over the research process and the knowledge produced to be returned to the wider class community.
8. The realities and experiences of the unemployed women are an unconditional datum. The subjective experiences of the women are to be prioritised since this is the way in which they make sense of their lives and is thus a necessary starting point for the way in which power relations structure society. This is not to deny the need to theorise beyond the subjective experience of the participants, merely that the theory itself must originate from that experience.
9. Subjugated knowledges are to be given credence. The participants are to be given the space to define the issues that are important to them. These may or may not coincide with the researchers interests. Where the interpretation of events/issues differs between researcher and participant both interpretations must be accounted for.

10. The research findings are to be critically assessed by the participants. If there is time this critique is to be incorporated into the thesis. The participants' accounts of the researchers visits are to be similarly incorporated. Such actions stem from the belief that it is only by possessing a critical knowledge of our own reality that working class women can create the appropriate action for change.
11. The reproduction of written products must be in an accessible form.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION BY DISTRICT WARDS

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1. Drumry
2. Summerhill
3. Blairdardie
4. Knightscliffe
5. Yoker
6. Knightswood
7. Scotstoun
8. Broomhill
9. Kelvindale
10. Kelvinside
11. Summerston
12. Maryhill
13. Milton
14. Ruchill
15. North Kelvinside
16. Woodlands
17. Partick
18. Anderston
19. Springburn
20. Robroyston
21. Keppochhill
22. Cowlairs
23. Alexandra Park
24. Dennistoun
25. Central
26. Caltoun
27. Belvidere
28. Carnntyne
29. Parkhead
30. Shettleston



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38. Easterhouse
39. Drumoyne
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42. Cardonald
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47. South Nitshill
48. Arden
49. Pollackshields
50. Shawlands
51. Kingston
52. Hutchesontoun
53. Queenspark
54. Crosshill
55. Pollackshaws
56. Newlands
57. Kings Park
58. Aikenhead
59. Toryglen
60. Rutherglen
61. Linn Park
62. Castlemilk
63. Lenwood
64. Fenhill
65. Cambuslang
66. Halfway
67. Milngavie
68. Newton Mearns

APPENDIX C

The following advertisement was placed in 'The Glaswegian' in November 1990:

**ARE YOU AN
UNEMPLOYED
WOMAN?**

If so would you like
to help with research
being conducted at the
University of Warwick
on Glaswegian women's
experience of unemployment.

**All information will
be treated confidentially**

Tel: Pauline Anderson on
041 959 5671

To arrange an interview.

APPENDIX DInterview Schedule: Biographical Information

Interview Number:

Date:

Time Interview Began:

Time Interview Ended:

Participant Contacted Through:

Name:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Marital Status:

Members of Household:

Name
Age
Employment Status
Relationship

Length of Time at Present Address

Have you any relatives living locally?
Which ones and how close do they live?

Does your partner have relatives living locally?
Which ones and how close do they live?

How long have you been unemployed for?

How many of your immediate family are unemployed?
How long have they been unemployed for?

How many of your extended family are unemployed?
How long have they been unemployed for?

Occupational status of mother and father?
Occupational status of partners mother and father?