Sheffield Hallam University

Food and work - A sociological study of the eating habits of shift workers.

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REFERENCE

ProQuest Number: 10702888

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ProQuest 10702888

Food and work – a sociological study of the eating habits of shiftworkers

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A thesis submitted in partial
fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

October 2003

CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT

I declare that this thesis, entitled 'Food and Work- a sociological study of the eating habits of shiftworkers' is my own work and has not been published elsewhere.

Margaret Mary Prescott

27 October 2003

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a sociological study of the eating habits of shiftworkers. It explores the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to food purchase, food preparation and food consumption in the home and at their place of work. This included exploration of the interaction of attitudes and beliefs about food and health on shiftworkers' diets and patterns of eating, and their perceptions of the influence of shiftworking on food consumption and eating patterns.

The research used a mixed methods approach and collected both quantitative and qualitative data; two workplaces were observed, 120 shiftworkers responded to a self-completion questionnaire and 43 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of shiftworkers employed in a variety of industries in Sheffield. A critical review of the background academic literature also informed the study.

Quantitative data was analysed to provide a description of the facilities available to obtain food at work and the patterns of eating of shiftworkers on their last working and last non-working day. A typology of eating patterns, and profiles of the eating patterns types which were more associated with various groups of shiftworkers, were also developed through analysis of the data.

Qualitative analysis explored the interaction of attitudes and beliefs about food and eating on shiftworkers' diets and patterns of eating both at home and at work, and their perceptions of the factors influencing their eating patterns. Conceptions of the 'proper' meal and 'family' meal were important influences, particularly on female shiftworkers' ideas of appropriate patterns of eating in the home. Factors within the workplace also constrained shiftworkers' eating patterns at work; notably the facilities available to obtain food at work; formal rules and regulations within the workplace; the organisation of the labour process, and informal social norms relating to uses of food.

Gender appeared as an important influence on the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to food and eating. The study explored gender divisions of labour in foodwork in shiftworkers' households and found that female shiftworkers were primarily responsible for food purchase and preparation.

The study found shiftworkers were dissatisfied with their eating patterns at work and at home as a result of what they perceived to be the constraints of shiftwork. The study contributes to increasing theoretical and practical understanding of the social influences on food purchase, preparation and consumption at home and at work.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I explain my interest in the topic of food and shiftwork, and why my research is important. I first give a brief overview of the aims and objectives of the research, then outline the research methods used and the overall structure of the thesis. The chapter ends with a discussion of the policy implications of the study.

1.1.i. Why I chose this topic

When I was a child, my father was a shiftworker in the steel industry, and I well remember the sense of normal life in the household being turned upside-down at these times, particularly when he was working a night shift. During the week of night shifts, he would be going to work at the time when I was going to bed, yet during the day, his sleeping presence dominated our activities as we took care not to make any noise in case he was disturbed. These early experiences impressed on me the effects of shiftwork on family life, and, in later years, stimulated me to develop a sociological imagination to explore these issues.

The second reason for my interest in the topic was a developing interest in the sociology of food and eating. This is an area which has received comparatively little attention from sociologists and very few studies have, as yet, concentrated on the workplace as a focus for the consumption of food. Little is known about the influence of work on eating patterns (Heller 1981). This is an important omission as those in paid work spend a large part of their life at work and some workers may eat their only meal of the day at work. Warde and Martens (2000) have also indicated that 'eating out' is becoming an increasingly important aspect of modern eating practices, and so the sociology of food needs to investigate eating at work as part of this trend.

The themes of food and work were brought into sharper focus for me when I realised that one group of workers whose eating patterns were probably more constrained by the characteristics of their place of work than most were those who worked shifts. A shiftwork schedule can require complete reversal of the pattern of sleeping, eating and waking activities we tend to regard as 'normal' in western societies. It thus seemed that it would be particularly interesting to study the eating habits of shiftworkers and explore how they coped with such a work schedule. To concentrate on the place of food and eating in the lives of shiftworkers seemed to offer a way of linking together the areas of work, the family and health, and to contribute to the developing debates within the discipline. In particular I was interested to explore the meanings workers attached to food and eating at work in order to understand their perceptions of the links between their work, their eating patterns, and their family life.

The aims and objectives of my study were as follows:

- To contribute to the sociological study of food, gender, health and work;
- To provide a critical analysis of the literature relevant to a study of the food preferences and eating habits of shiftworkers;
- To conduct field work and collect original data which would address some of the gaps in existing sociological knowledge of the factors affecting food choice, food consumption and eating patterns;
- To explore the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to food purchase, food preparation and food consumption in the home and at their place of work. This included exploration of the interaction of attitudes and beliefs about food and health on shiftworkers' diets and patterns of eating, and their perceptions of the influence of shift-working on food consumption and eating patterns;
- To contribute to the literature and academic debates in the sociology of food and eating, and the sociology of work, by developing an approach which linked these areas and explored relevant theoretical concerns.

1.1.ii. Why is the topic important?

There are a number of reasons why this research is important. First, although it is now attracting more attention, the sociology of food and eating is an under-researched area. Murcott (ed)(1983) stated that,

> There is... no identifiable sociological literature dealing with British culinary practices, menus and manners, with beliefs and concepts about food and its value, with the social organisation of the provision of meals. (Murcott (ed) 1983:1)

The study of food and eating in everyday settings is important as people spend time and energy preparing and consuming meals, and give thought to, and attribute meaning to their activities around food and eating. Food choice can be used to define identity and express values, as illustrated by the vegetarian's choice not to eat meat. The production and consumption of food can also provide opportunities for pleasure, the exercise of skill, and can give a structure to life. A number of studies have begun to explore everyday eating habits and attitudes to food in modern societies and I want my research to make a contribution to sociological knowledge in this area.

A second reason why my research is important focuses on gender issues. Although there is a growing literature on the patterns of food consumption of various social groups, much of this work has been based on studies of food and eating in the family as perceived by the women involved, many of whom were not in paid work (Murcott (ed) 1983; Charles and Kerr 1988; De Vault 1991). There is a need to explore the relationship of both sexes to food. As Gillon et al (1993) note,

> The importance of men's dietary beliefs and practices as an area for research has long been under-estimated. (Gillon et al 1993:8)

My research will explore the eating patterns and attitudes to food of both men and women in paid work.

In addition, as already stated, little is known about the eating habits and attitudes to food of those in paid work, and of shiftworkers in particular. This group of workers are of particular interest with regard to food and eating as their work schedules would appear to pose numerous problems for the social organisation of eating, both at work and in the home. Put simply, for night shiftworkers, lunch may be at midnight and breakfast may be at the time that most of the population is eating an evening meal. How do such workers cope with the inversion of 'normal' patterns of eating? Do meals have the same social significance for them as for others in the population? Do they eat the same types of foods? How do shiftworkers who live in households with others who do not work shifts organise meal times together? There would appear to be no answers as yet to these questions from a sociological perspective.

A fourth reason why my research is important draws on concerns within the sociology of health. A theme prominent in some existing work in the sociology of health is the identification of social factors which may encourage or constrain adoption of a 'healthy' diet (Pill, in Murcott (ed) 1983). In addition, within the field of the sociology of work there has long been interest in health issues, as shown by the concern to identify the types of work which have detrimental effects on health (Caplan et al 1975; Kahn 1981). Shiftwork has long been identified as having a detrimental impact on health. Evidence from Britain and Europe suggests that shiftworkers are at greater risk of gastro-intestinal and other illnesses than other workers, yet the links between shiftwork and health are still unclear (Rutenfranz et al 1981; Duchon and Keran 1990; Hansen 2001).

> The relationships between night-shiftwork, gastro-intestinal complaints, obesity and diet are not understood .... Data, theory and popular interest now call for an expanded interest in this topic. (Tepas 1990:209)

I intend my research to increase understanding of shiftworkers' perceptions of the links between shiftwork, eating and health by adopting a sociological approach to explore the social significance of food and eating to this group of workers, and discover how they organise meals at home and at work whilst working shifts. Understanding the choices that shiftworkers make about their diet requires appreciation of the social context in which these choices are made, and the ways in which that context is perceived by workers. A sociological approach is able to locate eating patterns within the wider social context of work, gender and family life, and make connections with sociological research on health and illness.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Following on from the introduction, the thesis is arranged in 3 main sections. The first section is a critical review of the existing academic literature on the sociology and anthropology of food and eating, and the sociology of work and shiftwork, which occupies chapters 2, 3 and 4. This is important in providing the context for my research. The second section, in chapter 5, presents the rationale for the study and describes the research process. The third section, the presentation of the research findings, occupies chapters 6 to 11 inclusive. Chapter 6 describes the attitudes to food and eating of shiftworkers in my study. This is followed in chapter 7 by quantitative evidence on shiftworkers' eating patterns on work and non-work days, and this material is used in chapter 8 to develop a typology of eating patterns, which forms the background to the later chapters.

Chapters 9 and 10 draw on the qualitative interview research to outline and discuss the social significance of food and eating to shiftworkers both at work and at home, and the strategies used to organise meals. Chapter 11 focuses on the gender relations underlying the organisation of food and eating at home. The main conclusions of the research, the implications for policy, and areas for further research are outlined in chapter 12. An appendix and bibliography conclude the study.

1.2.i. Research methods
The main research objectives of the study were to collect original data as follows,

- To identify the range of diets and patterns of eating of male and female shiftworkers employed regularly on shiftwork in a variety of industries, both in the home and at work;
- To explore male and female shiftworkers' perceptions of the ways in which their diet and patterns of eating are influenced by their shiftwork schedules, and their attitudes to food and eating;
- To explore the social significance of food and eating, and the social organisation of food and eating of shiftworkers both at work and at home;
- To relate my study to the sociological literature on work, shiftwork, food and eating, the family and gender.

Since this was a sociological study of food and eating, and not a nutritional science study, no attempt was made to consider the nutritional value of particular foodstuffs eaten, nor to measure the health status of workers. I was interested in the social experiences of shiftworkers in relation to food and eating, and the subjective meanings of those experiences to workers. Also, my focus was on the everyday, 'normal' patterns of eating that existed among this group of workers, not on any 'unusual' patterns of eating, such as those of people suffering from various eating disorders or following medical diets.

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The research was informed by a critical review of the existing academic literature. This was an important part of the study as my topic of the eating patterns of shiftworkers forms a contested site; much of the existing literature has taken a nutritional science approach, but I considered the topic could be illuminated by bringing together and linking material from the sociology of food and eating, the sociology of work, the sociology of health, the sociology of the family and the sociology of gender.

I adopted a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to collect original data in order to gain a full and rich appreciation of shiftworkers' relationship to food. Observational research in two workplaces provided me with contextual material as background for the study. Quantitative data on eating patterns was collected through a postal questionnaire to a sample of shiftworkers employed in a variety of industries. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a sub-sample of shiftworkers to gather qualitative data on themes relating to the social organisation of food and eating at work and in the home.

1.2.ii. Policy implications

My research has implications for policy in a number of areas. First, there are implications for the provision of food at work. It is now widely recognised that diet can affect the performance of athletes (Edwards 1993), but there is less recognition of the importance of food for the health, well-being and productivity of workers. It has been shown that not taking a mealbreak in the working day leads to a loss of concentration, increased stress and lower levels of effectiveness (Boots the Chemist, Research and Auditing services 1996:20). Recognition of the importance of food provision at work is important as not only do workers in Britain work longer hours on average than in any other European country (IRS Management Review 2002), but the number of companies providing subsidised, workplace canteen facilities has also fallen by 30% over the last decade (Labour Research 2000:7). This suggests that some employers may be giving the needs of workers less attention, and by highlighting the impact of work on eating patterns, my research might contribute to policies to reverse this situation and improve catering facilities at work.

My research also has implications for the organisation of work. Greater knowledge of the social effects of shiftwork, and its consequences for eating patterns, might lead to a reconsideration of the need for shiftwork, or a move towards the introduction of shift patterns which are less disruptive to health and family life, such as those which do not include night work.

My study also has implications for policy in the area of shiftwork and health. Although my study is not concerned with the medical effects of shiftwork, I am concerned to explore the effects of shiftwork on shiftworkers' subjective sense of well-being and health, and to increase understanding of shiftworkers' perceptions of the links between their work, what they eat and their health. By increasing understanding of the factors which shiftworkers perceive as

constraining their ability to eat 'healthily', more effective 'healthy' eating policies might be developed.

Finally, my research on the social organisation of food and eating in shiftworkers' households highlights issues with implications for social policies concerning family life and gender divisions. I argue that most of the work involved in preparing meals in households in which one or more members work shifts still usually falls on women; employers need to give greater consideration to the introduction of family-friendly policies, and implement work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working hours, to allow both male and female shiftworkers to combine paid work and domestic work more easily.

1.3 SUMMARY

My research aims to make an original contribution to the sociology of food. Although there have been previous studies of the effects of shiftwork on eating patterns, these studies have tended to take a nutritional science approach, and use quantitative research methods. My study is innovative in taking a sociological approach to explore the social significance of food and eating, and conducting quantitative research to gather evidence on eating patterns and also qualitative research to explore food and eating from the perspective of shiftworkers themselves.

My study also takes the developing field of the sociology of food and eating in new directions by exploring eating at work, whereas previous sociological studies of food and eating have concentrated on eating in the domestic context of the family (Murcott 1982,1983;Charles and Kerr 1988). I also aim to consider the social organisation of the whole process of food purchase, food preparation and food consumption by exploring the factors shiftworkers see as influencing the ways in which they organise food and eating both in the home and at work.

In addition, I explore gender issues in relation to food; previous research has rarely explored systematically men's attitudes to food and their involvement in food work at home. I aim to present an account which reveals gender similarities and differences in relation to food and eating. I also consider the relationship of women in paid work to food and eating, in contrast to previous studies which have concentrated on the relationship of women not in paid work to food. By studying the eating patterns and meanings of food to male and female shiftworkers, both in the home and at work, I aim to provide a fuller exploration of the topic.

Finally, I intend my study to allow the development of new theoretical insights, through the development of a typology of eating patterns, so as to provide a better understanding of the social influences on eating and the uses of food. My research aims to incorporate together different substantive areas of sociology and bring together themes previously unconnected in the sociologies of food, work, health, the family and gender.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I review the background sociological and anthropological academic literature, concentrating on that most relevant to my thesis. I consider first the contribution of social anthropology and history to the study of food and eating, then, in section 2.3, review in more detail the sociological literature. Food is important in family life and section 2.4 presents this literature, continuing in section 2.5 to focus on the relationship between food and gender. This material is important in the interpretation of my research findings in chapters 10 and 11.

Section 2.6 considers eating and the 'civilised body', and the close links between the body, food and health are considered in section 2.7. Discussion of the relationship between food and health also touches briefly on issues of poverty, food and health, and class differences in patterns of food consumption are outlined in section 2.8. Section 2.9 presents the literature on food and eating at work, which relates closely to the interpretation of my research findings in chapter 9. Section 2.10 concludes this chapter.

2.2 SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES OF FOOD AND EATING

2.2.i. Social anthropological studies of food and eating

Why, even though human beings are omnivorous, is it that in no society are all the potentially nutritious foodstuffs eaten? Insects apparently contain almost as much protein as beef or prawns, yet few people in most western societies would consider eating them. The Tatuya Indians of Brazil and Colombia, however, eat twenty different species of insect, and at certain times of year, insects account for 14% of the average Tatuya woman's protein intake (Harris 1986:157). Insects are also regarded as a delicacy in China, along with silkworms, cicadas, crickets, giant water beetles, cockroaches and fly maggots. According to Murcott (1986), the Shona tribe in Africa eat locusts and offer caterpillars for sale. The Western reluctance to eat insects, indeed the refusal to even consider them edible, seems to be partly based on their association with dirt and disease, yet this association apparently does not exist in other societies. Horsemeat is also eaten in Belgium and France, and dogs are eaten in China and Korea, but in Britain today such practices are inconceivable (Murcott 1986:225).

Religious rules also advocate or prohibit the consumption of food at certain times of the week or year in many societies. Lent in the Christian calendar is traditionally a time when no eggs or meat should be consumed. Religious houses in medieval England prohibited the consumption of meat, yet fish was permitted, hence the existence of fish ponds at monasteries (Hartley 1975:237). Ramadan for Muslims is a similar period when fasting during daylight hours is required for religious reasons.

These few examples demonstrate that human food choice depends not only on the foods available within that society, but also on cultural definitions of which items are edible and which foods are considered appropriate to eat on which occasions, or by particular social groups. Indeed, cultural beliefs can also be so strong as to counteract the biological need to eat – as those who fast for religious reasons would testify. These examples indicate that,

> *What is to count as food, then, is culturally not biologically defined. Before human beings eat something, they have to have called it food.* (Murcott 1995:225)

This is the starting point of the social anthropological approach to the study of food and eating. In her studies of Bantu tribal societies, Richards (1932, 1939) took a social anthropological approach to attempt to show how food production, preparation and consumption were related to the life cycle, and structure of social groups. She argued that seeking and producing food necessitated co-operation between people, and preparing food also contributed to the maintenance of social relationships. Women expressed kinship sentiments towards their different male relatives through the preparation of porridge, the staple foodstuff (Richards 1939:127).

Douglas (1972, 1974, 1975,1982, 198?) and Levi-Strauss (1964, 1965, 1968) have also made significant contributions to the anthropological study of food and eating. According to Levi-Strauss (1964, 1965, 1968), in all societies there are cultural conventions which link certain kinds of foods and certain social occasions. The cuisine of a society is a language in which social structures can be read. For example, in the USA, people say Thanksgiving with roast turkey. Levi-Strauss was concerned to understand particular cuisines because, in his view, they revealed fundamental structures of human thought, such as the distinction between the 'raw' and the 'cooked,' which he suggested was universal.

Douglas's work most relevant to my thesis is concerned with the structure and sequence of meals in British society. Douglas (1972,1974,1975) suggested that meals follow an ordered sequence of breakfast, lunch and evening meal through the day, and also through the week and year, with Sunday lunch regarded as most important meal of the week, and Christmas dinner as most important meal of the year. In her view, food has meaning within a culture, with 'meals' being distinguished from, and regarded as more important than 'snacks'. Meals, she suggests are for family, close friends and honoured guests as they express *'close friendship'* (Douglas 1975:256). People with whom we have a less close relationship, such as workmen, may be invited for a drink, perhaps a cup of tea, but not for a meal.

> *Food categories therefore encode social events.* (Douglas 1975:249)

Food is also used to mark changed boundaries within the family, such as the wedding meal used to symbolise the new relationship between the families of bride and groom, or the 18th birthday meal to celebrate the entry of a young person to adulthood. In this way, food can be

seen as a code, expressing different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion in social relationships.

2.2. ii. Historical studies of food and eating

Historical studies of food and eating have focused on changes in patterns of food consumption over time (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939; Hartley 1975; Oddy and Miller (eds) 1976; Burnett 1979; Levenstein 1988). Burnett (1979) charted changes in eating patterns in Britain since the Industrial Revolution, while Levenstein (1988) discussed changes in the American diet through the nineteenth century. Others have focussed on the incorporation of particular foodstuffs, such as sugar, the potato, and fish and chips into the western diet (Mintz 1985; Walton 1992; Zuckerman 1998). We also find historical studies concentrating on food and diet as part of a wider concern to document the lives of the poor, as in the work of Rowntree (1901) and Reeves (1913).

Historical studies of food and eating have revealed changes over time in the types of food considered suitable at different meals. In the 1660's, cold turkey pie, goose, red herrings, oysters, anchovies and wine would have been served for breakfast in the more prosperous households, rather than the cereal of today (Picard 2000). We find also differences in the treatment of foodstuffs over time; in Britain in the 1600's, the potato was cooked with sugar as a dessert, not treated as a vegetable (Zuckerman 1998). These studies also point to the changes in the status of foodstuffs over time. White sugar was very expensive and a symbol of status and affluence in Elizabethan England (Drummond and Wilbraham 1957). As sugar became cheaper and more widely available, it was more widely consumed and its status fell.

We also find within the literature studies which span anthropology, sociology and history to explore the development of culinary cultures. 'Culinary cultures' may be defined as the,

> ...*ensemble of attitudes and tastes people bring to cooking and eating* (Mennell, Murcott and Van Otterloo 1992:20)

This work is concerned to explain the development of different tastes in food in different social groups, such as why haute cuisine developed in France but not in England (Goody 1982; Mennell 1985).

2.3 SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF FOOD AND EATING

2.3.i. The social significance of food and eating

Until the early 1980's, food and eating received more attention from historians and anthropologists than sociologists. By focussing on cultures perceived as very different from those of the modern, industrial world, these disciplines were able to highlight social issues related to food and eating which seemed to go unnoticed by sociologists.

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Yet one reason why food and eating are worthy of sociological attention is because of the time and money spent on food-related activities by most people each day in advanced industrial societies (Murcott 1987). In Britain today, around 20% of the average weekly income is spent on food (Family Spending 2002). Also, cooking, shopping for food, thinking about what to eat (or not eat, as some may do), or going out for a meal in a restaurant, all take time, can provide enjoyment and interest, and form a major part of the way in which we live our lives.

The central premise of anthropological, sociological and historical approaches to food and eating is that food choices cannot be explained solely in terms of biology; over time, and across cultures, a wide variety of food habits have existed and a wide variety of items which have been defined as food and consumed. The explanation has, in part, to be sought in the cultural rules which have been learned by members of those societies as to which items are to be defined as 'food', and which foods are to be considered appropriate for eating on which occasions, and by which social groups.

> *What we eat, how it is prepared, when it is eaten, with whom, what implements we use, how we behave before, during and after its consumption, the rules and meanings which permeate every aspect of food consumption practices are all social matters ...* (Ritson, Gofton and McKenzie (eds) 1986:129)

According to Murcott (1987), one line of enquiry for sociologists interested in food and eating has been to explore conceptions of food held within British society.

> *How do people think about food? How do they classify foodstuffs or categorise meals? How do people evaluate different foods? How do concepts of food's qualities link with concepts of health or well-being? How are menus, meals and occasions conceptualised? What conceptions and conventions govern food choice, and in what way might these mark and symbolise social relationships?* (Murcott 1987:2)

These arguments can be illustrated by reference to Blaxter and Patterson's (1983) interviews with elderly Scottish women about food. The women in their study saw 'healthy' food as simple and 'natural', whereas highly processed food was regarded as 'bad' for one's health. 'Healthy' food also tended to be seen as 'home-made' food, made by mothers for their families. These ideas about food and eating link properties of foods with health, and also imply certain social relationships in the preparation of such foods – soup made with fresh vegetables by women at home is 'good for you', but store-bought, tinned soup is not. Conceptions of food thus extend beyond health to encompass gender roles in the family. Other social uses of food are outlined in the following sections.

2.3.ii. The use of food to mark rituals and celebrations

As noted in section 2.2, food and eating are important within many religions. Both Muslims and Jews are prohibited from eating pork and Hinduism prohibits killing and eating any living thing. Religious laws may also specify particular methods of preparing food; Jews and Muslims may only eat meat slaughtered according to kosher or halal rituals respectively (Harris 1986). The

celebration of religious events also typically involves the consumption of special foods. Christians celebrate Holy Communion with bread and wine, and hot cross buns marked with the sign of the cross are eaten at Easter. Rice and bananas in Hindu festivals are used to symbolise fertility (Fieldhouse 1995). Food is also used to mark social inclusion or exclusion, as obedience to these religious dietary laws serves to distinguish believers from non-believers.

Secular festivals are also celebrated with special foods, typically more elaborate, and of better quality or more expensive, than those usually eaten. According to Hartley (1975), the mixture of raisins, currants and sultanas, marzipan and icing found in mince pies, cakes and plum puddings at Christmas is part of a tradition dating back to medieval times, when green foods, such as salads and green parsley bread, were also used to represent the coming of spring (Cosman 1981). Conceptions of which foods are appropriate on which occasions, however, vary across cultures. Cakes, for instance, are used to celebrate birthdays in Britain, whilst in Japan, lobster is served (Fieldhouse 1995).

2.3.iii. The use of food to show friendship

Food is also used to express hospitality and sociability. In many cultures, sharing food with another person is a sign of friendship, and the word 'companion' derives from the Latin for sharing bread. As Douglas noted,

> *Many of the important questions about food habits are moral and social. How many people come to your table? How regularly? Why these names and not others? There is a range of social intercourse which is based on food, on reciprocity, on frequency of exchange and other patterns.* (Douglas 1984:11)

By sharing food and eating together, people show that there is a bond between them. Meals with the family are used to mark an engagement or retirement. A meal out with friends may be organised to mark a new job, and work colleagues may go to a restaurant to celebrate winning an important contract. There are also instances where eating meals may be a requirement for entry into a profession, as in the requirement for pupil barristers to dine in the Inns of Court. In all these situations food is a vehicle for expressing and reinforcing social bonds, and smoothing social relationships, and the more elaborate the food, the more intimate the relationship between participants would seem to be.

The particular obligations of hospitality, however, vary across cultures. Fieldhouse (1995) noted that among the Kikuya tribe in Kenya, it is expected that hosts will feed visitors every time they visit the home. For the host not to do so is seen as impolite, as is any refusal to eat by the visitor. In western society, however, obligations to visitors are less demanding, and a cup of tea will suffice (Douglas 1984).

Why do many societies attach significance to commensality, or eating together? Eating with others is risky, *'both physiologically and socially'* (Meiselman (ed) 2000:122). The risk of transmission of disease is greater when eating with others than when eating alone, and the

easy availability of knives might also pose a threat. Eating with others can also carry social risks because information about what, how, when, where and with whom that person ate is also shared along with the food, and such knowledge may be useful to a poisoner. Hinduism holds strong ideas about commensality; religious rules forbid those in higher castes from eating with, or receiving food prepared by, those in lower castes, for fear of the food being polluted by their presence (Meiselman (ed) 2000:124).

Within western societies, the family is most common commensal unit (individuals eating together at a particular meal), although changes in eating habits and family structure would seem to have increased the numbers of people eating alone. However, a wide variety of possible commensal meal arrangements exist. Commensality suggests all the family eating the same meal, at the same time, together round a table. However, is the family in which individuals eat different meals at the same time, as might be the case for a meat-eating parent and vegetarian child, also a commensal unit? What of the family in which individuals eat the same meal but in different places around the house? It has also been suggested that some people form 'virtual' commensal units when they are eating alone by watching television and so inviting television characters to the meal (Meiselman (ed) 2000:124).

While eating together may express and affirm social connections, Mennell, Murcott and Van Otterloo (1992) remind us that sharing food also defines 'outsiders' as well as 'insiders', and marks boundaries between social groups. Eating different food is frequently used to distinguish and stigmatise social groups, as in use of the term 'Frogs' as a derogatory term for the French.

2.3.iv. The use of food to express emotion

Gifts of food, particularly sweet foods, are used in many cultures to express emotions of love, gratitude and sympathy. It would not be thought appropriate to give an everyday food, such as potatoes, as a gift; the food gift has to be special in some way – expensive, home-made or exotic. James (1990) suggests that confectionery is often used as a gift because it is both food (edible) and non-food (of little nutritional value) thus allowing the intimacy achieved through sharing food to be combined with the exchange relationship of the gift.

Food is also used to reward and punish. The chocolate bar after a hard day at work can be a reward to oneself, while the bread and water diet of prisoners is a punishment. Mead (1980) noted that parents often use food to socialise children, with the reward of sweets if they are well-behaved and denial of food - sent to bed without supper- as a punishment for bad behaviour.

2.3.v. The use of food to demonstrate status and prestige

Food can also be used to demonstrate status and prestige. Class differences in diet in medieval Britain (Tannahill 1988), seventeenth century France (Mennell 1985), and eighteenth century Britain (Burnett 1979) have been well documented. All suggest that the lavish and expensive

diet of the upper classes in each era was one of the means by which this group distinguished itself from the lower classes. For example, whilst the medieval peasant diet consisted largely of bread, the nobility ate 20 to 30 dishes at one meal, many containing meat. Guests of a Parisian merchant in 1393, for instance, were offered a first course of dishes of eels, roast meat, salt water fish, sturgeon and meat in a cinnamon sauce. This was followed by a second course of roast meat, fish, broth with bacon, capon pasties, bream and eel and a third course of frumenty, venison and lampreys with sauce (Tannahill 1988:185). Burnett (1979) also noted that the middle and upper classes in Britain consumed vast quantities of food, with 8 to 12 course meals being not uncommon. Status was derived both from the type of food served – exotic, expensive cuts of fish and meat – and from the elaborate and time-consuming methods of food preparation used.

2.3.vi. Other social uses of food

Food can also be used in other ways. It can be used to express anger or disgust, as in the example of eggs or tomatoes being thrown at politicians, although, more recently, blancmange would also seem to have been used in this way ('Blancmange hurler goes to jail' Barnsley Chronicle 28 September 2001: 3). Food and eating can also be used as time markers, to break the day into manageable parts so that time seems to pass more swiftly (Roy 1959; Young and Schuller 1991). In prisons, or other total institutions, food may be used in this way to pass the time, and food and cigarettes may also be traded for other items and used as a form of currency (Goffman 1961:249). Finally, food can be used to distinguish oneself from others, and make a statement about personal identity. To choose organic or vegetarian food can be seen as making a statement about the type of person we would like others to consider us to be.

2.4. FOOD AND FAMILY LIFE

2.4.i. Food and Family Life

Food and the family are closely linked; many family occasions, such as birthdays, are marked by special meals, and Sunday and Christmas dinners are regarded as important family occasions. However, everyday meals are also important as shopping for, preparing and eating these meals forms the context in which family life is led, and much time and effort is spent in these activities. Cooking and eating can also bring great enjoyment, and to spend time in this way can be a source of pleasure and an opportunity to express love and affection. In reviewing the literature on food and family life in this section, I do not have space to review the literature on the relationship of children (Wenlock et al 1986; Murcott 1987; Charles and Kerr 1987; Brannen et al 1994) or elderly people to food (Davies 1981; Williams 1983; Herne 1995; McKie 2000) but concentrate on conceptions of appropriate meals in Britain today, and the argument that the 'family' meal is declining.

2.4.ii. Family meals - the 'proper' meal

An important theme in the literature has been exploration of ideas about what counts as a 'meal'. Douglas's (1972) distinction between 'meals' and 'snacks' has already been noted; she also drew attention to 'meals' as occasions requiring organisation and planning, such as a laid table, and the meal itself being organised in terms of courses, and involving specific combinations of food, such as meat and two vegetables. Importantly, 'meals' involve social relationships, with some degree of intimacy being assumed between those who routinely eat together.

These ideas were developed by Murcott (1982), who found in her research in South Wales that young women with children had clear ideas about the composition and preparation of 'proper' meals. The 'proper' meal was the 'cooked dinner', of meat, potatoes, an additional vegetable and gravy. (Murcott 1982:677). It was seen as the main meal of the day, the most appropriate meal to provide for a family, and important for the family's health and well-being.

Charles and Kerr (1988) also found the notion of the 'proper' meal was widespread. They argued that not only were certain foods essential to the notion of the 'proper meal' – the meat must be roasted - but that the social context of the 'proper' meal was also important. 'Proper' meals were eaten by all family members, sitting together round the table, and were seen as a central part of 'proper' family life. Indeed, Charles and Kerr (1988) suggested that the presence of all family members was essential for a meal to be considered a 'proper' meal. If the male member of the family was absent at the time when the 'proper' meal was usually served, this had an effect on the content of the meal. Women would not go to the trouble of making a 'proper', cooked meal just for themselves. The 'proper' meal was thus defined by the *social relationships within which it is prepared, cooked and eaten'* (Charles and Kerr 1988:23).

The authors argued further that there were strong gendered assumptions about the provision of 'proper' meals. Such meals should be prepared by women.

> *...an important aspect of women's role within the family is to provide proper family meals for men and children. The woman-wife-mother prepares and cooks food that is 'wholesome' and nutritious, the epitome of 'good, home-cooking'.* (Charles and Kerr 1988:17)

Indeed, the cooking and eating of 'proper' meals defined families as 'proper' families. The shared experience of eating the same food, and of eating together, as at Sunday dinner, or Xmas lunch, served to unite members of the family and identify them as a group. As the authors noted,

> *... food is important to the social reproduction of the family in both its nuclear and extended forms, and that food practices help to maintain and reinforce a coherent ideology of the family throughout the social structure.* (Charles and Kerr 1988:17)

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Other studies of food and family life have developed the theme of the 'proper' meal. Kemmer et al (1998) found that the young, cohabiting couples they studied felt that eating a meal together was an important part of their life together. Sociological studies of reconstituted families have also pointed to the importance of shared meals in creating a sense of family. Burgoyne and Clarke (1983) found many of the reconstituted families they studied attached great importance to the traditional Sunday dinner of meat, roast potatoes, vegetables and gravy, suggesting that the provision of such meals was seen as important part of the routine of a settled and stable family life (Burgoyne and Clarke 1983:158).

Although sociological research has revealed the significance of food in family life, studies have tended to concentrate on the relationship of women, rather than men, to food, and on the place of food and eating in particular types of families at a particular stage in the life course, i.e. nuclear families with young children. There is a need for research into eating in other types of household, and more analysis of the effects of such factors as social class, economic status, age and life-course stage on food and eating in the family (Bell and Valentine 1997; Kemmer et al 1998).

2.4.iii. The decline of the 'family' meal?

It has been suggested that the consumption of snacks between meals, and eating whilst doing other things, or 'on the hoof', rather than seated with the family round a table, has led to a decline in the 'family meal' (Murcott 1997:32).' Others argue that the use of pre-prepared, convenience foods has led to a 'desocialised' form of eating, in which family members eat different meals at separate times, according to their individual preferences and time schedules (Mintz 1985). The shared, family meal has become 'marginalised' (Falk 1994:30). In explaining this apparent trend, some commentators blame parents.

> *Parents today are lazy...these days it is an easy option to plonk a child in front of the television at mealtimes...* John Morgan, in The Guardian 29.9.1997

Others, however, point to social and economic changes which have made it more difficult for the family to gather together to eat at the same time. More 'flexible' working patterns, the increase in the number of single-person households, leisure commitments, more eating out, health concerns, financial constraints and changes in the attitudes of women towards domestic work have all influenced the organisation of family meals and made shared family meals more difficult to achieve (Marshall (ed) 1995: 279). According to Warde (1999), the 'de-routinisation of everyday life', resulting from more varied patterns of work and leisure, means the 'social synchronisation' needed to organise family meals is now more difficult.

Murcott (1997) has also suggested that we need to distinguish between the 'ideal' of family meals and the reality. Shared, family meals may be an ideal to which families are encouraged to aspire, yet the reality of family meals for many, both now and in the past, may have been different. Low-income families, for example, might have been forced to eat together because it

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was cheaper to prepare the same dish for everyone. In her view the significance of the family meal lies in its symbolic meaning, rather than in its frequency. She suggests family meals remain significant to many people because they offer a *'daily assurance of family identity and propriety'* (Murcott 1986:122). These debates suggest that what families eat, where, and who prepares it, raise not just factual but also ideological questions, and are not easily separated from views about 'proper' families and the 'proper' roles for women.

2.5. FOOD AND GENDER

2.5.i. Studies of gender divisions of labour and food

The starting point for many sociological studies of the links between food and gender is well expressed by Gillon et al (1993). They note that,

> *Males and females not only eat differently, but have a completely different relationship to the selection, preparation, presentation and consumption of food in our present day society.* (Gillon et al 1993:9)

A useful starting point in these discussions is to recognise that the range of activities involved in the work of feeding a family should be seen as 'work', and that this work should be seen as gendered. De Vault (1991) uses the term 'food-work' to refer to all the *'work involved in providing food'* (De Vault 1991:4). However, attention to food-work specifically was not a feature of early sociological studies of gender roles (Bott 1957; Gavron 1966; Young and Willmott 1973). This view was challenged by Oakley (1974), who found that a sharp gender division of labour existed around food. Food shopping, food preparation and cooking were predominantly done by women. Although some men cooked, this was more likely to be for special occasions, such as barbeques, rather than everyday, family meals. Oakley (1974) also revealed the ambivalent attitude of many women towards food-work. Housework in general was viewed as low-status and monotonous work, and although cookery *could* also be pleasurable and creative, routine food preparation and cooking was disliked (Oakley 1974:59).

During this period there were also attempts to develop a marxist analysis of the contribution of domestic labour to the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production (Seccombe 1974; Kuhn and Wolpe (eds) 1978). The performance of domestic labour in the home, including food-work, was argued to 'service' the present and future generations of workers, ensuring that their physical needs were met and so enabling them to engage in waged labour.

During the 1980's, studies of domestic gender divisions of labour developed which used the 'time-budget' approach, notably Pahl (1984), who showed that women still tended to do the majority of domestic labour. Others explored the inter-relationship between women's participation in paid employment and domestic work, and demonstrated the 'double burden' that women in paid employment faced (Pollert 1981; Yeandle 1984; Westwood 1984). All

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emphasised women's continued responsibility for domestic work, and specifically for preparation of meals, even when they were in paid employment.

> *Women spent all their waking hours working; they carried the responsibility of managing home life and the manual work it involved...Mam made breakfast, cut sandwiches, washed clothes, shopped, cooked, cleaned and generally set the world in order for the other members of the household.* (Westwood 1984:167)

These studies took a feminist perspective in focussing on gender inequalities and power relationships at home and at work, and explored the inter-relationships between women's lack of power in the home and their position in the labour market. As Mennell, Murcott and Van Otterloo (eds)(1992) noted,

> *...increasing sociological acknowledgement of the asymmetry of power between men and women has highlighted the service element in women's share of domestic work. This is nowhere more evident than in the preparation and presentation of food.* (Mennell, Murcott and Van Otterloo (eds)1992:99)

More recent sociological work on domestic labour has been interested in identifying the *particular* domestic tasks performed by both women and men in households in a variety of *different* economic situations, and in identifying how particular domestic tasks come to be gendered, i.e. socially constructed as suitable work for men or women. Warde and Hetherington (1994) concluded that, despite the development of less rigid gender divisions of domestic labour, there was still evidence of a,

> *... continuing and pervasive conventional division of labour between men and women in couple households.* (Warde and Hetherington 1994:43)

More explicit treatment of gender divisions of labour around food are found in Murcott 1982, 1983; Charles and Kerr 1986b, 1988; De Vault 1991; Purcell 1996 and Warde 1997.The broad conclusion of these studies was that women continued to be primarily responsible for the work involved in providing family meals, taking decisions about food purchase, shopping for food, cooking and clearing up after a meal. Some men might cook, but few took responsibility for routine family meals. According to Purcell (1996),

> *...the overwhelming majority of women, even ... those in full-time employment, appear to do most food management work in households* (Purcell 1996: 197)

Murcott (1982, 1983) found that men and women took it for granted that cooking was women's work, part of their role as wife and mother, while the man's role was that of breadwinner for the family. Women tended to justify this division of labour as their part of the bargain in marriage. The man's responsibility was to provide for the family by being the breadwinner and earning a wage. While men might cook at times, this tended to be seen as 'helping' and limited to certain circumstances (such as when the wife was ill.) Routine, everyday cooking was the wife's job and she tended to see her role as that of 'refuelling' the man at mealtimes so that he could

continue to go out to work. Charles and Kerr (1988) found a similar relationship between food and gender in their study of young mothers. Women tended to be the 'servers' of food, cooking and providing food for others, while men were the 'providers' (Charles and Kerr 1988:63). Women's participation in food work was strongly associated with the family ideology that a woman's place is in the home and a man's in paid work, providing for his wife and family.

Warde (1997) also found that a woman was seven times more likely than a man to have cooked the household's last main meal and five times more likely to have prepared a packed lunch. He noted that the only task men were more likely to have done was cooking a barbeque. Overall, Warde (1997) found more frequent involvement by men in food work than Charles and Kerr (1988), but this may have been due to the larger proportion of professional and managerial men, and larger proportion of women in paid work, in his sample.

These findings are not limited to Britain; De Vault (1991) came to similar conclusions in her study in Chicago, and argued that, while the particular pattern of gender division of labour around food within individual households resulted from a variety of processes of decision-making, adaptation to circumstances and negotiation, on the whole women fed the family. Of the 21 couples she studied, in 8 households women did virtually all the food-work.

> ...in most of these households, husbands never or only occasionally share the work of cooking and provisioning; wives take primary responsibility for these tasks. (De Vault 1991:99)

2.5.ii. Why do women cook?

Cooking can bring pleasure and provide opportunities for the exercise of skills, but why should cooking be associated more with women than men? The studies cited above clearly stated the influence of gender ideologies as one reason why women took responsibility for family food provision. Cooking was regarded as 'nurturing' and 'naturally' part of the caring for others involved in the roles of wife and mother. Gender ideologies also made the mental work of planning and co-ordinating family meals invisible, such that it was taken for granted and seen as 'natural' for women to do. Thinking about, and preparing food is also spread over time and mixed in with other activities, as in thinking about how to prepare the meal whilst caring for children. De Vault argued that,

> There are few words for this kind of effort, and a pervasive trivialisation of the work of managing meals [results]. (De Vault 1991: 57)

Other studies have pointed to the influence of the employment status of the woman on gender divisions of labour in food-work. Purcell (1996) found that households composed of two full-time employed adults were more likely to share shopping and food preparation tasks than households where the female partner either did not work outside the home, or worked part-time. Warde (1997) also suggested that men were more likely to cook the family meal in households where the woman was in full-time paid employment. According to Murcott (1982, 1983) and

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Charles and Kerr (1988), women gave men's food preferences priority when planning and cooking family meals as men were felt to 'deserve' substantial meals because they went 'out' to work. Women regarded their work in the home as not requiring such expenditure of energy and hence they needed less food. The birth of children has also been seen as often leading to many couples adopting, '...a more sharply demarcated division of labour' (Charles and Kerr 1988:60) as the woman tended to leave paid work to stay at home to look after the children. In these circumstances, women assumed greater responsibility for family food provision.

More recent studies have suggested that gender divisions of labour around meals may have changed substantially in recent years as a result of changing attitudes and social and economic changes. Kemmer et al (1998) found that the man was the main cook in two households in their study of 22 cohabiting couples in Scotland, and seven couples shared food preparation and shopping. The authors concluded,

> There was a great deal of negotiation and adaptation in food choice and eating habits.
> (Kemmer et al 1998:68)

The theme of negotiation in family relationships and responsibilities, first raised by Finch and Mason (1993), has also been stressed by Valentine (1999), who argues there is a need to understand how patterns of eating may be negotiated and contested and a recognition that households can be 'sites of multiple and sometimes contradictory consumption practices' (Valentine 1999:491).

2.5.iii. Gender and food consumption

Differences in the diets of men and women have been identified by several studies, with women tending to choose foods seen as more 'healthy', such as wholemeal bread and salads (Gregory et al 1990). The importance of meat in men's diets has also been noted (Twigg 1983; Kerr and Charles 1986; Wilson 1989). Men also tend to eat out in restaurants, cafes, canteens and pubs or buy take-away, fast foods more often than women (Gregory et al 1990). These findings are relevant to my study as they suggest that the type and quality of food provided by commercial and workplace caterers may be more likely to appeal to men than women. According to Wood (1990), the British restaurant industry is,

> ...heavily oriented towards male tastes, preferences and spending power.   (Wood 1990:5)

Sociological studies of gender differences in food consumption have argued that family food consumption varies according to the individual's status in the family (Delphy 1979; Murcott 1982, 1983 and Charles and Kerr (1986b,1988). In her study of French peasant families, Delphy (1979) found that meat was reserved for the male head of the household, who was accorded the highest status, and consequently ate larger quantities of, and the best quality, food. Vegetables alone were thought suitable food for women and children. Charles and Kerr (1988) also found men consumed larger quantities of food than women or children, and more of the

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'higher' status foods, such as steak. They suggested that, within the dominant food ideology of western societies, certain foods are accorded a higher status than others. In Britain, meat is given higher status than other foods, and different types of meat accorded different amounts of status, with steak given high status and low status given to processed meat, such as beefburgers. Red meat, in particular, was associated with men and masculinity and carried connotations of strength and aggression. Foods such as fish, chicken and salad, in contrast, were regarded as weaker, lighter, more 'feminine' foods, and were associated with women (Delphy 1979; Charles and Kerr 1988).

2.6. FOOD AND THE BODY

2.6.i. Food and the 'civilised' body

The link between food and the body is clear – we are literally what we eat in that the food we eat provides the energy and nutrients we need to maintain our body as a living organism. Yet, as the literature of the sociology of the body has emphasised (Turner 1984;Featherstone et al (eds) 1991; , the body is also socially constructed; within contemporary society, images of the 'body beautiful' are presented by the media, the fashion industry, and health educationalists, against which we compare our own body, perhaps dieting or taking exercise to change our shape or weight. In this section I briefly summarise the literature in the developing field of the sociology of the body, concentrating on themes most relevant to my thesis.

One theme within this literature concerns control and regulation of the body. Elias (1978) suggested that a 'civilising process' has taken place in western societies since the Middle Ages, in which the performance of natural bodily functions has come to be seen as embarrassing, shameful and indecent. Codes of conduct and etiquette developed around eating, spitting, and urinating, which once took place in public, calling for greater self-control over bodily functions. The result, Elias claimed, was the 'civilised body'. Mennell (1985) took these ideas further to explore how notions of appropriate table manners developed around eating. In medieval times, people would eat with their hands, from a common pot, putting half-eaten food back into the pot or spitting it on to the floor. More refined manners, such as use of a knife and fork, developed first in court society, but later spread more widely. Table manners, Mennell (1985) suggested, involved control over the body. Greed came to be seen as vulgar, and delicate, refined manners the height of good taste.

In his discussion of how bodies are controlled and regulated in society, the work of Foucault (1979) has, perhaps, made the most significant contribution to the sociology of the body. In his view the change from pre-modern to modern forms of society meant a change in the form of power. Sovereign power, in which power resided in the body of the sovereign and was exercised on the body of the subject, as in physical torture, came to be replaced by disciplinary power, in which prisoners were controlled by the organisation of physical space. A number of institutions in modern society served to produce 'docile' bodies. Institutions, such as schools,

hospitals, and prisons, examine bodies and information about them is processed, individuals are assessed and corrections made. The collection of information through which bodies were monitored became particularly important In modern health centres and hospitals, babies are weighed, their weights compared with some standard which has been deemed appropriate, and the diet of those judged too heavy or too light modified. Notions of 'normal' body size and weight are learned and individuals attempt to present and maintain their bodies in line with these expectations.

2.6.ii. Feminist contributions to the sociology of the body

Feminist writers have made important contributions to the sociology of the body in exploring women's relationship to food, eating and their own bodies (Orbach 1978, 1986; Lawrence (ed) 1987; Charles and Kerr 1986b; Bordo 1993). This work suggested that the ideal feminine body in western societies was one which was slim and youthful. A slim body was also seen as sexually attractive and healthy. Bombarded with these images, many women felt dissatisfied with their own bodies, as Bordo (1993) noted. Few women accept themselves as they are (Charles and Kerr 1986b:545), and most women feel troubled and uneasy about their bodies and the amount of food they eat (Lawrence (ed) 1987:12).

Such images, Chernin (1978,1986), and others, have argued, contribute to a 'tyranny of slenderness'. Both sexes, but particularly women, feel under pressure to eat less, lose weight and reduce their body size so that it will conform to the ideal and be sexually attractive. Yet there is also a contradiction in women's attitudes to food and eating as they are expected to deny themselves food while being also expected as wives and mothers to provide their partners and children with healthy, nutritious meals.

Some take dieting to extremes and develop eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia. Anorexia is less about food and weight loss than discipline and denial (Bruch 1974; MacSween 1993). Starvation is a means of achieving control over one's body, and cravings for food, with loss of weight the outcome. We also find examples of workers in service industries, such as female airline flight attendants, being selected for employment or promotion on the basis of the appearance and weight of their body, and this can cause anxiety over eating (Hochschild 1983; Bell and Valentine (eds) 1995).

In summary, the growing literature on the sociology of the body has raised the issue of control over the body through restriction of food intake, as in vegetarianism or dieting, and the ways in which relationships to food can be contradictory, invoking both guilt and pleasure. Feminist work has also stimulated interest in media representations of the 'ideal' feminine and masculine body and the effects of such images on the lives of men and women. Finally, there is also a link here between food, the body and work, in the pressures some 'emotional labourers' face to present themselves for work as slim and fit.

2.7. FOOD AND HEALTH

2.7.i. The nutritional science approach to food and health

At one level, the link between food and health is obvious - lack of food threatens our basic survival - but the quality of our diet and eating patterns also impact on health and well-being. This section outlines briefly the nutritional science approach to food, health and diet, then moves on to consider gender and ideas about food and health, and poverty, diet and health.

While today the link between a good diet and good health is largely accepted, this was not always the case. Nutritional science is a branch of medical science and draws on the disciplines of biology, microbiology and biochemistry to consider the relationship between food intake and health. As a discipline, nutritional science developed in the mid-nineteenth century in response to problems of malnutrition and food scarcity among the poor. There was concern that large numbers of British army recruits at the time of the Boer War suffered poor physique, ill-health and stunted growth, largely as a result of the lack of nourishing food available to the poor and working class (Lupton 1996:70). Consequently the attention of policy makers focussed on the quality of the nation's diet. There had already been scientific investigation of the nutritional composition of foodstuffs, identifying proteins, fats and minerals, and the energy value of each type of nutrient. Links between vitamin deficiencies and poor health were established, and consumption of certain foods, such as meat, fish, eggs, milk, butter, fruit and green vegetables encouraged.

Ideas about the proper constituents of a 'healthy' diet did not remain fixed, however, and the literature shows how nutritional advice given to the public over the course of the twentieth century has changed drastically. Current British government advice on diet and health recommends reduction of fat, sugar and salt intake, and increased consumption of dietary fibre (Health Education Council 1983). This advice runs counter to most post-war advice which emphasised the importance of eating a diet rich in meat, eggs and whole milk.   For example, Australians were encouraged to eat one egg and drink a pint of whole milk a day in the 1940's (Walker and Roberts 1988). Nutritionists would now point to the dangers of raised cholesterol levels and heart disease from high levels of consumption of these foods.

2.7.ii. Gender and ideas about food and health

An important theme within the sociology of health has been to explore conceptions of the relationship between food and health held by various social groups. Blaxter and Patterson (1983), Pill (1983), and Charles and Kerr (1988) explored perceptions of the types of behaviour women regarded as 'healthy' and found a widespread belief that eating a good diet was important for health. Others have explored what the middle and working classes perceived to be a 'healthy' diet (Calnan and Cant 1990; Calnan 1990).

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The attitudes of women to food and health are particularly significant as it has already been shown (Murcott (ed) 1983, Charles and Kerr 1988, De Vault 1991) that women are perceived by men, and perceive themselves, as having responsibility for the health of their family through the meals they provide, as noted in section 2.5.ii. above. Interesting comparisons of the attitudes of men and women to food and health are revealed in Jowell et al (1990), Blaxter and Patterson(1983). Jowell et al (1990) investigated the attitudes of men and women towards diet and eating patterns, and found that women were more likely than men to claim that they had changed their diet in the ways recommended. In developing these themes, other studies have explored perceptions of which foods are seen as 'healthy' (Blaxter and Patterson 1983; Calnan and Cant 1990; Calnan 1990).

2.7.iii. Poverty, diet and health

Many studies have investigated the links between diet and low income (Cole-Hamilton and Lang 1986; Malseed 1990; Hobbiss 1991; Dobson et al 1994; Leather 1996). These studies have shown that low income was generally associated with poor diet, possible because the cost of a 'healthy' diet in line with current advice has been calculated to be up to 35% more than an 'unhealthy' diet (Cole-Hamilton and Lang 1986). Studies of food availability (Leather 1996) have also indicated that 'healthy' foods are less readily available in shops than less 'healthy' foods. Others found mothers going without food to ensure that their children were not seen to be eating differently from their peers (Dobson et al 1994:20). These studies suggest that, within a family, the woman may be eating a poorer diet than other family members.

It has also been suggested that single parents felt it a '*real deprivation*' (Charles and Kerr 1986a: 417) not to be able to provide a traditional Sunday lunch. Even though they were extremely short of money, and would not be able to eat properly for the rest of the week, they still felt it important to provide this meal. A 'proper' meal seemed an essential part of family life and made them a 'proper' family. These studies indicated that those families who were unable to conform to cultural standards in food because of low income could feel severely deprived and stigmatised. Ironically, attempting to live up to these standards could cause some families to eat a poorer diet than they otherwise would, as they go without in order to afford the more expensive, but expected, cuts of meat. This meal, in Charles and Kerr's terms '*symbolises their existence as a family*' (Charles and Kerr 1986a:426). These points are relevant to my study as shiftworkers' households may not be able to eat 'proper' meals together as a family as often as they might wish, as a result of their hours of work and may also feel deprived.

2.8 FOOD AND CLASS

2.8.i. Class differences in food consumption

There are close links between the literature on food and poverty and that on food and class. A number of empirical studies have also sought to explore economic, cultural and ideological differences between classes in relation to food preferences and food consumption in Britain.

Tomlinson and Warde (1993), argued that class-based differences in diet may have declined over the past 150 years, but maintained that,

> ...the working class has always had, a relatively, and until fairly recently an absolutely, inadequate diet. (Tomlinson and Warde 1993: 3)

From an examination of data on food expenditure by different social classes over the period 1968 to 1988, Tomlinson and Warde (1993) found a class gradient in use of foodstuffs such as skimmed milk, fruit, vegetables and brown bread, with higher socio-economic groups consuming more of these items and lower socio-economic groups consuming diets containing greater amounts of animal fats. They concluded that eating habits reflected the British class structure and that this was less a function of income than a 'class structuring of taste', as suggested by Bourdieu outlined below (Tomlinson and Warde 1993:9).

Warde and Martens (2000) also argued that eating out is becoming increasingly important as a means of class distinction to display taste and status (Warde and Martens 2000:1). To be seen at an expensive restaurant not only suggests that the person can afford to eat there, but also that they have the time to spend on a leisurely meal and can appreciate fine food. Eating out, they suggest, was strongly associated with,

> ...higher income, more education, younger age, being in full-time employment, not having children, city of residence, being single, male, and higher occupational class. (Warde and Martens 2000:71)

2.8.ii. Food and class distinctions

Links between food and class have also been made at a theoretical level. Bourdieu (1984) sought to analyse how consumption patterns and practices, in areas such as art, literature, dress, music and food, were used to create and sustain distinctions between classes. Through their distinctive consumption practices, higher classes attempted to maintain their social status and position and distinguish themselves from lower classes, with class distinctions being exhibited through cultural and ideological differences in 'taste'. Lack of taste betrayed the individual's humble social origins, while the upper and middle classes sought to display their good taste.

Applying this argument to food and eating, Bourdieu argued that the middle and upper classes preferred 'the light, the refined and the delicate' and developed tastes for exotic and foreign foods, while the working class taste was for 'the heavy, the fat and the coarse', preferring to eat large quantities of bread and fatty foods, such as pork, milk and cheese (Bourdieu 1984:185). These differences in food preferences were also related to each class's perception of the body.

> Tastes in food also depend on the idea each class has of the body and of the effects of food on the body, that is, on its strength, health and beauty... (Bourdieu 1984:190)

The working class emphasised the strength of the male body, which was seen as needing large quantities of cheap, nutritious food for fuel. The sedentary professional class, in contrast, placed less emphasis on bodily strength, and favoured health-promoting, non-fattening foods. Bourdieu argued that eating and drinking was one of the few areas in which peasants and industrial workers challenged the *'new ethic of sobriety and slimness'* by maintaining an *'...ethic of convivial indulgence'* (Bourdieu 1984:179).

2.9 FOOD AT WORK

2.9.i. The importance of food and eating at work
Despite the importance of workplace meals, it is rare that attention has been given to the eating habits of workers while they are at work. Much of the literature has discussed food and eating only within the domestic context. However, there are several reasons why it is important for sociologists to consider food consumption in the workplace. First, considerable numbers of people regularly consume meals in facilities provided by their employer. Second, the amount of time available to have a meal, the facilities provided in which to eat and the quality of the food available in such facilities can all have significant effects on the worker's diet and eating patterns, particularly if no other food outlets are accessible nearby.

A third reason why it is important to consider food and work is that poor nutrition at work, such as missed meals, can affect work performance. One study found that 22% of pilots and aircrews admitted to symptoms such as faintness, sweating, difficulty in concentrating and irritability, which could be associated with hypoglycaemia, caused in part by inadequate feeding as a result of missing meals through their flying programmes (Fisher and Atkinson 1980). Finally, meals and drinks consumed at work can have a special social significance. We might place 'power breakfasts', 'working lunches', 'company dinners', and even the 'tea break' in this category as occasions when the food or drinks consumed can be secondary to the formation, or maintenance of, social relationships between business colleagues or workmates.

2.9.ii. The regulation of eating at work
One contrast between eating at home and eating at work is that the latter is subject to rules and regulations, whereas eating in the home is not. Food hygiene laws apply to canteens and dining rooms; working time regulations on times for breaks must be observed. Management may also want catering services to provide food which meets current 'healthy eating' advice, and to offer equal opportunities for nourishment to all employees by providing food in accordance with religious or cultural dietary laws.

Other regulations may be justified by management in terms of health and safety (no liquids near electrical equipment) or hygiene (no food to be eaten in the dirty surroundings of the work area). Management regulations typically also specify when and where eating or drinking is allowed.

There may also be rules stipulating who can eat where, such as manual workers being barred from the directors' dining room.

Other rules relating to eating at work may be 'unwritten' rules, reflecting the custom and practice of social norms and expectations. An example may be the expectation that members of a work group will share a table in the canteen, or go to the pub on Friday lunchtime. Commensality within work groups can be seen as important in group cohesion, as eating together can reinforce social relationships and social bonds (Fieldhouse 1995). Eating together, and possibly eating similar food, serves to define membership of a group, distinguishing 'insiders' from others who are excluded. The person who chooses to sit and eat alone, or not go to the pub, may experience various degrees of social pressure to join the others, ranging from friendly encouragement to fear of being stigmatised through being thought 'odd'.

2.9.iii. The changing pattern of provision of food at work

According to Heller (1981), although examples of the provision of food for workers can be traced back to medieval times, the stimulus to industrial catering came with the Second World War (1939 – 45) in Britain. In 1940 the Factory Canteens Order required every factory with over 250 employees to provide a place in which workers could eat food brought from home. There was initially no requirement for employers to also provide food, but many did so and by 1945, 50 million meals were being served per week in factory canteens (Heller 1981:17).

Between 1945 and the mid 1970's, workplace catering in Britain expanded, partly as a result of the 'paternalist' view held by companies (National Catering Inquiry Report 1973). The provision of meals was as seen as important for employees' well-being and productivity, an incentive when recruiting staff and important for the company's image. We find during this period, for example, claims that a well-fed worker is a more productive worker.

> *It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that productivity increases when workers eat three substantial meals and supplement them with mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks.* (Ireson 1952, quoted in the National Catering Inquiry Report 1973: 20)

Since the mid 1980's, the industrial catering market has declined, partly as a result of the decline in manufacturing industry (Warde and Martens 2000:36). In recent years consumer pressure from workers for vegetarian food and foods conforming to current 'healthy' eating advice has changed the types of food provided at work. One survey found 90% of company canteens in 2000 offered a vegetarian alternative and 25% catered for religious or cultural requirements, offering beef or pork-free dishes. Segregated canteen facilities in industry have also largely disappeared, with one restaurant for all employees now being the norm, although a recent report found that, whereas 82% of companies surveyed in 1995 had a canteen, only two-thirds did so in 2000, suggesting that some workers no longer enjoy this facility. Shiftworkers were particularly likely not to have access to canteen facilities outside standard hours – only 40% did so in 2000 (Labour Research Bargaining Report December 2000:6,10).

2.9.iv. The 'disappearing' lunch break

There is also evidence to suggest that fewer employees are now taking their full lunch break entitlement as compared to earlier years. A survey in 1996 found over one-third of respondents indicated that they took a shorter lunch break than five years ago, and 70% continued to work while eating their lunch. Reasons given by employees for skipping lunch breaks were *'increased workload'*, *'more responsibility'*, *'shopping'* and *'more to do'* (Research and Auditing Services, Boots the Chemist 1996:6, 8). Other research found that, although a 30-minute, unpaid meal break was widespread among companies employing shiftworkers, some companies allowed only a 20 minutes 'snack' break, giving very little time to eat a hot meal, and no time to relax after eating Labour Research 2000:8). Pressure to work through meal breaks would seem to be extending to breakfast as well as lunch. Reports from America suggest that the 'working breakfast' is becoming widespread among executives and managers. Breakfasts accounted for 30% of the revenue of one Boston catering firm in 1997 (Day 1997).

However, despite these changes, institutional catering remains a major source of meals eaten outside the home. Warde and Martens (2000) found that in 1995, 29% of their sample of 611 respondents had eaten in their workplace canteen or restaurant in the last 12 months, eating on average 1.2 main meals per week. However, they note also that the extent of eating at work had fallen dramatically since the 1950's. One study in 1958 found that 40% of men and 20% of women had eaten a midday meal away from home, often at work (Warde and Martens 2000:37).

2.9.v. The social uses of food at work

There are few references to food in sociological studies of occupations. Studies of lorry drivers (Hollowell 1968), dockers (Wilson 1972) and car workers (Goldthorpe et al 1968) make no reference to workers' mealtimes. It would appear from these studies that although work can occupy long periods of time, workers do not eat whilst they are at work.

Other studies confine discussion of food and eating to the workers' family life, often in the context of gender divisions of labour in the home. A classic study of the coal-mining community of Ashton mentioned food and eating only in the context of one miner's insistence that his wife should have his meals cooked to his liking ready for him when he returned from work. A meal cooked by another woman in his wife's absence was thrown *'straight to t'back o' t' fire'* (Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter 1956: 181).

However, some studies of occupations do, albeit briefly, acknowledge the importance of mealtimes and breaks. Lupton (1963) mentioned the importance of tea breaks in the factory in providing opportunities for workers to socialise outside their immediate workgroup. He suggested that greater identification with the company was encouraged as workers formed emotional attachments and developed a sense of loyalty to other workers from other sections.

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Westwood (1984) found women factory workers used food to express affection between workmates.

> *A woman rarely ate a bag of crisps on her own; it was a way of showing friendship to send it around the unit or offer it to those nearest.* (Westwood 1984:93)

Food was particularly suitable for this purpose because, as Turner noted,

> *The sharing of food from a common table has long been regarded as a demonstration of friendship, for the act of eating together symbolises a degree of social unity.* (Turner 1971:24)

Food used in this way served to demarcate social groups, including some within the friendship group whilst excluding others. Other eating occasions, such as lunch times or the company's Christmas party, also provided opportunities for groups of workmates to associate together around food. In the car industry, workers discussed grievances and tactics with shop stewards during tea and meals breaks (Batstone 1983:49).

Perhaps the best example of the use of food to exclude and segregate groups was the practice of providing separate canteens or dining rooms for different grades of staff, with, for instance, a waitress-service dining room for directors and a self-service canteen for shop floor workers. Different provision expressed social hierarchies within the workplace, with those workers of the same grade eating together, and so expressing their common identity, while at the same time differentiating and separating themselves from others.

Batstone (1983) provided a detailed discussion of the differences in 'modes of food provision' between directors and assembly line workers in the car industry. These extended, he suggested, to differences in what was consumed, the time allowed for consumption, the place and environment in which it was consumed, and whether consumption of alcohol was allowed.

> *In contrast to the style and luxury of the directors' dining room, the workers' canteen is basic: a large hall, with serried ranks of formica tables and steel frame chairs.* (Batstone 1983:48)

The key to understanding these different modes of provision was the degree of trust accorded each grade of worker by management. The assembly line worker was regarded as being in a 'low trust' work situation, and his or her work needed to be closely supervised to ensure it was performed correctly, and his or her behaviour within the factory controlled. Providing for the food needs of assembly line workers was,

> *...comparable with the maintenance of a machine - a strictly regulated refuelling and lubrication function.* (Batstone 1983:52)

In contrast, the director, in a 'high trust' work situation, could be allowed greater discretion in modes of food provision as he or she was assumed to have internalised the goals of the company and to be capable of pursuing them independently. Directors were allowed considerable freedom to eat what they liked, with hospitality and sociability towards clients being seen as part of the job.

Tea and meal breaks could be used by workers to distance themselves from their work role. Meal breaks are 'free' time for the worker to use as he or she wishes, perhaps by leaving the premises for lunch, but food from home could also provide an escape.

> The sandwich box therefore provides a link with the domestic situation and, in doing so, constitutes a form of 'personalisation' of eating, contrasting with the anonymity of the canteen. (Batstone 1983:49)

In 'extreme' occupations such as deep-sea fishing, or in the offshore oil industry, absence from home for long periods gives the work setting a different character as workers live and work in close proximity with each other for considerable periods of time. In these circumstances, food can assume a heightened significance. Aubert and Arner (1959), and Tunstall (1962), suggested that, deprived of other pleasures for long periods, men looked primarily to their meals on board ship for enjoyment and satisfaction.

> Normal outlets such as sex and drinking are not available on a trawler and consequently food has to carry an immense burden of emotional freight.... well-cooked food, new dishes, freshly baked bread and extra delicacies come to assume an extraordinary significance. (Tunstall 1962:128)

Food on board ship could be an important reminder of home life, and so meals had a heightened emotional significance for crews.

> The food is a link with the world ashore. (Aubert and Arner 1959:384-5)

While some still work in extreme occupations, for the majority of workers in advanced industrial societies, work is less dangerous and demanding. However, food can still play an important role by providing a means of passing the time and dealing with boredom. Lunch breaks, tea and coffee breaks provide ways of managing time. Westwood (1984) found many women experienced boredom at work, and eating and drinking, particularly snack foods such as crisps, were used to break up the day and provide a brief moment of pleasure. Roy (1959) also recognised the use of food by machine operators in an American factory as a means of structuring time and dividing the day. Most breaks, he commented, involved the consumption of food or drink of some type, and he noted, in addition to coffee breaks and lunch time, 'peach time', 'banana time', 'coke time' and 'fish time'. Yet it was not the eating or drinking per se which was important, but the opportunities these activities offered for social interaction.

2.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that food and eating is an area of sociological interest which has expanded rapidly in recent years. It is not adequate to consider food and eating only from a nutritional perspective; both a nutritional/ biomedical and a sociological perspective are needed to understand food habits. The literature in this chapter has demonstrated some of the important insights into food and eating which can be gained by consideration of the social and cultural context of food and eating, and ways in which eating is socially organised.

The literature has highlighted the many social uses of food, such as to express emotion and to express friendship. Food and eating play an important role in family life, and some of the most important gendered aspects of food preparation and consumption take place in the context of the family. We also find studies of food at work, such as the development of different patterns of food provision in the workplace, and discussion of the ways in which eating at work is changing in the debate on the 'disappearing lunch break'. Food and eating at work have been usefully linked to sociological concerns with hierarchies at work, and relationships between social groups, themes very relevant to my thesis. In the following chapter, I continue to review the background literature to my study and turn to the literature on the sociology of work.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I review the main themes within the sociological literature on work relevant to my thesis. I begin by considering what is meant by 'work' in modern industrial societies, then, in section 3.3, outline briefly theoretical approaches to the study of work, focussing particularly on the implications of each approach for the study of food and eating. This leads on to section 3.4 which discusses the nature and extent of economic and social restructuring in Britain in recent years, and the implications for work and the occupational structure. I turn to the experience of work in section 3.5, then review the literature relating to work and gender, highlighting gender similarities and differences in paid and unpaid work, and discuss the relationship between work and the family in sections 3.6 and 3.7. The chapter ends by outlining some of the themes in the sociology of the body relevant to the study of work.

3.2 WHAT IS 'WORK'?

3.2.i. What is 'work '?

Discussion of shiftwork begs the question of what is meant by 'work'. 'Work' can be defined as *'the application of effort or exertion to a purpose'* (Noon and Blyton 1997:9). However, what counts as 'work' is also dependent on how activities are interpreted by the people involved (Abrams and Brown (eds) 1984; Noon and Blyton 1997; Grint (ed) 2000). The same activity - cooking, for example - may be relaxation for one person and hard work for someone employed as chef. Parker et al (1972) suggest a potentially more useful definition of 'work' as,

> *...an activity that is carried on under conditions in which there are normally demands with respect to time and place and in which effort is directed to the production of goods and services....work contributes something which others are willing to pay for (or which others would have to be paid if one did not do it oneself)...* (Parker et al 1984:129)

This directs attention to the specific social relationships surrounding work in modern, industrial societies, highlighting the importance of the employment relationship in such societies for the definition of work. A person's position in this relationship as employer, employee or self-employed worker is significant for the rewards that are obtained from work, the conditions under which work is performed and the meaning given to the activity. However, in discussing work, a concentration on paid employment, and the idea that only work which attracts a wage is 'real' work, needs to be avoided as it is important also to recognise other activities which involve work, such as domestic work, voluntary work, and work in the 'black', illegal economy.

3.2.ii. The changing nature of work

The particular form and organisation of work in Britain today reflects the transformation of British society from the mid-eighteenth century onwards from a largely agricultural, rural economy to a capitalist, industrial, urban economy. Drastic changes took place in the nature of work, and the

social relationships surrounding work. Work in the rural, agrarian economy was based on the household, and workers enjoyed a degree of economic self-sufficiency, perhaps combining agricultural work and textile production, with hours of work largely governed by the season, and the task in hand (Abrams and Brown 1984; Thompson 1989; Thompson 1991).

The application of water, and later steam, power to production led to technological advances and the organisation of industrial production in factories. Work came to be increasingly carried out within a capitalist employment relationship, undertaken for certain periods of time for a wage. With the extension of the division of labour, work tasks became increasingly specialised, controlled and dependent on the activities of large numbers of other workers, employed to do similar or related tasks. Home and work came to be separate spheres, with workers going 'out' from the private world of the family into the public world of work.

These historical changes also changed the significance of work for the individual. According to Thompson (1991), attitudes to the use of time changed as clocks came to be used to regulate and coordinate production, and workers were socialised into the belief that time was money Capitalist industrialisation, and the spread of a market economy, meant that individuals became dependent for their survival on earning a wage to buy the goods they needed to live. The possibility of surviving economically outside the market economy became increasingly difficult for the majority of the population. While the nature of the changes affecting the modern economy are open to debate (Lash and Urry 1987; Allen and Massey (eds) 1990), it is clear that changes in the economic structure of societies have vast implications for the type of work available, and the numbers of people needed to do it.

3.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF WORK

In this section, I review briefly marxist, weberian and symbolic interactionist theoretical approaches to the sociological study of work, and highlight the implications of their approaches for the study of food and eating. These perspectives informed my analysis of the data presented in chapter 9.

3.3.i. The marxist approach to the capitalist labour process
The starting point for Marx's historical materialist approach is that the most fundamental aspect of human existence is the necessity to work to produce the means of subsistence, initially food and shelter. Work, for Marx, is essentially a social and collective enterprise, involving human beings entering into relationship with others. In outlining a materialist view of history in 'Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy', and 'The German Ideology' Marx states that work should be a creative and satisfying experience, part of being human (Giddens 1971: Swingewood 1975; Ransome 1999)

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Analysis of the way in which production is organised is central to a marxist analysis of society and involves attention to the forces of production (technology) and the social relations of production (class relationships). Marx's analysis of work and the labour process is therefore an analysis of capitalist relations of production. In other words, work in capitalist societies takes a particular form because the bourgeoisie or capitalist class purchases raw materials, tools and the labour power of the working class, or proletariat, to produce goods in order to make a profit. Capitalism treats the labour power of workers as a commodity and so produces alienation. He stated in the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844'

> *What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker...in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself...does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body...man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any but his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating...(Marx 1969:99 -100)*

The process by which profit is produced in capitalist production is explained by Marx's theory of surplus value. This distinguishes between two forms of labour – 'necessary labour' and 'surplus labour'. 'Necessary' labour is labour which the proletariat performs in order to secure their own means of subsistence and keep alive. The wage the worker receives is equivalent to the value of the labour power expended on necessary labour. 'Surplus' labour is labour which results in the production of a surplus beyond the requirements of subsistence of the proletariat themselves. All or part of this surplus, termed by Marx 'surplus value', is appropriated by the capitalist class and includes profit. This relationship creates the basic conditions for the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie and makes the relationship between classes one of both conflict and dependence. The bourgeoisie depend on the proletariat to produce surplus value and hence profit, yet the circumstances under which profit is extracted creates a conflict of interest between classes, as the proletariat does not receive in wages the full value of what it produces.

Hence, Marx's theory of the labour process is also a theory of class. In all class societies, Marx argues, we find a class of owners of the means of production and a class of producers of goods and services. The class of direct producers (proletariat) is forced to sell its labour power (its capacity to produce goods and services) to the owners of the means of production in order to survive as it does not itself own or control the means of production or the products of its labour.

When applied to the analysis of work, Marx's model sees work relationships under capitalism as characterised by the conditions of the sale and purchase of labour power, which are determined by the nature of the class struggle. The proletariat seek to alter the conditions of the labour market in their favour and reduce the rate of exploitation, while the bourgeoisie seek to increase the rate of exploitation by changing conditions in their favour.

Marx termed the form of direct, capitalist control over labour used in the early stages of capitalist development, 'factory despotism', and argued that, with capitalist industrialisation, the

processes of mechanisation, more indirect forms of capitalist control of labour were used. Introduction of the division of labour increased productivity by deskilling, cheapening and controlling labour, and productivity was also increased by increasing the length of the working day. Marx described this as the 'formal' subordination of labour (Thompson 1989: 41). Hence during the early period of capitalism, employers insisted on very long hours of work, imposing harsh fines for poor time-keeping. Class struggles at this time tended to focus on issues related to the length of the working day (Thompson 1991).

In later stages of capitalism, Marx argued there was a greater reliance on more intensive use of labour, through improved application of technology and the introduction of piecework payment systems, continuous operation, and the separation of mental and manual labour. This he termed the 'real' subordination of labour and class conflict focussed on attempts to exercise managerial control over wages, working conditions and skill levels (Thompson 1989: 41). Although Marx's analysis of the labour process under capitalism, emphasising the key issues of conflict and control, has stimulated much debate among later commentators, these debates are not pursued here as they are not central to my thesis (Hyman 1971; Braverman 1974; Nichols and Beynon 1977; Edwards 1979; Beynon 1973; Thompson 1989).

3.3.ii. Application of a marxist approach to the study of food and eating

The marxist approach to the study of work contains a number of insights relevant to the study of food and eating. The production of food can be seen as the first 'historical act', necessary for human existence and the focus of collective, productive activity. Marxist analysis of the processes of food production and distribution in capitalist societies emphasises the role of private profit in determining production, rather than considerations of human need (Fine et al 1996).

For workers within the food, and other industries, a marxist approach suggests that the central issue for capital and management is control of the labour process, and that this will involve class-based assumptions about the value of labour. References to workers as 'hands', for example, illustrates their reduction to their role as providers of manual labour in the production process, and the need to control the conditions within which an alienated workforce operates.

The provision of food at work may be seen as part of a strategy used by capital to control labour. On the one hand, workers need to eat to replenish their ability to work, yet the conditions under which food for workers is provided are strictly controlled and reflect assumptions about the role and purposes of the working class, with canteens organised like factory production-lines to feed the largest numbers in the shortest time, in conditions similar to the factory shop-floor. The nature of the food that is provided may also reflect these assumptions, with cheap, filling foods seen as suitable 'fuel' for the reproduction of labour power.

It can also be argued that, within capitalist societies, time that the worker spends eating is a cost to capital, and should be kept as low as possible so as to increase the amount of surplus value which can be extracted from the worker's productive activities. In other words, the physical needs of the individual for food may be met, but within the context of the conditions for the exploitation of labour. The time allowed for lunch is therefore reduced to a minimum and unpaid. Analysis of patterns of food consumption using a marxist approach would also emphasise the capitalist system of production as the major determinant in structuring the social relationships within which food is produced and consumed, including access to income to buy food (Tomlinson and Warde 1993; Fine et al 1996).

My analysis of food at work in chapter 9 draws on the marxist concept of the labour process to explore ways in which the organisation of the capitalist labour process shapes the organisation of eating at work.

3.3.iii. The weberian approach to the study of work

An alternative approach to the study of work is found in Weber's writings. The transition from pre-industrial societies to modern industrial societies, in Weber's view, involved a change in the meanings that individuals give to their actions. Europe, he argued, has undergone a process of rationalization, in which traditional and affectual (based on emotion) forms of action have been replaced by rational action. Rational principles of thought came to be applied in many areas of life, including the economy, politics, and the legal system, such that the process of rationalisation became a defining characteristic of modern industrial societies (Weber 1930; Ransome 1999). Capitalist economic enterprise exhibits instrumental rational action as the most efficient and economic means for obtaining maximum profit, as means of achieving goals are carefully calculated and decisions made on the basis of such considerations. As Weber noted,

> ...it is one of the fundamental characteristics of an individualistic capitalist economy that it is rationalized on the basis of rigorous calculation, directed with foresight and caution towards the economic success which is sought in sharp contrast to the hand-to-mouth existence of the peasant... (Weber 1981: 50)

Explanation of the origins, or 'spirit' of capitalism required explanation of the origins of the rational attitude, which, to Weber, was to be found in the beliefs of the Calvinist sects of the early seventeenth century, who had developed an ethic that saw hard work and diligence in economic activities as virtuous. This Weber described as the 'Protestant work ethic'.

Development of the 'spirit' of capitalism alone was not sufficient explanation of the origins of capitalism, however; Weber (1930) also referred to the importance of economic factors, such as the existence of a class of 'free' wage labourers able to sell their labour, an increase in the size of enterprises, increased specialisation and mechanisation and an increase in the size and functions of management (Salaman 1981:49).

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Within Weber's analysis, ideological control over the workforce is exercised through the notion of the work ethic, in which work is seen as a duty, and importance attached to hard work, discipline and self-denial. Rationalisation within the bureaucratic work organisation, however, also produces a centralised system of managerial control, and rules and procedures for the performance of tasks which also control workers.

> *The search within the capitalist system for the most intensive and efficient methods of working was said to result in a process of rationalisation whereby jobs could be systematically ordered, routinised and subject to centralised managerial control.* (Thompson 1989:26)

The weberian approach to the origins and nature of work in modern industrial societies stresses the principles of instrumental rationality. This directs attention to the ways in which work organisations are managed and controlled, and to the rules and regulations governing bureaucracies.

Weber's approach to inequality also differed from that of Marx. Whereas for Marx the main inequalities were those of class, based on position in relation to the means of production, Weber considered inequalities could be based on economic position, prestige or political power (Gerth and Mills 1948). Historical study was necessary to determine the dominant form of inequality in any particular period, although Weber's analysis of work gave particular attention to the discussion of status, or 'social honour', as he recognised that occupations, lifestyles and ethnic or religious differences are accorded different degrees of prestige or esteem by members of a society.

3.4.iv. Application of a weberian approach to food and eating

Certain aspects of Weber's approach informed my analysis of food and eating. The focus on formal, bureaucratic rules and procedures within organisations was useful in highlighting the regulation of eating within workplaces. The conditions in which eating at work is allowed may be seen to be specified by formal rules and regulations created to achieve an efficient workplace. This approach would also suggest that workers exercise self-control over their desire for food through adherence to the Protestant work ethic, which stresses the duty to apply themselves diligently to work rather than seek gratification in food.

However, the element of Weber's thought possibly most relevant to the discussion of food and eating is that of status. The work of Bourdieu (1984), outlined in the previous chapter, takes a weberian approach to suggest that different degrees of status are attached to the consumption of certain types of foods, such as caviar, which is typically accorded high status, while other foods are regarded as low status. Access to, and consumption of, high status foods may be used by high status groups to claim higher social standing and as a form of social closure, to exclude those seen as of lower status.

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The weberian concept of rationality is also relevant to the discussion of developments in the food industry which are said to be dramatically changing eating habits. Ritzer (1993) argued that McDonald fast food restaurants exhibit the features of rationalization identified by Weber. In particular, technology is used to offer food and service that can be easily quantified and calculated, and this produces efficiency, predictability and control over the customer and employee (Ritzer 1993:9-10). Employees are trained to perform a limited number of tasks in a very precise way. Ritzer quotes the operations manual of Hamburger University which specifies exactly the cooking times, portion sizes and burger grilling techniques employees must follow (Ritzer 1993:33). Customers are also encouraged by limited menus, queues and uncomfortable seats to do what management wishes them to do, which is to eat quickly and leave. For these reasons, he maintains, McDonalds has achieved remarkable success, and represents a process now affecting many other sectors of society, such that we can speak now of the 'macdonaldization' of society.

3.5.i. The symbolic interactionist approach to the study of work

The symbolic interactionist approach, as developed by Cooley (1922), Mead (1927), Goffman (1961, 1967, 1971) and Blumer (1969), sees society as consisting of fluid and flexible networks of interaction between people, and stresses that attention should be given to the study of these patterns of face-to-face interaction between people in small groups. According to W.I.Thomas,

If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences. (Thomas 1966:22)

This statement can be seen as axiomatic of the approach in that it sees the actions of individuals as constructed from the meanings, or definitions, that individuals give to situations rather than the situations themselves. Attention is thus given to the interpretation of meaning in social interaction. Cooley's concept of the 'looking-glass self' also directs attention to the self-concept which an individual develops of his or her self, partly in response to the reactions of other people towards them, and which is seen as having an important influence on their actions.

Goffman (1961, 1967, 1971) developed the dramaturgical approach within symbolic interactionism, and used the metaphor of the theatre to understand social interaction. Individuals are regarded as 'actors', who play their roles in a 'scene', following a 'script' and making use of 'props', such as the doctor's white coat and stethoscope, and 'scenery,' such as a consulting room, to convey an impression to others. The public performances that workers give on the 'front stage' may be prepared in a private, 'back-stage' region, out of the public view, and it will be to the back-stage region that workers go to relax from the need to present a 'front' to others.

Goffman's study (1961) of 'total institutions', (prisons, orphanages, monasteries, and mental hospitals among others), the first major study of organisations from an interactionist perspective, directs attention to the ways in which life within the organisation is subjectively experienced by 'inmates'. He argues that many of the actions of inmates can only be

understood with reference to the processes of strict supervision that occur. Smuggling food from the kitchen can come to mean an act of rebellion showing the individual still retains some independence.

3.3.vi. Application of a symbolic interactionist approach to the study of food and eating

A symbolic interactionist approach can also be usefully applied to the study of food and eating. One theme highlighted by an interactionist approach to organisations is that inmates or workers develop various 'survival strategies' to attempt to cope with the situations in which they find themselves. Noon and Blyton (1997) suggested workgroups develop particular 'cultures', or shared understandings, over time. Management culture, for example, assumes that workers should spend all their time in productive activity, whilst the 'counter-culture' of the workers seeks to find ways to reduce the pressure and monotony of work. According to Westwood (1984), women factory workers used humour against their male managers in this way. Escapism, through day-dreaming or absenteeism can be another strategy, as can the excitement of illegal activities at work (Ditton 1979; Mars 1982).

Food can also be used to create rituals which help pass the time at work. As summarised in chapter 2, Roy (1959) described food being used to 'make out', or create a diversion from the monotony of factory work. Workers enjoyed breaks for food ('peach time', and 'banana time') at roughly hourly intervals, in addition to their usual lunch and coffee breaks. They also played practical jokes involving food.

> *Each morning, after making the snatch, Ike would call out, 'Banana time!' and proceed to down his prize while Sammy made futile protests....he never did get to eat his banana but kept bringing one for his lunch.* (Roy 1959:162)

The significance of this ritual was that food 'meant' opportunities for joking and humour within the group, so helping to pass the time. Roy's (1959) study is characteristic of an interactionist approach, being based on close observation of interaction between the groups of workers, and elaboration of the collective meanings underlying actions. The consumption of food is secondary to the rituals that were enacted and the relationships which developed within the group.

The symbolic interactionist approach also stresses the interpretation of social rules, both formal and informal, in shaping social action. Eating at work is subject to many rules and regulations - it may be prohibited at certain times, or in certain places, but workers find ways to circumvent the official regulations, such as by eating surreptitiously in a 'back stage region', or perhaps interpreting their actions as a minor demonstration of resistance, as in the example from Goffman's work noted above.

This approach also recognises that symbolic meanings are attached to foods. Posner (1983) argued that moral judgements are attached to foods, and that sweet foods have long been

equated with 'goodness' and prized. Diabetics, however, must learn that, for them, sweet foods must be re-defined as 'bad' and avoided. The food industry also exploits the symbolic meanings attached to foods; cakes, for instance, may be advertised as 'just like mother used to make'. Lupton (1996:27) suggests that one reason why companies such as MacDonald's have been so successful is that consumers associate burgers with American culture and success, factors promoted in the company's advertising.

In chapter 9 I draw on the symbolic interactionist approach to explore the meanings workers attached to food and eating at work. In summary, the theoretical perspectives of marxism, weberianism and symbolic interactionism offer different approaches to the study of work, which can usefully be applied to the study of shiftworkers' use of food and eating patterns at work.

3.4 THE RESTRUCTURING OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT IN BRITAIN

3.4.i. Economic and social restructuring

My study of shiftwork takes place against a background of social and economic re-structuring of work and employment in Britain. In this section I briefly outline the main changes which have taken place. Whilst the precise nature of the changes is still debated, economic and social re-structuring in Britain from the mid 1960's has meant the decline of manufacturing industry in the North and West of Britain, and rapid expansion of service industries in the South and South East (Allen and Massey (eds) 1990). Changes in the economic structure have also brought changes in the occupational structure (Allen and Massey (eds) 1990; Noon and Blyton 1997). Between 1978 and 2000 the number of jobs in the service industries in Britain rose by 36% and those in manufacturing fell by 39% over the same period (Social Trends 2001:73). The proportion of the total workforce engaged in the service sector in Britain is now around 75%, compared to just over half in 1971 (Noon and Blyton 1997:25).

Changes in the occupational structure have also had consequences for the gender composition of the labour force. A process of feminisation of the labour force has occurred, with fewer opportunities for male employment and more opportunities for the employment of women. Employment rates for men fell from 94% to 79% from 1959 to 1999, compared with an increase from 47% to 69% for women over the same period (Social Trends 2001:75). This is partly explained by the types of industries which have developed. Those which have declined have been those characterised as 'men's jobs', such as mining, while the sectors which have expanded, such as retail distribution, are characterised as 'women's work'.

3.4.ii. 'Flexible' work

There have also been other changes in the occupational structure over this period, as more 'flexible' patterns of employment, such as part-time, temporary work and self-employment have replaced full-time, permanent employment (Noon and Blyton 1997:27). Reskin and Padavic (1994) described these changes as part of the growth of a 'contingent' labour force, defined as,

...any job in which workers lack an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or in which the minimum hours vary unsystematically. (Reskin and Padavic 1994:168)

Temporary, part-time and other types of 'flexible' workers, whose jobs depend on the employer's need for workers, can be seen as 'contingent' workers. There has also been a transfer of jobs from manufacturing to services through the contracting out to other companies of services which had previously been provided in-house. Industrial catering is a good example of this trend, as whereas manufacturing companies previously employed their own catering staff, now the services of specialist catering companies are bought in as required.

Reskin and Padavic (1994) also suggest that the decline in manufacturing has meant an overall deskilling of the workforce as it is skilled and semi-skilled manual jobs which have been lost, such that low-skilled jobs now predominate. Leidner (1991) gives an example of deskilling in the fast food restaurant. When the worker punches the cash registers keys for a hamburger, keys for other items also light up, reminding the worker to also suggest these to the customer, so removing the need for thought.

Work has become a much more precarious activity for many people (Noon and Blyton 1997; Franks 1999). The notion of a full time, permanent job for life with one employer has all but disappeared. Higher levels of unemployment, high redundancy rates and increased job insecurity arguably have made work an intermittent, rather than a regular activity, for many, and may be changing the value attached to work.

According to the Labour Force Survey, 26% of female employees and 17% of male employees in the United Kingdom in spring 2001 had some type of flexible working arrangement, with the most common types being flexitime, term-time working, weekend working, annualised hours contracts, zero hours contracts and job-sharing contracts. Hewitt (1993) suggested that a number of social and economic changes are combining to produce these more flexible patterns of work, such as the demand for services to be provided at all times of the day and night, the impact of information technology, and competitive pressures on industries. She also noted changes in the composition of the workforce, particularly the expansion in the numbers of women working, which has been associated with campaigns for reduced, and more flexible, hours of work. Introduction of work-life balance legislation in 2003 can be seen as a response to these demands (Yeandle et al 2002; Dex and Smith 2003).

I do not have space to detail all these types of flexible work here, but it is important to note that patterns of flexible working can be seen as representing important changes to the 'traditional' contract of employment which typically specified that an employee would work for an employer for a regular number of hours per week and weeks per year, with the rest of the time being 'free' for leisure or other activities. This is now not the case. New 'flexible' work patterns can be seen as marking a different relationship between employer and employee, and drawing different

distinctions between the employee's work and leisure time. Importantly, flexible types of work are similar to shiftwork in that they can mean that the employee is working at 'unusual' times, such as weekends, and also can be seen as marking an end to 'traditional' distinctions between work, leisure and personal time as any time of day or night seems now available for an employer to buy and the employee to sell.

3.5 THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK

3.5.i. The meaning of work

Against the changes taking place in the structure of employment, do people still think it is important to work? It is often suggested that people work in order to gain an income to live. However, Gallie and White (1993) found that financial necessity is not the prime motivation for work; 67% of workers they surveyed said they would continue to work if they had enough money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives, suggesting some felt a moral obligation, or duty to work. (Gallie and White 1993). This sense of a 'work ethic', associated with the values of hard work, diligence, punctuality, obedience and honesty, links with Weber's emphasis on the Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism.

Studies of male unemployment have suggested that men are more likely than women to perceive themselves as having a duty to work, and unemployment undermines men's sense of themselves as 'good providers' and 'breadwinners' (Jahoda 1982; Fagin and Little 1984). Paid work can bring self-esteem, status, self-respect, and a sense of personal identity. Work also structures the passage of time, and distracts from personal worries and fears. It can provide opportunities for achievement and creativity, a sense of purpose and the chance to interact and socialise with others from outside the family. Gini (2000) suggests,

> *Because work preoccupies our lives and is the central focus of our time and energies, it not only provides us with an income, it literally names us, identifies us, to both ourselves and others.* (Gini 2000:2)

Finally, work can be important to individuals because it structures rewards and life chances. Sociologists have shown that income, health, leisure, educational opportunity, achievement of children, liability to accident, unemployment, rates of infant and adult mortality and morbidity are all associated with occupation, as operationalised in socio-economic classifications (Reid 1981). In Britain the social class classification scheme most frequently used is that of the Registrar General, which is based on occupation, and the distinction between mental and manual work in particular has been seen as the divide between the middle and working classes.

3.5.ii. Job satisfaction

While some individuals may feel a financial or moral obligation to work, this does not necessarily mean that they will enjoy their particular job, and a considerable body of literature has explored the factors which affect the worker's attitude to his or her work and levels of job satisfaction.

According to Marx, the social relations of capitalist production created alienation and job dissatisfaction. Different industrial technologies have been seen as intensifying or reducing the four aspects of alienation - powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement - identified by Blauner (1964). His work opened up the issues of the meaning of work and job satisfaction by bringing subjectivity into the discussion of alienation. This allowed for the recognition of the possibility of *'multiple meanings and interpretations of behaviour'* (Noon and Blyton 1997:14). For example, one worker may find a job boring and monotonous yet be 'satisfied' with it if he or she does not feel they have the chance of getting another.

The Hawthorne studies conducted during the 1920's and 30's by Elton Mayo, however, gave greater attention to the influence of social relations between workers in determining attitudes to work (Grint (ed) 1991). The Human Relations approach, to which Mayo's work gave rise, recognised,

> *... that workers derive meaning from their work through their relationships with others and derive their standards of behaviour from the work group which exerts pressures on its members to conform.* (Weir (ed) 1976:12)

Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1968) explored further the meanings which workers bring to, and derive from, their work, allowing the issue of job satisfaction to be explored in greater depth. Their study of car workers suggested that the attitude to work of these workers could be defined as 'instrumental' in that they disliked their job but tolerated it as a means to an end, namely (relatively) high wages, and did not look to work to provide them with other types of interest or satisfaction.

Such studies have given rise to numerous attempts to relate the content of jobs to workers' subjective assessments of their levels of satisfaction with their work. Recent attempts to assess levels of job satisfaction have investigated the significance of levels of pay; the level of influence individuals feel they have over their job; achievements from work; and respect from managers (Cully et al 1999). A recent study found that fewer than one in ten employees in the United Kingdom in 1998 could be said to be very satisfied with their jobs and three in ten were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (Cully et al 1999:183).

In recent years, the issue of work-related stress has received much attention. Among the indicators of work-related stress, according to Cully et al (1999), are feelings that there is never enough time to get the work done, and worrying about work outside work time. It was found that

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women were more likely than men doing similar hours of work to consider their jobs stressful (Cully et al 1999:172). Such findings are important for my study as it can be argued that whether an individual enjoys his or her work and derives satisfaction from it, or finds it stressful, may affect other areas of life, such as attitudes to food and eating. Over-eating and 'comfort eating' may be used to compensate for lack of satisfaction at work.

3.5.iii. The experience of time at work

Job satisfaction can also be seen as closely linked to the experience of time at work. Since my study is concerned with shiftwork, and some shiftwork takes place at unsocial hours, it is important to consider the experience of time at work. The total amount of time spent in work over the life course is determined by the age a person starts, and retires from, work; whether work is full or part time; whether overtime is worked; whether the person has had periods of unemployment or short-time working. Some workers may hold more than one job at any one time. All these factors influence the total amount of time spent at work over a lifetime.

In addition, paid workers can be said to perceive a division between 'work' as time belonging to the employer, and 'leisure', their 'own' time. Noon and Blyton (1997) distinguished three aspects of working time which affected the experience of work by the worker - the duration of the work period; the timing or scheduling of working time; and the way in which working time was utilised or the tempo of work. The duration of the work period (the length of time spent at work) has fallen from around 60 hours to 40 hours per week over the past 150 years (Noon and Blyton 1997: 66). The most common length of working week in 2002 in the United Kingdom was 40 hours for male full-time employees and 38 hours for female, but 25% of male workers and 11% of female workers worked more than 50 hours per week (Social Trends 2003:87, 88). Compared with the rest of the European Union, British workers have the longest weekly hours of work. Clearly, the longer spent at work, the less time available to spend in leisure or with the family.

When working hours are scheduled or arranged over the 24-hour, 7-day period is, also important in the experience of work. A working day of 9 am – 5 pm for five days per week, with a holiday at weekends, is commonly assumed to be the normal working week, although this ignores the wide diversity of 'flexible' working patterns mentioned previously. The scheduling of work is important in the experience of work as certain periods of free time are typically regarded as more valuable than others. This is generally recognised in the payment of overtime or shift premia for work at these times. Being at work when others are at leisure can also create feelings of deprivation and exclusion, for which higher pay may not compensate.

The experience of work is also affected by the way work time is utilised and the speed, or tempo, of work. Not all time at work is necessarily spent in productive activity; some time is spent in rest and lunch breaks, and the timing and length of these breaks can affect the experience of work. Equally, boredom can result from too little work being available and stress

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from too much work. Also relevant here is the type of activity and whether the work involves repetition of the same activities, or a variety of tasks.

3.6 WORK AND GENDER

3.6.i. Gender and participation in paid work

There is an extensive sociological literature on work and gender, which has highlighted the importance of women's paid and unpaid work, linking the 'public' world of production and paid work with women's unpaid work in the 'private', domestic sphere, but I have space to mention only that most relevant to my thesis (Barrett 1980; Yeandle 1984; Cockburn 1985, 1991; Walby 1986, 1988; Charles 1993; Rees 1998; Bradley 1999).

Since 1945 the extent and nature of women's participation in the labour force in Britain has changed considerably (Hamnett, McDowell and Sarre (eds) 1989; Grint (ed) 2000). As noted previously, there has been a process of feminisation of the labour force. The pattern of women's participation in paid work, however, varies according to their family responsibilities, in ways which that of men does not. In general terms, women are less likely to engage in full-time work if they have young children. In the United Kingdom in 2002, 39% of women aged 16 – 59, whose youngest child was under 5 were economically active, compared to 80% whose youngest child was aged 16 – 18. (Social Trends 2003:75). Women are more likely to break their career to have and care for children than men (Hakim 1996; Grint (ed) 2000: 95) and the more breaks from employment a woman has, the more likely she is to return to a lower occupational category when she does return to paid work (Martin and Roberts 1984).

According to Hamnett, McDowell and Sarre (eds) (1989), much of the expansion of women's employment since 1945 has been into part-time employment, which was virtually unknown before this time. Women are more likely to work part-time than men. In the United Kingdom in 2002, 5.1 million women of working age worked part-time, compared to 1.1 million men (Social Trends 2003:79). Part of the reason for women's concentration in part-time work is that men's participation in domestic labour has not increased with women's participation in paid work. In consequence, the majority of women tend to do both paid work and domestic work and childcare – a 'double burden', or 'second shift', according to Hochschild (1989).

3.6.ii. Gender segregation in paid and unpaid work

The increased participation of women in paid work, however, is argued to have had little impact on gender divisions of labour in paid work. Hakim (1981) distinguished patterns of horizontal and vertical segregation in paid work, in which women were concentrated in a narrow range of occupations, and at the lowest levels of those occupations respectively. The degree of gender segregation in paid work is shown by the over-representation of men in management and senior official positions. In the United Kingdom in 2002, 18% of men aged 16 - 64 in employment were in these categories, compared to 9% of women (Social Trends 2003:80). Men also

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predominated at the highest levels of those occupations, such as nursing, where women formed the majority of the workforce. A consequence of the pattern of gender segregation is that average pay rates for women are lower than for men, despite equal pay legislation. In the United Kingdom in 2002, women's full-time weekly earnings were 75% of that of men, and women's hourly earnings 81% of men's (Social Trends 2003:97).

There has been much interest in the literature in examining the processes by which occupations are gendered, and gender inequalities maintained. Cockburn (1985, 1991) and Bradley et al (2000) have highlighted the role that women's assumed responsibility for domestic work plays in the reproduction of gender inequalities in paid work. According to Bradley et al (2000), there is a popular myth that there is increased equality between men and women in domestic work (Young and Willmott 1973), but in reality women continue to take responsibility for, and perform domestic work in the home and look after children, even when they work full-time, as outlined in chapter 2. Social Trends 2003 showed women spent almost 3 hours per day on average on housework (excluding shopping and childcare), compared to 1 hour and 40 minutes for men (Social Trends 2003:224). These issues are important for my study as shiftwork can increase the burden of domestic work for women.

Until recently such attempts by women to 'juggle' paid and unpaid work were unrecognised; we now see, however, increased interest from the state in finding political solutions to the problems of what has been termed 'work-life balance', and the provision of some financial support for childcare. Some employers have also recognised these issues as important for equal opportunities and some have provided childcare and other support for employees.

3.7 WORK AND THE FAMILY

3.7.i. The relationship between work and the family

The relationship between work and family has been extensively explored in the sociological literature in recent years. Economic restructuring, and the move from a pattern of full-time, permanent employment to 'flexible' work patterns, raise issues about the relationship between work and the family. Morgan (1996) has suggested that it can no longer be assumed that a secure income, sufficient to support a dependent family, can be gained from work. In addition, flexible working arrangements can be seen as the result of new managerial strategies to exercise control over more areas of workers' time. Time which previously may have been thought of as belonging to the family may now be subject to the demands of an employer, and for an increasing number of workers it may be becoming more difficult to separate 'work' from 'family.'

Traditionally, however, sociology has seen work and the family as separate spheres. Work was assumed to mean paid employment, and the typical worker assumed to be male. Many of the classic studies of work have been studies of male workers – clerks, miners, dockers, assembly

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line workers, clerks (Lockwood 1958; Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter 1959; Tunstall 1962; Goldthorpe and Lockwood et al 1968).

Classifications of socio-economic class position, such as the Registrar-General's scale, also reflected these assumptions in seeing the occupation of the head of the household as determining the life chances of the family. Living and housing conditions, the levels of educational attainment of the children, and the chances of children and adults suffering certain illness or dying prematurely, were seen as being systematically related to the level of income provided by occupation (Reid 1981).

3.7.ii. Feminist perspectives on work and the family

The traditional assumptions about the relationship between work and family have largely been challenged by research from a feminist perspective, which attempts to,

> ...expose the fact that women suffer from various manifestations of gender inequality because men seek to reserve for themselves a leading role in those activities which attract higher levels of economic power and social prestige. (Ransome 1999:128)

Essentially this is a statement of a central concept in feminist analyses, that of 'patriarchy', defined as the dominance of all men over all women (Charles 1993:88). Feminist social historians have explored changes in the relationship between work and family at different historical periods during the process of capitalist industrialisation in Britain (Tilly and Scott 1978; Gittins 1985; Charles 1993). Broadly these studies show that in pre-industrial societies, the household was the centre of production, and women, men and children all contributed to producing the goods the family needed. Industrialisation meant the separation of home and work, of consumption from production. Although men, women and children were employed in factory production in the early period of industrialisation, through the nineteenth century men sought to exclude women from paid employment and restrict them to the domestic world of the family. The separation of home and work came to be gendered (Gittins 1985).

Although there is debate within feminism as to whether it is capitalism, patriarchy or a 'dual-system' (Hartmann 1979, 1981) which best explains women's subordination, all recognise patriarchal ideology as playing an important role. Barrett and McIntosh (1982) and Hartmann (1979, 1981) argued that women have been, and remain, disadvantaged by the ideological assumption that men should earn a 'family wage', i.e. a wage sufficient to maintain a wife and family.

> For most men, then, the development of family wages secured the material base of male domination....First, men have the better jobs in the labour market and earn higher wages then women. The lower pay women receive in the labour market, both perpetuates men's material advantage over women and encourages women to choose wifery as a career. (Hartmann 1979:130)

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The notion of the 'family wage' can be important today in decisions about who works and who does not in some families; as women's jobs are typically less well-paid than men's, it may make economic sense for the man, rather than the woman, to do paid work. Women's choices are consequently restricted and their economic power reduced. Yet, as the nature of work changes, and employment opportunities in fields traditionally associated with women, such as caring and office work increase, those who cling to traditional assumptions about the type of work appropriate for men and women may find their options restricted.

To highlight the importance of the 'family wage', however, is not to assume that the wage paid to the man will be distributed equally within the family. Graham (1984) and Brannen and Wilson (1987) have highlighted inequalities between men, women and children in the distribution of resources within families. Women tend to have responsibility for providing for the family, but not control over the money. Other work has suggested that other resources, such as time and food, are also distributed unequally within families (Pahl 1984). Recognition of these issues allows for use of the concepts of negotiation and household strategies to understand how decisions about the use of the households' resources are made (Finch and Mason 1993).

As the sociological understanding of women as paid workers developed, so studies of economic restructuring during the 1980's and 90's also contributed to a broader understanding of the nature of work. Unemployment called into question the model of the male breadwinner as the key link between work and home (Roberts, Finnegan and Gallie (eds) 1985; Morris 1990). There was also increasing recognition of forms of labour that took place outside the formal economy, such as voluntary work, work in the 'black' economy and homeworking (Allen and Wolkowitz 1987). As Morgan (1996) notes, this work gave rise to a more complex understanding of the 'interchanges' between home and work and the possibility that the household might be itself a site of economic activity, producing vegetables, wine or bread, for the family's consumption (Pahl 1984).

Recent literature has also paid more attention to the relationship between men's roles in the family and paid work. Hood (ed) (1993) investigated the diverse experiences of men as fathers and workers, and recognised the diversity of family forms which existed, such as single parent and dual earner families, in which paid work and unpaid work may be combined in various ways.

3.8 WORK AND THE BODY

3.8.i. Work and the body
As noted in chapter 2, the body has now become an important area of interest within sociology. I concentrate in this section on one theme relevant to my thesis, namely, that of the exercise of power at work through control of the body and its activities (Foucault 1981).

An important theme here is that of control over body shape. Management of the diet can be one of the main ways in which women and men attempt to exercise self-discipline to attain the slim physique idealised in western culture. We also find examples of employers attempting to exercise control over the physical appearance and bodies of employees, as Fiske (1993) argues,

> *The body is the primary site of social experience.....To understand the body we have to know who controls it as it moves through the spaces and times of our daily routines....who controls its performances at work, its behaviour at home and school and also influences how it is dressed and made to appear in its function of presenting us to others.* (Fiske:1993:57)

An increasing number of workers are now considered to be engaged in work which requires the display of emotions. Supermarket checkout operators charge up the goods with a smile and a friendly greeting with the intention that this will make the customer feel good and so be more likely to shop at that store. According to Noon and Blyton (1997), many workers in the service sector, in travel, retail, leisure, communications, and finance, carry out 'emotional labour' as they are now expected to display certain emotions, which may or may not be genuinely felt, as part of their work.

In these jobs, what Hochschild (1983) termed a 'managed heart' is required, or the ability to perform 'emotional labour', defined as *'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'* (Hochschild 1983:7). She suggests around one half of the jobs done by American women involve this type of labour (Hochschild 1983:104-14). Emotional labour clearly requires workers to carefully manage their bodily appearance and performance, but importantly, as this form of labour is now purchased by employers, employers will also seek to specify how such work should be performed, laying down rules and running training courses to control the performance. Noon and Blyton (1997) suggest that increased competition between service providers means more employers will have to pay attention to how their employees perform emotional labour; however, the existence of company rules and regulations regarding performance (for example, on dress codes) indicates that achieving compliance with the rules of emotional display remains problematic (Noon and Blyton 1997:128).

3.8.ii. Emotional labour and eating at work

As noted above, there is increased interest in emotional labour in the workplace, largely within the context of studies investigating ho·v gendered workplaces are constructed. Gender enters into emotional labour as women are more likely to be in the type of work which demands it and the work of making others feel good is stereotypically assigned to women. I concentrate here on ways in which food and eating can be used in emotional labour.

One way in which food and eating relates to emotional labour is through emphasis being placed on body size and shape in employee recruitment. Hochschild (1979, 1983) described how the airline she studied emphasised personal grooming, appearance and body weight-height ratio in

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recruiting staff. Other studies confirm that employers emphasise body shape and weight in recruiting employees; according to one study, Asda supermarkets sought to recruit people with a *'healthy, well-groomed appearance and pleasant expression,... near the ideal weight for their height'* (McDowell 1995:77). Similar findings emerge from other studies of the airline industry which show management seeking to monitor and control female flight attendants' body shape and weight through appraisals by supervisors. (Taylor and Tyler 2000:88).

While formal company rules may seek to regulate the weight of employees, according to Tyler and Abbott (1998) such regulations, which could involve being disciplined for failing to maintain a low weight, are reinforced by self-appraisal and informal peer pressure. They found that the work of the flight attendant involved *'adhering to culturally prescribed norms of femininity'* (Tyler and Abbott 1998:433), which specified a slim figure, starving themselves before flights and dieting constantly. A slender flight attendant is seen to signify a sleek, efficient airline, as Tyler and Abbott note,

> *Her body acts as the material expression of the airline by which she is employed, as the medium through which the airline itself is personified...* (Tyler and Abbott 1998:441)

Male flight attendants, however, had only to present themselves as clean, neat and tidy. Neither they, nor the male pilots, were weighed. Brewis (2000) also noted the influence of perceived colleague and customer reactions to employees' body size, and suggested that women were under greater pressure than men to conform to the particular physical appearance thought appropriate in their workplace.

This work links with that of feminist writers who have explored gendered, emotional labour in the context of the maintenance of gender inequalities in the workplace. In this they are drawing on an established theme within feminism, which sees women's bodies as sites and expressions of patriarchal power relations. For example, McDowell (1995), in a study of gender performances in merchant banking, argued that equal opportunities policies have had little apparent impact on the culture prevailing in banking in the United Kingdom which values *'certain attributes of heterosexualised masculinity'* (McDowell 1995:76). This makes the working environment in banking unwelcoming to many women and present the 'normal' bank worker as having a male body.

3.9 SUMMARY

The literature reviewed in this chapter both sets the scene for my study and informs my analysis in later chapters. I have considered how work may be defined and outlined the main theoretical approaches to the sociological study of work and their implications for the study of food and eating. Evidence on the restructuring of the United Kingdom economy and occupational structure has been presented, and this has led into a review of the literature on the experience of work and job satisfaction. I then outlined the main strands in the literature on work and the

family, gender and the body, including here discussion of emotional labour. In the next chapter I focus on shiftwork as the particular type of work of relevance to my study.

CHAPTER 4: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON SHIFTWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I review the academic literature on shiftwork. After defining shiftwork in section 4.1, I outline the main types of shift systems and present evidence on the extent and distribution of shiftworking in Britain. Section 4.3 discusses the health effects of shiftwork and section 4.4 outlines the effects on eating patterns. Finally, the social effects of shiftwork, and its implications for family life, including meals, are presented. A section outlining the law relating to shiftworking, particularly the regulations on working time, health and safety, and meal break entitlements, is included in the appendix.

4.2 SHIFTWORK

4.2.i. Definitions of Shiftwork

A number of different definitions of the term 'shiftwork' are found in the academic literature. Wedderburn (1991) defines 'shiftwork' as work done '*at ANY unusual time of day*' (Wedderburn 1991:7). Bunnage (1982) offers a similar definition, seeing shiftwork as,

> ...*all kinds of work schedule where a substantial part of work time occurs outside the normal hours of day work.* (Bunnage 1982:2)

This includes work done at weekends and on public holidays, but excludes normal overtime working. Kogi (1985) offers a different definition, based on the replacement of one group of workers by another group. He defines shiftwork as,

> ...*a system of working in which a regular change of one group of workers for another takes place on the same type of job and in the same workplace.* (Kogi, in Folkard and Monk (eds) 1985:166)

It is important to note that the outline of the different types of shift systems found in Britain is presented in this chapter as contextual background to my study; I do not intend to analyse the eating patterns of shiftworkers in relation to the different types of shift system worked.

4.2.ii. Reasons for shiftwork

Employers seek to use shiftwork where there is 24-hour demand for goods and services, and where the cost or complexity of capital equipment means it cannot be left standing idle, such as in the nuclear power industry. Although shiftwork has long existed in manufacturing, transport, postal services, hospitals and hotels, it is now found in retailing and financial services. Some supermarkets, for example, now open 24 hours a day. For employees, the incentive to work shifts can lie in higher pay as the premia for shiftwork range from 15% to 55% of the basic rate to compensate for the disruption caused (IRS Employment Review August 2002:22).

4.2.iii. The extent of shiftworking

According to the most recent figures, in 2001 3.9 million employees (16% of the United Kingdom labour force) worked shifts 'most of the time' in their main job (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48). Shiftwork has increased over the past 10 years; in 1991 15% of the total United Kingdom male labour force and 11% of the total United Kingdom female labour force worked shifts. In 2001, 18% of men and 13.7% of women did so (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48). Indeed, it can be argued that the majority of the working population of Britain now works 'unusual' hours as only one employee in three regularly works full-time from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (Powell (ed) 1999:39).

Shiftwork is also concentrated in particular types of occupations, although the pattern may now be changing. In the past, shiftwork was more common in manual occupations, but it is now increasingly found in non-manual occupations. In 2001, the majority of shiftworkers were found in the personal and protective service industries, which accounted for 52.9% of male shiftworking employees in the United Kingdom. Two fifths of these were care assistants, home carers, nursing auxiliaries or assistants. Security guards were also found in this group. The second largest group of male shiftworkers (33.2% of the United Kingdom male labour force) are plant or machine operatives (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48). The category of associate professional and technical services accounted for 24% of female shiftworkers, and almost two-thirds of women in this group were nurses. 21% of shiftworking women also worked as plant and machine operatives (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48).

It is likely that use of a growing diversity of working-time arrangements, including shiftwork, will increase with the extension of 24-hour opening by organisations such as banks, shops, and leisure facilities. If this happens, the effects of shiftwork on eating patterns, family and social life will be felt by many more people.

4.2.iv. Types of shift systems

The main types of shift systems commonly found in Britain are the two-shift, or 'double day' system, and the three-shift system, which can be further sub-divided into continuous, discontinuous and continental types. Mixed, or hybrid systems also exist, combining features of several types. 19% of workers in the UK in 2001 worked 'other' type of shift arrangements (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48).

In the two-shift system, employees work two shifts, usually 6am to 2pm and 2pm to 10pm, over a two-week period. This is the most common shift pattern in the UK, accounting for 29% of all workers (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48). Three-shift non-continuous systems include night shifts, usually from 10pm to 6 am, to achieve 24 hour working over 5 days, and employees work early, late and night shifts over a 3-week period. In 2001, 14% of all workers in the UK worked a three-shift system (IRS Employment Review May 2002). Three-shift continuous systems operate for 24 hours, 7 days a week. 12-hour shifts, such as 7am to 7pm, tend to be

worked over 4 days, followed by 4 days off.

A further refinement is the three shift 'continental' system. This is a rapidly rotating shift system. Over a period of nine days, two morning shifts, two afternoon shifts and three night shifts are worked, followed by two rest days. The next cycle of work repeats this pattern, but extends the afternoon shifts worked to three, reducing the number of night shifts to two, and allowing three rest days. This system has the advantage of avoiding long periods of night work.

Shiftworkers may also work permanently on one shift, or rotate between early, day, late and night shifts. 10% of all workers in the UK in 2001 worked night shifts (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48). Shift systems can also be distinguished by the 'direction' in which shifts rotate. 'Backward' rolling involves a sequence of night, afternoon and morning shifts, followed by a rest period before starting again with night shifts. 'Forward' rolling reverses this pattern to morning, afternoon and night shifts and then a rest period. Forward rolling is seen as preferable as sleep patterns adjust more easily to this pattern (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48).

The distribution of men and women on different shifts varies. In 2001, women were more likely than men to work two-shift systems, such as early and late shifts (32% of female shiftworkers in the United Kingdom did so, compared to 27% of male shiftworkers). Men were more likely to work three-shifts and continental shift systems (22% of male shiftworkers did so, compared to 14% of female). The percentage of male and female night shift workers was roughly equal at 10% of female shiftworkers and 9% of males (IRS Employment Review May 2002:48).

There have been changes in the prevalence of different shift patterns over the last 40 years, although it is difficult to make conclusive statements due to possible differences in definitions and measures. In 1964, 23% of shiftworkers worked a two-shift system. Seven-day, three shift systems accounted for a further 22% of shiftworkers, and 12% worked permanent nightshifts. A further 19% were employed on five day, three shift systems, 17% on double day shifts and 7% on 'other' systems (Fishwick 1980:7). In Britain prior to 1988, women were largely prohibited from night work, and could only work in firms granted an exemption from the regulations. Abolition of these restrictions allowed women to be employed at night.

Studies of shiftworkers need to recognise that shiftwork is not homogeneous; shiftworkers may have very different patterns of work depending on the type of shift system in use, the direction of rotation of the shifts, the number of work and rest days, and whether they work permanently on one shift or rotate between shifts.

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4.3 THE EFFECTS OF SHIFTWORK ON HEALTH

4.3.i. Studying shiftwork and health

In this section the main themes in the academic literature relating to the effects of shiftwork on health, and particularly on digestion, are reviewed, followed in section 4.4 by a review of the literature on shiftworkers' eating habits. There has long been interest in the effects of work on the physical and psychological health of workers (Caplan et al 1975; Kahn 1981). Interest in the health of shiftworkers developed in Britain in the 1940's, when it was realised that large numbers were engaged on shiftwork and yet little was known about the effects of such work on health and well-being. As since that time a large number of studies have been conducted, I include here only those of most relevance to my study.

It is important to mention first some of the methodological difficulties in studying the relationship between shiftwork and health. Studies of the long-term effects of shiftwork on health have tended to use either a retrospective, or prospective, longitudinal research design, tracking workers over a long period. This is important as some health effects may take many years to appear. Gastro-intestinal disorders and gastric and duodenal ulcers, it is suggested, reach their highest frequencies in shiftworkers after 40 or more years in such work (Rutenfranz et al 1985:204). However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to follow the same population over such a long period of time, and this raises problems of reliability in the data. Retrospective studies also face problems of poor data quality if they are forced to rely on data collected, possibly many years ago, by other organisations for other purposes.

Partly for this reason, some researchers favour cross-sectional studies, in which a group of current shiftworkers is compared with a non-shift working control group, preferably engaged in the same type of occupation and employed at the same workplace, at the same period in time, in order to assess the effects of shiftworking on the worker, as distinct from any effects due to the occupation itself, or other features of the work environment. This approach can avoid the problems of the longitudinal study, but is limited to workers presently engaged in shift work. Workers who have given up shift work for various reasons are not included. This is an important omission likely to affect the quality of the data as those workers who continue in shiftwork can be presumed to be 'survivors' and study of the survivors alone will tend to under-estimate any health effects as survivors might be assumed to be better able to cope with shiftwork. Yet, cross-sectional studies of ex-shiftworkers, who have left this type of work, might over-estimate the problems since these are the people who, it might be assumed, could cope least well and so left.

A further problem involved in studying the health effects of shiftwork is that it is very difficult to distinguish between the likely variables which may contribute to ill-health. The relationship between occupation and ill health is complex, involving inter-related factors likely to vary in

significance between individuals. It has been suggested that some diseases which may be job-related,

>...*cannot usually be defined by simple cause-effect relationships. They are usually multifaceted in origin, having risk factors that are not only related to work, but also to the individual person and his lifestyle.* (Rutenfranz et al 1985:200)

In particular, it is very difficult to separate out the effects on health of working in a particular occupation, as opposed to working shifts. A class gradient in mortality and morbidity rates has also been identified. To investigate these various factors adequately would ideally require comparison of a sample of shiftworkers with a suitably matched control group of non-shiftworkers in the same occupation, taking into account such factors as age, length of exposure to shiftwork, and personal circumstances, which is rarely possible. These methodological difficulties should be borne in mind when reviewing the literature.

4.3.ii. Effects of shiftwork on health

There is some evidence that shiftwork may shorten life. A study by Taylor and Pocock (1972) remains the major investigation of death rates among shiftworkers. They found standardised mortality ratios for male manual workers in England and Wales over the period 1956 to 1968 to be 92 for day workers, 102 for current shiftworkers and 132 for former shiftworkers. This suggested shiftwork might have been associated with increased death rates, although it is difficult to separate the effects of shiftwork on mortality from those of class.

There is also evidence that shiftwork is associated with higher morbidity rates in a number of diseases. The incidence of cardiovascular disease has been found to be 40% higher in shiftworkers than in dayworkers (Knutsson et al 1989). It has been suggested that possible causes could be increased body mass, sleep loss, smoking, stress, decreased physical activity and disturbed body rhythms (Waterhouse et al 1992:4). Recent studies have also shown increased incidence of neurological disorders, including anxiety and depression (Waterhouse et al 1992:7). Loss of sleep has been seen as a possible factor, and many studies have explored the effects of shiftwork on sleep (Frese and Harwich 1984; Labyak et al 2002). Some studies have also suggested a link between shift work and breast cancer (Hansen 2001; Davis et al 2001).

Shiftwork is also associated with a higher incidence of gastro-intestinal and digestive problems, such as indigestion, flatulence and heartburn. Harrington (1978) concluded that there was,

>...*good epidemiological evidence linking gastrointestinal disorders, particularly gastric and duodenal ulcers, with shiftwork.* (Harrington 1978:19)

An early study of male shiftworkers in England and Wales found a majority reported poorer appetites and less enjoyment of food when working night shifts, with problems such as continuous indigestion (Wyatt and Marriott 1953:169,170). However, while this study suggested

a link between shiftwork and gastro-intestinal disorders, it was unable to demonstrate that it was shiftworking itself which was the significant factor. It was possible that the noisy, dirty, working conditions and heavy work in the manufacturing industries studied might have affected appetite and digestion.

However, other work has since supported Wyatt and Marriott's findings (Angersbach et al 1980; Costa et al 1981). In a review of studies between 1948 and 1970, Rutenfranz et al (1981) found gastro-intestinal complaints were highest among shiftworkers. 50% of workers on continuous night shifts complained of gastro-intestinal problems, compared to 10-25% of day workers.

Waterhouse et al (1992) reported that recent studies indicated gastrointestinal disturbances occurred 2 to 5 times more frequently among shiftworkers than dayworkers, with 30-50% of shiftworkers being affected (Waterhouse et al 1992:6). Shiftworkers were also more likely to suffer from stomach ulcers; recent studies suggested that peptic ulcers occurred after an average of 12-14 years in day workers, but after only 5-6 years in shift workers (Waterhouse et al 1992:6). A study of Japanese workers also found that gastric and duodenal ulcers were twice as common in shiftworkers as in those who worked days only, and that the effects were long-lasting, contributing to workers who had left shift work retaining a 'residual ulcerogenic capacity' (Vener et al 1989: 424).

Some studies have indicated that some forms of shiftwork are more detrimental to the health of workers. Costa et al (1981) found a 'significantly higher' incidence rate of gastroduodentis and peptic ulcers among permanent night shift workers (Costa et al 1981:218). Some workers were also more at risk than others - workers who were younger, unmarried, heavy smokers and with a past history of such illnesses seemed more susceptible to gastro-intestinal diseases. The authors suggested that possible causal factors were fatigue and the lifestyle of shift workers, concluding that,

> ... the stress of shiftwork itself did not inevitably or regularly cause illness, but illness, especially gastrointestinal disorders, was influenced by confounding factors, such as social situation, patterns of behaviour, or biographic variables. (Angersbach et al 1980:138)

4.3.iii. Links between shiftwork and digestive disorders

Despite the evidence presented above, there is no general agreement among researchers about the causes of digestive disorders among shiftworkers and the precise ways in which shiftwork may contribute to, or exacerbate these problems. As my study takes a sociological approach and is not a medical study of the eating patterns of shiftworkers, I do not wish to speculate on causes, but a major review of the literature concluded that,

> ...shiftworking certainly seems to exacerbate pre-existing ulcers and may be a contributory factor in initiating them. (Harrington 1978:19)

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A number of factors have been identified as possibly linking shiftwork to digestive disorders, such as eating at the 'wrong' time (e.g. during the night), eating at irregular times, eating meals composed of foods considered to be less 'healthy', and eating alone. I will briefly outline the arguments.

Shiftwork can disrupt the 'body clock', or the biological rhythms of the body. It is generally accepted that circadian rhythms govern many biological functions in the human body, including temperature, pulse, blood pressure, breathing, brain waves, composition of the blood, and metabolic and endocrine secretions. Each rhythm has its own cycle, but in the usual case of activity by day and rest at night (as humans are generally diurnal creatures), most of these rhythms are in a state of maximum activation during the day and in minimum activation at night (Carpentier and Cazamian 1977:14). It has been suggested that eating during the night exacerbates digestive problems as this is a period of *digestive de-activation* (Carpentier and Camazian 1977; Vener et al 1989).

Some studies have suggested that *unrhythmic nutrition'*, or lack of a regular pattern of eating, causes digestive problems (Carpentier and Cazamian 1977:28). Shiftworkers may change the times of their meals frequently, depending on the shift. If a shift starts at 06.00 hours, breakfast is likely to be taken very early or missed. An afternoon shift starting at 14.00 hours and finishing at 22.00 hours is likely to mean a very late evening meal. During nightshifts, 'lunch' might be eaten in the middle of the night, and the 'evening' meal eaten in the morning, before sleep. Workers on rotating shift systems may experience rapidly changing and irregular mealtimes. It has been suggested that shiftwork produces a continual state of stress due to *internal desynchronization of the individual's time structure* and this can cause disease in susceptible individuals (Vener et al 1989:422).

It may also be the case that shiftworkers are more likely to eat foods considered less 'healthy', such as fatty and sugary snacks, fried foods, and fast foods. They may prefer these foods, they may have no appetite for a 'full' meal, or canteen facilities may not be available which offer 'healthy' foods. The need to stay awake during a nightshift can prompt the consumption of coffee and snacks throughout the shift.

Studies of the social effects of shiftwork reviewed in section 4.5 suggest that shiftwork can be socially isolating, as the worker's pattern of activity is not synchronised with that of other people. He or she may often eat alone. This may affect eating habits as a worker may not consider it worthwhile to prepare a cooked meal for one, and a lone diner is perhaps unlikely to linger over a meal. It may also be that social isolation can contribute to anxiety and depression, which may exacerbate any physical ill-effects on digestion. Evidence to assess these explanations is presented in the next section.

4.4 THE EFFECTS OF SHIFTWORK ON EATING HABITS

4.4.i. Irregular eating patterns

The high incidence of digestive and gastro-intestinal disorders among shift workers has led to investigation of their eating habits and patterns of food consumption. Much of this literature is from a medical or nutritionist perspective, and has investigated in detail the food intake of shiftworkers (Tepas 1985,1990; Smith and Folkard 1993; Lennernas et al 1993; Pitsosoulos et al 2002). However, some claim that,

> ...there is as yet little information about the dietary patterns of shiftworkers. (Fisher et al 1986:54)

As noted in the previous section, the effects of working shifts on eating patterns can be complex as different patterns of shift systems exist, as described in section 4.2.iii., and that workers may work permanently on one shift or rotate between different shifts.

Several studies have found that shiftworkers do not tend to follow a consistent pattern of eating each day, but change their meal times frequently. Smith, Colligan and Tasto (1982) investigated the eating patterns of male and female shiftworkers in America. 67% of day workers had an eating pattern which conformed to the cultural norm in western societies of a light morning meal, lunch mid way through the day and a large evening meal. Workers on other shifts were less likely to follow this pattern; 36% of workers on afternoon shifts ate a large meal in the middle of the day and ate two other light meals in the morning and evening. 40% of night shiftworkers had some 'other' pattern, and did not eat a large meal at midday, in the evening or in the morning. 64% of those on rotating shifts had a different pattern of eating for each shift (Smith, Colligan and Tasto 1982:138). Duchon and Keran (1990) also found that only 6% of nightshift workers studied ate three meals a day, compared to 27% of dayshift workers. 74.7% of night shift workers also felt that shift 'interfered' with their eating habits, compared with 9% on the day shift (Duchon and Keran 1990:113, 114). A recent study of the eating habits of Japanese workers confirmed these findings, suggesting 'late' shift workers had inadequate nutrient intake due to lower meal frequency and poor meal quality (Sudo and Ohtsuka 2003).

Tagaki (1972) also found that between 82% and 93% of Japanese day shift workers ate three meals per day, but the percentage of workers eating only once or twice a day was 'markedly increased' on evening and night shifts (Tagaki 1972:197). They tended to eat an evening meal, but missed either breakfast or the midday meal, or amalgamated breakfast and lunch into one meal. The study described the eating habits of shiftworkers as 'greatly confused' (Tagaki 1972:204).

Few studies in this area have investigated possible gender differences in shiftworkers' eating patterns as undifferentiated samples of male and female workers have tended to be used. Robson and Wedderburn (1990), however, compared the eating patterns of male and female

shiftworkers in a range of industries in Britain, and found that single women shiftworkers had the *'most disorganised eating routine'* with 70% just *'...snacking when hungry'* (Robson and Wedderburn 1990:141). The authors do not suggest any reasons for this finding.

4.4.ii. Snacking

There is also evidence that shiftworkers tend to eat snacks, rather than full meals. An issue here is how 'snacks' and 'full meals' are distinguished. Lennernas et al (1993) distinguished between nutritionally 'complete', 'incomplete' and 'less balanced' meals and 'high', 'low', and 'mixed quality' snacks. 'Complete' meals consisted of food groups that contribute protein, starch fibres and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). 'Incomplete' meals lacked vitamin C, 'less balanced' meals lacked starch. High quality snacks consisted of 'high nutrient density' foods, such as an apple; a low quality snack was low in nutrient density, such as a cup of coffee. The authors found that Swedish shiftworkers ate five to seven times a day, and this consisted of two to four meals and several snacks (Lennernas et al 1993:248). Of the total 518 eating occasions studied, only 27% were complete meals; the remainder were incomplete meals or snacks (Lennernas et al 1993:249).

4.4.iii. Fast foods

Other studies have suggested that shiftworkers tend to eat convenience foods, cold and fried foods frequently, and that night workers tended to eat more snacks of crisps or chocolate, rather than full meals, because no canteen facilities were available (Waterhouse et al 1992:6). This was supported by a study of shiftwork and canteen food purchase among factory workers in Australia. The authors found 44% of dayworkers used the canteen, compared to 21% of night shiftworkers, who were more likely to buy snacks from vending machines. However, only a minority of workers on any shift used the canteen; between 60% and 80% of workers on any shift usually brought food from home (Stewart et al 1985:553). Another study suggested that sandwiches, fruit, cakes and biscuits were popular choices of food from home (Fisher et al 1986:55).

The type of food eaten clearly has consequences for body weight and appearance, and some studies have found shiftworkers were more likely to suffer problems of obesity than other workers. Cervinka et al (1984) found that Austrian shiftworkers had a daily calorie intake 25% higher than that of the day workers. 18.8% of the shiftworkers were also 'extremely overweight' compared with 5.3% of day workers (Cervinka et al 1984). No details were given, however, of the types of food eaten, nor of the sex of the workers studied. The authors did note, however, that shiftworkers tended to keep their eating behaviour constant over the different shifts. This could lead to eating during the day and at night.

4.4.iv. Poor appetite

Shiftworkers were also more likely to complain of poor appetite. Whereas in one study 43% of day workers rated their appetite as 'excellent', only 29% of rotating shift workers did so, and

53% of rotating shift workers indicated that their appetite was poorest on a night shift (Smith, Colligan and Tasto 1982:138). In addition, shiftworkers, and particularly those on nightshifts, were dissatisfied with their eating habits, noting especially problems with,

> ...*timing of meals, lack of social interaction and / or disruption of circadian digestive cycles.* (Smith, Colligan and Tasto 1982:141)

Lack of appetite may contribute to irregular patterns of eating as meals may be missed if the worker does not feel hungry. Alternatively, workers might eat even though they are not hungry, and there may be an increased tendency to eat sugary or salty foods to stimulate the appetite.

4.4.v. Are differences in eating patterns the result of working shifts?

The literature suggested that shiftwork had detrimental effects on eating habits, with night shifts having the most disruptive effects (Smith, Colligan and Tasto 1982; Duchon and Keran 1990; Tepas 1990). However, were the detrimental effects on eating patterns caused by shiftwork? It might be argued that some workers preferred these patterns of eating, or that lack of sleep, stress, heavy work or poor working conditions affected their eating habits.

Some differences in eating patterns between shift and day workers might reflect individual differences. One study noted that 10% of shiftworkers claimed to enjoy shiftwork. These workers tended to be those who led solitary lives, without social and family ties. A process of self-selection might have occurred, whereby people who had less regular eating habits opted, for some reason, to work shifts (Harrington 1978). Waterhouse et al (1992) suggested that shiftworkers might also smoke more; drink more coffee (to stay awake); drink more alcohol (to get to sleep after work); and that these habits might also promote digestive disorders.

Some studies have suggested that shiftworkers may be an atypical group (Bunnage 1982). Shiftwork may be attractive to groups who are disadvantaged by gender, ethnicity, age or other factors, and need the higher wages typically offered by shiftwork. These issues make it difficult to isolate the effects of shiftwork from other factors which may influence the eating habits of these workers. The length of time a worker has been engaged on shiftwork is also likely to have consequences for health and eating patterns, as is the nature of the actual job itself, in terms of the mental and physical demands made on the worker. Social factors, such as the domestic and personal circumstances of the worker, gender, ethnic background, marital status, housing and occupational conditions are also likely to be important influences.

Tepas (1990) claimed that the effects of shiftworking on eating habits could be demonstrated if differences between the eating habits of shiftworkers on workdays and on their days off could be identified. If shiftwork did adversely affect eating patterns, eating patterns on days off should be less irregular, consist of more full meals and fewer snacks and be accompanied by better appetite. I adopted this approach in my study.

4.5 THE SOCIAL EFFECTS OF SHIFTWORK

4.5.i. Shiftwork and social life

In this section I move on to examine the social effects of shiftwork. A central theme in the literature has been the effects of shiftwork on the worker's social life, such as contacts with friends and relatives, and participation in leisure activities. These studies have mostly concluded that shiftworkers were less likely to participate in social and leisure activities and were at risk of being isolated and marginalised from the life of the community. According to Walker (1985), shiftworkers were less likely to be members, or office-holders, of organisations such as clubs, political parties, civic groups, and parent-teacher associations (Walker 1985:219). Salaman (1974), in a study of railway workers, also found that shiftwork interfered with other activities. He suggested, however, that shiftwork could contribute to the development of occupational communities as socialisation with others was difficult. Others have also suggested that shiftwork contributes to the formation of more cohesive work groups. Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1956) saw shiftwork as one factor producing high levels of occupational solidarity among printers.

However, it is difficult to generalise about the social effects of shiftwork because, as noted above, there are many different types of shift system and rota patterns, all of which may have different effects on workers and their families. Factors such as occupation, age, sex, marital status, health, and stage in the life cycle also mediate the social effects of shiftwork, as does the amount of time spent working shifts and the attitude of family members. Walker (1985) also noted that location is also important as attitudes to, and facilities for shiftworkers, may be different in communities where shiftwork is widespread.

4.5.ii. Shiftwork and family life

Shiftwork has also been seen as having a disruptive effect on family and domestic life. Bunnage (1984:7.13) concluded that shiftwork had an adverse effect on family life, particularly when it involved night and rotating shifts. These adverse effects impinged on the shiftworker's domestic life, marital relations and their role as a parent. Mott et al (1965) found working a shift other than a dayshift could ' ...*invert some of the time patterns typical in the family'* (Mott et al 1965:110). This affected the worker's relationships with his family, causing him to be absent from home when certain activities occurred, or to be in the home at times which conflicted with the activities of other family members. Shiftwork adversely affected the performance of family roles, as the male shiftworkers studied felt they were less able to fulfil various aspects of family life when working shifts, such as providing companionship for their wife, disciplining their children, and maintaining close family relationships.

Other work has looked in more detail at the disruptive effects of shiftwork on the organisation of domestic work in the home. The wives of shiftworkers felt their partner's work disrupted their domestic routine. Among the problems mentioned were being left alone and nervous at night; having to prepare meals at unusual times, and dealing with an irritable partner (Brown 1959,

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Bunnage 1984, Hertz and Charlton 1989). Young and Wilmott (1973) also admitted that shiftworkers' households did not fit the pattern of the 'symmetrical' family they claimed to have identified because the adult partners' patterns of work and leisure did not coincide. Recent work has indicated that shiftwork does not tend to change gender divisions of labour in the home. Speakman and Marchington (1999), in a study of male shiftworkers, found that men generally performed household tasks only when they were obliged to do so, and concluded that,

> *In almost all the households, ownership of the domestic tasks remained with the wife.* (Speakman and Marchington 1999:98)

Although many studies of shiftworkers have focused only on male shiftworkers, Brown and Charles (1982) in a study of women shiftworkers found that the women suffered similar problems to male shiftworkers as a result of their work schedules, such as adverse effects on health, fatigue, and problems with social life, but the women also suffered,

> *...added stresses arising from their specific position within the family.* (Brown and Charles 1982:701)

Women generally attempted to combine shiftwork with continued responsibility for domestic work in the home and childcare. Some, indeed, saw nightshift work as offering them particular advantages as it allowed them to work full-time and continue to look after the family during the day. Robson and Wedderburn (1990) and Preston et al (2003) also found that, in shiftworkers' households, women did '...*most of the traditional female tasks themselves*' (Robson and Wedderburn 1990:142). Other studies, however, have highlighted the considerable difficulties some mothers faced in combining shiftwork with childcare (Presser 1988; Hochschild 1989), although Blain (1994) suggests couples may use shiftwork to divide the work of childcare.

4.5.iii. Food and eating in shiftworkers' households

I have noted above the problems shiftwork posed for the organisation of family meals. Some studies have specifically examined this theme. An early study found that steelworkers' wives mentioned the problems involved in preparing meals for their partners at unusual times, such as preparing meals in addition to those of the rest of the family (Banks 1956). Maasen (1982) also suggested that the frequency of meals was higher in shiftworkers' families as more meals had to be prepared because the shiftworker ate at different times to other family members, and shiftworkers were also likely to eat alone. The wives of both day and shiftworkers spent the same amount of time - 1.56 hours per day - cooking and the husband did the cooking in 18% of families (Maasen, in Rutenfranz et al 1982:30).

Other studies, however, have focussed more on the social significance of shared family meals, and in so doing, have developed a theme important for my study. The rituals surrounding mealtimes can be important in family life.

The performance of certain specific rituals at mealtime, in which the family unites as a whole, gives the family a feeling of solidarity. (Bell and Vogel (eds) 1960:25)

Hertz and Charlton (1989) suggested that shiftworkers are unable to share time with their families as often as they would wish; their schedules may not coincide with those of their family and so they may have fewer opportunities to engage in shared activities, particularly meals. According to Hertz and Charlton (1989), the wife's role in the family was largely concerned with solving this problem and 'making time' for the family, which she did by re-scheduling and co-ordinating the activities of family members so that they could spend time together, by adjusting the routine of the children and meeting their needs while the father is at work, and by subordinating her life and organising her schedule around that of her partner. Her co-ordination of schedules to achieve family mealtimes emerged as particularly important, and a very important way in which shiftwork families attempted to construct a sense of themselves as a 'normal' family. One man commented,

> *When I worked swing shifts, instead of us having dinner as a normal hour, at 5 or 6 o'clock, we had to have dinner as 12 o'clock in the afternoon. And that disrupts the whole family life, because who could picture an average normal family having dinner as 12 o'clock in the afternoon?* (Hertz and Charlton 1989:494)

This study also implied that feelings of stress and conflict between the demands of work and family often found in shiftworkers' families may have been related to the ways in which shiftwork made it difficult for couples to realise their expectations of 'normal' family life. Attempts to realise these expectations involved the woman in much extra work, often around food, yet it may have been that such attempts were actually counter-productive and could have contributed to family conflict and breakdown in some circumstances.

Hertz and Charlton (1989) offer valuable insights relevant to my study. Why food should be given such a central part of creating a sense of family life in the families of shiftworkers is one issue worthy of further exploration. However, there were also issues which were in need of clarification, such as whether similar concerns were found in all shiftwork families, regardless of the circumstances of individual members. It would be of interest to explore the relationship between shiftwork and family life in Britain as well as in America, and to include a wider range of age-groups and family types, as Hertz and Charlton's study over-represented older couples, couples with children, and non-employed wives. It was also possible that the air-force security guards and their wives studied were unusual in being part of a distinctive occupational community, all living in close proximity on an airforce base, and studies of other shiftworkers in other industries and occupations are needed to see if similar concerns may be found there also.

4.6 SUMMARY

'Shiftwork' may be defined as work oone at any unusual time of day, by teams of workers succeeding each other on the same job, according to a certain pattern. The two main types of

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shift system in operation in Britain are the two and three-shift systems, including the 'continental' system. There is evidence that the extent of shiftworking has increased in recent years, along with other types of 'flexible' working.

Shiftwork generally, and night shifts in particular, have a detrimental effect on health. Evidence shows a higher incidence of cardiovascular and gastro-intestinal diseases, such as stomach ulcers, and digestive disorders, such as indigestion, flatulence and heartburn which some see as caused by the lack of a regular pattern of eating. Shiftworkers tend to eat at the 'wrong' times (such as in the middle of the night), when not hungry, at irregular times and to eat alone. They also suffer poor appetites, eat snacks rather than full meals, and tend to be dissatisfied with their eating patterns.

Shiftwork also has a disruptive effect on social and family life, and workers are less likely to participate in local community activities, as a result of their work schedule, although there is evidence to suggest that strong occupational communities develop among some groups of shiftworkers. Many studies have also suggested that family life is disrupted by shiftwork, and family relationships are affected. Performance of certain family roles becomes difficult as the worker is absent from family activities. Gender divisions of labour in the home seem not to be affected by shiftwork, and studies indicate that women perform most domestic tasks. Studies of shiftworkers' eating patterns in the home have found that meals are often eaten alone, or at different times to other family members, with increased time spent on meal preparation by the female partner, and her consequent dissatisfaction.

However, other important issues are given little or no attention in the literature and need to be explored more fully. Insufficient attention has been given to exploring the complex inter-relationship between different types of shifts and their impact on domestic and social life. Also, insufficient attention has been given to gender, age, and stage in the life cycle, occupation and family circumstances in considering the impact of shiftwork on different groups. Other neglected areas of research would also seem to be the effects of shiftwork on life in families where both partners are working shifts, and ways in which shiftwork might impact differently on men and women. In reviewing the literature, it would also seem important for future research to recognise that study of the consequences of shiftwork should be based on the household, rather than the individual worker, as his or her work has consequences for the family as a whole, and for the community, which should be recognised. The literature reviewed in this chapter has highlighted the complex inter-relationship between shiftwork, health, and eating. As more people now work unsocial hours, more research is needed on the effects of such work.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the rationale underpinning the research, and the process of undertaking the study. I describe first, in section 5.2, some of the issues involved in studying food and eating and outline a nutritional science approach. Then, through discussion of the limitations of this approach, I move on to present my reasons for adopting a sociological approach in this study. Section 5.3 sets out my research strategy and the rationale for the mixed methods research design employed. This is developed in sections 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6, which outline how I conducted the questionnaire, interview and observation research respectively. Case studies of the industries chosen for study are also included in section 5.5, as are the characteristics of the sample. Section 5.7 discusses the ethical issues involved in the research, and section 5.8 outlines the process of data analysis. The chapter ends by outlining the strengths and limitations of the data collected. The appendix contains a copy of the questionnaire; themes pursued in interview questions; the audit trail for one category; a list of the categories developed and the chronology of the research.

5.2 STUDYING FOOD AND EATING

5.2.i. Studying food and eating – the nutritional science approach

It is important to outline first some general issues involved in studying eating patterns as it might be thought a comparatively unproblematic area of study. Eating patterns can be defined as,

> ... the foods eaten, times and occasions on which they were eaten, sequences of food eaten, the interval between eating and the amounts eaten on different occasions. (Kemm and Booth 1992:155)

As Kemm and Booth (1992) acknowledge, it is extremely difficult to gain accurate information about people's eating patterns. This relates partly to attitudes to food and eating in modern societies; lack of food is no longer an issue for most people in modern societies, so food and eating can seem unworthy of notice. Food and eating may also be seen as insufficiently interesting or important because of their association with women, a group traditionally accorded low status (Beardsworth and Keil 1993a). Also, as much eating takes place within the home, gaining access to research settings can be problematic.

> The private nature of domestic eating presents enormous difficulties in conducting such research. (Marshall (ed) 1995:285)

The discipline traditionally most concerned with the study of food and eating is nutritional science. This approach was briefly outlined in chapter 2. As many of the studies of shiftworkers' eating patterns (Fisher et al 1986; Lennernas et al 1993; Sudo and Ohtsuka 2003) reviewed in

chapter 4, and surveys of the dietary health of the British population (Gregory et al 1990), have used nutritional science methods, it is important to be aware of the strengths and limitations of this approach. Nutritional science determines the quality of an individual's diet by assessing the intake of nutrients from records of food consumed over a given period. Such studies have the advantage of providing detailed, quantitative evidence about food intake, allowing comparisons between groups and trends over time to be identified.

However, from a sociological perspective, this approach is limited. First, the positivist approach taken by nutritional science takes no account of the meaning of food and eating to the individual. It can be argued that individuals eat meals, rather than nutrients, and a more revealing approach would be to ask shiftworkers why they organise their meals in the ways they do. Why do they consider it appropriate to combine particular foods in particular ways as 'meals', and to organise their eating habits in particular ways, such as eating three meals per day? Do they experience any difficulties in attempting to organise their eating patterns in these ways? To address these questions a sociological approach is needed which recognises that meals are social occasions as well as opportunities to refuel the body (Douglas 1972; Murcott (ed) 1983).

A second limitation of nutritional science is that it takes a bio-medical approach and regards eating patterns as mainly influenced by biological factors. Yet to understand eating habits fully we need to recognise that individuals are influenced by their membership of social groups, such as age, gender and ethnic groups. From a sociological perspective, eating habits are shaped by social and cultural factors, such as perceptions of what are appropriate or 'proper' meals for members of those groups, or desires to eat food defined as 'healthy' or non-fattening. Sociologists recognise that what people eat may not always be determined by what is nutritionally most beneficial. Indeed, there may be cultural pressures to eat food that is not beneficial but which is associated with a certain image or life-style, such as Coca-cola and burgers.

We can also question the methodology of many nutritional science studies, which generally rely on individuals accurately reporting and/or recalling their food intake. Not only may memories be flawed, but it has been suggested that respondents may 'idealise' their diet by under-reporting their consumption of sweets and alcohol by 50% or more, and over-estimating consumption of fruit and vegetables (Bingham and Nelson 1991:170). Sociological studies, by exploring the significance of ideas about food and eating within a culture could help us understand why some may 'idealise' their eating habits, and might also be more likely to generate reliable data by studying food and eating within the context of everyday life.

5.2.ii. Adopting a sociological approach to food and eating

The section above, and chapter 2, suggested some of the features of a sociological approach to food and eating; in this section I expand briefly on some of these issues to indicate topics which

a sociological approach to food and eating might illuminate. According to Murcott (ed) (1983:1), a sociology of food and eating might explore the *'philosophies of eating'* within a society, or the cultural ideas about socially acceptable, or 'proper' ways of eating and the value, socially, medically and gastronomically, thought to be gained from eating certain foods, or certain types of meals. This directs attention also to the social relationships surrounding food and ways in which eating is socially organised.

> *What is eaten, how it is cooked and served, the range of choice, who does the preparation, all are matters of material and social relationships.* (Murcott (ed) 1983:2)

Traditionally, most everyday food preparation and food consumption has taken place in the home, and foodwork in the domestic context has been gendered, in that women have done much of the work (De Vault 1991). The relationship of men and women to foodwork has been unequal, with implications for their relationship to paid employment. Gender roles in the home have implications for public life, and so the social relations of food preparation and consumption have wider social consequences, which a sociological perspective can address.

Finally, a sociological approach is also able to gather information about the ways in which different social groups organise their eating habits. Much empirical information has been collected on patterns of food consumption among different social groups, and by class, age and sex, and used to explore changes in patterns of food production and consumption over time, and between different societies. Warde and Martens (2000), for example, situate their discussion of the use of ready-meals and take-away foods within the trend towards the commercialisation of food that has occurred over the past 10 – 15 years in Britain. Such studies have explored the significance of food and eating to individuals, and the social consequences of patterns of food consumption and production. These examples show that food and eating have social, as well as biological aspects, and a full understanding requires a sociological as well as a nutritional science approach.

5.3 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

5.3.i. Research strategy

As stated in chapter 1, the main aims of my study were to explore the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to food purchase, food preparation and food consumption in the home and in their place of work. This included collection of empirical data on the range of diets and patterns of eating of male and female shiftworkers in a variety of industries, and exploration of the interaction of their attitudes and beliefs about food and health on their diets and patterns of eating, and their perceptions of the effect of their work schedule on their diet.

It is important to note what I did not intend to do in my research. I was not seeking to provide a causal explanation of the relationship between shiftwork and eating patterns. I decided not to

conduct a quasi-experimental study using a control group as shiftworkers are not a homogeneous group; a great variety of different shift patterns and different patterns of shift rotation exist, as described in chapter 4, making it difficult to isolate the impact of shiftwork as a variable on eating patterns. This was particularly the case in the industries studied where shifts rotated very rapidly, making it difficult to distinguish the impact of each shift. I also chose not to conduct an ethnographic study as, although I adopted an interpretivist approach, conducting qualitative interviews and some observational research, it was not practical to immerse myself in the social settings being studied for an extended period of time (Bryman 2001:291).

My research aims suggested a research strategy which used a mixed or 'multiple' methods approach was the most appropriate to give both breadth and depth to the research. A mixed methods approach can be defined as one which involves the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative forms of data in a single study. A pragmatic approach is taken to select the techniques best able to provide an understanding of the problem (Creswell 2003:12, 15). As I wished to be able to describe variations in the eating patterns of shiftworkers in my sample, I needed to collect some quantitative data. I also wished to explore shiftworkers' own understandings of the meaning and significance of food and eating, and to do this I also needed to collect qualitative data (Cassell and Symon (eds) 1994:4).

According to Creswell (2003), the use of a mixed methods approach was originally justified by researchers on the grounds that the limitations of any one method would cancel out the limitations or biases of other methods. However, later researchers saw that results from one method could be used to help develop or inform those generated by another, and greater insight could be gained from approaching a topic from different levels. According to Creswell (2003) there are three general strategies for the use of multiple methods – 'sequential', 'concurrent' and 'transformative' strategies. The 'sequential' strategy is used where the researcher seeks to elaborate on, or expand, the findings of one method with another method. Thus a quantitative approach may be followed by a qualitative one, or vice versa. The 'concurrent' strategy involves both quantitative and qualitative data being collected at the same time and then integrated together in interpretation of the results. Finally, the 'transformative' strategy involves the use of a 'theoretical lens' to provide a framework for the study, or as an overarching perspective in a design that includes both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell 2003:16).

I used a sequential strategy in which a quantitative survey was followed by a qualitative study because I wanted to gather descriptive data on eating patterns from the questionnaire sample before exploring in detail the meaning of food and eating with a smaller number of individuals in qualitative interviews. Briefly, I distributed 380 questionnaires, of which 120 were returned, a response rate of approx 33%, and then followed up a sub-sample of 43 individuals to explore how they organised eating at home and at work. In this way I was able to gain the advantages of collecting both closed quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data to answer my

research questions (Creswell 2003:22). Use of a mixed methods approach enabled me to gain insight into the social aspects of food choice and consumption at several different levels.

5.3.ii. The research design

I began the research by conducting informal, focus group discussions with shiftworkers to help focus my research ideas. The discussions suggested that participants might be willing to talk about their work and eating habits and interesting research material could be obtained.

I needed to gather empirical information to describe the range and detail of eating patterns of shiftworkers in my sample, so chose to conduct a sample survey. A survey research design reflects positivist philosophical and epistemological assumptions, namely that only phenomena confirmed by the senses can be accepted as knowledge and that the purpose of scientific enquiry is to test theory and formulate laws of cause and effect, i.e. the hypothetico-deductive model which allows hypotheses specifying relationships between variables to be generated and tested empirically.

As explained in more detail in section 5.4.iii, my original intention was to investigate the effects of shiftwork on eating patterns, generating results from a representative sample survey which could be generalised to the wider population of shiftworkers. However, as I conducted the research, recognition of the complexities of shiftwork led me to change my approach. As I explain below, it did not prove possible to select a random sample. I decided to use quantitative techniques to provide a description of the frequency of patterns of eating within my sample only, so producing results which were suggestive. I also decided to concentrate more on shiftworkers' perceptions of the influences of shiftwork on their eating patterns, a topic for which qualitative techniques were more appropriate.

The quantitative stage of my research, therefore, aimed only to provide descriptive statistics. Results suggestive of the frequency of certain patterns of eating among shiftworkers in my sample (such as differences in the eating patterns of different groups according to age or gender) were generated through quantification of the data and use of statistical procedures to measure frequency distribution in the analysis of the data. Information about eating patterns at one point in time was gathered as I did not have the resources to conduct a longitudinal study over a longer period of time.

The second stage of my study involved an interpretivist approach, using qualitative interviews to explore shiftworkers' understandings, experiences of, and attitudes towards food and eating. I was concerned to gather rich and detailed data on the meanings shiftworkers gave to the preparation and consumption of food in the context of both their work and domestic situations, recognising the complexities of these situations.

In contrast to a positivist approach, a qualitative approach reflects an interpretive philosophy, which produces a different kind of knowledge about social reality to that provided by a positivist

approach. According to Creswell (2003), interpretivism assumes that individuals seek to understand the world and develop subjective meanings of their experiences. Meanings are seen as constructed in negotiation with others through interaction in a situation, and through cultural norms.

> *The goal of research is...to rely as much as possible on participants' views of the situations being studied.* (Creswell 2003:8)

Interpretivist research involves the researcher making an interpretation of the data, developing a description of the individual or setting, analysing data for themes and making sense of, or interpreting the meanings others have about the world (Creswell 2003:9). This approach seeks to understand processes of interaction between individuals and to develop complex accounts with a high level of detail.

An interpretivist approach was appropriate for the second stage of my research as I regarded my interviewees as actively constructing their social worlds and wished to gain an understanding of the processes by which shiftworkers understood the influence of their work on their eating patterns. I wished to use an approach which was able to explore *'actors' meanings and interpretations'* (Blaikie 2000: 232) and capture shiftworkers' experiences of food and eating in their own words. In other words, I was interested to,

> *...understand the participant's categories and to see how these are used in concrete activities.* (Silverman 2000:128)

Such research procedures generate descriptive data, *'thick description'*, in the interviewee's own words (Creswell 2003:1960). In the analysis of data, the interpretivist researcher uses inductive reasoning to,

> *... develop concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in the data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories.* (Taylor and Bogdan 1984:5)

In contrast to the positivist approach which sought to make generalisations from the data, the interpretivist approach seeks to understand particular instances and situations. Creswell (2003) describes the process by which knowledge is generated in an interpretivist approach as 'emergent', as the research questions and methods of data collection may change during the study as issues emerge. An iterative approach is also used, as the researcher moves back and forth from data collection, to analysis, to reformulation of the problem (Creswell 2003:183). According to Gregory (1995), such an approach is suitable for areas of study which are new and under-theorised as it allows,

> *... analysis and theory to unfold and evolve during the course of data collection...* (Gregory 1995:33)

This was important for my study as it was an area under-researched from a sociological perspective and I wished to allow new themes to emerge from the data, rather than imposing pre-determined categories.

My choice of research design was confirmed by recent studies which have indicated the value of a qualitative approach in the sociological study of food and eating. De Vault (1991) explored the 'everyday work' of feeding a family, and noted that a qualitative approach allowed her to get beyond conventional assumptions and describe feeding work in considerable detail, exploring the 'the contours of 'ordinary' experiences' (De Vault 1991:28). I wished to present an account which was similarly sensitive and able to capture interviewees' words about the place of food and eating in their everyday lives. I also wished to present data to show the diverse experiences of shiftworkers in relation to food and eating, and Murcott (ed) (1983) suggested that a qualitative approach was useful for this purpose as it was able to indicate the range and variety of people's experiences.

5.4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESEARCH

5.4.i. Rationale

I developed a self-administered questionnaire to collect standardised, descriptive information on the range of shiftwork and eating patterns among shiftworkers in a variety of industries. The information collected was analysed using statistical procedures to describe patterns and trends in the data. I first piloted the questionnaire with academic colleagues, shiftworkers and students, and made some revisions to question wording and layout.

Questions were included (see appendix) on the shift pattern worked, the time and length of meal breaks, facilities available in the workplace to obtain food and drink, use of facilities, the types of foods consumed on the last day at work and the last day when not working, including the place and times when food was eaten, and who the respondent ate with, if anyone. I also asked who was usually responsible for performing various tasks relating to food and eating in the home, and whether the household possessed various household appliances. Questions were also included to ascertain shiftworkers' attitudes to food, health, family eating patterns, shiftwork and cooking.

I chose to use a self-administered questionnaire as this is considered to be an appropriate research tool to use to collect standardised information from a relatively large number of people who are widely dispersed geographically. According to Williamson et al (1982), self-administered questionnaires are the least costly data-gathering technique and have the added advantage that,

> There is no pressure to produce an immediate reply, as there often is perceived to be in an interview, and there is not likely to be any embarrassment regarding sensitive questions. (Williamson et al 1982:132)

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This was important for my study as, for some people, food and eating are sensitive issues, and I wished to obtain full and considered responses.

However, one of the major disadvantages of self-completion questionnaire surveys is a potential low response rate, which can cause the sample to be unrepresentative (Williamson et al 1982; Bryman 1993; Blaikie 2000). I attempted to maximise the response rate by including a covering letter explaining the purposes of the research, and a pre-paid return envelope. A reminder letter was also sent two weeks after distribution of the questionnaire.

5.4.ii. Access

In the early stages of the research I hoped to be able to gain a representative sample of shiftworkers so as to be able to generalise from my sample to a wider population. However, since no database of shiftworkers exists from which to construct a random sample, I decided the most practical method to contact shiftworkers was through their place of work. I wrote to the personnel departments of 12 large, service-sector companies which employed shiftworkers, asking for permission to conduct the research. A bank, two hospitals, two retail stores, a bakery, a telecommunications company, the Royal Mail, a paper mill, the police service, university security services and ambulance service were contacted. Some companies refused to take part, and cited pressure of work, data protection legislation and dispersal of staff across many locations. Two organisations which were conducting their own surveys of canteen facilities were not included as I felt this could confuse participants and possibly contaminate my findings.

Of the organisations willing to take part, none would allow me to personally distribute questionnaires to workers. Personnel managers, however, offered to distribute questionnaires on my behalf. I felt this was problematic as I would have no control over the distribution and managers might give questionnaires only to those they thought were interested in the topic. Also, I felt this method of distribution might not achieve a high response rate or produce truthful responses if the survey was perceived as sponsored by management.

I therefore tried to negotiate access to shiftworkers using another approach. I met the officers of two trades unions whose members included shiftworkers and explained the purposes of the research. They were willing to allow me to distribute questionnaires to their members in person via their shop stewards. I visited one retail organisation and met with the shop steward to explain the research and together we distributed questionnaires to members during tea breaks in the staff canteen.

However, this method of negotiating access also proved difficult. First, not all shiftworkers at individual companies were union members, so questionnaires could only be distributed to a small proportion of workers at any one site, making the process very time-consuming. The problems of distribution of questionnaires and possible perceptions of bias already explained were also apparent. I also found that I was in an awkward position when visiting the company to

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contact the shop steward as I had to first explain my presence to the local manager, who was suspicious.

I therefore reverted to a variation of my original plan and approached the personnel departments of a number of industries which employed shiftworkers, who referred me to the heads of relevant departments. I met personally with two directors of nursing in the hospital and the personnel director of the ambulance service and gained permission to distribute questionnaires in person and conduct interviews. At the bank, police and university security service, the personnel managers refused permission for me to contact staff personally but were willing for supervisors to distribute questionnaires to staff in their sections according to my instructions. These instructions were to give a questionnaire, covering letter and pre-paid envelope to all staff in their sections.

5.4.iii. Sampling

As my original plan was to select a representative sample, I aimed to select shiftworkers from service sector industries so as to avoid any differences between shiftwork in different sectors, and to choose industries employing relatively large numbers of shiftworkers so as to obtain a sufficiently large sample to generate more reliable statistical results. I also wished to include a range of occupational groups and different shift patterns in the sample to explore the range of experiences of shiftworking, and to include occupations which would yield a rough gender balance, and to select the sample from workers employed at the same site to minimise any differences between workers in the same industry resulting from location of the workplace. I was able to achieve this for all groups except the ambulance workers, who were based at two ambulance stations. More details of the workplaces chosen and the shift systems in operation are given in section 5.5.

The questionnaire sample was finally selected from shiftworkers employed in banking and the health, ambulance, police and security services. The first three of these were also used in the interview research (see section 5.5). 380 questionnaires were distributed over the period July 1995 to December 1997 to,

- 120 nurses and auxiliary workers employed in two departments at the hospital;
- 85 ambulance technicians and paramedics based at two ambulance stations;
- 65 police officers based at police headquarters;
- 30 security staff employed at the university main site;
- 80 staff employed in the bank computing department.

120 questionnaires were returned, a response rate overall of approx 33%. The process by which I finally selected my sample of shiftworkers was thus determined largely by practicalities. The issues involved in contacting shiftworkers proved more complex than I had anticipated at the outset of the research, and I was led to develop an alternative strategy. As it did not prove

possible to select a random sample, for the reasons outlined above, I did not conduct a representative study, but one which was suggestive of the range of eating patterns among my sample of shiftworkers. The strengths and limitations of the data are discussed further in sections 5.9.i. and 5.9.ii.

5.4.iv. Characteristics of the questionnaire sample

Of the total 120 respondents, 74 (61.7%) were female and 46 (38.3%) male. 51 women and 5 men working in the health service responded, reflecting the predominantly female nature of the nursing profession.

Table 5.1: Questionnaire respondents, by gender

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Female	74	61.7
	Male	46	38.3
	Total	120	100.0

N = 120   No missing cases

17 men and 8 women in banking responded, suggesting a predominance of men in computer operations attached to banking. The sample from the security service was exclusively male, with 7 men responding. The ambulance service produced a roughly equal gender balance of respondents, with 9 women and 7 men. In the police service, 6 women and 10 men responded.

Table 5.2: Questionnaire respondents, by age

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	20 - 29	39	32.5
	30 - 39	50	41.7
	40 - 49	26	21.7
	50 - 59	5	4.2
	Total	120	100.0

N = 120   No missing cases

Table 5.2 shows that the largest age group (41.7%) were aged 30 – 39. 39 (32.5%) were aged 20 - 29; 50 (41.7%) aged 30 – 39; 26 (21.7%) were aged 40 - 49, and 5 (4.2%) were aged 50 or over. None were under 20.

The majority of respondents, 117 (97.5%), described their ethnic background as white; 2 (1.6 %) described themselves as 'white - other', and one of Chinese origin. 60 (50%) respondents were married or cohabiting; 37 (31%) were single; 18 (15%) were separated or divorced, and 4 (3.3%) were widowed.

In terms of household composition, 25 respondents (20.8%) lived alone; 39 (32.5%) with a partner; 38(31.7%) with a partner and children; 10 (8.3%) with parents or other relatives, and 8

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(6.7%) lived with friends or others. 18 (15%) respondents had spouses or partners who also worked shifts regularly, and another 7(6%) had spouses or partners who did so occasionally. 83 respondents (69.2%) had no children aged 16 or under living with them at the time of the survey; 17 (14.2%) had 1 child living with them; 13 (10.8%) had 2 children; 5 (4.2 %) had 3 children; 2 (1.6%) had 4 or more children.

Respondents were employed in various occupations in a range of industries, as shown in table 5.3. 56 (47%) of respondents were nurses or nursing auxiliaries employed in the health service; 25 (21%) worked in computer operations in banking; 16 (13%) worked in the police service as police officers. 16 (13%) were employed as paramedics and technicians in the ambulance service, and 7 (6%) as security guards at a university.

Table 5.3: Questionnaire respondents, by industry

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Ambulance service	16	13.3
	Bank	25	20.8
	Health service	56	46.7
	Police	16	13.3
	Security service	7	5.8
	Total	120	100.0

N = 120, No missing cases

Table 5.4 below shows that, at the time of the survey, 75 (65.2%) of the 120 respondents worked a three-shift pattern; 9 (7.8%) were working only one shift - usually permanent night shifts; 13 (11.3%) worked a two-shift pattern, usually early and late shifts. 3 (2.5%) worked four or more shifts, and 15 (13.0%) said that they did not work a fixed pattern of shifts, but the pattern could vary.

Table 5.4: Questionnaire respondents, by shift pattern worked

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	One shift	9	7.8
	shifts	13	11.3
	Three shifts	75	65.2
	Four shifts	3	2.6
	Variable pattern	15	13.0
	Total	115	100.0

N =115, 5 missing cases

The majority of respondents had been working shifts (in any job) for less than ten years. Of the 116 respondents to this question, 4 (3.4%) had been working shifts for less than one year; 40 (34.4%) between one and five years; 29 (25.0%) between six and ten years; 13 (11.2%) between eleven and fifteen years; 12 (10.3%) between sixteen and twenty years and 18

(15.4%) for over twenty years. Of the 18 workers who had worked shifts for over 20 years, 12 were men, and those who had been working shifts longest tended to be in their 40's and 50's.

At the time of the study, of the 116 respondents, 47 (40.5%) had last worked an early shift, 26 (22.4%) a late or afternoon shift and 36 (31%) a night shift.

Table 5.5: Questionnaire respondents, by shift worked on last work day

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Morning/early	47	40.5
	Day	2	1.7
	Afternoon/late	26	22.4
	Night	36	31.0
	Other	5	4.3
	Total	116	100.0

N = 116, 4 missing cases

5.5 INTERVIEW RESEARCH

5.5.i. Rationale

In the second stage of the research, semi-structured, face-to-face, qualitative interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of 43 shiftworkers. 'Qualitative interviewing' refers to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured forms of interviewing (Robson 2000). The purpose of the qualitative interview is,

> *...to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis. Its object is to find out what kind of things are happening rather than to determine the frequency of predetermined kinds of things that the researcher already believes can happen.* (Lofland 1971:76)

This approach was appropriate to my study as I wished to explore the meanings shiftworkers' gave to food and eating, and gain insight into their understandings of the impact of shiftwork on their uses of food and eating patterns both in the home and at work. In taking this approach I was using what Silverman (2001) describes as an 'emotionalist' approach, as I wished to '*...generate data which [gave] an authentic insight into people's experiences*' (Silverman 2001:87). In his view interviews

> *...offer a rich source of data which provide access to how people account for both their troubles and their good fortune.* (Silverman 2001:114)

Gilbert (ed) (1993) sees the advantages of interviews as flexibility and versatility, and suggests that, because respondents can develop their answers in their own terms, they allow the researcher to become acquainted with the concepts, and phrases used by respondents (Gilbert (ed) 1993:138). He also notes that this approach is more suited to the exploration of sensitive topics than a more structured approach as greater depth can be achieved, making this approach suitable for my study. Other commentators have also suggested that open interviews are useful to establish the variety of opinion on a topic, or when the researcher wishes to develop tentative hypotheses about the motives underlying behaviour (Mason 1996; Wengraf 2001).

Although qualitative interviews offered these advantages for my study, Robson (1993:229) notes that making profitable use of the benefits of flexibility offered by the qualitative interview demands considerable skill and experience of the interviewer. The quality of the information gained greatly depends on the interaction between researcher and interviewee, and the achievement of rapport and trust (Spradley 1979; Gilbert (ed) 1993; Wengraf 2001).

5.5.ii. Access

The interview sub-sample was constructed from those workers who completed a questionnaire, volunteered to take part in the second stage of the study and included their contact details on the questionnaire. I telephoned these respondents, explained the purposes of the research, and arranged to conduct the interview. Before each interview, I explained the purpose of the study to each participant and stressed that the information they gave me was in confidence and no reference would be made to named individuals or workplaces. I also stressed that no information would be released to their supervisors or colleagues and that they were free to refuse to answer any questions or to ask any questions they wished. All gave me permission to tape-record the interview.

I conducted semi-structured interviews of between 30 and 60 minutes over the period July 1995 – February 1996. Interviewees were offered a choice of location - their home, workplace, or an office at the university. The office location was private, with no interruptions as far as possible. Some interviews in workers' homes took place with other family members (usually the female partner) also present. Interviews in the workplace were in a private room, but sometimes we were interrupted. The place where each interview took place was recorded and possible effects of the location on the content of the interview noted. These points are discussed in more detail in section 5.9.ii. I attempted to create rapport with the interviewee to encourage truthful responses by allowing the interview to take a more conversational tone and giving them space to raise issues and ask questions.

The interviews were semi-structured in that the same themes were covered in each interview, but the order and wording of questions could change as I did not have a list of structured questions to use with every interviewee but explored a set of themes and topics as they

emerged. Lofland (1971:76) sees these types of interviews as characterised by a relatively informal style and likens them to a *'guided conversation'*. I developed the set of themes used in the interviews on the basis of the literature review, and after preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data. (See appendix.) Interviews were conducted concurrently with further analysis of the questionnaire responses in order to explore further emerging themes. The interview questions were loosely defined in advance to enable interviewees to raise issues and so generate new topics for exploration in subsequent interviews. I transcribed the tapes fully myself and wrote summary sheets of the key themes in each interview afterwards to aid in analysis of the data.

5.5 iii. Sampling

The interview sub-sample was drawn from the industries which had yielded most volunteers from the questionnaire survey. These were the ambulance service, hospital and bank. These workplaces also offered possibilities for the study of contrasting work environments and shift patterns. Brief case studies of the industries in the interview research are presented below, including the shiftwork systems in operation. A description of the facilities to obtain food in each industry is given in chapter 7.

5.5.iv. The workplaces in the interview research
5.5.iv.a. The hospital

A large teaching hospital in Sheffield was chosen for the study. My respondents were nursing and auxiliary staff employed in two acute injuries departments. Department A was housed in a new hospital building, although one of the wards was in an older part of the hospital. Department B occupied a new, purpose-built centre, some distance away from the other hospital buildings. In both departments staff worked a three-shift system of,

- early shift from 7.00 am - 3.00 pm;
- late shift from 1.15 pm - 9.15 pm;
- night shift from 8.00 pm - 7.10 am.

The formal pattern of shift rotation was early / late/ night, but in practice shift patterns and days off were unpredictable and subject to change at short notice. Sometimes staff worked all three shifts in one week and might work 8 or 9 days without a day off.

5.5.iv.b.The bank

The bank studied was situated on an industrial estate 12 miles from Sheffield. It was in its own grounds, surrounded by a high security fence. Around 300 people worked there, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, processing data on computer systems for the bank and other clients worldwide. Access to the site was restricted to authorised personnel and involved passing through a security gate observed by a guard. There were no shops nearby, although there were

two public houses, two transport cafes and a fast food restaurant. Staff worked a four-shift system of,

- day shift from 7.30 am - 4.00 pm, Monday to Thursday;
- evening shift from 3.30 pm - 12.00 midnight, Tuesday to Friday;
- night shift from 11.30 pm - 8.00 am, Monday to Friday;
- weekend shift of a 12-hour day or night shift (alternate weeks) plus Monday evening shift and Friday day shift. Off duty on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday.

The shift rotation pattern was fixed in advance and rarely changed. A four-week cycle of day, night, evening and weekend shifts was worked, with 2 days off between shifts.

5.5.iv.c. The ambulance service

The ambulance service chosen for study provided accident and emergency and patient transport services over the South Yorkshire area. Over 600 staff were employed, with around 50 people at each ambulance station. The interview research was conducted with ambulance technicians and paramedics engaged on emergency services at two ambulance stations. Staff worked a five-shift pattern of,

- morning shift from 6.00am to 2.00pm;
- day shift from 8.00am - 4.00pm;
- afternoon shift from 2.00 pm - 10.00pm;
- evening shift from 6.00pm - 2.00am;
- night shift from 10.00pm - 6.00am.

Although staff knew their rota in advance and it was not usual for this to be changed at short notice (except on 'float weeks' as explained below), shift start and finish times could vary, and overtime sometimes made finishing times unpredictable.

To gain an understanding of the nature of shiftwork, it is helpful to consider the way in which the shift pattern in the ambulance service worked in practice. The usual pattern of work consisted of five shifts per week, followed by two days off. The days off might be split, however, and rarely corresponded to days off at weekends. Every thirteen weeks a 4-day weekend off could be taken. The shifts worked varied, with generally two or three of each shift being worked in succession, such as three morning shifts followed by two dayshifts. At times as many as five of the same shift could be worked; at other times a different shift might be worked each day, to no apparent pattern. A shift pattern which was felt to be particularly difficult was the 'quick turnaround', when a night shift would be followed by an afternoon shift, giving the worker only a few hours sleep. Once every sixteen weeks, a 'float' week would be worked, which involved staff covering for others who were absent. During the float week staff could be asked to work anywhere in the county and cover any shifts. This could be extremely disruptive as staff would

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not know until late the preceding week which shifts they would be working. No shift allowance was paid as unsocial hours were deemed to be part of the normal work pattern.

5.5.v. Characteristics of the interview sample

A list of interviewees is included in the appendix. Briefly, of the 43 interviewees, 16 were male and 27 female. 23 were employed in the health service, 10 in banking and 10 in the ambulance service. Eleven interviewees were aged 20 – 29; thirteen were aged 30 –39; seventeen were 40 – 49 and two were over 50. 42 respondents were white, and one was of Afro-Caribbean ethnic origin. 31 were married or cohabiting, 9 were single and 3 divorced or separated. 17 lived with their partner and children; 14 with their partner; 5 with friends or relatives, 1 with their children and 6 lived alone.

The majority of interviewees, 28 (65%), were living in households with no children under 16. 7 had one child under 16 living with them, 6 had two, and 2 had three or more children under 16 living with them.15 interviewees had been working shifts at the time of the study for between one and five years; 9 for between six and ten years; 5 for between eleven and fifteen years; 9 for between sixteen and twenty years, and 3 over twenty years. A further 2 interviewees did not know how long they had been working shifts.

5.6 OBSERVATION RESEARCH

5.6.i. Rationale

I also conducted observation research concurrently with the interview research to gain a fuller appreciation of the context in which workers consumed food at work and their work environment, so as to give more depth to the study. The material gained helped contextualise the data gained in the interviews. According to Robson (2000), a major advantage of observation is its directness; what people actually do can be observed, rather than what they say they do, as in an interview or questionnaire. Observation can thus usefully complement information obtained by these techniques (Robson 2000: 191). However, observation research is very time-consuming and the presence of the observer can influence the situation under observation. This point is discussed further in section 5.9.ii.

Two main types of observation research are identified in the literature – participant and non-participant (Robson 2000; Bryman 2001). I conducted non-participant observation as I observed but did not seek to participate in the behaviour of the groups I was observing. In both cases the observation was unstructured as I did not use a schedule to record behaviour but made written notes on my observations.

5.6.ii. Access

I intended to observe in the three industries used in the interview research. However, when I requested permission to observe at the bank, I was told access to the bank site was restricted

for security reasons and was refused. I negotiated access to observe ambulance workers by writing for permission to the personnel department of the ambulance service. Permission was granted and I then met and explained my study to the station supervisor. He allowed me to spend a day observing in one ambulance station. After introducing myself to staff present and explaining my role as a researcher and the purpose of my study, I conducted overt observation. I openly made brief notes of my observations, which I wrote up fully afterwards. Some staff I observed had completed questionnaires and been interviewed.

In the hospital, I conducted covert, participant observation without requesting permission because the opportunity to observe presented itself unexpectedly during periods when I was visiting a patient, spending time by their bedside. Although the hospital was the same as that in which I had conducted interviews, it was not the same department and the workers observed had not taken part in any of the previous stages of the research. I made brief notes during the observation, if it was possible to do so unobtrusively, or immediately afterwards.

5.6.iii. Sampling

I conducted observation research in two of the workplaces used in the interview research. As noted above, the hospital sites selected for observation were determined because opportunities presented themselves; the particular ambulance station in which I observed was chosen by the ambulance service management.

5.6.iv. Characteristics of the observation sample

I observed in the lounge area of one ambulance station during one day shift from 9.30 am to 3.00 pm and in two hospital wards for six periods of 1 – 2 hours each. I observed the facilities available to ambulance workers, and staff eating and preparing food in the lounge and open-plan kitchen areas of the ambulance station. I observed the activities of nurse and other health workers on the areas of two wards open to the public, but was not able to observe in staff rooms, offices or in private areas.

5.7 RESEARCH ETHICS IN MY STUDY

The main research study was conducted in accordance with the statement of ethical practice of the British Sociological Association (Fulcher and Scott 1999). This sets guidelines for researchers regarding issues of professional integrity and relationships with research participants, in particular that researchers have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of participants are not adversely affected by the research.

In approaching each of my respondents in the questionnaire and interview research, I informed them that the research was part of my postgraduate thesis, although I explained that I hoped that shiftworkers would benefit in the long term if greater knowledge was gained about the social and health effects of this type of work. I took care to explain to each participant that my

study was independent, and not related to any management or trade union initiative. I also took care to inform respondents that participation in the study would not require them to change their diet or eating habits, and I was not concerned with their weight, size or shape.

The BSA guidelines also state that researchers should protect the interests, sensitivities and privacy of participants. I stressed that participation in the research was voluntary, and that the identity of all respondents would be kept confidential. Questionnaire respondents were asked to give their name and telephone number if they wished to take part in the interview stage of the research. I then contacted those who were willing to be contacted by telephone at a later date, explained the purposes of the interview, and asked if they were still willing to take part.

Interviews were conducted in locations which afforded respondents privacy, and at times convenient for them. I asked the respondents' permission to tape record interviews and assured them that the tapes and transcripts would be kept confidential and destroyed after completion of the study. When conducting the interviews, respondents were told they were free to refuse to answer any questions, and that I was willing to answer any questions they might have about the research.

In the observation research, I informed ambulance staff of my role and the purposes of my study, but it would have been difficult for those who did not want to take part in the study not to take part as, apart from the private office and bathroom areas (which I did not observe), the station was open-plan. In the hospital, staff being observed were unaware of my role as a researcher and permission was not asked. I recognise that there was a lack of informed consent because participants were not given information about the nature of my research and this could be seen as unethical. At the time of the research, however, to obtain consent did not seem practical. I have used the data from the observation study to give general background only and have maintained the anonymity of the people observed.

5.8 DATA ANALYSIS

5.8.i. Analysis of quantitative data

The quantitative data collected were analysed using SPSS-X (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows, version 11. The raw data were cleaned, coded and inputted manually by myself, then analysed using frequency and cross-tabulation statistical functions. The information produced was presented in tabular form to show frequencies and relationships between variables. I also developed typologies of eating patterns by coding responses and analysing their frequency. As the sample was small and not representative, I intend my findings to be taken as descriptive of my sample only and not generalisable to a larger population. I used SPSS-X to conduct probability, Chi-square and Cramer's V tests and I have noted the statistical significance or otherwise of the findings for reference.

Analysis of the quantitative data was carried out concomitantly with collection of qualitative data so as to allow emerging themes to be pursued in the interviews. I transcribed the tape recordings of interviews immediately afterwards so that my thoughts and observations on the interview should not be lost. Notes from the interviews and observations were written up and analysed in the same way as the interview transcripts.

5.8.ii. Analysis of qualitative data

In interpreting the qualitative data collected I used thematic analysis. This is a procedure for analysing data in order to develop a grounded theory. The systematic rules and procedures for analysing qualitative data and developing social theory originally set out by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and developed in later work by Strauss and Corbin (1990), have been widely used as a framework for qualitative data analysis. 'Grounded theory' can be defined as,

> *...theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another.... The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.* (Strauss and Corbin 1998:12)

My rationale for using thematic analysis consistent with a grounded theory approach was as follows. I wished to take an inductive approach to data analysis. My interviewees had given rich and full accounts of their perceptions of the effects of shiftwork on their eating habits and I wished to proceed from their descriptions of their experiences to attempt to generate theoretical explanations and concepts. According to Bryman (1993), this is an approach which remains faithful to the perspectives of subjects.

Also, as the topic was under-researched from a sociological perspective, it was important to remain flexible in the course of data collection and analysis, and grounded theory, by taking an iterative approach in which analysis of the data is used to inform the process of data collection, allows this flexibility. For example, further interviews may be conducted to explore further particular issues which emerge in the course of analysis. The interview schedule may also be changed to allow questions to be added on important themes raised by interviewees. Bryman (1993) also notes that such flexibility has the advantage of not closing off potentially fruitful issues by theorising which is too early or inappropriate.

There are other approaches to the analysis of qualitative data which could have been appropriate to my study. Possibly the most relevant approach which I could have chosen would have been discourse analysis as this approach also focuses on the ways in which research participants describe and interpret their situations. Wengraf (2001) defined 'discourse' as the mode of talk spontaneously chosen by the subject. In his view the 'linguistic performances' of subjects can be analysed following Foucault and Chomsky by attempting to identify the 'deep structure' which underlies what is actually said (Wengraf 2001:7). Researchers attempt to

identify the 'systemic nature of discourses' which enable some things to be said and others not said. Marshall (1994) sees the aim of discourse analysis as being to,

Examine the constructions and meanings of phenomena in society that are available and drawn in by people as they make sense of various aspects of their lives. (Marshall 1994:93)

This approach is interested in the ways in which people use of language as a shared system of meaning and draw on 'interpretative repertoires', defined as *'clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech'* (Marshall 1994:93) to describe and make sense of situations, events, actions and other phenomena. Within discourse analysis data are interpreted as expressing one or more culturally available discourses (Edwards and Potter 1992; Potter and Wetherall 1995).

However, I chose not to follow the approach suggested by discourse analysis. This was because, as a sociologist, I wished to have regard for the social, political and cultural context within which shiftworkers' eating habits were located. This meant taking account of structural factors, such as the rules and regulations around eating in the workplace and the facilities available to obtain food in the workplace. I also wished to take account of structures of gender relations and the family as they influenced eating habits at home. The structures of the discourses underlying my interviewees' accounts, and the ways in which they used language, were not of direct relevance to me in my study.

I outline below the process of analysis of my qualitative data explaining how I used thematic analysis in my study, drawing on Strauss and Corbin 1998; Flick 1998; Wengraf 2001. I first read the interview transcripts a number of times. As I read I used the process of open coding. The aim was to identify recurring topics or themes within the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to this first stage of identifying themes in the data as 'open coding', defining this as,

The analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data. (Strauss and Corbin 1998:101)

Flick (1998) suggests that open coding aims at expressing data in the form of concepts (Flick 1998:180). The data are examined closely and broken down into parts, grouping together points on similar themes. Codes are attached to these themes, which may be single words or short phrases. Some of the open codes I used at this first stage in my analysis were 'family meals', 'disrupted body-clock', 'being organised about meals', 'not bothering to eat', 'no time to eat ' and 'proper meals'. (A list of codes generated is given in the appendix). I also made notes (memos) in the margins of the transcripts of any points which seemed to link with my research questions or themes within the literature notes, and noted connections between concepts identified in the literature and themes in my data in order to aid in interpretation. For example, the use of the phrase 'proper meal' by interviewees seemed to echo use of this term in Murcott (1982) and was linked to theorising of the influence of the family on eating habits. All the interview

transcripts were coded in this way. The result of the open coding was a list of the codes and categories developed.

The next stage in the analysis was to attempt to refine the codes and categories generated by selecting those that seemed most relevant to the research questions (Flick 1998:183). Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to this stage as 'axial coding', describing it as,

> ...the process of relating categories to their subcategories to form more complete explanations about phenomena. (Strauss and Corbin 1998:123)

In axial coding, the codes and categories that are most relevant to the research questions are selected and passages from the transcript then sought as evidence of the 'fit' between these codes and the data. Flick (1998) suggests that the researcher should ask a series of questions to try to untangle the different dimensions of a category. These questions are,

- What ? What is it about here?
- Who? Which persons are involved?
- How? Which aspects of the phenomenon are mentioned?
- When? How long? Where? Time, course and location.
- How much? How strong? Aspects of intensity.
- Why? Which reasons are given or can be reconstructed?
- What for? With what intention, to what purpose?
- By which? Means, tactics and strategies for reaching the goal.

(Adapted from Flick 1998:183)

The third step in my analysis of my data was to attempt to generate concepts and theoretical propositions from the themes identified. Strauss and Corbin (1998) refer to this as 'selective coding'. Coding continued at a more abstract level, with the aim being to elaborate one or more 'core categories' around which the other categories could be grouped. According to Creswell (2001, the researcher identifies a 'story line' that integrates the categories developed through axial coding. The core category is developed in all its detail and linked to all other categories. This is the stage when the grounded theory, which has been developed from the data, is presented. According to Flick (1998:179) the development of theory involves the formulation of networks of categories and the relations between them. The analytic process ended when I considered that 'theoretical saturation' (Strauss and Corbin 1998) had been reached, that is, when further coding, or further elaboration of codes, no longer provided me with new knowledge. The appendix gives an example of the audit trail of one category and a list of codes generated during the data analysis.

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5.9 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

5.9.i. Strengths of the Data

One of the main strengths of the questionnaire research was that it allowed quantitative data to be collected to describe the range and diversity in the eating patterns of shiftworkers in my sample on work and non-work days. Patterns in the data could be identified, leading to development of the typologies of eating patterns presented in chapter 8, which were based on calculations of the frequency distributions of certain patterns of eating within my sample of shiftworkers.

I also used the questionnaire to collect quantitative data for the first time about the facilities available for shiftworkers to obtain food at work in different industries, their use of, and levels of satisfaction with, these facilities, and lengths and times of meal breaks. This material could be used in future research as a basis for comparison with the facilities available to other groups of workers, or to map changes in facilities available and levels of satisfaction over time with this same group of shift workers.

The quantitative data was also used to develop profiles of the demographic characteristics of shiftworkers likely to be associated with different eating patterns. The eating pattern typologies could be used in further research in a comparative study to investigate the eating patterns of shiftworkers in other industries, non-shift workers, or for a follow-up study of the shiftworkers in my study to investigate possible changes in eating habits over time. It was important to use the questionnaire to collect this data as I could then concentrate in the interviews on eliciting shiftworkers' perceptions of the factors influencing their eating patterns. I also used the questionnaire to recruit the interview sub-sample by inviting volunteers to include their contact details.

The interview stage of the research was used to generate original, qualitative data revealing the meanings male and female shiftworkers attached to food and eating. The interview research was valuable as I was able to gain understanding of the complex ways in which individual shiftworkers understood the influences and constraints on food purchase, food preparation and food consumption at a more detailed level than possible in the questionnaire research. I was also able to use the interviews to follow up points made in the questionnaire on the gender divisions of labour in foodwork in shiftworkers' households. This allowed a deeper understanding of shiftworkers' experiences around food and eating to be gained, and also allowed gender issues to be explored more sensitively than in a questionnaire.

A strength of the data gained in the observation research was its directness. I was able to observe eating behaviour in work settings directly, rather than rely on interviewees' reports, and see for myself the facilities available to obtain food in some workplaces. Observation thus usefully complemented data gathered using other techniques. By using a range of both

quantitative and qualitative research techniques, my study was able to explore shiftworkers' experiences of eating at different levels and so provide a rich and full account.

I have sought to produce valid data by reporting in detail the research methods used, so providing an audit trail of the key decisions made in conducting the study, enabling readers to judge the validity of these decisions. I have also quoted extensively from the qualitative data, so as to provide thick, detailed descriptions to enable others to judge the adequacy of the interpretation offered. In the case of the quantitative data, I have noted carefully that my intention is to describe my sample, not to make generalisations. I chose not to use respondent validation as I agree with the critics (Bryman 2001:273; Silverman 2001:236) that research participants are unlikely to be able to understand material written for an academic audience and so are unable to validate the analysis presented.

5.9.ii. Limitations of the Data

There were limitations to the data collected. From a positivist perspective, the quantitative data sample was small and not representative as a random sample was not achieved. The process of questionnaire distribution through a third party introduced bias into selection of the sample and research participants were self-selected, as they volunteered to take part. For these reasons, I intend my findings to be descriptive of my sample only, and do not make inferences to the wider shiftworker population. Probability, Phi and Cramer's V statistical tests were conducted, where relevant, and the results are given where appropriate.

However, from an interpretivist perspective it can be argued that a topic which is under-researched cannot be specified precisely at the outset but an emergent approach is required in which research questions and data collection techniques may change as the researcher learns more about the topic (Creswell 2003:182). I developed a strategy to deal with the problems of being unable to obtain a representative sample, which involved giving greater weight to the qualitative aspects of my study and using the quantitative material as descriptive only.

A second possible weakness was that the data on eating patterns related to a short period only (the last workday and last non-work day) and these days might not have been typical of respondents' eating patterns over a longer period. I also relied on respondents' memories for information on their eating patterns, which may not have been reliable. Some might argue from a positivist perspective that information about eating patterns over a longer period should have been collected, and methods used which did not rely on memory. The food-diary method, in which all food eaten is recorded, might have been a more reliable method. However, I chose not to collect data on eating patterns over a longer period of time as I was not interested in providing a comprehensive record but wished to gain a limited amount of descriptive information about food consumption as a basis for the interviews, which would gather qualitative data on why interviewees ate what they did. I also wished to keep the questionnaire short to encourage responses.

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Some might also see the lack of a control group of non-shiftworkers as a weakness in the data. From a positivist perspective, use of a control group of non-shiftworkers, matched against the sample of shiftworkers for age, gender, occupation and so on, might have been used to examine the influence of shiftwork on eating patterns, as opposed to other factors, such as age, gender or occupation. However, as noted previously, my study was not attempting to discover the effects of shiftwork on eating patterns, but was mainly concerned to explore the perceptions of shiftworkers themselves on the influences of shiftwork on their eating patterns. I was interested in the particular understandings of the shiftworkers in my sample, and so, from an interpretivist perspective, use of a control group was not necessary.

Moving on to the interview research, it might be argued from a positivist perspective that interview questions were not standardised, and so lacked reliability. However, from an interpretivist perspective, the flexibility of the semi-structured interview format used was a strength as it allowed interviewees to talk about topics important to them, in their own way. It might also be argued that interviews took place in various settings, and so were not standardised. However, it was important to allow interviewees a choice of location to facilitate participation, and different issues could have seemed more salient to interviewees in different settings. Shiftworkers interviewed in their home tended to talk more fully about the influence of home and family on their eating habits, while those interviewed in the workplace focussed more on the circumstances of their work.

It could also be argued from a positivist perspective that some interviewees might have given the answers they thought I wished to hear, so reducing the validity of the data. Bryman (2001:122) notes that attributes of the interviewer can have an impact on interviewees' replies. It may have been that the agenda for the interviews was set for some respondents by the covering letter to the questionnaire which stated that I was attached to the Health and Community Studies department of the university. This may have influenced respondents' comments about the 'healthiness' of their diet. Also, health issues were salient to nurses and ambulance workers by the nature of their work. However, from an interpretivist perspective, all research material is located, both by the researcher's cultural background and assumptions, and by the ways in which the research is introduced to participants.

Some interviewees were also rather unforthcoming, which made for some difficulties. It may have been that they considered their eating habits unremarkable and so routine that there was no need for comment. This may indicate a more general methodological problem relevant to the study of food and eating and it may be, as Douglas and Nicod (1974) suggested, that direct observation is a more appropriate research technique.

The data gathered through observation research could also be said to have limitations. As I observed on dayshifts only, it was unclear how far the eating behaviour observed was typical of other shifts. It was also probable that the sites selected for observation research were not

typical of other settings in which shiftworkers were employed, and so my findings from the research cannot be generalised. Management of both the ambulance service and the bank also acted as gatekeepers in determining my access to research participants and observation sites, limiting what I was able to observe.

At both sites, my observation was limited to behaviour which was in public view within a small area. Also, it was unclear how far my presence as a researcher affected the behaviour of workers in the ambulance station, those workers who had taken part in other stages of the research would have been more aware of the nature of my study than others, and this may have influenced their behaviour. In the hospital, staff were unaware of my research and so I believe their behaviour was unlikely to have been affected by my presence, although I cannot confirm this.

5.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the rationale for the research and described the research process. A mixed methods approach was adopted in which self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observational techniques were used to collect quantitative data about eating patterns, and qualitative data of the meanings of food and eating to shiftworkers. 120 questionnaires were returned and 43 interviews conducted. The quantitative data was analysed using statistical procedures and a thematic approach consistent with grounded theory was used to analyse the qualitative data. This chapter has also outlined the ethical issues involved in the research and assessed the strengths and limitations of the data collected. The findings of the research are presented in the following chapters, beginning with the attitudes of shiftworkers to food and eating.

CHAPTER 6: SHIFTWORKERS, FOOD AND EATING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this, and the following five chapters, I present the findings of my research. This chapter presents evidence on shiftworkers' attitudes to food drawn from the questionnaire survey. Was food important in their lives, and if so, why? It is important to gain an understanding of these issues, not only because attitudes to food could be seen as important influences on shiftworkers' eating patterns, but also because the social context in which eating took place might also have shaped their attitudes to food. For example, if workers were obliged each day to choose food from a limited range of unappetising dishes and eat quickly in uncongenial surroundings, it would not be surprising if they came to regard eating as unimportant and a chore. This chapter serves as a prelude to the quantitative data on shiftworkers' eating patterns contained in the next chapter, and to the discussion in chapters 9 and 10 of the social organisation of food and eating at home and at work based on the qualitative data collected in the interview study.

6.2 SHIFTWORKERS' ATTITUDES TO FOOD

6.2.i. Is food important to shiftworkers?

Was food important to my respondents, and if so, why? If food was important to a person it might be expected that they would take care over the content of their diet, and the times, and circumstances in which they ate, and value other aspects of the experience of eating, such as cooking or sharing a meal with others.

Table 6.1: Is food important to you?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	No	17	14.2
	Yes	100	83.3
	Sometimes	2	1.7
	Total	119	100.0

N = 119, 1 missing case

Table 6.1 shows that the majority of my respondents, 83.3% of the 119 who answered this question, indicated that food was important to them and 2 respondents indicated food was 'sometimes' important to them. Their reasons why food was important to them are outlined below. 17 respondents indicated that food was not important to them.

6.2.ii. Why is food important?

Three main themes emerged when I coded questionnaire responses to this question, as shown in table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2: In what ways is food important to you?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	For nutrition, good health	55	58.5
	As a social event	3	3.1
	Enjoy eating	31	32.9
	Other reason	5	5.3
Total		94	100.00

N = 94, 26 missing cases

58.5% of the 94 respondents who answered the question indicated that food was important to them because it was important for good nutrition or good health. For 32.9%, food was important to them because they enjoyed eating.

> *It sustains you and can be exciting for the palate, e.g. a great well-cooked curry tastes amazing!* (Henry – bank worker)

3% of respondents enjoyed the social side of meals. One nurse wrote,

> *Food is a pleasure and a centre to focus a social event around.* (Jill - nurse)

Five respondents indicated that food was important to them for other reasons. Of these, one noted that food was important as a time marker. Mealtimes divided the day and formed,

> *...nice marker points during an otherwise humdrum existence - something to look forward to especially when home alone.* (Tim – bank worker)

Food was important to shiftworkers not only for its nutritional value, but also for the social side of eating, as in meals prepared to share with others, or eating out in restaurants. Meals and food were also used to mark the passage of time, and possibly to provide a structure to days and nights which did not follow the cultural pattern of a society in which a daytime schedule was taken as the norm.

Female respondents in my sample were more likely to indicate that food was not important to them than male respondents. 16.2% of the 73 female respondents who answered this question indicated that food was not important to them, compared to 10.9% of the 46 male respondents. It is not clear what respondents meant by this. One woman implied a distinction between the importance of, and the need for, food.

> *Food is not important. But I understand that food is necessary.* (Adele – nurse)

Without more detailed investigation it was difficult to draw conclusions as to the meaning of this comment, but some studies have suggested that women's relationship with food is 'contradictory and problematic' as they are expected to prepare food for their families and yet to

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deny themselves food to remain slim and attractive (Charles and Kerr 1986:537). It may have been that some female respondents in my study were reluctant to indicate that food was 'important' to them as they may have thought that to do so conveyed an 'unfeminine', greedy interest in food (Lawrence (ed) 1987:230). A different interpretation of the 'importance' of food seemed to be suggested by a male respondent, who noted,

> Food is not important. If it tastes OK, fine... It really is quite a chore to eat.(Alan – bank worker)

It was possible that use of the word 'chore' indicated that eating was hard work and physically difficult for this man; he revealed elsewhere that he suffered from arthritis, and so this may have influenced his attitude to food. Some illnesses, and medications, are accompanied by loss of appetite.

6.2.iii. Do shiftworkers think they eat a 'healthy' diet?

To gain further insight into shiftworkers' attitudes to food and eating, I also asked questionnaire respondents if they thought they ate a 'healthy' diet or not. As noted earlier, understandings of what constitutes a 'healthy' diet within medical and public health discourses change over time, and different groups are likely to have different understandings of what constitutes a 'healthy' diet. I did not define the term 'healthy' in the questionnaire as I was interested in shiftworkers' judgements of the quality of their diet in terms of their own understandings of the word.

Table 6.3 shows that, of the 120 shiftworkers who answered this question, 63.3% indicated that they thought they did eat a 'healthy' diet (however they defined it), compared to 28.3% who thought they did not. 10 respondents did not know if their diet was 'healthy' or not.

Table 6.3: Do you think you eat a 'healthy' diet?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	No	34	28.3
	Yes	76	63.3
	Don't Know	10	8.3
	Total	120	100.0

N = 120, no missing cases

Tables 6.4a and 6.4b below show that 60.8% of the 74 female respondents to this question thought they did eat a 'healthy' diet, compared to 67.4% of the 46 male respondents. These findings may be interpreted in a number of ways. It may mean that the diets of female shiftworkers were less 'healthy' in nutritional terms than those of male shiftworkers. However, as this was a sociological study of food and eating, and not a nutritional investigation, I was more interested in my respondents' perceptions of the quality of their diet and eating habits. Research has suggested that people's judgements of the quality of their diet and their

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knowledge of what constitutes a 'healthy' diet are often flawed. Brannen et al (1994) have suggested that a large proportion of people consider themselves to eat a 'healthy' diet when nutritionally this is not the case. Conversely, it may have been the case that some of my respondents considered their diet to be 'unhealthy' when it was not so nutritionally.

Table 6:4a Do you think you eat a 'healthy' diet.
Female respondents

			frequency
			female
Do you think you eat a healthy diet?	No	Count	25
			33.8%
	Yes	Count	45
			60.8%
	Don't Know	Count	4
			5.4%
Total		Count	74
			100.0%

N = 74, no missing cases

Table 6.4b: Do you think you eat a 'healthy' diet?
male respondents

			frequency
			male
Do you think you eat a healthy diet?	No	Count	9
			19.6%
	Yes	Count	31
			67.4%
	Don't Know	Count	6
			13.0%
Total		Count	46
			100.0%

N=46, no missing cases

My findings could also perhaps be interpreted as indicating that female shiftworkers were perhaps more likely to make judgements about the quality of their diet and eating habits than men. It may have been that women were more knowledgeable than men about issues related to food and diet, or more inclined to be critical of their eating habits and diet, relating this to a more critical attitude towards their body shape. Lawrence (ed)(1987), and Charles and Kerr (1988) have suggested that many women feel guilty about their bodies and appetites. Interestingly, a higher percentage of male than female shiftworkers who answered this question (13% compared to 5.4%) did not know if their diet was 'healthy' or not, perhaps suggesting a lack of

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concern, or lack of knowledge, of such issues among men. It might also have been that male respondents did not feel it appropriate to express concern about the quality of their diet, perhaps considering such concerns to be associated with women and therefore 'unmanly.'

6.2.iv. What do shiftworkers do to eat a 'healthy' diet?

Respondents who indicated that they thought they did eat a 'healthy' diet were asked what was the main thing they did to try to achieve this.

Table 6.5: What is the main thing you do to eat a 'healthy' diet?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	eat vegetables	29	34.1
	eat fruit	13	15.3
	eat less fat	28	32.9
	eat less meat	4	4.7
	eat regular meals	1	1.2
	other	10	11.8
	Total	85	100.0

N = 85, 35 missing cases

Table 6.5 shows that 34.1% of the 85 respondents who answered this question, and thought they did eat a 'healthy' diet, indicated that they ate vegetables, and 15.3% that they ate fruit. 32.9% indicated that they tried to reduce their consumption of fat. That only one person indicated that 'eating regular meals' was the main thing they did to eat a 'healthy' diet suggested this was perhaps not a practice which many shiftworkers associated with eating a 'healthy' diet. 10 respondents, however, noted they did 'other' things, including avoiding sugary and / or spicy foods. It was interesting that responses to this question tended to reflect current health education advice regarding 'healthy' eating practices; it may have been that, in answering this question, respondents tended to give the answers they thought were expected, rather than what they actually did.

I was interested to see if those who thought they ate a 'healthy' diet also enjoyed cooking, as shown in table 6.6 below. Table 6.6 shows that, within my sample, 65.4% of the 78 respondents to this question who indicated that they enjoyed cooking also considered that they ate a 'healthy' diet. It may have been that enjoyment of cooking among shiftworkers in my study was linked to a concern to eat 'healthily', as both might indicate a view that food and eating are important. Cooking and a 'healthy' diet need not be linked, however; some might have considered that they ate a 'healthy' diet but chose foods such as salads and fruit because they did not enjoy cooking.

Table 6.6: Respondents who thought they ate a 'healthy' diet and also enjoyed cooking

			frequency
			enjoy cooking
Do you think you eat a healthy diet?	No	Count	18
			23.1%
	Yes	Count	51
			65.4%
	Don't Know	Count	9
			11.5%
Total		Count	78
			100.0%

N=78, 42 missing cases

6.2.v. Choice of evening meal

The questionnaire survey also asked my respondents to state their favourite choice if they could have whatever they liked for their evening meal at home. It was intended that this question would allow some impression to be gained of how far respondents would practise 'healthy' eating (as defined by their responses to previous questions) when given a free choice of food for an evening meal. This question was also designed to gauge how far the shiftworkers' meals of choice would reflect the type of meal described by Murcott (1982, 1983) as the 'proper' meal, that is, a cooked dinner of meat, potatoes and vegetables, with gravy.

When I coded the questionnaire responses, as table 6.7 shows, I found that the most popular choice among my respondents was a meat-based dish. 39.2% of the 118 respondents to this question chose a roast or 'Sunday' dinner, or other 'English' meat-based meal. A further 34.2% chose a 'minority ethnic' meat meal. Other 'minority ethnic' meal choices, however, were vegetarian dishes, such as vegetable curry, and these were coded as such. 10% of respondents chose a vegetarian meal, and a further 10% fish or seafood. Responses to this question highlighted the need to be sensitive to assumptions commonly made about food. Curry, for example, is often assumed in Britain to include meat, whereas in India curry dishes would more often be vegetarian.

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Table 6.7: If you were at home and could have whatever you liked for your evening meal at home, what would you choose?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Roast or 'Sunday' dinner	11	9.2
	Other 'English' meat meal	36	30.0
	'Minority ethnic' meal meal	41	34.2
	Fish or seafood meal	12	10.0
	Vegetarian meal	12	10.0
	Salad	3	2.5
	Other	3	2.5
	Total	118	100.0

N=118, 2 missing cases

Note: 'Other 'English' meat meal, e.g. steak and chips, lamb stew.

'Minority ethnic' meat meal', e.g. beef curry, lasagne, spaghetti with meatballs.

Vegetarian meal, e.g. baked potato and cheese.

These findings suggested that meat meals tended to be given priority within British culture and were seen as particularly appropriate for evening meals. My respondents' choices were also reminiscent of the 'proper' meal or 'cooked dinner' identified by Murcott (1982,1983). It was interesting that many favoured meat meals despite health education messages urging reduction in the consumption of red meat. The limited references to the 'healthy' eating practices mentioned above, such as eating less fatty food, suggested the desire to follow current 'healthy' eating recommendations might not have been a major factor in respondents' choices. The inclusion of some 'gourmet' meals (such as duck a l'orange, or steak tartare), such as might be served in a restaurant, suggested that perhaps few considered that they would be cooking the meal themselves.

6.2.vi. Foods avoided

In considering shiftworkers' eating patterns, I considered it important to ascertain if respondents had particular reasons for avoiding certain foods as this would potentially influence their eating patterns. Respondents were asked if they were on a slimming diet and also if there were any foods which they always avoided eating and if so, for what reasons.

Table 6.8 shows that 79.6% of my 118 respondents were not on a slimming diet at the time of the survey. Of the 24 who indicated they were on a slimming diet, 18 were female and 6 male, suggesting that, of the shiftworkers studied, women were three times as likely to be on a slimming diet as men.

Table 6.8: Are you on a slimming diet now?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	No	94	79.6
	Yes	24	20.3
	Total	118	100.0

N= 118, 2 missing cases

This finding was interesting as a description of my sample, and might have been related to cultural expectations that women in western societies should be slim; however, it seemed some male respondents were also concerned to reduce their body size and weight. It was possible that some respondents who were ambulance workers and nurses thought that as 'health' workers they should themselves appear slim and healthy.

Respondents were also asked in the questionnaire if they generally avoided eating any types of food, and if so, which.

Table 6.9: Which foods do you generally avoid eating?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	All meat	6	8.3
	Red meat	4	5.5
	Offal	9	12.5
	Dairy foods	2	2.7
	Fried / fatty food	22	30.5
	Spicy food	7	9.7
	Other	22	30.5
	Total	72	100.0

N= 72, 48 missing cases

When I coded the responses, as table 6.9 shows, I found that almost one third (30.5%) of the 72 respondents who answered this question avoided fatty or fried food, possibly because they were following a slimming diet, or because they wished to eat a 'healthy' diet. 6 respondents indicated that they were vegetarians and avoided all meat, and 4 others indicated that they avoided red meat. 9 respondents indicated that they avoided offal (where specific types of offal were mentioned by respondents, liver and kidney were mentioned most frequently).

Some respondents indicated that they avoided certain foods because of perceived risks to health and some avoided red meat because they thought it contained high levels of cholesterol which some considered a risk to health. My research was also conducted at the time of the BSE outbreak in Britain and health warnings against the consumption of beef and offal may have influenced responses. No respondent gave a religious or cultural reason for avoiding any foods,

and none indicated that they avoided any foods because they were thought to make sleeping or working difficult.

A further 22 respondents to this question indicated that they avoided a wide range of other foods, including beetroot, eggs, semolina, garlic and 'spicy' foods. Where a reason was given for avoidance of a particular food, some indicated that it was because they disliked the taste, but some also avoided foods because of the perceived after-effects, such as 'bad breath after eating garlic'.

The high percentage of respondents who indicated that they avoided certain foods was interesting and perhaps indicated that shiftworkers were more likely to experience digestive problems than other groups. It may also have been that workers in close personal contact with others, such as nurses, were more aware of possible anti-social after-effects of eating some foods and avoided eating them for this reason.

6.3 SUMMARY

The majority of shiftworkers in my sample enjoyed food, and thought eating important. Whilst health and nutrition were the most common reasons given as to why food was important, the social side of eating was important to some. Most respondents regarded their diet as 'healthy'. Around 20% of respondents indicated they were on a slimming diet, and around one third indicated they avoided some types of foods, particularly fatty and fried foods.

Meat-based meals were the most popular evening meal choices, such as the 'Sunday dinner', steak and chips, beef curry, lamb stew and lasagne. This suggested a preference for substantial, 'proper' meals even though the range of meals regarded as 'proper' meals seemed to have been extended from the traditional 'English' 'proper' meal of 'meat and two veg' to include 'minority ethnic' meat based meals, such as curry.

This chapter has given an overview of shiftworkers' attitudes to food and eating as a prelude to the more detailed examination of the quantitative evidence on patterns of eating presented in chapters 7 and 8.

CHAPTER 7: EATING PATTERNS AND SHIFTWORK

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a general overview of shiftworkers' eating patterns, drawing on the quantitative data collected in the questionnaire survey. It provides a descriptive context to later chapters which explore the social organisation of food and eating at work and in the home in more detail from a qualitative perspective. The first section considers the facilities available for shiftworkers to obtain food and drink at work. This is followed in section 7.3 by descriptions of the eating patterns of shiftworkers on work and non-work days. Section 7.4 summarises the main themes of the chapter.

It is important to state my intentions in this chapter. As stated in chapter 5, I am not seeking to provide a causal explanation of the relationship between shiftwork and eating patterns; my intention is to provide a preliminary description of the facilities available to obtain food and the eating patterns of shiftworkers on both work and non-work days. As this topic has not been studied sociologically previously, it is important to collect data to show the range of eating patterns which exist among both male and female shiftworkers in different industries. Collection of this data also allows the eating patterns of male and female shiftworkers to be compared, and gender issues to be integrated into the study of shiftwork and eating habits in a way that previous studies have not attempted. The descriptive material presented in this chapter is also necessary as background to the exploration of the meanings of eating at home and work to this group of workers, which is developed in chapters 9, 10 and 11. Again, this approach has not been taken by previous studies and is important to gain a full understanding of the topic.

7.2 FACILITIES AT WORK TO OBTAIN FOOD

7.2.i. Facilities at work to obtain food

Access to facilities providing hot meals, snacks and drinks at work is very important to all workers, but particularly to those who work shifts as no other facilities may be available nearby at the times they are working. The facilities available for shiftworkers in my study to obtain food and drinks at work in each of the workplaces studied are summarised below.

7.2.i.a. Ambulance service

No canteen or café facilities were provided for ambulance workers to obtain cooked meals at work; neither were any vending machines provided. I was told this was because the stations were too small to make such provision economic. Staff had to prepare their own food themselves in the ambulance station, or bring in food. Generally workers had access to a cooker, microwave oven, toaster, kettle, water boiler, fridge, counters and cupboards for food storage and preparation. Some stations had a 'tuck shop' of snacks, such as crisps and chocolate, paid for communally and available to all staff. Ambulance workers were not allowed

to leave the station during work time to buy food from shops, although they were allowed to use hospital canteens if not on call. A lounge area was available in which food could be eaten.

Table 7.1: Facilities available to obtain food in industries studied

	24 hour canteen	Restricted hours canteen	Cafe	Food shop	Vending machine	Kitchen
Bank	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Hospital	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*No*
Ambulance station	*No*	*No*	*No*	*Limited to snacks*	*No*	*Yes*

7.2.i.b. The bank

A self-service restaurant was available on site, providing a restricted service of hot and snack meals from early morning till 3.00a.m. the following morning, although hot meals had to be ordered in advance at night. A wide choice of food was offered - starters, main meals including a vegetarian option, sweets, soup, salads and various snacks. The restaurant was regarded by staff as offering good quality food at reasonable prices. I was told that prices had been very heavily subsidised in the past, possibly to attract staff to the out-of-town location. Over the years, however, prices had increased and workers thought the restaurant did not offer as good value as previously. There were no facilities for bank staff to prepare their own food or drinks.

Snack and drinks vending machines were widely available on corridors throughout the bank. Hot and cold drinks were free to staff and snacks, such as crisps, sweets, chocolate could be purchased. A rest room/coffee room, and television room were available where staff could eat food brought from home. Off the site, meals and drinks could be obtained at the two nearby pubs, a fast food outlet and a transport cafe. Takeaway meals could also be ordered by phone for delivery to the site. There were no shops selling food in the immediate vicinity.

7.2.i.c. The hospital

All staff at the hospital studied had access to two restaurants on site – one termed the 'dining room' by staff, the other referred to as the 'canteen'. Both were large, self-service restaurants, serving a wide range of hot and cold meals, drinks and snacks from early morning until late evening. Staff, hospital visitors and patients could use either restaurant, but management tended to use the dining room and manual workers and nursing staff used the canteen.

The catering manager informed me that a 24-hour, hot meals service was available but staff seemed confused about opening times and thought both restaurants closed in the early evening. Of the two restaurants, the dining room was seen as more attractive as it was larger and more airy. The canteen was described as *'feeling like it was underground'* and could be noisy and untidy. There was also a small café operated by a voluntary organisation, near to the

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departments studied, which sold snacks, hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, crisps, cakes, sweets and some very expensive fruit. There were tables and chairs for the use of customers, who might be staff, hospital visitors or patients. There was also a sandwich bar in the main hospital building, referred to by staff as the 'deli'. It sold more expensive sandwiches, snacks, fruit and cakes.

Vending machines were widely available in the hospital corridors, dispensing hot and cold drinks and chocolate, crisps and sweets. Some also stocked sandwiches. Shops on the site included a newsagents which sold pre-packaged sandwiches, snacks, fruit, sweets, milk, chocolate, crisps and some groceries, but it was seen by staff as expensive and too far away to visit during a break, although some staff would visit on their way in to work. There were several takeaway food outlets outside the hospital which would deliver food ordered by telephone.

The places in which food could be consumed in the hospital, with the exception of the restaurants or snack bars, were limited. One department studied had a staff room with easy chairs, coffee tables, a microwave, kettle, and staff lockers in which food could be stored. A small room was available in the other department studied, with a microwave and hot water boiler. Staff on one ward I observed, however, had no staff room and they were obliged to eat in the canteen, the staff nurses' office or in the corridor. All wards had a kitchen area, which was officially to be used only for storing and preparing patients' meals, but some staff occasionally used the kitchen, and even bathroom areas, to consume food.

7.2.ii. Access to facilities

I wanted to find out in the questionnaire survey if respondents were aware of the facilities available to them to obtain food and drink. The majority of shiftworkers indicated they were aware that they had access to a wide range of facilities to obtain food at work as shown in table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2: Access to facilities to obtain food and drink at work

Have access to -	Number	Valid %
Snack vending machine	81	68.1
Drinks vending machine	98	81.7
Microwave oven	87	72.5
Snack trolley	19	15.8
Canteen or restaurant	86	71.7
Other	44	37.0
Total	119	100.0

N = 119, 1 missing case

Access to a canteen or dining room at the place of work was perhaps most important as it enabled workers to obtain a meal without having to bring food from home. 71.7% of the 119

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respondents who answered this question had access to a canteen or restaurant at their place of work. However, it seemed cold snacks could be obtained more easily than hot meals, as the type of facility most widely available was the vending machine. 81.7% of those who answered this question had access to a drinks vending machine and 68.1% had access to a snack vending machine at their place of work. Many workers also could buy snacks, such as sandwiches and sweets, at snack bars in their workplace, and hospital staff had access to mobile snack trolleys which voluntary services brought to the wards for the use of staff and patients.

Some shiftworkers had access to shops or other outlets which sold snack foods, sweets and drinks, such as petrol stations. For health service staff, some shops were available in the hospital, but not necessarily near their immediate place of work; workers who were mobile, particularly ambulance workers, had greater access to a range of shops and other food outlets in the course of their work. 37% of respondents indicated they had access to 'other' facilities to buy food or drink at, or near, their place of work.

Facilities to cook or reheat food at work were widely available. Some employers provided microwave ovens for workers to use. 94% of ambulance workers who responded had access to a microwave at work, as did 20% of bank workers. Ambulance workers also had access to a fully equipped kitchen at their workplace, with a conventional oven and fridge. Usually workers who had access to facilities to cook food at work also had food storage facilities, such as a locker or refrigerator.

Overall, a majority of shiftworkers in my study were aware they had access to a wide range of facilities in, or close to, their place of work, enabling them to buy food, reheat food brought from home or buy cooked meals. However, provision of facilities differed between workplaces, and these different levels of provision of facilities by employers can be seen as reflecting management decisions about the need to provide such facilities for their staff. In some industries, such as banking, it seemed that management had decided to provide extensive, subsidised canteen facilities, partly to attract staff to work in the industry, as the bank was in an out-of-town location, but also to enable staff to meet their needs for food during the shift quickly and relatively cheaply, so enabling them to work more effectively. In the ambulance service, it seemed that a 'self-catering' mode of food provision had been considered more appropriate as the work of an emergency service did not lend itself to meal breaks at fixed times, and the small number of staff at any one station made provision of a canteen uneconomic. The privileged position of the bank workers in my study as regards access to facilities recalls the claim by Parkin (1984) that the occupational structure is the backbone of the system of class inequality in capitalist societies, and that white-collar workers enjoy privileges not available to manual workers (Parkin 1984:24).

7.2.iii. Use of facilities

The availability of facilities, however, did not mean that shiftworkers would choose, or be able, to make use of them. Here I consider the use shiftworkers made of various facilities and the pattern of use on different shifts by workers in different industries.

Table 7.3: Use of facilities to obtain food and drink at work

Used regularly *	Number	Valid %
Snack vending machine	26	22.0
Drinks vending machine	46	39.0
Microwave oven	34	28.8
Snack trolley	5	4.2
Canteen or restaurant	37	31.4
Other	28	23.7
Total	118	100.0

N = 118, 2 missing cases

*used regularly = more than 3 times per week.

Despite the apparent convenience of c canteen or restaurant at work serving hot meals, table 7.3 above shows that only one-third (31.4%) of my respondents used the canteen on a regular basis. There may have been a number of reasons for not using a canteen. Canteens were not available in some workplaces, but where they were provided some shiftworkers in my study might not have used it due to the high cost, poor choice of food, insufficient time at meal breaks, restricted canteen opening times, the distance of the canteen from the workplace, and the availability of other options, including the dining habits of fellow workers and the type of meal that might be eaten at home after work. It may also have been that some respondents used the canteen fewer than three times per week.

28.8% of respondents to this question indicated that they regularly used a microwave oven at work, possibly because it gave them greater flexibility over the timing of meals, and allowed them to obtain hot food at times when the canteen was closed, and have more choice over what, and when, they ate, possibly at a lower cost and in less time than going to the canteen. The social circumstances of eating a meal prepared by another, as in the canteen meal, and that prepared by oneself, however, were very different. It may have been that some workers preferred the more individualistic situation of the microwaved meal, which they could eat alone, than the communal setting of the canteen. I found that use of a microwave oven at work varied according to the shift being worked, as 33% of the 36 respondents to this question, who had been on a night shift on their last day at work, had used the microwave oven at work, compared to only one user who had been on a day shift.

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			sex of
			female
uses canteen at work regulary	No	Count	51
			70.8%
	Yes	Count	21
			29.1%
Total		Count	72
			100.0%

N = 72, 2 missing cases

Table 7.4b: Uses canteen at work regularly,
male respondents

			sex of
			male
uses canteen at work regulary	No	Count	30
			65.2%
	Yes	Count	16
			34.8%
Total		Count	46
			100.0%

N = 46, no missing cases

Tables 7.4a and 7.4b above show that roughly twice as many shiftworkers in my sample indicated that they did not use the canteen at work regularly (i.e. more than 3 times per week), as indicated that they did use it. Male shiftworkers in my sample, however, were more likely to use the canteen than female respondents to this question. 34.8% of the 46 male respondents to this question indicated that they used the canteen at work regularly, compared with 29.1% of the 72 female respondents.

Over a fifth (22%) of respondents to this question had used a snack vending machine on their last day at work. Other studies, as noted in chapter 4, have found between 18% and 30% of shiftworkers were likely to use vending machines to obtain food at work, depending on the shift being worked (Stewart et al 1985).

7.2.iv. Satisfaction with facilities

I also asked shiftworkers if they were satisfied with the facilities available at work to obtain food or drink. 66% of the 119 respondents to this question indicated that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the facilities at work to get food or drink. Over a third (34%), however, said that they were dissatisfied with the facilities.

Some workers were dissatisfied with the limited canteen opening hours, particularly on night shifts, when canteens tended to be closed. Others were dissatisfied with the range of foods on offer, both in canteens and vending machines, and indicated they would like more 'healthy' choices, such as fruit. One worker indicated that the problem was not lack of facilities but lack of opportunity to use them as a result of insufficient time for meal breaks. These dissatisfactions possibly go some way to explain why a fifth of my respondents used other facilities to those provided in or near their workplace to obtain food and drink at work. The main alternatives seemed to be to buy food from shops or other outlets, or to bring food from home.

7.2.v. Time allowed for breaks

Shiftworkers employed in the industries studied were allowed different amounts of time for meal and tea breaks, as table 7.5 below shows. Over half (58%) of the 120 respondents to this question indicated that they were allowed 30 minutes or less for their main meal break, and around one third were allowed 60 minutes.

Table 7.5: Breaks in industries studied

	60 mins	30 mins	Tea Breaks	Guaranteed meal break?
Bank	Yes		2 x20 mins	Yes
Health		Yes	none	Yes
Ambulance Service		Yes	none	No

Ambulance staff were allowed a 30-minute meal break during an eight-hour shift, to be taken between the 4th and 5th hours of work. The times when the break could be taken were strictly specified. It could not be taken before 11.45 am for staff beginning work at 8.00 am. However, staff were not guaranteed a break, nor could they take a meal break at their own discretion but had to gain permission from control staff. I was told that control staff would try to allocate work so that crews could return to their own stations for a break, but pressure of work meant breaks could be several hours late or missed altogether. There were no official tea breaks allowed.

Hospital staff were allowed a 30-minute meal break in a seven and a half hour shift. The timing of the break was uncertain, and not guaranteed if the workload was very heavy or there were staff shortages. Staff had to negotiate the times of their breaks with colleagues to ensure sufficient cover was left on the ward, and they could be called back if they were needed. Support workers were particularly restricted in the timing of their meal breaks as their work involved distribution of patients' meals and this work had to take priority. Tea breaks were not officially allowed but most staff tended to take a break of 5 - 10 minutes once each shift if work allowed.

Bank workers were allowed a 60-minute main meal break and two 20-minutes tea breaks per 8-hour shift, with an additional half-hour break allowed during a 12-hour shift. The timing of meal

breaks was fairly flexible but at least one member of staff in each section had to remain on duty at all times, so staff going for breaks had to negotiate times with colleagues.

The time that workers were theoretically allowed for a meal break was not always the same as the time they actually did take, which could have been more or less, depending on various factors. A major factor in health workers' decisions whether to use the canteen or not was time - how long it took to walk there, to queue to be served and to eat the meal. These considerations were balanced against the length of time allowed for meal breaks, how busy the ward was, and whether the supervisor was known to be strict or lenient. Very few nurses mentioned the cost of the meals in the canteen as a consideration, or their own preferences for the type of meal they wanted to eat.

Some workers in the industries studied were allowed paid, guaranteed breaks, whilst for others, meal breaks were unpaid and not always guaranteed. Industries also differed in the extent to which meal times had to be taken at a fixed time or not, and whether the worker could leave his or her immediate place of work or not. There were differences between grades of staff in the degree to which they enjoyed some autonomy over timing of their meal breaks. For example, more senior grades of bank staff were generally able to take breaks when they wished if staff were available to cover for them, whereas lower grades of staff were unable to do this. A senior nursing officer provided an illustration of the high degree of autonomy and choice which she enjoyed in decisions about eating at work. Not only did she have a choice of different restaurants, but she could send her secretary to buy sandwiches for her, which she could eat in her private office, or she could bring food from home to store in the private refrigerator in her office. She also had a biscuit tin, fruit bowl and drinks cabinet in her office.

In summary, this section has shown that a majority of shiftworkers in my study were aware they had access to a wide range of facilities in, or close to, their place of work, enabling them to buy food, reheat food brought from home or buy cooked meals. The range of facilities available, however, varied according to the location and size of the workplace, and the nature of the work being performed. Those shiftworkers employed by large organisations, with a fixed place of work, such as bank and health service workers, tended to have access to more extensive facilities within their immediate workplace.

7.3 THE EATING PATTERNS OF SHIFTWORKERS ON WORK AND NON-WORK DAYS

7.3. i. Definitions of terms
In this section I outline the quantitative evidence collected in the questionnaire survey on the eating patterns of shiftworkers on work and non-work days. It was important to study shiftworkers' eating patterns on both work and non-work days in order to gain a full picture. In

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collecting and analysing the data presented in this chapter, the following definition of a 'meal' was used.

> *...a meal is an eating occasion which cannot be described by a single food item code, but which includes a main dish.* (National Food Survey 1994:131)

A 'snack' is implied to be a single food item. These definitions accord with the nutritional definitions used by Lennernas et al (1993) who defined a 'complete meal' as consisting of the food groups protein, starch and fibre, for example, steak, chips and peas. A 'snack' was defined as *'not containing enough food groups to qualify as a meal'*, such as an apple, beans on toast, or a piece of chocolate (Lennernas et al 1993:248). I also used the terms 'first eating occasion', and 'second eating occasion' in place of the terms 'breakfast', 'lunch' and so on, and in place of the term 'meal'. This was to avoid assumptions about the content of the meal or its place in the sequence of meals through the day. The 'first eating occasion' of the day for a night shift worker may be at 6.00 pm, whereas for a worker on an early shift it may be at 6.00 am.

7.3.ii. Shiftworkers' perceptions of their eating patterns on work and non-work days

Shiftworkers in my study made interesting distinctions between their eating patterns on work and non-work days. In general, although most enjoyed food and eating, they felt that on days off they enjoyed their meals more and generally felt more satisfied with their pattern of eating as compared to days when they were at work. This implies they were dissatisfied with their eating habits on workdays, did not enjoy their meals, and their meals were eaten at irregular times.

7.3.iii. Number of meals

Tables 7.6a shows that, of my 120 respondents, almost one third (32%) reported eating 3 meals or snacks on their last day at work, and a further 25% had eaten 4. 18%, however, reported eating only 2 meals or snacks and 10% had eaten only once. Some had eaten more often than the 3 or 4 meals or snacks usually seen as 'normal' in Britain today – 13 people reported eating 5 meals or snacks, and 5 had eaten 6 times.

Table 7.6a: Total number of meals or snacks eaten on last work day

Number of meals or snacks	Number of respondents	Valid %
1	12	10.0
2	22	18.0
3	38	32.0
4	30	25.0
5	13	11.0
6	5	4.0
Total	120	100.0

N = 120, no missing cases

The number of meals eaten varied according to the shift being worked. Night shift workers were likely to eat either very few, or very many, meals or snacks. Of the 36 respondents on a night shift when last at work, 13 had eaten 3 or 4 meals, 4 had eaten only once on that day and 8 had eaten five or six meals. In contrast, of those last working a morning shift, 23 had eaten 3 or 4 meals during the day, 2 had eaten only once and only 1 had eaten six meals or snacks.

Table 7.6b: Total number of meals or snacks eaten on last non-work day

Number of meals or snacks	Number of respondents	Valid %
1	6	5.0
2	14	12.0
3	42	35.0
4	38	32.0
5	17	14.0
6	3	3.0
Total	120	100.0

N = 120, no missing cases

Table 7.6b shows that, on the last day when they were not at work, more of my respondents ate the 3 or 4 meals or snacks regarded as 'normal' in Britain today than did so on their last work day. 35% of my 120 respondents to this question had eaten three times, and a further 32%, four times. Although some ate very many or very few meals on non-work days, 5% of the 120 respondents to this question had eaten only once in the day, compared to 10% on their last work day. This suggested that some shiftworkers seemed to eat more frequently on the days when they are not at work as compared to workdays.

7.3.iv. What types of food were eaten?

Respondents were asked for details of all the meals and snacks eaten on their last work and non-work day, and also for the time and place of the meal, and who they ate with, if anyone. Responses were then coded using the following categories.

Categorisation of types of meals / snacks

1. hot main meal with meat or fish, e.g. steak, chips and peas

2. hot vegetarian main meal, e.g. vegetarian lasagne

3. cold meal, e.g. salad with meat, cheese, fish

4. hot snack, e.g. chips, beans on toast, soup, baked potato

5. cold snack, e.g. sandwiches

6. sweet pudding, e.g. cakes, yoghurt, buns, sponge pudding

7. 'breakfast' foods, e.g. cereal, toast, muesli

8. sweet snacks, e.g. chocolate, confectionery

9. savoury snacks, e.g. crisps

10. fresh fruit

Table 7.7a below shows the types of foods eaten by shiftworkers in my sample at each of the first three eating occasions on the last workday. An important distinction to draw is between consumption of hot meals and snacks.

Table 7.7a: Type of food eaten at each eating occasion on last workday

(Figures rounded to nearest whole number)

Type of food eaten	Eating occasion 1	Eating occasion 2	Eating occasion 3
	Valid %	Valid %	Valid %
1.Hot meal with meat or fish	15	22	30
2.Hot vegetarian meal	1	3	8
3.Cold meal	3	3	4
4.Hot snack	10	15	11
5.Cold snack,	18	32	19
6.Sweet pudding	48	2	4
7.'Breakfast' foods	2	7	7
8.Sweet snacks, chocolate / confectionery	2	4	8
9.Savoury snack, crisps	0	3	2
10.Fresh fruit	2	7	7
11.Other	0	0	0
Total	100%	100%	100%

Eating occasion 1, N = 120, 0 missing cases

Eating occasion 2, N = 108,12 missing cases

Eating occasion 3, N = 86, 34 missing cases

If we look first at the types of food eaten through the day at the three eating occasions, 30% of the 86 shiftworkers in my sample who had eaten a third meal and answered this question had eaten a hot meal with meat or fish, and 8% a hot vegetarian meal at the third eating occasion compared to 15% who had done so at the first. This accorded with the normative eating pattern in Britain which sees the third meal of the day as the most substantial meal, the 'main' meal of the day, and, according to Murcott (ed) (1983), this has typically been regarded as the culturally appropriate or 'proper' meal. However, 70% had not eaten such a meal, but a cold meal, a hot or cold snack such as sandwiches or breakfast cereal. This suggests that shiftworkers in my study were perhaps more likely to eat snacks than hot meals on work days.

Also, those who had eaten a hot meat or vegetarian meal for their first eating occasion, indicated that they had eaten dishes such as bacon and eggs, the traditional 'full, English breakfast', but also dishes such as lasagne, roast beef, beans on toast or chips, which would

more be more associated with an evening meal in England. These findings were interesting as eating hot, substantial dishes for breakfast occurs in other cultures, but is not seen generally as the norm in Britain. Newman (2000) noted that breakfast in China is usually 'congee', a rice porridge with pickled vegetables and the leftovers from the evening meal, such as noodle soup or 'dimsum' of rice and meat. My findings suggested that, in some ways, the eating habits at the first meal of the day for some shiftworkers in my study diverged from those regarded as the norm in Britain today. This may have been an indication that, for some shiftworkers, meals may have been losing their distinctive identity.

What did shiftworkers eat on days when they were not working? Table 7.7b shows the types of food eaten at the first, second and third eating occasions of their last non-work day. The table shows some differences in eating patterns on non-work days as compared to workdays. First, more hot meals than snacks were eaten on non-work days than workdays, particularly at the second and third eating occasions. 52% of the 98 respondents to this question, who had eaten a third time, ate a hot meat meal, and a further 14% ate a hot vegetarian meal.

Table 7.7b: Type of food eaten at each eating occasion on last non-work day
(Figures rounded to nearest whole number)

Type of food eaten	Eating occasion 1 Valid %	Eating occasion 2 Valid %	Eating occasion 3 Valid %
1.Hot meal with meat or fish	5	35	52
2.Hot vegetarian meal	0	7	14
3.Cold meal	2	4	1
4.Hot snack	6	19	8
5.Cold snack	8	29	7
6.'Breakfast' foods	76	3	2
7.Sweet pudding	1	0	5
8.Sweet snack, confectionery	0	1	4
9.Savoury snack, crisps	0	0	4
10.Fresh fruit	1	2	1
11.Other	0	0	1
Total	100%	100%	100%

Eating occasion 1, N = 120, 0 missing cases
Eating occasion 2, N = 112, 8 missing cases
Eating occasion 3, N = 98, 22 missing cases

The tendency to eat more hot meals than snacks on non-work days may also have been associated with having more free time available to prepare food on non-work days. It might also have been more likely that the occasion was shared with other family members and special

meals (such as Sunday dinner) were eaten. It was also interesting that 76% of the 120 respondents who indicated that they ate at the first eating occasion ate 'breakfast' foods, and only 5% ate a hot meat meal. This suggests more shiftworkers in my study ate foods normally associated with that eating occasion on their last non-work day.

7.3.v. Where were meals eaten?

The questionnaire also asked shiftworkers where they ate each meal or snack on work and non-work days. A great many outlets now exist in Britain where people may eat out, ranging from establishments specialising entirely in the provision of food, such as cafes, canteens and restaurants, to those which provide some other service but also sell food, such as pubs, hotels, in-store restaurants, shops and service stations. There are also take-away food outlets, including fish and chip shops, burger, pizza and sandwich bars. Eating out can also take place in someone else's home (Warde and Martens 2000:21). Workers might choose to eat in any of these places, to eat at their desk, or near their place of work. Some might choose to go home to eat.

It was important to know where shiftworkers ate as the social significance of a meal varies according to the setting in which it is consumed. Compare, for example, a meal eaten in a restaurant, with one eaten in a canteen. The first usually suggests a special occasion, with pleasure taken in eating expensive and exotic food, whereas the second suggests 'functional feeding' - adequate but rather unappetising food eaten as fuel for work. Eating establishments also convey by their design and fittings the type of behaviour expected of customers. Canteens tend to have hard, uncomfortable seats similar to those provided by fast food outlets which encourage people to eat their meal quickly and leave (Ritzer 1993), whereas expensive restaurants provide plush, comfortable seating to encourage people to stay longer.

Table 7.8a below shows that home and work were the main places where shiftworkers had eaten on their last day at work; very few had eaten in a café, restaurant or public house outside work, or at a friend or relative's house. Few workers reported that they had eaten in the canteen or dining room at work on their last day at work. Even for the first meal of the day, the meal for which the canteen was most frequently used by my respondents, only 13% of the 116 respondents who had eaten this meal had done so in the canteen, and only 9% and 11% of those who had eaten second and third meals respectively had used the canteen.

However, even though few used the canteen, table 7.8a also shows that many other respondents did not leave their work premises at mealtimes. For example, at the second eating occasion, 50% of the 105 who ate this meal and responded to the question ate in some other place at work, such as a snack bar, at their desk or in their office. This suggested that some shiftworkers were perhaps not taking the opportunity to take a break from work to eat a full meal.

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Table 7.8a: Place of each eating occasion on last workday

(Figures rounded to nearest whole number)

Place	Eating occasion 1 Valid %	Eating occasion 2 Valid %	Eating occasion 3 Valid %
1. Home	51	34	35
2. Canteen at work	13	9	11
3. Other place at work	26	42	35
4. Work – desk, office	4	8	7
5. Café, restaurant outside work	1	2	1
6. Public house	0	1	1
7. Car, other vehicle	2	2	4
8. Other, e.g. friend's house	1	2	4
	100%	100%	100%

* Other place at work, e.g. snack bar

Eating occasion 1, N = 120, 0 missing cases

Eating occasion 2, N = 105, 15 missing cases

Eating occasion 3, N = 82, 38 missing cases

Warde and Martens (2000) provided a limited basis for comparison with my findings. Their study of food consumption outside the home found that 29% of their respondents reported having eaten in their workplace canteen or restaurant *'in the last 12 months'* (Warde and Martens 2000:36). This is a higher figure than I found, but Warde and Martens (2000) asked about use of the canteen over the past year, whereas my question related to the last work day only. Also, as the authors suggested, it was possible that there were more organisations with canteens in their study areas of London, Bristol and Preston than in my study area (Warde and Martens 2000:37).

Table 7.8b below shows that, among shiftworkers in my study, most eating still took place within the home on non-work days, but meals tended to be eaten in a wider variety of locations on non-work days than on workdays. As over 90% of shiftworkers who answered this question, and ate a third time on their last non-work day, had eaten at home, this might have indicated a home-based lifestyle among this group. It may also have been that eating out was difficult for this group, perhaps because of childcare responsibilities, or because their partner was working. Perhaps they were unable to afford to eat out. It may also have been that meals at home with the family on non-work days were seen as special occasions. However, it was not possible from my data to ascertain if non-work days were weekdays or weekends. If the data collected related to a Sunday, this may have led to an over-estimation of meals eaten at home as traditionally in Britain a special 'Sunday dinner' is eaten. It would have been interesting to have discovered

how many of my respondents ate a roast 'Sunday' dinner on their day off, regardless of whether it was a Sunday or not.

Table 7.8b: Place of each eating occasion on last non-work day

(Figures rounded to nearest whole number)

Place	Eating occasion 1 Valid %	Eating occasion 2 Valid %	Eating occasion 3 Valid %
1. Home	95	84	91
2. Canteen at work	2	2	2
3. Other place at work	0	1	1
4. Work – desk, office	0	0	0
5. Café, restaurant outside work	1	6	3
6. Public house	0	4	2
7. Car, other vehicle	0	0	1
8. Other, e.g. friend's house	0	3	0
	100%	100%	100%

Eating occasion 1, N = 120, 0 missing cases

Eating occasion 2, N = 112, 8 missing cases

Eating occasion 3, N = 95, 25 missing cases

I also found that shiftworkers were more likely to eat out in a commercial establishment on a non-work day than on a workday. 10% of the 112 respondents who had eaten a second meal ate in a café, restaurant or public house, compared to 3% of respondents who had done so on a workday. It may have been that shiftworkers were more likely to eat out as a leisure activity on days off, or that their leisure activities made it difficult for them to return home for a meal. Some workers (2 – 4% depending on the meal) had, rather surprisingly, eaten at work on non-work days, possibly because this was a cheaper or more convenient option for them. One health service worker, for example, revealed that free meals were a 'perk' of his job.

7.3.vi. With whom did shiftworkers eat?

As chapter 2 showed, meals are social occasions, and the pleasure gained from eating and conversing with others is part of the occasion. It may be thought that shiftworkers would seek social contact with colleagues at mealtimes as their shift schedule could have made it difficult for them to socialise with non-shiftworkers, as suggested by Walker (1985), summarised in chapter 4.

I found that sizeable groups of shiftworkers in my sample had eaten meals alone on their last workday. For example, 44.7% of the 85 respondents who ate a first meal on their last day at

work ate alone, as did 37.7% of the 77 who answered this question, and ate for a second time on their last day at work. Meals eaten alone might have been enjoyed less, or rushed.

However, to ask with whom shiftworkers ate a meal is open to different interpretations. It might also have been that some of my respondents were eating in the presence of, but not *with* others, such as eating a sandwich in an office surrounded by other colleagues who were still working. This is a different situation to that of a meal shared with colleagues who are all eating. Enjoyment of the meal, and experience of the meal break as a time free from work, are likely to be reduced for the worker surrounded by others still at work.

Murcott (ed) (1983) attached a special significance to eating with other family members, seeing this as a feature of the 'proper' meal, and suggesting that it was eating together and eating the same food, prepared by the mother, which gave the 'proper' meal its special quality. My findings suggested that eating with the family was possible for only a minority of shiftworkers on workdays, as a result of their work schedules. This raised questions about the significance of 'proper', family meals in these households. Did shiftworkers perhaps attach more significance to family meals as they were a rare occurrence, or did they regard such meals as less important? These issues are discussed in more detail in chapter 9 in the context of food and eating at home.

On non-work days, shiftworkers were less likely to eat alone. In contrast to workdays, they were more likely to eat with another person at the third eating occasion of the day, as 86% of the 70 respondents who had eaten a third time, and answered this question, had done so. 77% of these 70 respondents had eaten with their partner and /or partner and children.

It is possible that shiftworkers in my study used the opportunity to eat with their family on non-work days as many indicated that they were often unable to do so on workdays. When I asked my respondents how often they were able to eat with their family, 52.3% of the 65 workers living with a spouse / partner and /or children who responded to this question, reported that they were only able to eat together as a family at weekends, as shown in table 7.9.

Table 7.9:How often do you usually eat together as a family?

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Never	3	4.6
	some days in week	16	24.6
	Weekends only	34	52.3
	Most days	9	13.8
	Other	3	4.6
	Total	65	100.0

N = 65, 55 missing cases

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A further 24.6% of those who responded to this question indicated that they ate together on some days of the week. 4.6%, however, indicated that they never ate together as a family. Just as shiftworkers tended to often eat alone, it was also the case that shiftworkers' partners and children may have also often tended to eat alone, possibly because the worker was at work, asleep, did not want a meal or had already eaten. My findings tended to confirm studies presented in chapter 4, particularly Maasen (1982), Bunnage (1984), and Smith and Folkard (1993), who also concluded that some shiftworkers rarely ate with their families.

7.4 SUMMARY

Access to, and shiftworkers' use of facilities to obtain food and drink at work, varied between the different industries studied. Shiftworkers in the health service and banking enjoyed a wide range of facilities to obtain food and drink in or near their place of work, whereas the facilities available to ambulance workers were more limited. Only around one-third of shiftworkers in my study used the facilities at work to obtain food, although there was variation between the different facilities used. Almost half (47%) regularly used drinks vending machines, and 37% regularly used the canteen at work. Over one-third (34%) of shiftworkers were dissatisfied with the facilities available at work to obtain food, with canteen opening hours on nightshifts a major source of dissatisfaction.

I also found that 87% of shiftworkers in my study had access to, and 34% regularly used, a microwave oven at work. This might have suggested that the pattern of communal eating in the works canteen was being replaced by a more individualised pattern of food provision and eating at work, in which workers took meal breaks at different times and prepared and ate their own food alone. This pattern seemed to be already established in the ambulance service.

Over half (58%) of my respondents were allowed 30 minutes or less for their main meal break. Industries varied in allowing workers guaranteed, paid meal breaks. Workers in the health and ambulance services frequently took meal breaks late, or missed meals due to pressure of work. Bank workers were more likely to be able to take longer, guaranteed breaks.

Shiftworkers' eating patterns on their last day at work were irregular and erratic. Some did not follow a regular eating pattern each day, but changed their pattern of eating when they changed shifts, with night shifts being the most disruptive, and most removed from the customary pattern in Britain of 3 - 4 meals per day. On days when they were not at work, more of my respondents ate the 3 or 4 meals or snacks regarded as 'normal' in Britain today than did so on their last work day.

Shiftworkers in my study were more likely to eat snacks at each eating occasion than meals. Few had used the canteen at work for any meal on their last day at work. At the second eating

occasion of the day, most shiftworkers ate at some other place at work, such as a snack bar, or at their desk. Home was the second favoured location for meals on the last day at work.

On days when they were not working, shiftworkers' eating patterns tended to be more organised than on workdays, i.e. they tended to eat more often, and to eat more meals and fewer snacks. Although most meals were eaten at home, they were more likely to eat out in a café or restaurant, and were also more likely to eat with other members of their family. However, it remained that a significant number of workers in my study ate alone on non-work days, and some indicated that they never ate with their family.

My findings in this, and the previous, chapter suggested that shiftworkers experienced certain tensions in their relationship to food and eating. While chapter 6 concluded that most shiftworkers thought food was important, for health and social reasons, for some, eating patterns and their enjoyment of eating were constrained by the conditions of their shiftwork. These points are developed more in chapter 9 which explores the meaning of food and eating at work from the perspective of shiftworkers themselves.

The quantitative data presented in this chapter to describe the main features of shiftworkers' eating patterns on work and non-work days forms the background to the discussion of eating pattern typologies presented in the next chapter and the social organisation of food and eating in shiftworkers' households and at work in chapters 9 and 10. In the next chapter I seek to go beyond this description of shiftworkers' eating patterns to explore the association between different aspects of their eating patterns and their social, work and family situations by developing a typology of eating patterns. In chapter 9, I explore the meaning of food and eating at work from the perspective of shiftworkers themselves.

CHAPTER 8: A TYPOLOGY OF EATING PATTERNS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters have presented descriptive data on the attitudes to food and eating patterns of shiftworkers on work and non-workdays. In this chapter I develop a typology of shiftworkers' eating patterns. I explain first the purpose of the typology and how it was developed. I then use the typology in sections 8.3 and 8.4 to explore further the relationship between shiftworkers' eating patterns on workdays and other aspects of their work and social situations.

My intentions in this chapter are limited. Although in presenting a typology of shiftworkers' eating patterns I aim to go beyond the description of shiftworkers' eating patterns presented in the previous chapter to offer an analytical tool which may inform further work in the field, at this stage, I am merely attempting to develop a framework which could be developed further in future research on eating patterns. As noted in the previous chapter, it is not my intention in this study to seek to demonstrate a causal relationship between shiftwork and eating patterns. My intention is to relate together the different aspects of shiftworkers' eating patterns in order to describe their frequency within my sample, and develop a profile of the characteristics of shiftworkers associated with each type of eating pattern.

8.2 A TYPOLOGY OF SHIFTWORKERS' EATING PATTERNS

The aim of the typology is to relate together the different aspects of eating patterns, particularly the type of meal consumed, the regularity of meal times and the number of meals or snacks eaten during the day in one indicator. Having categorised the eating pattern as a particular type, associations may be sought between this and other factors. In this way, I hope to be able to analyse the data collected more systematically and develop greater analytical understanding of the issues.

I developed the typology of shiftworkers' eating patterns presented below in the following way. The questionnaire survey collected data on the food eaten on the shiftworker's last work and non-workday, including where it was eaten, with whom, and when. The intention was to gain a comprehensive and accurate record of the pattern of eating on each day. The data was then categorised as eating pattern type 1, 2 or 3, as explained below, on the basis of the number of meals or snacks (eating occasions) per day, the timing of eating occasions and the type of food eaten on each occasion. The three types of eating pattern identified were as follows,

- **Type 1 Eating pattern** described a pattern of eating at irregular times, either very many or very few eating occasions during the day, and eating occasions mostly consisting of single item, 'snack-type' foods, such as crisps, chips, sweets or sandwiches.

- **Type 2 Eating pattern** described a pattern which showed a mixture of Type 1 and 3 eating patterns, such as a pattern of eating at irregular times, either very many or very few eating occasions during the day, but substantial, or 'proper' hot, cooked meals being eaten, or a pattern of single item, 'snack-type' foods, such as crisps, chips, sweets or a sandwich, but at 3 or 4 regular meal times.

- **Type 3 Eating pattern** described a pattern of regular meal times, 3 or 4 meals or snacks being eaten during the day, and more substantial or 'proper', hot, cooked meals being eaten.

These criteria for categorising eating patterns were developed from sociological studies of food and eating found in the literature, particularly the work of Murcott (1982,1983), and Charles & Kerr (1988), and also nutritional studies of food consumption, such as Lennernas et al (1993). In categorising the eating patterns of shiftworkers in my sample using the typology, I was also making a comparison between their eating patterns as reported on the questionnaire, and the pattern of eating revealed by sociological studies of food and eating to be the normative pattern in Britain today. The Type 3 eating pattern could be seen as representing a pattern of eating in seen by sociologists as the 'ideal' in Britain today, whereas the Type 1 pattern could be seen as the reverse of this.

I then cross-tabulated the types of eating pattern identified with other variables to explore the frequency of different types of eating pattern among particular groups within my sample. The limitations of the data on which the typology is based must be recognised. As I have noted in chapter 5, my sample was small and collected on shiftworkers' eating patterns on one workday and one non-workday only, and this may not have been representative of shiftworkers' eating patterns over a longer period. Development of the typology would require a longitudinal study, based on a larger sample, to capture data on eating patterns over a longer period of time. In presenting my findings in this and the following chapters, I intend my findings to be taken as descriptive of my sample only; I do not intend to generalise to a larger population. However, I did use SPSS to conduct probability, Chi-square, Phi and Cramer's tests and note where my findings may be significant.

8.3 SHIFTWORK AND EATING PATTERN TYPES

8.3.i. Shiftwork and eating pattern types on last work and non-workdays

I first analysed the frequency of the different types of eating patterns among shiftworkers in my sample on work and non-workdays, in order to discover any differences in the distribution which might suggest factors worthy of further exploration.

Table 8.1: Eating Pattern Type on last day at work

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Type 1	46	38.7
	Type 2	47	39.5
	Type 3	26	21.8
	Total	119	100.0

N = 119, 1 missing case

Table 8.2: Eating Pattern Type on last non-work day

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Type 1	13	11.0
	Type 2	71	60.2
	Type 3	34	28.8
	Total	118	100.0

N = 118, 2 missing cases

Tables 8.1 and 8.2 above show that the distribution of eating pattern types of the shift workers in my sample on work and non-workdays differed, as there was a higher frequency of type 1 eating patterns on workdays than on non-workdays. On workdays there were almost four times (38.7%) as many respondents whose eating patterns could be categorised as type 1, as on non-workdays, when 11% of respondents were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns. Type 3 eating patterns were also more frequent on non-workdays; 28.8% of my sample were in this category on non-workdays, compared to 21.8% on workdays.

This suggested that working a shiftwork schedule might be more associated with the characteristics of a type 1 eating patterns, i.e. less regular meal times, more missed meals and more snack-type meals for some shiftworkers in my study. When not at work more shiftworkers would seem to have been able to achieve a type 3 eating pattern of more regular meal times, 3 - 4 meals per day, and more substantial, hot, 'proper' meals, rather than snacks.

8.3.ii. Shift being worked and eating patterns

I analysed my data to investigate whether the particular shift being worked might be more associated with different types of eating patterns among my respondents. My respondents worked four main shift patterns, as follows, although starting and finishing times could vary,

- Early or morning shift;
- Day shift;
- Afternoon or late shift;
- Night shift.

I compared night shifts with all other shifts (grouping together early, day, afternoon and 'other' shifts), having previously categorised shifts as 'early' if the shift started before 9.00 hours; as 'afternoon / late shift' if the shift started after 12.00 noon, but before 18.00 hours; 'night', if the shift started after 20.00 hours and 'other' for shifts starting at other times.

Table 8.3: Eating pattern on last work day by shift being worked

			shift being worked on last		
			all other shifts	night	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	24	18	42
		% within shift being worked on last work day	32.0%	51.4%	38.2%
	Type 2	Count	32	13	45
		% within shift being worked on last work day	42.6%	37.1%	40.9%
	Type 3	Count	19	4	23
		% within shift being worked on last work day	25.3%	11.4%	20.9%
Total		Count	47	35	110
		% within shift being worked on last work day	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 110, 10 missing cases. p = .038

Table 8.3 above shows a higher frequency of type 1 eating patterns among night shift workers in my sample than among those working other shifts. 51.4% of the 35 respondents to this question, who were working a night shift on their last day at work, were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns, as compared to 32.0% of the 47 working any other shift. This finding corresponds with those of Smith, Colligan and Tasto (1982) and Duchon and Keran (1990), who also found night shiftworkers had the most disrupted eating patterns. The p value, however, suggests my findings are not statistically significant.

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8.3.iii. Number of years spent working shifts and eating patterns

Table 8.4 below shows the frequency distribution of different eating pattern types among shiftworkers in my sample according to the number of years they had spent working shifts.

Table 8.4: Eating pattern type on last work day by number of years working shifts

| | | | Number of years | | |
			10 and under	11 and over	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	37	8	45
		%within years working shifts	50.6%	19.0%	39.1%
	Type 2	Count	23	24	47
		%within years working shifts	31.5%	57.1%	40.8%
	Type 3	Count	13	10	23
		%within years working shifts	17.8%	23.8%	20.0%
Total		Count	73	42	115
		%within years working shifts	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 115, 5 missing cases. p = .020

There was a higher frequency of type 3 eating patterns among shiftworkers in my sample who had worked shifts for 11 years and over than among those who had worked shifts for 10 years or under. 62.5% of the 8 respondents to this question who had worked shifts for 11 years and over had type 3 eating patterns, compared to 18.9% of the 111 who had worked shifts for 10 years or under. The p value suggests the findings may be statistically significant, but the values for Cramer's V (.256, .020) and Phi (.256, .020) suggest that it is probably not a strong relationship.

It might have been that those workers who had spent many years in shiftwork had found ways of managing their eating, and achieving more regular eating patterns, with less reliance on snacks, than those who had worked shifts for a shorter period of time. However, there was also the possibility that age was a factor here as it may have been that those who had spent longer in shiftwork were also older, and their eating patterns differed from those of younger workers due to cultural factors, as discussed below.

8.3.iv. Age and eating patterns

Table 8.5 below shows a higher frequency of type I eating patterns among shiftworkers in my sample aged 29 and under than among those aged 30 and over. 56.4% of the 39 shiftworkers aged under 29 who answered this question were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns. In contrast, 30% of those aged 30 and over were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns. The p value, however, suggests the findings are not statistically significant.

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Table 8.5: Eating Pattern Type on last work day by age

			Age group		
			29 and under	30 and over	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	22	24	46
		% within age group	56.4%	30.0%	38.7%
	Type 2	Count	12	35	47
		% within age group	30.8%	43.8%	39.5%
	Type 3	Count	5	21	26
		% within age group	12.8%	26.3%	21.8%
Total		Count	39	80	119
		% within age group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N= 119, 1 missing case. p =.145

It might have been that older shiftworkers had developed strategies to manage their eating patterns and work schedules as a result of their longer experience of shiftwork, or perhaps they had been socialised into a different culture of food and eating in Britain in the past, perhaps one based on eating 'traditional' English meals, three times per day. There may also have been situational factors involved, such as differences in levels of income between younger and older workers, or differences in family circumstances, with younger workers possibly having young children, which might have been associated with the differences in eating patterns.

8.3.v. Gender and eating patterns

Table 8.6 below shows a higher frequency of type 1 eating patterns among female shiftworkers in my sample compared to male shiftworkers

Table 8.6: Eating Pattern Type on last work day by gender

			Sex of respondent		
			Female	Male	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	33	13	46
		% within sex of respondent	44.6%	28.9%	38.7%
	Type 2	Count	22	25	47
		% within sex of respondent	29.7%	55.6%	39.5%
	Type 3	Count	19	7	26
		% within sex of respondent	25.7%	15.6%	21.8%
Total		Count	74	45	119
		% within sex of respondent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 119, 1 missing case. p = .020

44.6% of the 74 female shiftworkers in my sample who answered this question were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns on their last workday, compared to 28.9% of the 45

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male respondents. More female than male shiftworkers in my sample also had type 3 eating patterns. 25.7% of female respondents had type 3 eating patterns, compared to 15.6% of male respondents to this question. The p value suggests the findings may be statistically significant at a level of 0.01, but the values for Cramer's V (.256, .020) and Phi (.256, .020) suggest there is probably not a strong relationship between eating pattern types and gender.

Female shiftworkers in my study seemed to have more polarised eating patterns than male shiftworkers, as they were more likely to have type 1 or type 3 eating patterns on workdays than men. Differences in household circumstances between women could have been important here; it may have been that women living alone were more likely to have type 1 eating patterns, while those living with a partner and/or children had more regular meal times, and more 'proper' meals. Robson & Wedderburn (1990) also found 'single' women shiftworkers had the 'most disorganised eating routine' of shiftworkers in their study (Robson and Wedderburn 1990:141). More research would be needed to investigate these possibilities.

8.3.vi. Household composition and eating patterns

Table 8.7 below shows the frequency distribution of different eating pattern types among shiftworkers in my sample by household composition.

Table 8.7: Eating pattern type on last workday by household composition

			household composition			
			live alone	live with partner/s pouse	live with partner/spous e & children	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	11	16	9	36
		% within household composition	44.0%	41.0%	24.3%	39.5%
	Type 2	Count	8	16	19	33
		% within household composition	32.0%	41.0%	51.4%	36.2%
	Type 3	Count	6	7	9	22
		% within household composition	24.0%	17.9%	24.3%	24.1%
Total		Count	25	39	37	91
		% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 91, 29 missing cases. p = .448

It shows a higher frequency of type 1 eating patterns among shiftworkers in my sample who lived alone than among those who lived with a partner and /or children. 44% of the 25 respondents who answered this question, and lived alone, were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns, compared to 24.3% of the 37 who lived with a partner and children. However, the p value suggests the findings are unlikely to be statistically significant.

It may have been that those who lived alone took less care in managing their eating patterns as they did not feel responsible for feeding another person, whereas those with children were perhaps more likely to feel a responsibility to provide more substantial meals, at regular times, as this pattern of feeding children is emphasised within western culture.

8.3.vii. Attitudes to food and eating patterns

Did shiftworkers in my sample whose eating patterns were categorised as type 1 have different attitudes to food and eating to those categorised as eating pattern type 3? Table 8.8 below shows a higher frequency of type 1 eating patterns among those shiftworkers in my sample who considered family meals were important. 32.7% of the 55 respondents to this question who thought family meals were important were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns. 20% of the 55 respondents who thought family meals important were categorised as having type 3 eating patterns. However, the p value suggests the findings are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Table 8.8: Eating pattern type on last work day by 'Are family meals important to you?'

			Are family meals important to you?		
			No	Yes	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	3	18	21
		% within Are family meals important to you?	50.0%	32.7%	34.4%
	Type 2	Count	1	26	27
		% within Are family meals important to you?	16.7%	47.3%	44.3%
	Type 3	Count	2	11	13
		% within Are family meals important to you?	33.3%	20.0%	21.3%
Total		Count	6	55	61
		% within Are family meals important to you?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 61, 59 missing cases. p = .356

Possibly type 3 eating patterns were more associated with other attitudes to food, or with aspects of the work environment, such as access to canteen facilities.

Finally, I analysed my data to consider the relationship between shiftworkers' attitudes to cooking and their eating pattern types. Table 8.9 below shows that 41.5% of the 41 respondents to this question who indicated that they did not enjoy cooking were categorised as having type 1 eating patterns. 23.4% of the 77 who indicated that they enjoyed cooking had type 3 eating patterns. However, the p value suggests that the findings are unlikely to be statistically significant.

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Table 8.9: Eating pattern types on last work day by 'I enjoy cooking most or all of the time'.

| | | | I enjoy cooking most or all of the time | | |
			no	yes	Total
eating pattern on work day	Type 1	Count	17	29	46
		% within I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	41.5%	37.7%	39.0%
	Type 2	Count	17	30	47
		% within I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	41.5%	39.0%	39.8%
	Type 3	Count	7	18	25
		% within I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	17.1%	23.4%	21.2%
Total		Count	41	77	118
		% within I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 118, 2 missing cases. p = .725

Attitudes to cooking, specifically whether respondents enjoyed cooking or not, might have indicated a more deep-rooted attitude to food which could be associated with different eating pattern types. For example, those who enjoyed cooking might also take more interest in food, and see substantial meals at regular times as important. However, the results were not statistically significant.

8.4 EATING PATTERN PROFILES

In the previous section, I presented data on the eating pattern types on their last work day of shiftworkers' in my sample. Some of the findings, however, were not statistically significant, or the relationship between variables did not seem to be strong, and so I present the findings as a description of my sample only, and do not intend to generalise to the wider shiftworker population. However, profiles of the groups of shiftworkers in my sample categorised as having type 1 and type 3 eating patterns can be offered, as shown in table 8.10. No distinct profile emerged for the type 2 eating pattern, and so it is not included here.

Type 1 eating patterns tended to be more associated with shiftworkers in my sample who were younger, i.e. aged under 30; female; who had worked shifts for a relatively short period, such as under 10 years; who lived alone; and who had no children. These workers possibly also considered food not important and did not enjoy cooking.

Table 8.10: Eating pattern types profiles

Eating pattern type	Associated with shiftworkers who were -
1	Younger, i.e. under 30 Female Had worked shifts for under 10 years Lived alone No dependent children Thought food not important Did not enjoy cooking
3	Older, i.e. over 30 Male or female Living with partner and children Had worked shifts for over 10 years Had dependent children Thought family meals important Enjoyed cooking

Type 3 eating patterns tended to be more associated with shiftworkers who were older, i.e. aged over 30; male or female, living with a partner and children; who had worked shifts for a longer period of time, such as over 10 years; and who had dependent children. These workers also were likely to consider family meals important, and to enjoy cooking.

8.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a typology of shiftworkers' eating patterns, and used the typology to explore associations between eating pattern types and other factors, particularly attitudes to food, shiftwork and demographic factors. My intention was to develop an analytical model which may be of value in future research on eating habits.

My analysis of the data showed that there was a higher frequency among shiftworkers of type 1 eating patterns on work than non-workdays. Type 3 eating patterns were more frequent on non-workdays. This suggested that working shifts was more associated with type 1 eating patterns and more shiftworkers were categorised as having type 3 eating patterns on their last non-work day. I also presented profiles of the groups of shiftworkers in my sample categorised as having type 1 and type 3 eating patterns.

However, attempts to investigate the association between other variables and eating pattern types produced findings which were not statistically significant. A possible reason for this may have been that the information used to categorise eating patterns was based on data from the last workday only. Data for one day only was possibly insufficient. It may also have been that the indicators of attitudes to food used were also inadequate. For example, the judgements of my respondents about the 'importance' of food, or their 'enjoyment' of cooking were probably more complex than the limited range of responses in the questionnaire survey allowed them to express.

It may also have been that a shiftwork schedule constrained eating patterns, and was associated with the development of type 1 eating patterns, irrespective of my respondents' attitudes to food and eating. However, to show a link between eating pattern types and different attitudes to food and eating does not establish a causal relationship between these factors. My intention in developing the eating patterns typology was to provide a means for investigating further features of shiftworkers' relationship to food by linking eating patterns, attitudes to food, health, cooking and eating, and shiftwork in a systematic way. It may well be that eating patterns and attitudes to food varied in response to other factors, such as the shiftworker's stage in the life cycle, household circumstances, gender, employment status, and income. Exploration of these relationships in any detail was beyond the scope of this study.

A final conclusion which might be drawn from this chapter is that quantitative analysis is of only limited use for the exploration of eating habits from a sociological perspective, and that qualitative analysis may offer a more revealing and useful interpretation of my data. The results of my qualitative analysis which explore in more detail the social organisation of food at work and at home for shiftworkers are presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 9: THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF FOOD AT WORK AMONG SHIFTWORKERS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the social organisation of food at work among shiftworkers. Whereas chapters 6, 7 and 8 presented quantitative data to describe their patterns of eating, in this chapter I draw on qualitative data to convey a sense of shiftworkers' experiences of eating at work and their understandings of the meaning of food and eating. As noted in chapter 5, the qualitative material was collected in interviews with a subsample of shiftworkers in banking and the ambulance and health services.

This chapter also makes links with the literature reviewed in chapter 3, particularly the weberian, marxist and symbolic interactionist theoretical approaches to the understanding of work. I begin by outlining in section 9.2 the experience of eating at work for shiftworkers, then present an interpretation of shiftworkers' understandings of eating at work by considering ways in which their eating patterns at work could be seen to be constrained and controlled. Section 9.3 discusses the regulation of eating at work, section 9.4 the social uses of food at work, and section 9.5 the influence of the labour process on eating at work. The chapter ends with a summary of the main themes.

9.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING AT WORK FOR SHIFTWORKERS

9.2.i. Shifts and eating patterns
Most shiftworkers considered that shiftwork had a detrimental effect on their eating habits. Their eating habits tended to be erratic, '*all over the place*', in the sense that they ate at irregular and frequently changing times. Their timetable for meals could change entirely from one week or even one day to the next, with the evening meal becoming breakfast, as on a night shift.

> *No sooner have you got into one routine than you're into another and it can't help but confuse your body. No doubt of that.* (Thomas - bank worker)

Workers recognised, however, that different shifts affected eating patterns in different ways. Some shifts were regarded as 'better' for eating than others; night shifts could be quieter and so 'better' for eating, while day shifts tended to be very busy and more 'difficult' for meals. However, there was no set pattern of busy and quiet shifts in any of the industries studied.

> *And really it's totally potluck. You might have a quiet shift where you can get a meal break quite comfortable and then there's been other shifts where we've not even had a cup of tea all the shift.* (John - ambulance worker)

> *Nights can be very, very busy but you haven't got the external pressure of phones ringing and people ringing in and asking what's happening and when is it going to be fixed.* (Alan – bank worker)

'Good' and 'bad' shifts for eating also varied through the week and throughout the year. Weekend night shifts in the ambulance service were invariably busy. Also some patterns of shift rotation were 'worse' for eating than others in that some shiftworkers felt there was insufficient time for leisure, sleep and eating before returning to work. Nurses described the rotation from a 'late' to an 'early' shift as difficult for this reason.

9.2.ii. Missed meals

One consequence of the unpredictability of their work was that some shiftworkers felt the structure of their day was disrupted and they no longer knew when to eat. This was exacerbated by meals being interrupted or missed altogether at busy times. For example, at times ambulance workers were unable to return to the station due to constant demands of work, and so did not eat or drink at all during the entire eight-hour shift. At other times a crew might return to their station after 4 or 5 hours work, expecting to take a meal break, but if they got a 'shout' (a call from radio control at headquarters), they would be expected to leave their food and go out to answer the emergency.

> *The telephone can go and your sandwiches go down and you go out.* (Mary – ambulance worker)

> *Our control staff try to give us a break but sometimes we might have a 30-minute break in the shift but it might be split up into three 10-minute breaks, between jobs.* (Richard - ambulance worker)

Nurses also complained of missed and interrupted meals. Some highlighted the starting times of some shifts as a problem.

> *I have more problems when I'm working an afternoon shift, a late shift ... because of coming on duty at 12, 1.15, you don't have time for lunch....and my tea between 5.00 and 7.00 depending on how busy we are.* (Evelyn - nurse)

Interviewees complained of excessive tiredness, lack of concentration, feeling 'jittery' or 'hypo', and lacking energy because they missed meals.

9.2.iii. Eating alone or with colleagues

As noted in chapter 7, I found that between 23% and 38% of shiftworkers had eaten alone on their last day at work. Why was this? In the ambulance and health services there were no fixed meal times for all staff. Ambulance workers returned to the station at different times depending on their pattern of work and how busy they were. I observed a crew returning to the station for a meal break; each worker prepared their own food and then went to sit on their own to eat and watch television. A paramedic said that workers were possessive about food – '...*it is very much my food'* - and there tended to be little sharing of food, with staff even having their individual supplies of tea and coffee. This suggested that eating in the ambulance station was very much an individualistic affair.

Nurses also found it difficult to eat with colleagues at mealtimes, as the timing of breaks was determined by the staff nurse in charge. I was told that, as one qualified member of staff had to remain on the ward at all times, staff shortages meant only one person was allowed to go for a mealbreak at a time.

You don't think, 'Oh well, it's half past nine, I'll go for my break', they're not fixed like that. It's as and when your area that you are working in is sorted out and your qualified member of staff decides when you go for your break. (Trish – auxiliary worker)

This meant nurses often went for meal breaks and ate alone. In contrast, bank workers tended to have fixed meal times; having a break at the same time meant they were more likely to eat with others, in the canteen or elsewhere.

9.2.iv. Choice of Food

Many interviewees said they felt rushed at mealtimes, and that there was not sufficient time to eat a full meal, only a snack.

I don't feel in that time that I could get up and eat a main meal. I just have, like I say, like a breakfast. (Mick – ambulance worker)

One ambulance worker had gained the nickname 'asbestos mouth' as she typically did not wait for her coffee to cool but drank it boiling hot. The sense that they had insufficient time to eat was also apparent in the words workers used to describe meals and eating. Workers in all the industries studied used the term 'grab' in relation to food frequently. Many said that they *'just grabbed a sandwich'* or *'I just grab whatever's in the fridge.'* One bank worker, speaking of meals at home, said he *'might get a ready meal and just throw it in the microwave.'* These comments seemed to indicate that, for some shiftworkers, food was not something they took care over; rather they suggested that eating was rushed, careless and without thought.

Some workers described how they attempted to cope with limited time for meals by choosing only 'convenient' foods, such as sandwiches, crisps, chocolate, fruit, or salad. These foods were 'convenient' as they could be eaten cold and required little or no cooking, or other preparation, and so saved time. Such food was also easily transported and could be eaten at any time and place. Crisps and chocolate were also popular and convenient because they could be obtained easily from vending machines located near the wards.

Tend to eat junk food when working shifts such as crisps and chocolate. (Pamela - nurse)

Tend to eat more sweet things at work. Don't eat proper full meals due to lack of time to eat and digest them. (Janet - nurse)

Some shiftworkers also ate a variety of fast foods during meals at work. A wide range of foods was mentioned by workers, including hot sandwiches, takeaway meals, such as fish and chips, burgers, pizza, or curry, fried food from the canteen, or foods such as pot noodles, baked potatoes, or beans on toast that they could prepare quickly themselves. These foods were chosen because they could be obtained easily and eaten quickly, as this man suggested,

> ...'cos of the time constraints on me it'll be something fried, a burger or something...or something with chips. (Garry – bank worker)

9.2.v. Snacking

Although some interviewees said that they frequently had to miss meals, they also described frequent snacking.

> You'll think, well, just in case we don't get back, I'll have something to eat now, just in case we don't get a meal break. I'll have this, or I'll take a bag of crisps or a bar of chocolate. You get something to eat when you can. (Anita – ambulance worker)

> Yes, you tend to get into the habit of eating as and when you feel hungry, rather than, sort of having a mealtime. You tend to be sort of biting and batting more, and sort of eating when you get the opportunity. (Mick – ambulance worker)

These comments seemed to suggest that snacking was a strategy adopted by some workers to attempt to deal with the unpredictability of the timing of meal breaks. Snacking might be explained in nutritional terms as giving a quick burst of energy. However, I would suggest that snacking was more likely because the working day was not structured and divided into fixed meal times, and so there seemed no limit to the number of times when food might be consumed. It might also have been that, for the ambulance workers particularly, food was associated with the home, a return to safety and normality after dealing with a dangerous situation. Some linked eating to the stress of the job.

> You know it is quite a stressful job so you tend to cope with a bar of chocolate or whatever, you know. (Mick - ambulance worker)

> If I've had a bad shift I want some chocolate to make me feel better and I can get a box of Cadbury's fingers and eat, come in the house and eat the whole lot after a bad shift. (Elaine - nurse)

These comments suggested that eating was used as a diversion, a chance to 'wind-down', that was culturally acceptable and encouraged, as in the use of 'comfort food'. It was interesting that workers tended to associate a break from work with the consumption of food or drink.

In discussing time and place as influences on shiftworkers' eating patterns at work, it is also important to mention the role of the vending machine. Vending machines, supplying chocolate, hot and cold drinks and sandwiches were widely available in both the bank and the hospital. Staff in both organisations tended to regard them as important, complaining if they were out of

order, and used them frequently. In the hospital it was interesting that vending machines were available very near to all the wards I observed; it was far easier for staff to buy food from the vending machine than any other outlet. Vending machines also offered opportunities for social interaction – it was possible to leave the ward for a few moments and chat by the vending machines. Food purchased also provided opportunities for sharing and social contact – a packet of crisps could be shared, or chocolate offered to friends.

9.2.vi. Where they ate

As well as not restricting their eating to certain times, it also seemed that many of the shiftworkers I interviewed did not restrict their eating to certain places. Eating whilst doing something else was widespread. I was told that ambulance workers frequently ate in the ambulance, taking a half-eaten meal in the vehicle to be finished on the way to an incident. Workers described this as 'eating on the hoof'. One man described the advantages of Pot Noodles.

> You can actually put the water in and if the phone rings you can actually pick it up and take it with you and have it finished by the time you get to the house or whatever. (Mick – ambulance worker)

I was told of another ambulance worker who would balance a plate of food on his knees in the ambulance and eat the meal while travelling to the scene. A bag of crisps, chocolate bar or apple might be eaten while travelling to a job. In these circumstances, food was something which was just 'fitted in' when it was convenient, with little thought.

In the hospital also I found examples of food being eaten in unexpected places. One interviewee said at times she ate patients' meals left over on the trolley from lunchtime, whilst standing in the kitchen area of the ward. Others described eating lunch while sitting in corridors, and I observed others eating at the staff nurse's desk in the office, or at the nurses' station (a desk) on the ward.

> If I have anything to eat it's in the foyer, which is also the office area. There's nowhere private where you can get away and have a meal in peace, without interruption. (June - nurse)

This last comment was significant, as, although nurses were not paid for meal breaks, and should have been able to relax in their own time at meal breaks, they felt they could be (and were) interrupted and called back to work. Bank workers, in contrast, tended to get away from work by using the canteen or lounge area for meals, as they were not allowed to eat at their desks (although this did happen, as I explain later). None of the workers studied went home for a meal during their shift. This was partly due to the distance between home and work for most workers, and a reflection of the demands of work.

9.2.vii. Eating at work - bank workers and nurses

The main themes raised in this section can be illustrated by comparing the eating patterns at work of bank workers and nurses. The bank provided a canteen for staff, vending machines and a staff room area in which to relax and eat food brought from home. Bank workers frequently used the canteen facilities, and managers stressed the importance of taking meal breaks as opportunities for relaxation and social contact. Nurses never mentioned use of meal breaks in this way. It might have been that the labour process in the bank did not involve dealing with people, but computer screens, and this may have led to a desire to socialise at break times. The bank workers were also the only group in my study to mention leaving their place of work to eat at lunchtime. They had more time available to do this, as they enjoyed a guaranteed one-hour meal break, and there was a choice of places to eat and drink within the vicinity. Again, this was perhaps an indication of the importance of the maintenance of social networks to these workers, and the need to escape from the enclosed, security-conscious atmosphere of the bank. Going out at lunchtime, and not using the facilities provided by the bank could be seen as symbolising a release from regulation, a 'breaking through the boundaries' imposed by the employer.

The nurses, in contrast, were dealing with people, who might be very demanding, in the course of their work. Break times, taken alone, could have been an opportunity to escape from these demands. Nurses, however, felt they had little choice or control over when and where they ate, and generally ate when they could snatch a few minutes, on a chair or desk in the immediate ward area, in the staff room or in the staff nurses' office. The types of meals they could eat in these situations tended to be limited. Cold sandwiches, yoghurts and snacks were more convenient as they did not require any utensils, could be held in the hand, and could be eaten more quickly than hot food. Eating was rushed, something to be fitted in between the activities of work, and nurses could be called back to work at anytime during their break if they were needed. Although two restaurants were available in the hospital, staff did not tend to use either, considering them too far to go in the time available, the food poor value and the atmosphere unattractive.

Often nurses would buy a snack, such as a piece of cake, or a sandwich from one of the snack bars or vending machines within the hospital. Some of the 'snack bars' I observed were small, café areas, serving tea, coffee, cake and sandwiches. Others were merely counters where food was sold at certain times of the day. The impression given was that these facilities were provided for the benefit of patients and visitors to the hospital, but it seemed that nurses and auxiliary staff used them at break times to get away from the ward for a time, but then would eat a snack rather than a full meal.

Finally, it is perhaps useful to contrast the experience of food at work for shiftworkers with that of a meal taken on holiday. Such a meal might be given considerable thought and planning – the restaurant and company carefully chosen, the menu studied, attention given to choice of

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wines and service by attentive waiters. The meal would be leisurely, possibly extending over several hours, with time for conversation, enjoyment of the food and enjoyment of the occasion. This way of eating would be recommended by the 'Slow Food' movement (Jones et al 2003). Both this and the meal at work satisfy biological needs for food and refuel the body, and yet the experience and social significance of the two meals is profoundly different. We need to keep these points in mind in moving towards a sociological interpretation of the social organisation of food at work.

9.3 DEVELOPING AN INTERPRETATION OF EATING AT WORK

9.3.i. Theoretical background

In developing my analysis of eating at work, I have sought to draw on themes from weberian, marxist and symbolic interactionist approaches to work, as outlined in chapter 3. In integrating together these approaches I follow Smith (1988). In formulating her approach to institutional ethnography, Smith (1988) draws on feminist theory, phenomenology and marxism. She states that,

> *The ethnographic process of inquiry is one of exploring further into those social, political and economic processes that organise and determine the actual bases of experience....* (Smith 1988:177)

This is an approach which attempts to set out the nature of lived experience and to understand how and why everyday experiences are structured by social relations and powers beyond the control of individuals.

In analysing shiftworkers' eating habits I have also attempted to begin with the experience of eating at work, and explore the processes through which eating habits were organised and controlled. I draw on Weber's notion of rationality to emphasise the formal, organisational rules which controlled eating at work. I then discuss the ways in which shiftworkers controlled their own and others' eating habits through the cultural meanings attached to social situations in which food was consumed. Finally, I consider the ways in which organisation of the labour process according to the principles of scientific management in capitalist enterprises constrained shiftworkers' eating patterns.

In presenting my analysis, I am aware that other interpretations of shiftworkers' eating patterns are possible. The stress of the job, or of shiftworking itself, might be argued to shape eating patterns; some workers might have been constrained by income, and concerned to limit their expenditure on food; others may have been motivated for religious or other reasons to follow a vegetarian diet, or to follow medical dietary advice for health reasons. Also, it is likely that the meanings attached to food, and the social significance attached to situations in which eating took place were mediated by gender, age and family circumstances. Although further research

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is needed to explore these issues, I consider my interpretation reveals issues important for understanding the eating habits of shiftworkers in my study.

9.3.ii. The regulation of eating at work

In this section I consider the different ways in which formal rules and regulations in the workplace controlled shiftworkers' eating habits, drawing on Weber's model of the rational, bureaucratic organisation.

All the industries in my study were large-scale, bureaucratic organisations. An understanding of their operation and structure may be gained from consideration of Weber's ideal type of a bureaucratic organisation, as outlined in chapter 3. Weber extended the concept of 'rationality' to the analysis of the organisation, arguing that the bureaucracy was the most rational means of exercising authority over human beings because administration of the organisation was based on calculation and logical thought.

> *The management of the office follows general rules, which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned.* (Weber, in Gerth and Mills (eds) 1949:196)

Eating in the workplaces studied was also subject to formal regulation; all the workplaces I studied restricted eating to certain times and places, such as authorised break times, or to places designated suitable for the consumption of food, such as canteens, staffrooms, or lounge areas.

> *It's very regimented; you must have no more than a one-hour period.* (Henry - bank worker)

> *We're not supposed to, not allowed to have drinks or food at the desk. Umm, it's totally taboo during the working day 'cos all the management are around.* (Garry - bank worker)

This last comment hints at a theme explored more in later section, namely that workers' adherence to the rules might be contingent on the presence of management. Nurses and auxiliary workers also reported that they were not allowed to eat while on duty on the ward, at the nurses' station or caring for patients. Neither were they allowed to eat the food provided for patients' meals.

> *There is a definite rule; it would be called stealing the patients' food.* (June - nurse)

Ambulance workers were forbidden to eat in the vehicle, or to leave the vehicle to buy food from a shop or café when out on a call.

> *...whether it was written or unwritten I'm not sure, but it was sort of taboo to carry food on an ambulance.* (Richard – ambulance worker)

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Although it was not always clear from interviewees' accounts whether these rules formed part of their contract of employment, or were merely custom and practice within the organization, such regulation of their behaviour constrained their eating habits.

However, there were also aspects of eating at work which were governed by cultural definitions, rather than organisational rules and regulations. Cultural norms about what was acceptable as food influenced eating patterns, in that all my interviewees chose to eat items which were defined as 'food' within western societies; none, for example, said that they brought raw meat to work for their packed lunch, or that they ate grubs or insects, yet these are all examples of items considered edible in other cultures. There were examples, however, of attempts by some workers to define some foods as inappropriate for consumption in the workplace. One ambulance worker said that colleagues had expressed revulsion at his meal of rice and tuna, calling it 'maggot-bait' and, as a consequence, he no longer brought this type of meal for lunch. This example illustrates informal norms operating to limit the types of food considered suitable for consumption in the workplace.

9.3.iii. Enforcing the rules

How were the formal rules relating to eating at work justified and enforced? It was management's job to enforce the rules relating to eating at work, although workers also policed themselves and each other, as described above. Workers referred to penalties that might be enforced if the regulations on eating were broken.

> *It's a sackable offence at the end of the day if you've been up in a cafeteria somewhere.*
> (Mary – ambulance worker)

What was the basis of these rules and regulations? On the one hand, as indicated in chapter 3, there were legal requirements on companies under the Health and Safety at Work Acts, and Working Time Regulations 1998, with regard to provision of meal breaks. Workers seemed to find these regulations on the grounds of health and safety justified. One bank worker cited the damage that had been caused to computer equipment by an overturned cup of coffee, and discouraged others from drinking coffee at their desk.

Some rules were also seen by workers as justified in terms of the emergency nature of the service they provided. They recognised that, by leaving the premises to buy food, they were absenting themselves from work and this was potentially very serious if an emergency call was received and there were no staff on duty. Nurses also said that they were not allowed to leave the site during work time. However, although doctors had pagers and were permanently on call, as far as I was able to ascertain nurses were not issued with pagers and there was no rule which required them to be constantly available. The result, however, was that their access to other sources of food at break times was limited.

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However, it also seemed that some ambulance workers used the emergency nature of their work in the ambulance work as a justification for denying themselves food. Some interviewees presented their personal needs, such as the need for food, as irrelevant in the face of the emergencies they dealt with on a daily basis. They suggested that work had to come first when it was a matter of saving life, and this inevitably resulted, in the words of one woman, in the 'occupational hazard' of missed meals.

9.3.iv. Breaking the rules

Despite the penalties for infringement of the rules described above, some workers did break the rules on eating on occasions. Ambulance staff bought food from transport cafes and shops and management knew of this but condoned the behaviour.

> *Unofficially we sometimes buy chips and burgers on route back to station, but it is... you're not supposed to stop and buy food. They know we do it but it's something that you're not supposed to do really.* (Anita – ambulance worker)

> *In the evening you can go and get some food and come back and eat it on the ward.* (Joanne - nurse)

Nursing staff also ate food provided for patients and bank workers ate at their desks. Adherence to the rules seemed to be dependent on factors such as the likelihood of being caught, the time of day or night, the location, the worker's relationships with other staff and how hungry the individual felt. Food might be consumed on night shifts when visitors, patients and managers were less likely to be present. When there was a risk of being seen eating, food which could be easily hidden and eaten piece by piece, such as an apple, crisps or a bar of chocolate tended to be chosen. Surreptitious eating was also done quickly.

> *You end up eating very quickly to get rid of it so you don't get caught.* (Jenny - nurse)

However, it could also be that rules were broken at times to demonstrate rebellion, or resist managerial control. It seemed that workers enjoyed exercising their ingenuity to take risks and outwit management. One ambulance worker implied that eating a chocolate bar in an ambulance, or stopping for a sandwich on the return from a job, was a mild, and relatively risk-free way to take revenge on management for not providing her with regular breaks. There was also some satisfaction in breaking the rules with a fellow worker as it created a bond between them.

There are examples in the literature of food being used as a form of resistance and rebellion. Smith (2002), in a discussion of food in a women's prison, suggested that, in situations where the individual has little control over their food, eating is experienced as a source of pleasure, resistance and rebellion (Smith 2002:197). Complaints about prison food were a means of expressing dissent about prison conditions, and some prisoners went on hunger strikes to

attempt to gain improvements in their conditions. The example above also recalls Beynon (1973), who noted that food could be a bargaining counter in industrial relations disputes.

Breaking the rules on eating at work was, however, condoned by management at certain times. Eating at the desk was allowed at the bank in times of particularly heavy workloads, such as when new equipment was being installed and it was important to keep 'downtime' to a minimum. Workers received special treatment at such times.

> *A very busy period...can take you right the way through the whole night shift, and you've literally not had a break at all, not even a tea break. People bring coffees to your table, which we're not allowed to do normally, but in view of the fact that you can't even get up off the desk you're treated as a special case.* (Henry – bank worker)

Management in the ambulance service also condoned 'illegal' food consumption. At the time of my study, managers were allowing ambulance crews to eat in their vehicle as they wanted to introduce new working patterns which would necessitate crews being based away from the ambulance station for the whole shift and so having to eat in the vehicle. To enforce the rules prohibiting consumption of food in the vehicle would undermine the drive for what management saw as greater efficiency to be gained from the new working patterns. These examples suggested that management were only partly committed to meeting health and safety, or working time regulations.

For reasons of space, I have given only some examples of rules at work regarding eating; however, it was apparent that eating during work time was an issue which management felt the need, or was obliged, to regulate, on the grounds of health and safety, the emergency nature of the service provided, or general productivity. Although workers broke the rules from time to time, they generally seemed to accept the rules on eating at work as legitimate and largely abided by them. Workers also policed themselves with regard to their eating patterns, as discussed in more detail below.

9.4 THE SOCIAL USES OF FOOD AT WORK

9.4.i. The social uses of food at work

Shiftworkers' eating patterns, however, were not determined solely by the rules and regulations within their workplaces; food consumption was also influenced by social factors. As chapter 2 suggested, food and eating have symbolic meanings, and food and eating may be used to mark rituals and celebrations; to express sociability and friendship; to show love and concern; as a gift or punishment and to demonstrate differences in prestige or status (Fieldhouse 1995). In this section I will explore some of the social uses shiftworkers made of food at work, considering first eating and image.

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9.4.ii. Eating and Image

The theme of eating and image emerged strongly in interviews with shiftworkers. Some interviewees expressed the view that it was not appropriate to eat while carrying out their duties.

> *It's not always appropriate to be, you know, to be eating things, you know, if members of the public see you. It's not good. If we're parked somewhere you can't be seen to be eating in the cab part of the vehicle and it's not appropriate, I don't think it's appropriate, to eat things in the patient conveyance part of the vehicle either.* (Richard – ambulance worker)

> *It doesn't look very professional, does it, if you're sitting there at the nurses' station and visitors walk past and you've got a dirty great plate of food. It's all about image isn't it?* (Jenny - nurse)

These comments suggested that eating at work was not considered unacceptable because it would interfere with the work but because workers thought it would be interpreted as conveying an 'unprofessional' image. That it was the visibility of the behaviour which was important was indicated by comments that eating was acceptable if it was not in the public view, such as on a night shift when no visitors would be present, or in a part of the ward to which the public were not admitted, such as the bathroom, office or kitchen areas. Evidence of eating however, had to be hidden.

> *People will tend to secrete away an apple if no-one's watching, eat it, throw it in the bin and hide some paper over it.* (Henry – bank worker)

What were the links between professional image and eating that were being made here? It might have been that 'not eating' was thought to reflect an ideology of health work as selfless devotion to duty; the nurse or ambulance worker devoted his or herself to the care of their patient without thought for their own needs for food. The reference to 'image' in Jenny's comment, however, could also have referred to a 'feminine' image, suggesting gendered notions of food and eating. As noted in chapter 2, contemporary discourses about femininity link a slim body with sexual attractiveness and success. The successful working woman is presented as controlling both her appetite and her job.

Another theme in my data concerned the effects of shiftwork on weight and body size. In chapter 6, for example, I noted that 20% of my respondents were on a slimming diet at the time of the research. Some, who were relatively new to the work, appeared to welcome shiftwork, feeling that, by causing them to miss meals, it might cause them to lose weight. Others, however, revealed that they had gained weight since starting to work shifts. One nurse wanted to lose weight - *'I'm the only fat person in my family.'* (Rosie) - but also found it difficult to follow a slimming diet as working shifts made her eating patterns irregular. Another man said,

> *I tend to avoid eggs, cheese and the red meats which are high in fat content... I put on weight easily...I probably diet about three times a year.* (Steve – ambulance worker)

This comment suggests unsuccessful attempts to diet, and workers attempting to limit their food intake, or change their eating patterns, according to their conceptions of appropriate body size for their gender.

The above examples of eating behaviour can be interpreted using concepts drawn from symbolic interactionism, and seen in dramaturgical terms as 'impression management'. Dramaturgical analysis suggests that, in order to engage in social life, individuals require skills similar to those of an actor putting on a performance. Individuals, singly or in teams, give 'performances' during which they enact 'parts' and make use of a 'setting' (such as the hospital ward) and 'props' (the nurse's uniform and hospital equipment). As summarised in chapter 3, Goffman (1961, 1971) suggested that a dramaturgical perspective pays attention to,

> *...the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him...* (Goffman 1971:preface)

Importantly, Goffman suggested that impression management requires a separation of 'front' and 'back' regions in a performance. The individual's performance in the 'front' region, where he or she is on public view and observed by superiors, is contrived to give the appearance of conforming to certain standards. On public view on the ward, therefore, the nurse does not eat. In the back region, unobserved, however, the individual prepares for the performance and can drop the 'front' that is presented. Eating is necessary for the public performance to take place, but has to be concealed and done backstage, in the earlier example of eating in the kitchen area.

We can also use the concept of 'emotional labour' to interpret shiftworkers' behaviour (Hochschild 1993). Both nurses and ambulance workers engaged in emotional labour in the public view as they were required to manage their feelings in the course of their work and to present an acceptable facial and bodily display. The acceptable body was one which conformed to gender stereotypes, i.e. a slim body. To be seen eating at work, particularly to be seen eating large quantities of food, or food considered 'fattening', potentially undermined this display.

For some interviewees, 'not eating' was part of the image presented by the committed employee.

> *You can't leave problems. If it's a major problem there's really no question of you leaving to eat. ...It wouldn't be looked on favourably if you left to have something to eat in the middle of a problem.* (Kenneth – bank worker)

> *If you keep saying, 'That's it, I'm off for an hour', it doesn't look well. Some people have done it, they've gone away and refused to come back and got marked down for it. ...it's not seen as showing much commitment to the job even though you're legally in the right.* (Garry - nurse)

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These comments suggested that some workers thought commitment to the job could be demonstrated by ignoring personal needs, particularly for food; however, by depriving themselves of food for energy, workers might have been making themselves less, rather than more, effective at work. The above examples suggest that some shiftworkers' eating patterns at work could be constrained by the desire to present themselves in particular ways.

9.4.iii. Food and Friendship

A second theme which emerged in my data was the use of food to mark membership of a group. The literature reviewed in chapter 2 suggested that eating with others (commensality) is socially significant as it implies a bond of friendship or togetherness.

> *Sharing food is held to signify ... an equivalence among a group that defines and reaffirms insiders as socially similar.* (Mennell, Murcott and Van Otterloo 1992:114)

Eating with others brings opportunities to socialise with colleagues and identify oneself as part of the group, so such meals can be important sources of social cohesion, marking the boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Chapter 2 described examples of such meals, including wedding breakfasts, birthday parties and barristers' dinners.

One bank worker distinguished between 'shifties' (shiftworkers), who could be identified by their preference for decaffeinated coffee (because it did not keep them awake) and 'dayworkers' who drank 'normal' coffee, and described an attempt by shiftworkers as a group to have normal coffee replaced by decaffeinated in the vending machines. Some health workers described sharing meals at work.

> *In the evenings, yes, we do tend to go and take breaks together...at night time there is an oven, we can cook, prepare snacks. Sometimes somebody brings something in for us all to have. Somebody might bring in potatoes and we'd heat them up, and somebody else might have brought some cheese, salad.* (June - nurse)

These workers knew each other well as they had all worked together for some time, but sharing meals might have reinforced the bonds of friendship within the group, and contributed to its formation. Eating with colleagues was also important in creating a feeling of camaraderie at work.

> *I'll tend to try to make use of the canteen when I'm on a day shift, 'cos, you know, it's good to socialise with people, sit and have a meal. It's allowing you to unwind 'cos normally we talk about things other than work. It would normally create a general, sort of, feeling of conviviality.* (Henry – bank worker)

Shared meals could also be a relief from stress. To eat with fellow workers gave the opportunity to talk over problems, and shared meals at work could be a positive experience.

I think it's very important that you actually have somebody to sit down with and unwind especially if you've had a busy day. You can break it, wind down from it and hopefully go on from there. (Dot – nurse)

For others, however, shared mealtimes could bring unwelcome peer pressure to eat.

I don't need the meals I have at night but I feel as though I should have them 'cos everybody else is having them...if you don't have a meal with them you'd be left sat down on your own. ...When you get to work you try to keep socialising with them at work, but if you don't go up for an evening meal then you're not socialising. (Sharon - nurse)

This worker suggests that by choosing not to eat with the group, she risked being regarded as unsociable and unfriendly. The cost of friendly workmates was paid, she felt, by her waistline.

In some workplaces, meals outside work were important in reinforcing bonds between colleagues, but such meals seemed to be rare for the shiftworkers I studied. Two bank workers said that they went for meals after work with colleagues.

We'll go off to a curry house, have a few pints, just sit there, few shandies or whatever...and we'll all tuck into a nice curry and a bit of social chit-chat for an hour or two. (Henry – bank worker)

Others went for breakfast with colleagues to a transport café after a weekend nightshift which finished early in the morning. These communal meals might have been a practical option if no other hot food was available, but they could also be seen as rituals created around food to celebrate an event – the end of the shift – and to reinforce bonds between a team of workers. No female shiftworkers mentioned going out for meals with colleagues. If female staff did not participate this could be interpreted as food being used to socially exclude female colleagues and reinforce bonds between male workers. Possibly female shiftworkers shared food, such as sweets and crisps, at work, recalling Westwood (1994).

Solidarity and friendship of the shop floor were expressed through the sharing of food, most of it crisps and sweets from the machines in the coffee bar. (Westwood 1994:93)

The high levels of consumption of snacks, such as crisps and sweets, revealed in the questionnaire survey by workers in my study suggested that food might be used in this way, although I did not observe any examples and possibly interviewees thought it too mundane to mention. Interviewees, however, frequently offered me drinks and sweets in the course of interviews, suggesting that they did use food in this way. It may also have been that eating sweets could be described as 'comfort eating' as they were indulging in food regarded as 'naughty but nice' - nutritionally 'bad' but providing some satisfactions. It has been suggested that eating 'comfort' food is found in situations where women lack control over their lives. Smith (2002) studied women in prison and suggested that,

It may have been that some shiftworkers found their work offered few satisfactions beyond pay, and their shift work schedule deprived them of satisfactions such as socialising with friends and family.

A second aspect of the theme of food being used to demonstrate friendship was illustrated by patients giving gifts of food, such as sweets, cakes and chocolates, to nursing staff.

I had a patient recently; his wife brought these great big chocolate gateaux in. They were gorgeous; you can't say no. (Rosie - nurse)

Gifts were given to all the staff on the ward as an expression of gratitude, and left for staff to help themselves during work time. This eating on the ward tended to be condoned by management on condition that work was not disrupted. It was interesting that social obligations (the desire not to seem ungrateful) were allowed to over-ride formal rules prohibiting eating on the ward. Nurse were allowed to break the formal rules prohibiting eating to eat gifts of food, but not to satisfy their hunger. The choice of sweet foods as gifts was also interesting; nurses indicated they would prefer less fattening foods, such as fruit, but patients persisted in offering cakes and chocolate. Such foods may have been regarded as appropriate as gifts because, as Mintz (1996) suggested, sugar represents '... *the food life, the rich life, the full life.*' (Mintz 1996:9) Were patients thanking staff for restoring them to life? According to Lupton (1996) chocolate also symbolizes '*luxury, decadence, reward ... and femininity*' (Lupton 1996:35). Perhaps patients were not only rewarding nurses for looking after them but also for the display of femininity. The nurses' ambivalence about the chocolates was possibly based on a reluctance to accept this definition of femininity.

9.4.iv. Food and status

Food can also be used to demonstrate status. The practice of providing separate canteen facilities for manual and white-collar workers, once widespread in industry, is an example of food being used in this way (Batstone 1983). Such formal segregation of dining facilities no longer existed in the workplaces I studied. However distinctions were still made. Nurses had access to two restaurants within the hospital, although the term 'restaurant' was not one which nurses used to describe these facilities; one was referred to as a 'dining room', the other as a 'canteen'. The different terminology used appeared to be based partly on nurses' perceptions of the status of staff likely to use each facility, and hence the status of each facility; the 'dining room' was used by managerial and white-collar staff and the 'canteen' by patients and manual staff. These social distinctions were also reflected in the design and furnishings of each restaurant; the 'dining room' was a large and airy room, with large tables, covered with white tablecloths, decorated with pictures on the walls and flowers on the tables. The menu included

roasts, choice of salads, and fresh fruit. The 'canteen' was noisy, and untidy, with formica tables, no tablecloths, and a menu offering chips, pies, and suet pudding.

It was also the case that differences existed between different grades of staff in their ability to choose whether to eat alone or with others. A director of nursing had her own private office with her own fridge, and could choose to eat alone rather than visit the staff dining room if she wished to avoid having to talk with colleagues or the general public. Lower grade staff had no option but to eat alone. This also illustrated status differences between staff in food choices at work.

9.4.v. Food as a time marker

Finally, food and mealtimes were used by shiftworkers in my study to mark the passage of time. In both the hospital and the bank, workers described how the purchase and consumption of a bar of chocolate from the vending machine would help to divide a long night shift into manageable parts, and so help to pass the time. The food provided a reason to leave the immediate workplace, and perhaps meet others for a chat.

> *Yes, generally when we get back we have a drink …Yes, it passes time on doesn't it?*
> (Mick – ambulance worker)

Scheduled mealbreaks also divided the shift into more manageable sections, such as the 'time till tea break', the 'time till lunch' and so on. However, scheduled mealbreaks did not work in this way for those shiftworkers who had to work through their scheduled meal break; they not only faced hunger, but their system for managing time had also been disrupted. The shift could seem much longer without recognised time markers, and workers were possibly more likely to snack or use the vending machine for this reason.

These examples were reminiscent of Roy (1959), who described how machine operators created 'times', generally involving food consumption, to make the day go faster and reduce the monotony of work. Studies of prisoners have also described meals being used to structure time and make the time pass more easily (Cohen and Taylor 1972). Shiftworkers in my study also tended to use food and drinks to pass the time.

However, some workers found the starting and finishing times of shifts, and the scheduled times for meals, did not allow the shift to be easily divided and managed. One man described problems he had faced.

> *…when I first started the job, we started at 11.30 at night, through till 7.30 in the morning…. and they have a break straightaway from 12.30 to 2.30 – they have a two hour lunch period there….you just start getting into the work and then you'd stop… and I thought 'This is horrendous.* (Chris – bank worker)

The problem was resolved when he was moved to a different section and was able to take a mealbreak later in the night, at 4.00 am. This enabled him to manage the time better, even though his 4.00 am mealtime did not correspond with that of other workers. It is possible that nightshift workers had greater need of such ways of marking the passage of time as their time schedule was likely to run counter to that of many of their friends and family.

This section has highlighted the social uses of food by shiftworkers in my study. Food was used to convey messages about professionalism and commitment to the job, about friendship and team membership, and as a time marker. The different meanings attached to food constrained eating patterns. There could be various social pressures from work colleagues to eat because to do so demonstrated friendship and membership of the group. Workers also ate to pass the time, out of boredom, to rebel against authority and because going for a meal or snack provided social contact. Being sociable meant eating with friends and colleagues, and showing gratitude for gifts from patients meant eating sweets and cakes. There could also be pressure on some workers not to eat, if they wished to present a 'professional' or 'committed' image. Hunger rarely seemed the main motive for eating.

The interpretation of the eating patterns of shiftworkers presented in this section suggests that the structure of formal rules regulating food consumption in the workplace should be seen as interwoven with the interpretations individuals placed on social situations, and the meanings attributed to food and eating within these situations. Recognition of the social meanings shiftworkers attached to food suggests that eating patterns should be seen as actions both structured by the formal rules existing in workplaces, but also constructed and negotiated within particular social contexts.

9.5 THE LABOUR PROCESS AND EATING

9.5.i. The labour process and eating

The eating patterns of shiftworkers at work were also controlled and constrained in other ways. In this section I discuss the influence of the organisation of the labour process on shiftworkers' eating patterns. The phrase 'labour process' can be defined as,

> *The means by which raw materials are transformed by human labour, acting on the objects with tools and machinery: first into products for use and, under capitalism, into commodities to be exchanged on the market.* (Thompson 1993:xv)

This definition, which is situated within a marxist theoretical perspective, draws attention to the process within capitalism whereby management designs and controls work tasks in order to control labour and extract surplus value from the efforts of the worker (Thompson 1993:41). As outlined in chapter 3, Marx's analysis of the labour process was situated within his analysis of capitalism as a mode of production. In broad terms, Marx argued that the value of labour power

(i.e. the amount the capitalist is obliged to pay for labour power) was determined by the labour time necessary for its production. This can be interpreted as the time necessary for production of the minimum food, clothing, fuel and housing necessary for the worker to subsist, or to 'maintain him in his normal state as a labouring individual' (Marx, in Freedman (ed) 1976:45).

Extraction of surplus value in the production process required the capitalist to control the labour process. In the early period of industrialisation, Marx argued this took the form of 'formal' subordination of labour, involving extraction of surplus value by prolonging labour time (for example, increasing hours of work through reducing time allowed for meal breaks.) A move towards what Marx termed the 'real' subordination of labour occurred later with the introduction of machinery and expansion in the scale of production, which allowed more to be produced in the same period (Thompson 1993:42).

For Marx, work in capitalist society took place under alienated conditions as the worker did not control the process, nor own the means or product of his labour. Interestingly, in the 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844', Marx used the example of eating to illustrate the effects of alienation.

> As a result, therefore, man (the worker) no longer feels himself to be freely active in any but his animal functions – eating, drinking, procreating…..; in his human functions he no longer feels himself to be anything but an animal. (Marx 1969: 100)

Braverman (1974) developed Marx's analysis of the capitalist labour process to argue that application of the principles of Taylorist scientific management have had particular influence on the organisation of the labour process in the twentieth century, as the capitalists' search for profit takes place in increasingly competitive environments. According to Braverman (1974), three principles characterised scientific management techniques. First, the labour process was dissociated from the skills of workers as managers gathered knowledge traditionally possessed by workers in craft production and reduced it to rules and formulae. Second, the labour process was divided, separating the conception of work from its execution. Finally, management exercised control over each step of the production process, specifying,

> …not only what is to be done, but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it. (Braverman 1974:119)

How the labour process is organised has implications for eating at work. On the one hand, food is clearly a necessary part of the means of subsistence which produces labour power. Workers must eat in order to replenish their energy to be able to work, and so it is in the interest of capital to allow workers to take meal breaks, to be able to work and produce surplus value. This was recognised by Henry Ford, who stated that employers who did not pay a 'living wage' were breeding a generation of working men 'weak in body and in mind' (Ford, quoted in Beynon 1973:25). However, Ford also recognised that how eating was organised - whether it takes place communally or is individualised - could have implications for industrial relations in the

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factory. Beynon (1973), in his account of the early history of the Ford factory in the USA noted that,

> Chatting or fraternizing with workmates during the lunch hour was taboo in the old days...It was then the rule during the noonday spell to see a Ford employee squat on the floor, glum and uncommunicative, munching his food in almost complete isolation.
> (Beynon 1973:30)

Workers' eating habits were strictly controlled to prevent the formation of trade unions on the assumption that workers who ate lunch alone were less likely to share grievances with workmates.

9.5.ii. The labour process and eating in the industries studied

In the industries I studied, management controlled the pattern and length of the working day, most obviously by organising work on a shift system, but also by controlling the pace of work. One theme, which emerged strongly in my interviews with shiftworkers, was that of the pressure and pace of work, which gave no time to eat.

> It's full pelt right from 7.00am. (Elaine - nurse)

> You're governed by time all the time. (Mick- ambulance worker)

> We're so short of crews...that they'll just work you and work you and work you, not giving you any chance for a break at all. (Melanie - nurse)

> Because you have to do all those jobs in there you're not able to stop and eat. You have to do first the job, then eat. (Shahzia - nurse)

What did these shiftworkers see as the reason for this situation? For some it was the sheer amount of work they had to do, and this they perceived as due to shortages of staff. However, lack of time could also be seen as reflecting the degree of control over the pace of work exercised by management. The concept of the labour process draws attention to managerial control exercised over the nature and method of performance of the task, the speed of work, and the length of the working day, including the timing and length of breaks. One nurse described her experience of the organisation of work in the hospital.

> Well, what it is, the morning shift basically consists of washing everybody, dressing them, getting them up, and they're all in various stages of re-hab (rehabilitation) and they all need various stages of help, but it's like a heavy shift 'cos every patient, well most patients, have to be up by 10.30. You come on at 7.15 and there's baths to do, breakfasts, drugs, then it's washes, and dressing and getting up. So it's like a mega-hectic shift getting them all up and once you've got them all washed and dressed they've all got to get out of bed, and it's physical – there's a lot of physical lifting.... finishes about 11.30. It relaxes after that. (Jenny - nurse)

This description was reminiscent of the description in Beynon (1973) of the organisation of work on an assembly line. Patients had lost their individuality, as indicated by use of the word 'them',

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and had to be 'processed' according to a fixed time schedule. The use of the phrases, such as 'have to' and 'got to' as reasons for these types of work practices was also interesting as it suggested this nurse perceived this pattern of organisation of work as inevitable, rather than as chosen by management.

Other interviewees emphasised more that it was the object of their labour which determined their work process. As the objects of the nurses' labour were human (the patients), their needs were not predictable, but had to be met as they arose.

Patients have their meal at 12.30. Their meal obviously comes first. (Liz - nurse)

It has been suggested that these different views of the work process reflected the restructuring in the National Health Service (NHS) in the late 1980's and 1990's, which had brought about an 'uneasy coexistence' between Fordist and post-Fordist styles of management and working practices. Fordism was characterised by specialised divisions of labour, bureaucratic hierarchies and centralised control, and post-Fordism by flexibility, decentralisation and more responsiveness to the 'consumer' (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997:93).

The importance of a centralised time schedule in structuring activities in hospitals, consistent with a Fordist approach, has also been noted by Sellerberg (1991), who found that life in geriatric hospitals was tightly organised around a time-schedule in which meal times played an important part. Meals provided fixed points by which certain tasks had to be accomplished. Both patients and staff, she argued, were '...*subordinated to the fixed mealtime system*' (Sellerberg 1991:70). In my study also, the times designated by hospital management for patients' meals provided a framework around which the rigid time schedule was organised.

However, one staff nurse suggested that nurses themselves might have been partly responsible for some of the pressure of work they experienced.

Nurses have got this ritual of everything's got to be done first thing in the morning. And they won't stop till they've done everything...then perhaps they'll go for a break. (Elaine – staff nurse)

Issues surrounding the control and pace of work also emerged as central themes in interviews with ambulance workers.

You've got to be accountable for every single minute of the day and everything is logged...Obviously you're aware of this all the time – about time, time limits. (Mary – ambulance worker)

According to Noon and Blyton (1997), constant surveillance and supervision of the work process by management is a consequence of organising the labour process according to the principles of scientific management, as management cannot assume the workforce will comply

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without coercion. Scientific management techniques seemed to predominate within the ambulance service, as every work activity was allotted an allowed time for its performance. 3 minutes were allowed, for example, for a visit to the toilet. The application of scientific management principles to the organisation of the labour process meant that control of the work process was exercised by control over the length of the working day, and by organisation of work on a shift system. Control was also exercised by control over time allowed for tasks, and the manner in which tasks were to be performed was also specified by management, so constraining also the circumstances in which eating at work could take place. Organisation of the labour process had consequences for the social organisation of eating at work.

Control over the pace of work was also the subject of a special management initiative in the ambulance service at the time of the study. Managers wanted to reduce 'response times' (the time taken by crews to respond to incidents), and manage the service in line with the 'expected' pattern of emergencies. They had proposed that crews should not return to the ambulance station between incidents, but wait at places nearer to where accidents usually occurred, such as motorway junctions, so as to respond more quickly.

However, the service could not be totally controlled by scientific management techniques; it was clearly impossible for management to determine the exact time and place of accidents. The emergency nature of the work, therefore, determined the labour process to some extent as, because workers were dealing with emergencies, the work could not be stopped or rescheduled; tasks had to be performed immediately, without interruption, and so there could be no thought of taking a break. Also, the object of the ambulance workers' labour was human, and so needs were unpredictable and had to be met immediately.

Scientific management principles were also apparent in the organisation of the labour process in banking. Some staff were under constant managerial supervision at work, and their performance regulated by time. One data network manager described his job as *'heavily procedurised'* in that there were many tasks which had to be performed as a matter of routine. That the work process was more routine was not surprising as the object of labour for bank staff was an inanimate object – money - and so the work could more easily be scheduled to allow for a meal break. However, bank staff did face emergencies occasionally, and were expected to work all hours to correct the fault.

> *It's a very pressured environment, particularly in the financial side of things, and I mean by that the stocks and shares dealing services. When they fail you've literally got seconds ticking away and you're losing thousands of pounds in interest, so you've got to recover service quickly, so that can be highly pressured.* (Henry – bank worker)

The three industries studied provided interesting comparisons and contrasts in terms of the ways in which the labour process was organised and the implications of this for workers' eating habits. Both the ambulance and health workers provided a service to people, rather than

dealing with inanimate objects, and this influenced the labour process and the ability of management to schedule the work. The demands of patients had to come first and these demands might be unpredictable, causing the schedule to be changed and meal breaks for staff to be treated as less important. Moral obligations to patients also controlled staff in the health service, expressed through the professional ideology of nursing which emphasised the notion of duty. The labour process in banking was more predictable and routine, as the object of the labour process was inanimate – money. Consequently, bank workers operated more in the context of the formal rules in a large, bureaucratic organisation, and, although their work process was tightly controlled, they also enjoyed a more predictable working environment and regular breaks.

9.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I described the experience of eating at work for shiftworkers in my study. Many shiftworkers were dissatisfied with their eating habits at work, and eating was generally problematic for them. The facilities available to eat at work outside of 'normal' hours tended to be limited, and some found snacks from vending machines could be more easily obtained than cooked meals.

Meals at work tended to be depressing affairs; they were eaten at inappropriate times, either too soon or too late, and could be missed altogether. Meals were not generally seen as enjoyable occasions to relax and chat with colleagues, but were rushed affairs, frequently eaten alone. Many shiftworkers in my study ate 'convenience' foods at work, such as snacks of crisps and chocolate, sandwiches and takeaway meals or other fast foods. Shiftworkers' eating patterns as a result tended to be erratic and disorganised, with different patterns on different shifts. However, some shiftworkers in banking enjoyed more satisfactory circumstances in which to eat at work, having longer, guaranteed meal breaks, a subsidised canteen, and the ability, usually, to control the pace of their work to allow a meal break to be taken.

In conclusion, it would seem that Charles and Kerr's claim that the eating patterns of women in their study depended on a '... *lifestyle which is often determined by circumstances outside her control*' (Charles & Kerr 1986:559) could be applied to the shiftworkers in my study. In developing my analysis in this chapter I have sought to integrate together weberian, marxist and symbolic interactionist approaches, following Smith (1988). In analysing shiftworkers' eating habits I began by outlining their experiences of eating at work, and then explored the processes through which eating habits were structured. I argued eating patterns at work were constrained in a number of ways - through formal, organisational rules, through the organisation of the labour process according to the principles of scientific management, and through the meanings individuals attached to the social situations in which food was consumed. In the next chapter I explore food and eating in shiftworkers' home and family lives.

CHAPTER 10: THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF FOOD AND EATING AT HOME AMONG SHIFTWORKERS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the social organization of meals and eating on days when shiftworkers were not at work, i.e. when they were at home before and after work on workdays, and on their days off. How did shiftworkers organise meals at home? Did their eating patterns at these times differ from those on workdays? The literature reviewed in chapter 2 suggested that conceptions of the 'proper' meal and the 'family' meal played an important part in organising the eating experiences in the households of women with young children (Murcott 1982, 1983; Charles and Kerr 1986). Were these ideas also important in shiftworkers' households? What was the social significance of meals in households where family members might rarely eat together? This chapter discusses these questions, drawing on the qualitative data collected.

I begin by summarising the experiences of eating at home of shiftworkers in my study in section 10.2. This leads in section 10.3 into a discussion of their conceptions of appropriate meals to eat at home, drawing on the concepts of "proper' and 'family' meals. Section 10.4 discusses eating at home as 'work', and section 10.5 outlines the strategies shiftworkers used to organise this work. The focus on the domestic context of eating continues in chapter 11, which considers patterns of gender divisions of labour around food in shiftworkers' households.

10.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF EATING AT HOME FOR SHIFTWORKERS

10.2.i. The experience of eating at home for shiftworkers
According to my interviewees, there were important differences between the experience of eating at home, on days when they were not working, and eating at work. A nurse described her eating patterns on her day off.

> *I enjoy eating then. I can have a breakfast when I want. I can go out in town and eat something there and then something for the meal at night for myself, cook whatever I fancy at night... I spend some effort to cook on the days off and I enjoy eating.*
> (Shahida - nurse)

These comments suggested that eating was more enjoyable when she had the time and freedom to choose what, when and where to eat. She could eat two or three times in the day and could cook for herself if she chose or eat out. This worker's experience of eating on days off was shared by other shiftworkers in my study. Chapter 7, especially tables 7:8, 7:9 and 7:10, showed that, on days when they were not working, shiftworkers' eating patterns tended to be more organised than on work days, i.e. they tended to eat more often, and to eat more meals and fewer snacks. More ate the number of meals (3 or 4) regarded as 'normal' in Britain today. Although most meals were eaten at home on their last non-work day, my respondents were more likely on non-work than work days to eat out in a café or restaurant and they were also

more likely to eat with other members of their family at these times. Shiftworkers also described their eating habits as being 'better' on days off than on workdays. While their use of the word 'better' might suggest that the quality of food eaten was higher on days off than on workdays, or that they had more appetite for food, it might also have been that shiftworkers felt that their eating patterns on non-work days accorded better with accepted patterns within a society organized around a day-time schedule.

However, were shiftworkers' eating patterns on non-work days determined solely by their individual choices and preferences? I wanted to explore the ways in which their eating patterns at home might also have been subject to similar constraints as eating at work. I consider first, in section 10.3, shiftworkers' conceptions of appropriate meals to eat at home, and then the work involved in preparing these meals, and how shiftworkers organised this work in their households.

In discussing eating patterns at home, however, it is important to recognise that the effects of shiftwork also carried over to affect days off, as workers were still tired on days off, and workers might spend part of their day off sleeping, if the day off is before or after a nightshift. Distinctions between eating patterns on work and non-work days were thus sometimes difficult to draw as the effects of shiftwork tended to spill over into leisure time.

It is also important to recognise that the effects of shiftwork on eating patterns on days off were mediated by the worker's age, gender, family circumstances and number of years spent in shiftwork. I do not attempt to discuss the complexities of these different situations here, but concentrate on the main themes emerging from interviews with shiftworkers from a range of different backgrounds, working a variety of shift patterns.

10.3 SHIFTWORKERS' CONCEPTIONS OF MEALS AT HOME

10.3.i. The idea of 'proper' meal

The concept of the 'proper' meal has been central to much sociological analysis of food and eating, as noted in chapter 2. When shiftworkers in my study spoke about their eating patterns on days when they were not working, it became apparent that the notion of the 'proper' meal was also important to them. Days off were times when 'proper' meals could be eaten.

Yes, more hot meals when I'm off, proper meals, you know, pasta, vegetables, salad, rather than sandwiches and chocolate cake. (Melanie – ambulance worker)

And then for tea, meat, two veg, potatoes, you know, a proper dinner at night. (Sharon - auxiliary worker)

You see, it's my day off so they know they'll get a proper roast dinner on Wednesday. (Janet – auxiliary worker)

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What did interviewees mean by use of the term 'proper' meal in this context? The comments above seemed to imply that a 'proper' meal was a cooked, hot meal, and, importantly, included meat, probably roast meat, although vegetables were also required. Time and thought had to have been spent in its preparation. The idea of a 'proper' meal as a meal which was 'balanced' was also expressed by some respondents.

That's when I have what I'd say is a proper meal, a balanced meal. (Evelyn - nurse)

She described how she would prepare a meal of meat, perhaps chicken, with rice and fresh vegetables, emphasising that the meal was 'balanced' because she would eat fresh fruit, vegetables and meat, something she tended not do on workdays. While she also saw the 'proper' meal as meat-based, the inclusion of rice as a vegetable possibly reflected her Afro-Caribbean background.

Interestingly female respondents were more likely than men to describe meals as 'proper'; only one man in my study used the term, making a distinction between 'English' food, which he termed 'proper' food, and 'foreign' food, giving the examples of *'curries and Chinese'* (Kevin – bank worker)

These different definitions of the 'proper' meal were reminiscent of Murcott (1987), as summarised in chapter 2. She outlined three meanings of the term 'proper' in the context of a meal, suggesting it could be used to mean a meal that was nutritionally correct, a meal that was aesthetically pleasing, or a meal which was regarded within the culture as appropriate for the occasion. She found that use of the term 'proper meal' by the women in her study in South Wales in the 1980's tended to mean a meal that was 'correct' in terms of widely held cultural conventions. They had a clear understanding of, and were able to articulate 'rules' for the composition and preparation of the 'proper' meal. For example, it could not feature cold food, such as salad, or 'convenience' foods, such as baked beans (Murcott 1982:677).

According to Murcott (1982) and Charles and Kerr (1988), the social context of the 'proper' meal was also important. The women they interviewed suggested that such meals should be the main meal of the day, eaten together with all the family sitting round the table. Indeed, Charles and Kerr (1988) suggested that respondents in their study considered that the presence of all family members was required for a 'proper' meal to be provided. If the male member of the family in particular was absent, this affected the content of the meal. Women said they would not go to the trouble of making a 'proper' cooked meal for themselves if their partners were absent; they would have a snack or their children's preferences might determine the content of the meal. The 'proper' meal was thus defined by the '...*social relationships within which it is prepared, cooked and eaten'* (Charles and Kerr 1988:23).

Chapter 2 suggested that eating habits are constrained by social and cultural proprieties. Shared understandings define what is considered 'food' and the ways in which it should be eaten. Use of the term 'proper' meal conveys moral overtones, and the phrase 'eating properly' implies conforming to some normative pattern of behaviour. Warde and Martens (2000) suggest that these shared understandings,

> ...prescribe what should be eaten, how the meal should be eaten and who should prepare it. (Warde and Martens 2000:92)

De Vault (1991) also noted also that the meal must,

> ...conform to the pattern for a 'proper' meal that household members have learned to expect. Within every culture, custom dictates that foods should be prepared and served in particular ways. (De Vault 1991:43)

My interviewees also seemed to imply this notion of a culturally appropriate pattern of eating in their use of the term 'proper' meal. In drawing a distinction between their eating patterns on work and non-work days, it seemed that they were distinguishing between their 'improper' eating patterns on workdays and 'proper' eating patterns on non-work days. I noted in chapter 6 that shiftworkers in my study were dissatisfied with their eating patterns on workdays. This might have been because they felt they were eating in ways they regarded as 'improper', i.e. at the 'wrong' times, i.e. not at 'normal' mealtimes, or eating the 'wrong' types of food, i.e. cold rather than hot food, or eating in the 'wrong' place, i.e. alone, rather than with other members of their family. It was possible that their emphasis on eating 'proper' meals on non-work days was an attempt to reassure both themselves (and perhaps also the interviewer) that they did eat 'properly' at some times, and conformed to the social rhythms seen as 'normal' in British society. It was interesting that they tended to see 'normal' social rhythms as those of day workers, despite having worked shifts for many years in some cases.

The 'proper' meal was also socially significant because it was a meal prepared for the main meal of the day, which was usually eaten at the time of the husband's return from work (Murcott 1982:693). It marked the transition from the public world of work to the private world of the family, and, for men, from work time to leisure time. These concepts were also salient to some interviewees in my study.

> I make sure on my days off that I produce a dinner, if you like, for them to come home to. (Trish - auxiliary worker)

In referring to the 'meal to come home to', this comment implied that 'proper' meals were used to mark the return of the husband and children from the public to the private world. We may ask who prepared the 'proper' meal to mark the wife's return to the home after her work? I discuss the gendered aspects of the provision of 'proper' meals in more detail in the next chapter.

10.3.ii. Did they eat 'proper' meals?

Did the shiftworkers in my study eat the 'proper' meals they referred to when talking about their eating habits on days off? It might have been that my interviewees aspired to eating 'proper' meals, or felt that these were the type of meals they 'ought' to eat, rather than actually did eat. This is reminiscent of the distinction between the 'ideal' and the 'reality' of meals, noted by Murcott (1997) in her discussion of the 'declining' family meal summarised in chapter 2.

As the quantitative evidence presented in chapter 7 showed, on their last non-work day, 53% of the 85 respondents who ate a third meal indicated that they ate a hot meal with meat or fish, as compared to 30% who did so on their last workday. If this type of meal can be described as a 'proper' meal, over half the respondents to this question ate such a meal on their last non-work day. This was confirmed by the data presented in chapter 8, which considered shiftworkers' patterns of eating over the course of the day rather than at individual meals. I categorized between one fifth and one third (21.8% on their last workday and 28. 8% on their last non-work day) of shiftworkers in my study as having type 3 eating patterns. It will be recalled from chapter 8 that a type 3 eating pattern was used to describe a pattern of regular meal times, 3 to 4 meals or snacks during the day, and more 'proper', hot meals being eaten.

'Proper' meals also emerged as an important theme within the interview data. Many of my interviewees said that they ate a 'proper' meal on Sundays with members of their family.

We enjoy a proper, traditional Sunday dinner. (Susan – bank worker)

One man who lived alone, for example, regularly visited his mother's house for lunch on Sundays, and another man who lived apart from his children brought them to visit for this meal. Others would eat Sunday lunch in a pub or restaurant, perhaps suggesting that they enjoyed eating such meals but did not enjoy cooking them.

This suggested that 'proper' meals might have featured more strongly in shiftworkers' eating patterns on non-work days at weekends than at other times. This is consistent with Murcott's comment that the,

...social inheritance of Sunday as a special non-working day appears to persist and is marked by a superior variant of the cooked dinner. (Murcott 1982:680)

60.2% of shiftworkers in my study, however, were categorized in chapter 8 as having type 2 eating patterns on their last non-work day. (A type 2 eating pattern was used to mean either a pattern of irregular mealtimes and 'proper' meals being eaten, or of regular mealtimes and snack-type meals.) For this group of shiftworkers, 'proper' meals were perhaps more an ideal rather than a reality, possibly aspired to, but difficult to achieve every day, perhaps because of the time and effort involved in preparing such meals, as section 4 below shows.

Overall, however, many shiftworkers in my study seemed to accept the notion of the 'proper' meal as a reference point for their eating patterns, particularly on non-work days, and frequently ate meat-based, 'proper' meals. My study showed that shiftworkers had clear ideas about the types of meals considered appropriate for themselves and their families, and so confirmed earlier research by Murcott (1982, 1983) and Charles and Kerr (1988). Notions of the 'proper' meal as involving a substantial, cooked meal of meat and vegetables, eaten at regular times appeared to be important to many shiftworkers, and such meals were perhaps emphasised more among this group precisely because they could not indulge in them as often as they might like.

10.3.iii. The idea of the 'family' meal

Chapter 2 also outlined the concept of the 'family' meal, as a meal eaten together by family members (Murcott 1997). The idea of the 'family' meal also had resonance for shiftworkers in my study. Many of my respondents who lived with a partner and /or children indicated that they considered that meals at home should be eaten, whenever possible, with other members of the family. 56% of the 65 shiftworkers with families who responded to this question indicated that family meals were 'always' or 'sometimes' important to them, and noted in their questionnaire responses,

> *If you've got [a family] you've got to try to eat with them.* (Malcolm - bank worker)

> *You're pressurised by your family.* (Sharon - auxiliary worker)

> *Food is more than just sustenance. It's an opportunity to talk and I think it's a good example to set to your child.* (Rosie - nurse)

This last comment linked family meals to the socialisation of children, suggesting that eating together as a family was seen as important in teaching children table manners, and giving family members time and space to talk together. Another interviewee said,

> *I don't think it necessarily is the actual food that you eat, it's just the time, the occasion if you like, putting time aside for each other, utilizing the time for catching up on anything that each other should know.* (Guy - nurse)

Shiftworkers with young children particularly emphasised the importance of eating family meals together, and described the efforts they made to achieve this. One man said that on night shifts,

> *When I go to bed 'dinner' time is usually breakfast with the family and when I get up 'breakfast' is usually an evening tea to suit the rest of the family. .... I just like to try to be flexible to my family rather than to my needs.* (Henry – bank worker)

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His eating habits on days when he was not working were also affected, as he may have wanted to sleep after a night shift but felt obliged to get up and eat with his family. Fitting in with the family, however, could mean eating an evening meal for breakfast, which might not be appetizing.

> *And so for my breakfast I'll get, like, roast beef and Yorkshire pudding - a daft thing, you know.* (Malcolm – bank worker)

However, a number of different arrangements of the 'family meal' emerged among shiftworkers in my study. One worker described a meal at home with her family before she worked a nightshift.

> *We do sit down together but we just eat different meals. They'll have their main meal and I'll have a breakfast cereal.* (June – auxiliary worker)

She ate at the same time as other members of her family, around the table together, but did not eat the same food. Other female interviewees described how they would prepare a meal for a child or partner but not eat themselves, although they would sit at the table. In these instances, the meal had been organized to involve co-ordination of the schedules of family members to enable them be in the same place at the same time, but it was not considered necessary that everyone present should eat the same food. It seemed more important that they shared time together.

Another interviewee described a different 'family' meal arrangement.

> *If we're leaving food for my son then he won't do anything unless it's plated, not even take it out of the pan. If it's plated he'll put it in the microwave and warm it up, but if he's got to start transferring food, he wouldn't eat, he'd go out. So like today, I've made a pan of braising steak and things, hoping he's going to warm it up.* (Linda – nurse)

This woman seemed to imply that the meal was a 'family' meal because she had prepared the same food for everyone to eat, but individuals would eat at different times, depending on their preferences and commitments. It may even have been that the son did not eat at all, but went out. It seemed as though this interviewee saw preparation of the family meal as a ritual which she had to perform, even if the food she prepared was not eaten. I discuss attitudes to cooking in the next chapter.

10.3.iv. Did they eat family meals together?

Did shiftworkers in my study eat with their family on non-work days? As noted earlier in chapter 7, 77% of the 70 shiftworkers who had eaten three times on their last non-work day had eaten their third meal with their partner and /or partner and children. 52.3% of the 65 who answered the question ' how often do you usually eat together as a family?' indicated that they did so at weekends. It therefore seemed that a significant number of shiftworkers did eat with other

members of their families on non-work days. They were more likely to eat with their family on non-work than workdays, and particularly likely to do so at weekends. Yet eating together as a family could also be a rare occurrence for some shiftworkers in my study. 4.6% of the 65 workers living with a spouse, partner and/or children who answered the above question indicated that they never ate together as a family.

Why was this? One reason for the rarity of family meals was that shiftworkers' days off did not always coincide with days off for other family members. None of the shiftworkers I interviewed could expect to have weekends off regularly, and this created problems in co-ordinating free time with their families. In addition, shiftworkers' hours of sleep, work and leisure time each day often did not correspond with those of other family members, making the co-ordination of mealtimes difficult. Even if family members could all arrange to be present in the home at the same time, it might have been that the shiftworker had no appetite for a meal.

10.3.v. Why were family meals important?

There could be practical reasons for eating together. Eating the same food together meant less cooking as separate meals did not have to be prepared for individual family members. Also, although workers themselves might have preferred to eat separately, they might have had no alternative but to eat with the family. In the household of one interviewee, for example, Malcolm's wife cooked, and both she and the children ate at times to suit the children's daytime, school schedule and he was expected to fit in with this pattern of eating, eating the same type of meal at the same time as his wife and children, as she did not want to prepare another meal at a different time. If he did not eat with them, he would not get a meal.

Households in which the female partner was not in full time, paid employment were possibly more likely to be able to eat together as she was able to spend time cooking, and possibly also considered that doing so was part of her role as a wife and mother. Other research has also found that women at home with young children felt under pressure to cater for their families, as they felt they were judged as mothers by their ability to feed their families (Charles and Kerr 1988; Hochschild 1989).

However, eating family meals seemed to shiftworkers in my study to be something which they felt 'normal' families 'should' do, as this woman revealed.

We're on holiday next week...so we'll get up together, we'll have our breakfast together, we'll have all our meals together. (Mick's wife)

She continued,

What I've missed most of all in 20 years is not sitting down to breakfast as a family, that's what I've missed. I sort of feel that, if as a family you could sit down at the beginning of the day, it sets your day off right, but it's something we've very rarely done.

He's either in bed, or he's at work or he's on his way to work. That was how it should have been. (Mick's wife)

This comment highlighted the strong normative expectations around meals held by some interviewees. This woman's feeling that 'sitting down' to a meal 'as a family' 'sets your day off right' revealed the links she made between meals with all the family present, 'proper' eating and 'living properly'. These findings were also reminiscent of the work of Kemmer et al (1998) which found that, for many of the young Scottish couples they studied, eating the evening meal together symbolized their togetherness and was an important part of setting up a home. Family meals thus had an important symbolic function, which shiftworkers in my study seemed to recognise.

Others claimed family meals were seen as an important ritual, a family tradition.

It's something we've always done. (Kim – auxiliary worker)

One interviewee travelled over 100 miles each weekend in order to eat with his children.

I bring my children over here on a Saturday. Sunday is the time we sit down for a meal, and we have a breakfast, we have a Sunday meal at 4.00. (Mark – bank worker)

Whereas during the rest of the week he ate most of his meals at work, and had very little food in stock at home, at weekends he made special efforts to buy food and prepare meals to eat with his new partner and children. When asked why he did so he replied,

'Cos we're a family then on a Sunday. (Mark – bank worker)

This comment was very reminiscent of studies which have explored food and eating in reconstituted families. Burgoyne and Clarke (1983) found instances of divorced men organising 'proper' meals for their children, and suggested that provision of such meals symbolised an attempt to return to stability and normality at home (Burgoyne and Clarke 1983:57). It may have been that some shiftworkers were using food in a similar way to attempt to 'reconstitute' their family as a unit after time spent away from the family in shiftwork.

The emphasis placed on shared, family meals by my interviewees was consistent with other studies which see such meals as important in the social reproduction of the family (Charles and Kerr 1988; De Vault 1991). Through the shared experiences of family meals, families are brought together and their identity asserted. Charles and Kerr (1988) suggested that the ideology of the family was reinforced by the sharing of family meals and argued that,

... food is important to the social reproduction of the family in both its nuclear and extended forms, and that food practices help to maintain and reinforce a coherent ideology of the family throughout the social structure. (Charles and Kerr 1988:17)

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De Vault (1991) also argued that 'proper' meals were central in keeping the family together as a 'social entity' or 'cohesive social unit', claiming that,

Part of the intention behind producing the meal is to produce 'home' and 'family'.
(De Vault 1991:79)

The emphasis on the family meal among shiftworkers in my study was also reminiscent of Hertz and Charlton's (1989) study of American shiftworkers. They argued that shiftwork reduced the opportunities families had to participate in routine events, such as evening meals. Whereas day workers could eat together on a regular basis, shiftwork families must either eat without the presence of one or more members or adjust the time of the meal to fit the shiftworkers' schedule (Hertz and Charlton 1989:494). Considerable efforts were made (usually by the female partner) to adjust the times of meals to enable all the family to eat together, even moving Thanksgiving to another day to fit in with the worker's shift schedule. In this way shiftworkers attempted to,

...create a sense of a cohesive, family unit. (Hertz and Charlton 1989:492)

However, there could be a disjuncture between the ideal of the 'proper' meal and the reality of eating at home for some shiftworkers. Hertz and Charlton (1989) pointed to the *'contradiction of family life under shiftwork',* suggesting that shiftwork impinged dramatically on family life, making it very difficult for families to share time together, yet many shiftworkers attempted to act out the image of 'normal' family life despite the difficulties of preparing 'proper' meals and eating together at the same time (Hertz and Charlton 1989:505).

Some shiftworkers in my study seemed to place greater emphasis on family meals because they could happen infrequently. One woman said that eating together as a family had,

...become quite a rarity now and I find it's become quite important. (June - nurse)

The more infrequent the meal, the more it was seen to require the preparation of special food.

[I] *made a special effort to do a roast dinner which we had together.* (Dot - nurse)

It doesn't happen very often, not as often as it should. Make a big thing of it really. Cook something nice and have a bottle of wine. (Melanie – ambulance worker)

These comments suggested that, on occasions when it was possible to eat with the family or partner, special food - roast meat, a bottle of wine - was used to mark the event, suggesting that infrequent family meals tended to take the form of the 'proper' meal.

Family meals were perhaps used to compensate for failure to spend time together, and if these meals involved extra work for women, perhaps this was also an attempt to assuage guilt they may have felt at their 'failure' to provide meals for their partner and children whilst they were at

work. However, such attempts to use food to rebuild the family, however, may have been doomed to failure if they involved the women in extra work, and thereby intensified existing tensions within the family. I discuss eating at home as 'work' in the next section.

10.4 EATING AT HOME AS 'WORK'

10.4.i. Eating at home as 'work'

As the previous chapter showed, shiftworkers' meals at work were generally rushed, unsatisfactory affairs. It might be hoped, therefore, that eating at home would be a pleasant, relaxing experience. However, to some shiftworkers, eating at home also meant work. In this section I outline the work involved in preparing meals in shiftworkers' households. Chapter 11 discusses gender divisions in food-work in shiftworkers' households.

In interpreting my data, the concept of 'food-work', introduced in chapter 2, was useful. De Vault (1991) uses the term to mean all the work involved in planning what to eat, shopping for the food, cooking the meal, washing up afterwards, and any other tasks, such as laying the table (De Vault 1991:4). A wide range of mental and manual skills are involved in food-work.

> *'Doing a meal'... requires more than just cooking; it takes thoughtful foresight, simultaneous attention to several different aspects of the project, and a continuing openness to ongoing events and interaction.* (De Vault 1991:55)

Planning the meal required skills of co-ordination and forethought, first to co-ordinate the schedules of family members so that they could all be present for the meal at the same time, and, second, to plan food that everyone could enjoy. According to Hochschild (1989), producing a meal involves mental work to understand the needs of others and 'juggle' individual preferences to produce a meal acceptable to all. This might involve buying different food and cooking separate meals at separate times for different people, as one shiftworker in my study described.

> *If Nicola's having pasta or curry I'll probably do it vegetarian anyway and if I'm doing a roast dinner, well I do quite enjoy meat so I would have perhaps some roast meat and my older daughter would have that as well and my younger daughter and husband would have a vegetarian roast.* (June - nurse)

Her comment gives a sense of the decision-making processes behind making a meal which was acceptable to both vegetarians and meat-eaters.

There was also physical work involved in food-work. In some households, home-grown vegetables might be used, requiring physical work to grow and prepare the crops. All my respondents, however, took it for granted that they would purchase commercially all the food they needed. Shopping, however, involved both mental and physical work. Although some

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interviewees said that they were able to shop at less busy times on some shifts, thought still had to be given to fitting the task around working hours.

> *You're continually thinking of what day you're on, when you're working, when you can go to the shops, when you can get fresh food basically.* (Mary – ambulance worker)

For this worker, fresh food was a priority, but to achieve this meant shopping frequently and using particular shops, and then organising meals to use the food while it was still fresh. Other workers described the physical work involved in visiting different shops, as some women did to accommodate family members' preferences for particular foods. One woman, for example, described her partner's preference for meat pies, but his insistence that she bought them only from one particular shop created extra work for her. Finally, storing food at home also required careful thought, taking time and effort.

> *I spend hours. I check dates on things…. to make sure that it's going to last us right through, so that I can still get sandwiches out of them. When I'm shopping for the freezer I tend to be thinking, 'Will that fit in?' 'Cos it's pretty much always full, and I sort of try and think what's been used this last week, how much room is there.* (Guy - nurse)

In describing how he checked, not only the sell-by dates but also the amount of space he had available in the freezer, this man gave an interesting example of space influencing eating habits.

10.4.ii. Time and eating at home

How did interviewees describe the work involved in eating at home? To prepare and cook meals at home whilst also working shifts was very difficult.

> *I dig through the freezer or run to the shops, go and get it, prepare it, and it's like hassle-time and I hate shopping at the best of times.* (Janet – auxiliary worker)

This comment suggests the numerous tasks involved in feeding the family whilst also working shifts, and the lack of time in which to do them – she 'runs' to the shops. References to time also appeared in other interviewees' comments about eating at home.

> *The food I get when I get home is quite basic, something out of a packet, you know, but if I'm working and get home for 3, 4 o'clock then I'll tend to cook something…* (Jane – nurse)

> *I probably just have another snack, a sandwich or something…'cos I haven't time to cook between getting home and going back out.* (Linda – nurse)

These comments suggest that, for these women, the amount of time they had to prepare food after work had a strong influence on their eating habits, as it was a major factor in the decision whether to eat a snack or to cook a meal. Such time constraints were possibly not confined to shiftworkers.

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It seemed also that shiftworkers in my study might have experienced particular problems planning meals because their daily schedule was unpredictable, as a result of overtime work, and the difficulties they experienced sleeping during the day when on night shifts. Some interviewees described feeling nauseous from fatigue as a result of sleeping poorly during the day, with a consequent loss of appetite.

> *You get back from work in a morning, think, 'Oh I'll have chilli tonight' so you get some mince out of the freezer, go to bed at midday, get up at 8.00pm and you either don't sleep too well, or have a bit of a lie-in, and you don't feel like it. You have a sandwich and that'll be it. You can't plan for how you feel… It's not knowing, not being confident that you're going to want to knock something up fresh ….you get sloppy. It's just as easy to go down to the chip shop.* (Thomas – bank worker)

This man's comment seems to suggest that he found planning meals at home difficult because he could not predict if he would feel like cooking or eating when he woke up. He sometimes ate takeaway foods because they could be obtained quickly and easily if he did feel like eating. Also, according to Hertz and Charlton (1989:491), lack of control over time can be experienced as stressful, and stress may also have predisposed some shiftworkers to snack on fast foods. These examples highlight the need to see shiftworkers' eating habits in the context of both their home and working lives.

10.5 STRATEGIES TO ORGANISE THE WORK OF EATING AT HOME

10.5.i. Use of 'labour-saving' appliances
In this section I outline how shiftworkers in my study organised the work of eating at home. I have noted the importance interviewees placed on 'making' and 'saving' time when preparing meals for themselves and their families. I discuss below the three main strategies which they tended to use to save time, first, use of 'labour-saving' appliances; second, 'time-shifting' food-work tasks, and finally, use of 'convenience' foods. I begin by discussing ownership and use of various 'labour-saving' appliances.

Respondents in my study possessed a wide range of kitchen appliances and equipment, as shown in table 10.1 below. 90% of the 119 respondents to this question had a microwave oven, 93% a deep freezer/ fridge freezer, 20% a dishwasher, 56% a cooker with timer and 40% a food processor. These appliances and equipment allowed food to be prepared quickly, and stored easily for long periods.

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Table 10.1: Ownership of domestic appliances

	Ownership by shiftworkers in my sample %	Ownership by households Great Britain % (1995-6)**
Microwave oven	90.0	70.0
Deep Freeze/Fridge Freezer	93.0	89.0
Dishwasher	20.0	20.0
Food Processor	40.0	Not given
Cooker with timer	56.0	Not given
Other Equipment *	15.0	Not given

N= 119, 1 missing case

*Other equipment which respondents felt saved time and effort when preparing meals, e.g. woks, slow-cookers, and toasters.

** Source: Social Trends 1997

Comparison of my findings with national figures for ownership of these household appliances at the time I conducted my research shows that, at the time of my study in 1995-6, 89% of households in Great Britain owned a deep freezer/fridge freezer, 70% a microwave oven and 20% a dishwasher (Social Trends 1997:112). (The figures are not directly comparable, however, as the national statistics show ownership by households, whereas my figures refer to ownership by individuals.) Since 1995-6, ownership of these items within the population has increased further. The most recent figures show that 94% of households in Great Britain own a deep freezer, 85% a microwave oven and 28% a dishwasher (General Household Survey/Living in Britain 2001:30). The higher levels of ownership of both a microwave oven and freezer in my sample, compared to the national average, suggested that shiftworkers were possibly more likely to have acquired these appliances rather earlier than others in the population. This might have been because shiftworkers felt they particularly needed these items and possibly also because they were more likely to be able to afford them as they generally earned a premium for working shifts.

How did shiftworkers in my study use these appliances to save time in food-work? Many in my sample owned a deep-freezer.

> The freezer's a boon, absolute boon to us because it allows us to stock loads of food so when we need it, it's there, rather than having to go to the shops there and then to get things. (Henry – bank worker)

For this man, ownership of a freezer saved time as shopping could be done in bulk, and so done less frequently, and frozen food, unlike fresh, could be kept until needed. This gave greater flexibility over the content and timing of meals, which was very important to shiftworkers,

as I have shown above. Microwave ovens also allowed meals to be cooked more quickly and allowed greater flexibility over the timing of meals.

> *I cook for the kids at teatime, leave it on a plate and he'll microwave it up again when he comes in at midnight.* (Malcolm's wife)

This comment suggested the benefits of the microwave in allowing individuals to reheat food and eat at different times. In addition to saving time, use of microwave ovens might have been accompanied by possible changes in gender divisions of labour if some men were undertaking some aspects of food-work.

However, possession of kitchen appliances did not necessarily mean that they were used regularly. The home of one man I interviewed was immaculately tidy, with a very well equipped kitchen, but he said that he ate the majority of his meals either at work or in restaurants and the kitchen was rarely, if ever, used. It seemed kitchen equipment could also be used as a status symbol.

10.5.ii. Time-shifting tasks

The second strategy some shiftworkers in my study used to save time on food-work was 'time-shifting'. Interviewees described how they would divide the labour process involved in preparing and cooking a meal into smaller tasks and perform different parts of the task at different times, instead of preparing the entire meal at one time (usually when they returned from work), they prepared part of the meal before leaving for work, completing it on their return home. In some cases, different people performed the different tasks, although organisation of the whole process was generally managed by the female partner.

> *Well, like today, I mean I've prepared meat, I've set the oven for the meat and I've peeled vegetables and potatoes and they're just ready for lighting and the oven's an automatic, that'll come on at 1.30 and my husband'll just come home and cook the vegetables and potatoes. So that's their evening meal.* (Carol – nurse)

This interviewee described how both she and her partner 'cooked' a meal, using an automatic cooker, and how the various tasks involved were performed at different times. This process of 'time-shifting' tasks, using the automatic cooker and performing some tasks before leaving for work, allowed this woman to combine shiftwork and the work of feeding her family. It was interesting that, although she retained responsibility for organising the whole process, she credits her partner with 'cooking' the meal, which she might not even be eating as she suggests it is 'their' (her partner and children's) evening meal.

Another woman described how she would cook meals in advance.

> *I used to cook it before I came out if I was on a late shift. I used to cook in a morning and then plate it up. All they'd got to do was put it in the microwave.* (Pat – nurse)

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A nursing auxiliary worker also used this strategy.

When I come on a late, then I'll prepare it before I come to work, part cook it and then it's in the oven and in the saucepans. (June – auxiliary)

This comment illustrates how some women used time-shifting to produce a cooked meal for their families even though they were at work themselves. Interestingly the women were not saving time for themselves, but saving time for their partner or children, who would only have to cook the vegetables when they wanted a meal.

10.5.iii. Use of 'convenience' foods

Finally, a third strategy which some shiftworkers used to organise meals at home was the use of 'convenience' foods. Although definitions of 'convenience' foods differed among respondents, as I show below, as such food had generally been commercially processed in some way, the time spent in preparation of the meal in the home was reduced. A wide range of prepared food is now available in supermarkets, ranging from individual items, such as bagged, prepared salads, pre-boiled new potatoes and ready-made Yorkshire puddings.

For some interviewees, food that was 'convenient' was food which did not require any cooking at all, such as sandwiches, chocolate bars, crisps, fresh fruit or yoghurt. Food could also be 'convenient' if it could be stored for long periods and so was available in the home whenever required. Frozen food was convenient in this way. Other 'convenient' forms of food, such as home-grown food, or dried food, did not feature at all in my interviewee's accounts. 'Convenience' food could also mean food which was already prepared, such as take-away food, or food which had only to be reheated at home, such as canned food or a commercially-made, ready-meal. However, not all shiftworkers defined 'convenience' food as food which had been commercially prepared; one woman prepared large quantities of home-made soup to freeze and use later. For her, one type of 'convenience' food was food she had prepared herself.

Take-away fast food, such as burgers or fish and chips, was 'convenient' as it was bought cooked and ready to eat. 29.2% of the 117 questionnaire respondents indicated that they 'often' ate takeaway foods at home, and 22.5% indicated they 'often' did so at work. It might have been that a visit to a fast food restaurant was seen as a leisure activity in itself, or that takeaway foods, such as fish and chips, were used as a 'treat' on non-work days or to avoid cooking. It may also have been that convenience foods, such as ready-meals, were used because the choice had been made to use a microwave oven to save time.

In summary, many shiftworkers in my study were concerned to reduce, or shift, the time spent in food-work, by using the various strategies outlined above. It was possible that shiftwork might have increased shiftworkers' awareness of time as a factor in relation to food preparation and eating, although further research would be needed to investigate whether they differed from

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other members of the population in this. A possible contradiction between the preference for 'proper' meals, outlined in section 10.3 above, and the desire to save time, was resolved for some workers in my study by use of various strategies I have outlined. It was possible to prepare 'proper' meals by using labour-saving appliances (microwave oven), time-shifting tasks (preparing meat in advance) or by using convenience foods (canned, not fresh vegetables). Use of some or all of these strategies might have reflected a desire on the part of some shiftworkers in my study to accommodate the process of producing 'proper' meals with a shiftwork schedule, but it seemed they continued to regard the provision of such meals as important. Others also adopted a more individualised pattern of eating, in which individuals ate different meals at different times according to their personal commitments, tastes and preferences. This might be seen as 'time-shifting' the meal.

It might have been that the shiftworkers I studied in 1995 were at the forefront of changes in eating patterns which are now becoming more widespread. It may be that the strategies to organise food work in the home and erratic patterns of eating I have identified among shiftworkers would also be found among those engaged in other types of 'flexible' work today. More research would be needed to explore this possibility.

10.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that, although some shiftworkers felt more in control of, and more satisfied with their eating patterns on non-work than work days, eating patterns at home were constrained, however, by conceptions of appropriate meals at home. Some shiftworkers had clear ideas about the types of meals considered appropriate for themselves and their families; notions of the 'proper' meal as involving a substantial, cooked meal of meat and vegetables, eaten at regular times appeared to be important to many shiftworkers, and such meals were perhaps emphasised more among this group precisely because they could not indulge in them as often as they might like. There were also, however, some changes taking place here as some interviewees implied that they regarded other dishes as 'proper' meals.

I also found adherence to the idea of the 'family' meal eaten by all the family together among shiftworkers in my sample, particularly in households with children, and some fathers went to great lengths to eat with their partner and children, even though they may have had no appetite for the meal.

This chapter has highlighted the extent to which organising meals at home involved work, as often these compromises involved female shiftworkers in extensive extra food-work, preparing food in advance or preparing several different meals by making use of domestic technologies such as freezers and / or microwave ovens. That they were willing to do this suggested a strong normative aspect to family eating; eating 'proper' meals together was an activity which they felt they *should* do, despite the difficulties.

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Finally, I have suggested in this chapter that it is important also when considering shiftworkers' eating patterns to have regard for the wider context of their lives, including consideration of the composition of the family and the employment status of their partner. Meal times and eating patterns were likely to differ in shiftworker households where both partners are engaged in full time shiftwork, as compared to those where one partner is not in paid work. Similarly, it is likely that the presence of young children has an impact on eating patterns in the household. Unfortunately, as shown in chapter 7, the small sample size of my study did not allow for investigation of these issues, but this would be an interesting area for further research. In conclusion, it seemed that some shiftwork schedules removed the regular routine around which people often structured their lives. Flexible working times required flexible sleeping and eating times, but this was very difficult for workers living in a world where the cultural assumption was that majority did not work shifts, but worked during the day and slept at night.

CHAPTER 11 - GENDER DIVISIONS OF LABOUR AROUND MEALS AND EATING AT HOME

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores patterns of gender divisions of labour in food-work in shiftworkers' households to gain further insight into the relationship between food and eating, gender, shiftwork, and domestic work in the home. In section 11.2, I present my study's findings on the patterns of gender division of labour around food in shiftworkers' households. I draw mainly on data collected in the questionnaire survey from the 77 individuals in my sample of shiftworkers who were living with a partner, of whom 38 also lived with their dependent children. I outline male and female shiftworkers' responsibilities for planning meals, shopping for food, cooking and clearing up after the meal, and compare gender divisions of labour in relation to food-work in shiftworkers' and non-shiftworkers' households. Section 11.3 explains sociologically the patterns of gender divisions revealed, and in section 11.4, I present a summary of the main themes of the chapter.

11.2 GENDER DIVISIONS OF LABOUR AROUND MEALS AND EATING AT HOME

11.2.i. Planning Meals

It is important to consider how shiftworkers organised food-work in the home as, although other studies (Yeandle 1984; Hochschild 1989; Morris 1990; Hakim 1996) have shown that co-ordinating paid work and family life could be problematic for women, for shiftworkers the problems of planning and cooking family meals might have been more difficult as they might not have been sleeping or eating at the same time as their partner and children because of their paid work schedule.

Table 11.1 shows that female shiftworkers were more likely than male shiftworkers to indicate that they were usually responsible for planning meals in their households. This was the case for women in households both with, and without, children. 87.5% of the 24 women in my sample living with a partner, who answered this question, and 95% of the 20 female respondents living with a partner and dependent children, indicated that they were 'usually' responsible for planning meals, compared to less than half of male shiftworkers living in either type of household who answered this question. The values of p, however, suggest that the results were statistically significant for males, but not for females.

In the households of those shiftworkers who indicated that they were not responsible for this task, it may have been that the task was performed by their partner, their children, shared by both partners, done by both partners together, or done by another person.

Table 11.1: I am usually responsible for planning meals, by household composition and sex of respondent

sex of respondent				household composition		
				live with partner/s pouse	live with partner/spous e & children	Total
female	I am responsible for planning meals	no	Count	3	1	4
			% within household composition	12.5%	5.0%	9.0%
		yes	Count	21	19	40
			% within household composition	87.5%	95.0%	90.0%
	Total		Count	24	20	44
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
male	I am responsible for planning meals	no	Count	8	10	18
			% within household composition	57.1%	55.6%	56.3%
		yes	Count	6	8	14
			% within household composition	42.9%	44.4%	43.7%
	Total		Count	14	18	32
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(The male and female shiftworkers referred to in the tables in this chapter did not live with each other, but with other people.)

N (females) = 44, 27 missing cases, N (males) = 32, 14 missing cases

p = . 614 (females) p = .084 (males). Some columns hidden

I noted in chapter 10 the extent to which provision of family meals involved work - both manual and mental. Planning meals involved much more than just buying and cooking food; it involved the exercise of complex social and physical skills in shopping for food, planning and cooking meals, and in organising family meals. It was interesting that women might have been more likely to have acquired, and to feel the need to exercise, these skills than men, suggesting that the female shiftworkers in my sample might have seen meals as events requiring organisation and foresight, whereas men perhaps did not.

11.2.ii. Shopping for Food

Shopping for food was also a gendered activity in the households of shiftworkers in my sample. Table 11.2 shows that 95.8% of the 24 female shiftworkers in my sample living with a partner who answered this question indicated that they were usually responsible for shopping for food, as did 95% of the 20 female respondents living with a partner and children. It appeared that female shiftworkers living in households both with, and without, children were equally likely to see themselves as responsible for shopping for food. The values of p, however, suggest that the results were not statistically significant.

Table 11.2: I am usually responsible for shopping for food, by household composition and gender

sex of respondent				household composition: live with partner/spouse	household composition: live with partner/spouse & children	Total
female	I am responsible for shopping for food	no	Count	1	1	2
			% within household composition	4.2%	5.0%	4.5%
		yes	Count	23	19	42
			% within household composition	95.8%	95.0%	95.5%
	Total		Count	24	20	44
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
male	I am responsible for shopping for food	no	Count	6	7	13
			% within household composition	42.9%	38.9%	40.6%
		yes	Count	8	11	19
			% within household composition	57.1%	61.1%	59.3%
	Total		Count	14	18	32
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N (females) = 44, 27 missing cases. N (males) = 32, 14 missing cases

p = .184 (females), p = .207(males) Some columns hidden.

Why were female shiftworkers in my sample primarily responsible for planning meals and shopping for food? Shiftworkers in my study revealed that shopping for food required a detailed knowledge of the particular foods the family usually ate, the particular likes and dislikes of family members, the items they already had at home and those which needed to be bought and how frequently. De Vault (1991) also stressed the knowledge involved in food shopping, noting that part of the work involved was 'strategizing', using this term to mean '*planning, monitoring and remembering*' (De Vault 1991:75) when making choices about which foods to buy. The work that women usually did each day cooking meals, and their familiarity with the family's food preferences and eating habits, perhaps meant that it was they, rather than their male partners, who tended to acquire this knowledge.

Some women could also have found it difficult to forego responsibility for the task because much of their knowledge was implicit, based on years of experience of shopping and cooking for others, and, as such, difficult to articulate and share. One woman in my sample described writing shopping lists for her partner, which could have been seen as an attempt to share knowledge, but she still retained responsibility for writing the list and he shopped following her instructions. This example was reminiscent of a respondent in Luxton's study (1986), who attempted to teach her male partner how to do the laundry by giving him simple instructions, gradually increasing his level of responsibility for, and ownership of, the task.

However, it may also have been that some women did not want their partner to shop for food.

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I wouldn't trust him to go round the supermarket. He'd come back with all sorts.
(Melanie – ambulance worker)

This woman seemed to be hostile to her partner's involvement, and the implication of her comment that she could do the job better herself was reminiscent of similar comments by women in Charles and Kerr's study (Charles & Kerr 1988:57). It might have been that, for some women, the skills and knowledge contained in doing the shopping were important for their sense of themselves as capable and competent people. Shopping possibly also gave them certain power – they were in a position, for example, to largely determine what the family ate at home. Alternatively, as Hochschild (1989) suggested, some men may have used the strategy of presenting themselves as incompetent shoppers in order to avoid being asked to perform this task.

However, around 60% of male shiftworkers in my sample who answered this question indicated that they were usually responsible for shopping for food in households both with, and without, children; for example, 61.1 % of the 18 male respondents to this question living in households with children indicated that they shopped for food. Possibly they had use of the family car which allowed them to shop before or after work. This task might also have been performed by either partner, or both together. Further research might explore in more detail what respondents understand by being 'usually responsible' for a task. It might not necessarily be interpreted to mean that respondents perform the task alone.

11.2.iii. Cooking Meals

Female shiftworkers were also more likely than male shiftworkers in my study to indicate that they were usually responsible for cooking meals. This was true for women in households both with, and without children. Table 11.3 shows that 85% of the 20 female respondents in households with children who answered this question described themselves as 'usually responsible' for cooking meals, as did 91.7% of the 24 female shiftworkers living in households without children. The values for p suggest that the results may be statistically significant for male, but not for female respondents.

Some male shiftworkers in my sample indicated that they were usually responsible for cooking meals, particularly those living in households without children. 71.4% of the 14 male shiftworkers living in households without children who answered this question indicated that they were usually responsible for cooking meals, in contrast, to only 38.9% of male shiftworkers living in household with children. I will explore this difference in responsibility for cooking between men in households with and without children in more detail later.

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Table 11.3: I am usually responsible for cooking meals, by household composition and gender

sex of respondent				live with partner/spouse	live with partner/spouse & children	Total
female	I am responsible for cooking meals	No	Count	2	3	5
			% within household composition	8.3%	15.0%	11.3%
		yes	Count	22	17	39
			% within household composition	91.7%	85.0%	88.6%
	Total		Count	24	20	44
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
male	I am responsible for cooking meals	No	Count	4	11	15
			% within household composition	28.6%	61.1%	46.8%
		yes	Count	10	7	17
			% within household composition	71.4%	38.9%	53.1%
	Total		Count	14	18	32
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N (females) = 44, 27 missing cases. N (males) = 32, 14 missing cases

p = .954 (females), p = .004 (males) Some columns hidden

It would also have been interesting to have asked respondents which meal(s) they were usually responsible for cooking; it might have been that male and female respondents were usually responsible for different meals. Cooking the evening meal for all the family was possibly more demanding than cooking breakfast for one person.

Of those male and female shiftworkers who indicated that they were not usually responsible for cooking meals, it might have been that cooking was shared in these households, or undertaken jointly. There were also instances of older children cooking. In one household in my study the teenage children were expected to cook their own meals occasionally. One woman commented,

There'll be pizzas in...things like chicken kiev. They can cook them straight out of the freezer and they might cook themselves a few chips with it. (Trish, auxiliary worker)

11.2.iv. After the meal

The food-work task most likely to be performed by men in my sample in households both with and without children was washing up after the meal. Table 11.4 below shows that 85.7% of the 14 male shiftworkers living in households without children in my sample who answered this question indicated they were usually responsible for this task, as did 66.7% of the 18 male shiftworkers living in households with children. Interestingly, more female shiftworkers living in households with children indicated that they were usually responsible for washing up than

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females in households without children. The values for p suggest that the results may be statistically significant for males and females.

Table 11.4: I am usually responsible for washing up, by household composition and gender

sex of respondent				household composition		
				live with partner/spouse	live with partner/spouse & children	Total
female	I am responsible for washing up	No	Count	16	9	25
			% within household composition	66.7%	45.0%	56.8%
		Yes	Count	8	11	19
			% within household composition	33.3%	55.0%	43.1%
	Total		Count	24	20	44
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
male	I am responsible for washing up	No	Count	2	6	8
			% within household composition	14.3%	33.3%	25.0%
		Yes	Count	12	12	24
			% within household composition	85.7%	66.7%	75.0%
	Total		Count	14	18	32
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N (females) = 44, 27 missing cases. N (males) = 32, 14 missing cases

p = .008 (females), p = .015 (males) Some columns hidden

Why might male shiftworkers in my sample have been more likely to be responsible for this task than women? One reason might have been that washing up was the food-work task least determined by time; even though the man might have not been back from work in time to cook he could still wash up afterwards. Warde and Martens (2000:99) noted that, in households where time was scarce, such as was often the case when one or both partners worked full-time, there was more pressure on men to contribute to food-work. Men might contribute by performing the least demanding food-work task. Couples with young children might also have 'traded' the tasks of washing up and putting the children to bed, perhaps negotiating these tasks on a daily basis according to their other commitments (Hochschild 1989).

Also, I did not ask my respondents for which meals they were usually responsible for washing up afterwards and gender responsibilities might have varied for different meals. Washing up after breakfast, for example, was probably less of a chore than washing up after the evening meal. In some households, it may have been that clearing up after the meal was shared between partners, done by them both, or done by children, or a dishwashing machine might have been used. As shown in the last chapter, 20% of households in my study possessed a dishwashing machine and so neither partner might have been 'responsible' for 'doing' the task.

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To summarise, with the exception of washing up after the meal, female shiftworkers in my sample in households both with, and without, children were more likely than men in such households to be responsible for food-work tasks. Indeed, it seemed that household composition had little effect on the gender division of the food-work tasks of planning meals, shopping and cooking, as the vast majority of women in both types of household indicated that they were usually responsible for these tasks. With the possible exception of planning meals, male shiftworkers in my study living in households without children seemed more likely to see themselves as responsible for food-work tasks than men with children. Men without children in my study were almost twice as likely to describe themselves as usually responsible for cooking meals than did male shiftworkers with children. I explain the pattern of gender divisions of labour in food-work revealed in my sample in section 11.3.

11.2.v. Gender divisions in food-work in shiftworker and non-shiftworker households

Were gender divisions of labour in food-work more or less unequal in shiftworker than in non-shiftworker households? As noted in chapter 5, I did not conduct a quasi-experimental study with a control group of non-shiftworkers which might have allowed this question to be answered. Instead I have drawn on comparator studies to contextualise my findings.

I compared my findings with those of Warde and Martens (2000) as this study was conducted in the same year as my own. In the second phase of their study of eating out, Warde and Martens (2000) conducted a questionnaire survey of 599 households, containing 1001 men and women aged 16 – 64 in Britain in 1995. Table 11.5 shows the percentage of female shiftworkers living in households with children in my study who indicated that they were usually responsible for food-work tasks, and the percentage of women, in households both with and without children, whom Warde and Martens (2000) found indicated that they performed various food-work tasks the last time they were done.

Table 11.5: Gender divisions in food-work

Task	My study – % of female* shiftworkers usually responsible for task (%)	Warde and Martens' – % of females** who performed task last time ***
Planning	95.0	75.0
Shopping	95.0	56.0
Cooking	85.0	75.0
Washing Up	55.0	40.0
	N = 38	N = 599

* = in 2 adult households with children

** = in 2 adult households with and without children

*** Warde and Martens (2000:96)

Comparison of the two sets of findings suggests that the female shiftworkers in my study were more likely to indicate that they were usually responsible for food-work tasks than the women

studied by Warde and Martens (2000). For example, I found 85% of women in household with children in my study indicated that they were usually responsible for cooking, compared to 75% of women who indicated that they did the cooking the last time it was done (Warde and Martens 2000). This might suggest that shiftwork encourages a traditional gender division of labour in some households in which women are more likely to see themselves as responsible for food-work tasks than men. In non-shiftwork households, it might be that men are more likely to perform food-work tasks, or that these tasks are shared by both partners. I discuss these points further in the next section.

However, methodological differences between my study and that of Warde and Martens (2000) need to be recognised as they might account for some of the differences between the two sets of findings. First, the two studies phrased their questions about gender divisions of labour differently. Warde and Martens (2000) asked who performed the task the last time it was done, and allowed respondents a choice of 'women', 'man', 'both' or 'other', whereas I asked who was 'usually responsible' for the task. A woman may still be 'responsible' for ensuring that the task was performed, even if someone else did the task the last time it was done. For example, the woman might have decided which goods were needed, and have written the shopping list, even though the man went to the shop, and so she is still responsible for ensuring the shopping gets done.

Second, although approximately 60% of respondents in Warde and Martens' study were in full or part-time paid work, the authors did not indicate the number of women in paid work in their sample. They also did not differentiate between households with and without children in their analysis of the data. In contrast, I distinguished between patterns of gender division of labour in households with and without children. For these reasons, although my findings seemed to support those of Warde and Martens (2000), my conclusions are tentative as further research is needed.

11.2.vi. Summary

It might have been thought that shiftwork would challenge traditional gender divisions of labour in food-work. As the work schedule of some female shiftworkers meant that they were not at home at mealtimes regarded as customary in Britain today, it might have been supposed that other members of their households would take responsibility for preparing meals. However, my study suggested that this was not the case and that gender divisions of labour around food-work in shiftworker households could be more pronounced than in non-shiftworker households Female shiftworkers, in households with and without children, were more likely than male shiftworkers in my study to see themselves as usually responsible for food-work. Although there were differences between households with and without children in the extent to which male shiftworkers were responsible for certain food-work tasks, overall, men's involvement was limited and it was the case that women saw themselves as responsible for feeding the family, whether they worked shifts or not. These findings were consistent with Murcott (2000) and

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Social Trends 2003 which also found women did the majority of household chores in 2000-2001, despite their increased participation in the labour market (Social Trends 2003:224).

11.3 EXPLAINING GENDER DIVISIONS IN FOOD-WORK IN SHIFTWORKERS' HOUSEHOLDS

In this section I present and discuss different explanations of gender divisions of labour in shiftworkers' households, concentrating on gender divisions of responsibility for cooking. I consider first whether gender divisions in food work might be explained in terms of enjoyment of the tasks, taking the task of cooking as the example. I then consider explanations in terms of different gender identities and gender strategies, and the influence of differences in factors such as household composition and employment status. I end by suggesting that it might be useful to see gender divisions of labour in food-work as open to change and negotiation between individuals in shiftwork households.

11.3.i. Attitudes to Cooking

Could the unequal division of labour described in the previous section be explained in terms of differences in men and women's attitudes to cooking? Did women feel responsible for the task because they enjoyed cooking, whereas men did not enjoy the task and so did not cook?

Table 11.6: I enjoy cooking most or all the time, by household composition and gender

sex of respondent				household composition		
				live with partner/spouse	live with partner/spouse & children	Total
female	I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	no	Count	6	12	18
			% within household composition	24.0%	60.0%	40.0%
		yes	Count	19	8	27
			% within household composition	76.0%	40.0%	60.0%
	Total		Count	25	20	45
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
male	I enjoy cooking most or all of the time	no	Count	6	6	12
			% within household composition	42.9%	33.3%	37.5%
		yes	Count	8	12	20
			% within household composition	57.1%	66.7%	62.5%
	Total		Count	14	18	32
			% within household composition	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N (females) = 45, 26 missing cases. N (males) = 32, 14 missing cases

p = .003 (females), p = .626 (males) Some columns hidden

Table 11.6 above shows that 76% of the 25 female shiftworkers in my study in households without children who answered this question indicated that they enjoyed cooking most or all of

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the time, compared with 57.1% of the 14 male respondents. At first sight, therefore, it would seem that one reason some women might have cooked was because they enjoyed doing so. However, when we consider female shiftworkers living in households with children, only 40% indicated that they enjoyed cooking, only around half as many as indicated that they were usually responsible for cooking meals. Whatever the reasons for their lack of enjoyment, some female shiftworkers cooked even though they did not enjoy doing so. Some might have felt obliged to cook because their male partners refused to do so, as this respondent suggested.

I do it because I have to. (Evelyn - nurse)

It is important, however, to question the ways in which couples justified the patterns of organisation of domestic work in their households, and analyse the discourses used by respondents. Blain (1994) used the concept of 'family discourse' to analyse parent's accounts of reasons for their division of labour in her study of Canadian dual-earner families. She defines 'discourse' as,

> *...a set of terms, phrases, ideas, concepts, and linkages that defines perceptions and experience by making possible some questions while leaving others unasked.* (Blain 1994:524)

Some couples justified divisions of labour in their households in terms of personal preference or individual choice, claiming that one partner cooked because they 'enjoyed' it. However, according to Blain (1994), whereas women in her study would do tasks they did not enjoy, or did not mind doing, as well as those they enjoyed, men were more specific in choosing to do only those household tasks they felt like doing.

> *If the fathers give "I hate" as a justification for not doing something, this generally means that the mothers have to do it.* (Blain1994: 526)

Claims that couples performed tasks through personal choice, however, tended to perpetuate traditional gender divisions as women typically claimed to 'enjoy' housework (Blain 1996:525).

Blain's comments were relevant in interpreting the comments of some male shiftworkers in my study. As table 11.6 above showed, 66.7% of the 18 male shiftworkers living in households with children who answered this question indicated that they enjoyed cooking, yet only 38.9% of men in such households indicated they were usually responsible for cooking. This would suggest that they were able to choose whether they would cook or not. Those men in my study who claimed that they did cook tended to mention a special interest in food or that they cooked special meals.

> *I tend to do most of the catering at home because I actually enjoy it as a hobby, I enjoy cooking... I like experimenting.* (Alan – ambulance worker)

I've made dinner parties in this house for up to 50 people for a stand-up curry buffet, of around 12 different dishes. It's taken me weeks, the freezer's been bowing out.... (Henry – bank worker)

These comments were also reminiscent of Charles and Kerr (1988) who found that men tended not to do routine, family cooking, but only cooked if they were particularly interested in food or for special occasions. This might have explained also why some men in households with children did not cook; it might have been that cooking for children was less enjoyable, possibly because the types of meals regarded as appropriate for children within British culture tend to be rather bland and unimaginative.

These points suggest that, although cooking might bring pleasure, enjoyment of the task alone was not an adequate explanation of gender divisions. As Blain (1994) suggested, explanations of the persistence of gender divisions of labour should also take account of unequal power relations between women and men.

11.3.ii. Gender Identities

The concept of 'gender identity' has also been used to explain gender inequalities in domestic divisions of labour. A number of studies (Luxton 1986; Hochschild 1989; DeVault 1991; Purcell 1996) suggest a more useful way of explaining gender divisions in food-work may be found in the perceptions men and women have of their gender roles and identities, which derive from cultural expectations, and the 'gender strategies' each partner pursues. Hochschild (1989) identified the 'traditional', the 'transitional' and the 'egalitarian' gender identities for men and women in western societies (Hochschild 1989:15). Each contains ideas about the sphere – home or work – the man or woman wants to identify with, and how much power in the marriage they want to have – less, more or the same as their partner. Women holding 'traditional' views of gender roles wanted to identify with activities at home, and saw the man's place as in paid work. Those holding 'egalitarian' views wanted to identify with the same sphere as their partner and have the same degree of power in the relationship. The woman with 'transitional' gender identity wanted to identify herself both with home and paid work, although she wanted her male partner to focus more on paid work. Thus a woman might devote her attentions to the home (traditional), paid work (egalitarian) or attempt to do both (transitional).

When individuals applied their views about gender roles to the situations facing them, they pursed a 'gender strategy', defined as,

... a plan of action through which a person tries to solve problems at hand, given the cultural notions of gender at play. (Hochschild 1989:15)

'Traditional' gender identities see feeding the family as a 'natural' part of the woman's role as wife and mother.

Cooking has long been defined as one of women's major and most important tasks within the home, and central part of being a 'proper' wife. (Charles and Kerr 1988:46)

It might have been that, by doing the cooking, some female shiftworkers in my study were reassuring themselves that they were conforming to what was expected of their gender. As Purcell (1996) suggested,

Women's emotional involvement in food [is] an expression of their love and caring responsibilities to partners and children. (Purcell 1996:198)

However, some suggest that some women in paid work develop various strategies to attempt to deal with the contradictions between their circumstances and their perceptions of appropriate gender roles. Luxton (1986) identified various strategies women used to attempt to balance the demands of paid and domestic work. In her study, women who were in paid work, but who held a traditional view of gender roles, attempted to deal with the contradiction between their beliefs and actions by working even harder at domestic tasks. Among the 'strategies' women used to cope with the lesser involvement of men in domestic work which Hochschild (1989) identified were direct challenges to the man to do more; indirect challenges, such as denying him sex; doing all of the work themselves and trying to be 'supermums'; cutting back on paid work, as by changing from full to part-time work; cutting back on domestic work; and seeking outside help, such as hiring a cleaner (Hochschild 1989:8).

These ideas seemed useful in interpreting gender divisions of labour in food-work in my study. In chapter 10, I outlined the extra work some women in my study did to prepare food for their families before leaving for work, and some also expressed feelings of guilt that they were sometimes unable to live up to their family's expectations around meals. This suggested some might have been attempting to pursue the 'supermum' strategy, performing all the food-work in the home and also doing paid work. These examples were reminiscent of Luxton (1986) who found that one woman in her study insisted that every evening meal had to be home-made and have several courses (Luxton 1986:40).

Expression of a sense of guilt about meals would also seem to suggest that some female shiftworkers in my study associated their perceived inadequacies around food-work with a fear of being accused of 'failing' as 'proper' wives and mothers. It seemed some of my female respondents felt they were being judged by the food they provided for their family (Purcell 1996).

Some women in my study seemed to accommodate their male partners' lesser involvement in domestic work by reducing the amount of food-work they did at home by purchasing commercial food services, such as convenience foods or restaurant meals.

We go out for Sunday lunch a lot more. (Jenny – nurse, partner in paid work, no children)

We do use convenience meals, very much so. (Lizzie - nurse, partner in paid work, no children)

Men, however, also used various strategies to resist doing food-work, as Hochschild (1989) and others have noted. I found examples in my study of men claiming they did not have the skills required to cook, that their wives were more skilful. One man said he did not cook because his wife was a *'very good cook'*, and that food she had made tasted better than his. This linked also with the work of Speakman and Marchington (1999) who found that declarations of incompetence and denials of technological expertise were among the strategies male shiftworkers used to avoid domestic work. According to Blain (1994) also, references to the supposed 'natural' skills or abilities of men and women were used by both sexes as discourses to justify their involvement (or lack of it) in domestic work (Blain 1994:527). In some households without children in my study, some male partners would prepare a meal for themselves if their female partners were at work, but if their female partner was at home, she tended to cook for them both.

As a rule, if he cooks, it's for him, not for me, 'cos I'm normally at work... he very rarely cooks for us, hardly ever. (Jenny – nurse, living with non-shiftworking boyfriend, no children)

This suggests that cooking for them both was assumed to be her responsibility.

In summary, the above discussion has presented a number of explanations of gender inequalities in food-work. I have suggested that some female shiftworkers in my study might have cooked, not because they enjoyed doing so, but because they saw doing so as part of their gender identity as homemakers, even though they also engaged in paid work. Some may have been led to increase their involvement in food-work out of a sense of guilt at their perceived failure to fulfil this part of their gender identity, or as a coping mechanism when their male partners failed to contribute to food-work in the home. It is possible that female shiftworkers felt these pressures more intensely as shiftwork could be so disruptive of family life.

11.3.iii. Household Composition

The discussion above has concentrated on explanations of gender inequalities between male and female shiftworkers in my sample. I now turn to consider the influence of household composition on shiftworkers' involvement in food-work. As table 11.3 showed, I found that gender divisions in food-work were possibly more pronounced in households with children in my study than in households without children. In particular, only 38.9% of the 18 men in households with children indicated that they were usually responsible for cooking meals, compared to 71.4% of the 14 men in households without children. How can this be explained?

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Some studies have pointed to the influence of the employment status of women on gender divisions of labour in food-work. Purcell (1996) found that households composed of two full-time employed adults were more likely to share shopping and food preparation tasks than households where the female partner either did not work outside the home, or worked part-time. Warde (1997) also suggested that men were more likely to cook the family meal in households where the woman was in full-time paid employment; a man had cooked the last family meal in 25% of households in his study where the woman was in full time employment, but the figure was only 5% in households where she was employed part-time or not at all. Men in white-collar employment were also more likely to cook than men in manual work.

One reason for men's reduced participation in domestic work in households with children, therefore, might have been linked to the woman's employment status. Hakim (1996) suggested that women often withdrew from the labour market on the birth of a child, whereas men did not tend to do so, and so she was at home to perform tasks whereas he was not (Hakim 1996). Warde and Martens (2000) also found that men's contribution to domestic work was lower in households with children, and it has been suggested that, whereas both partners might have shared a range of domestic tasks before having children, the arrival of children was often accompanied by greater 'gender specialisation' and the burden of housework and childcare fell to the woman (Morris 1990; Newell 1993).

Studies of male shiftworkers would suggest their female partners may be more likely than other women to leave paid employment. Preston et al (2003), in a study of shiftworkers in Canada, noted that the 'vast majority' of households in their study had a 'traditional division of labour' because the woman often left, or opted not to do, paid work, to accommodate the demands of their partners who worked rotating shifts and make time for the family to be together (Preston et al 2003:5). One woman with three children, for example, was reported to have said that she left her job because her husband's shifts would have made childcare arrangements too complicated and disrupted family life (Preston et al 2003:16). Although I did not explore partners' employment patterns or responsibilities for childcare in my study, it might have been that the female partners in households with children in my study were not in paid work, and so cooked for the family.

For those female partners who were in paid work, other studies have shown that the level of the woman's earnings relative to the man's may also be important in explaining gender divisions of domestic work. Yeandle (1984) suggested that men were more willing to do domestic tasks if the female partners' earnings were thought significant for the family's standard of living. I found one example of such a situation among my respondents. One interviewee said,

I tell him what to cook (and) he cooks it. (Kellie – auxiliary worker)

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In this household, the female partner was in paid work and the male partner was unemployed. She controlled the family budget, deciding which foods should be purchased, but he cooked. It seemed that her work and income gave her power in the relationship and this gave her control over the division of food-work and the family's eating patterns. It may have been that other female shiftworkers in my study earned less than their male partners and so the men did not do food-work.

Other reasons for the difference in the numbers of men claiming to be usually responsible for cooking meals in households with and without children in my study might have been related to their hours of work. As Preston et al (2003) have noted, there is a wide diversity of shiftwork patterns and it might have been that men with children worked hours which made it difficult for them to be at home at mealtimes. It may also have been that some male shiftworkers in households with young children chose to work overtime to increase their income and so were unlikely to be at home to cook at meal times.

11.3.iv. Negotiating responsibilities for food-work
Some couples in my study did seem to perform jointly, or share responsibility for some food-work tasks. Some women in my study also expressed 'egalitarian' views of gender identities. One interviewee said,

> If I cook, he has to clean it up. (Jenny – nurse)

This might have suggested that the work of preparing and clearing away the meal was divided between the couple. Another couple, both of whom worked shifts, divided tasks according to the shift each was working, and it seemed the woman in this household might have held a view of gender identities which accorded with that described by Hochschild (1989) as 'egalitarian'.

> ...if I'm on afternoon shift I'll prepare it and leave it prepared for those [husband and children] to get when I'm at work. If I'm on a morning shift my husband usually prepares it if he can, or I prepare it. (Linda – nurse)

As noted in chapter 2, Kemmer et al (1998) and Valentine (1999) have suggested that eating patterns should be seen as negotiated. Food-work may perhaps also be negotiated between partners. There are examples in the literature of dual-earner couples with children 'trading off' food-work and childcare tasks, with one partner bathing the children, or putting them to bed, for example, while the other washes up (Yeandle 1984; Hochschild 1989). This suggests that patterns of gender division of labour around food and eating might be negotiated between couples in some households. Pilcher (2000) suggested that

> ...there is a lack of consensus about how to combine paid work, domestic work and family life, which provides a space for individuals within couples to negotiate their own solutions, albeit within the structural constraints of their lives. (Pilcher 2000:779)

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Shiftwork might increase the possibilities for negotiation. Speakman and Marchington (1998) noted that,

> ...*shiftworking provide different opportunities for involvement in housework given the mix of schedules and arrangements...At certain points in the shift cycle housework could have been more easily accommodated [by men], than at others.* (Speakman and Marchington 1998:88)

However, I was unable to pursue these issues as fully as I would have liked as I chose in conducting my research to concentrate more on food and eating at work than gender divisions of food-work at home; more research would be needed to explore gender divisions of labour in households where partners work different shift schedules.

11.3.v. Gender and power

Finally, gender divisions of labour in food-work in the home cannot be separated from patterns of gender inequality in the family and society which many feminist writers have seen as involving unequal relations of power (Barrett 1980; Walby 1990). According to Barrett (1980),

> ...*it is difficult to argue that the present structure of the family-household is anything other than oppressive for women.* (Barrett 1980:214)

Feminists have stressed the role of familial ideologies in reproducing gender inequalities in the home, but point also to labour market factors which allow men to earn more than women, so placing women in a position of financial dependency (Hakim 1996). Some men's control over financial resources within households can give them power in the marriage. As Charles and Kerr (1988) noted,

> *Women cook...but most of them carry out these tasks within a set of social relations which denies them power...particularly when they are ...dependent for financial support on a man.* (Charles and Kerr 1988:40)

A body of research has shown that food resources are not shared equally within families, and that women tend to put their husband and children first and their own needs last, by, for example, serving men larger portions of the more expensive, higher status foods, such as meat (Delphy 1979; Murcott 1982; Charles and Kerr 1988). Women in my study also often prioritised the food preferences of their male partners.

> *When I was married, he was very much a meat and two veg man...and I would cook one thing for him and something else for me.* (Elaine – nurse)

> *... my husband, he must have his red meat and so I found myself really resenting the shopping, the cooking, the serving, because I wasn't eating it.* (Ann – nurse)

Women also tended not to cook a hot meal for themselves but would do so if their partner was present.

When he comes I do cook; when he doesn't I tend not to. (Ann – nurse)

Murcott (1982, 1983) and Charles and Kerr (1988) have suggested that male power was linked to men's role in paid work. Men, as workers outside the home, were thought to deserve 'proper' meals on their return home, to 'refuel' their ability to work. These examples suggest that gender inequalities do not just relate to the production of food at home, but can extend also to its consumption.

11.4 SUMMARY

The evidence presented in this chapter suggested that shiftwork had not undermined traditional gender divisions of labour in food-work in most households in my study. Patterns of gender divisions of labour in food-work in shiftworkers' households, both with and without children, in my study were similar to those in non-shiftworker households in that female shiftworkers were more likely than men to perform food-work tasks. There was also evidence to suggest that, in some households, gender divisions were more polarised in shiftworker than non-shiftworker households, with shiftworking women possibly being more likely to do food-work than other women. This seemed to be the case in some shiftworker households with children in my study.

In explaining the persistence of these patterns of gender divisions, I found the concepts of 'gender identities' and 'gender strategies' useful, as these drew attention to couples' perceptions of appropriate gender roles for themselves and their partner. I also considered the effects of different household circumstances on gender divisions in food-work, and related patterns of gender divisions in the private sphere of the home to patriarchal ideology and gender inequalities in the public sphere of paid work. In the final chapter, the main conclusions of the research are presented.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, I summarise the main findings of the research and outline the contribution to knowledge made by the thesis. I then state a number of implications for policy suggested by the study, and propose areas for future research. The chapter ends, in reflexive research tradition, by commenting briefly on the effects of undertaking the study on my own eating habits.

As stated in chapter 1, the aims of the research were,

- To contribute to the sociological study of food, gender, health and work;
- To provide a critical analysis of the literature relevant to a study of the food preferences and eating habits of shiftworke₁s;
- To conduct field work and collect original data which would address some of the gaps in existing sociological knowledge of the factors affecting food choice, food consumption and eating patterns;
- To explore the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to food purchase, food preparation and food consumption in the home and at their place of work. This included exploration of the interaction of attitudes and beliefs about food and health on shiftworkers' diets and patterns of eating, and their perceptions of the influence of shift-working on food consumption and eating patterns;
- To contribute to the literature and academic debates in the sociology of food and eating, and the sociology of work, by developing an approach which linked these areas and explored relevant theoretical concerns.

12.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

A critical review of the existing academic literature informed my study. In reviewing the literature in chapter 2, I found that most existing studies of shiftworkers' eating patterns had tended to take a nutritional science approach, which ignored the social and cultural aspects of eating, yet little attention had been given by sociologists to the factors influencing eating habits at work. Although sociologists had addressed the issues of work and health, little, if any, attention had been given to exploring the links between shiftwork, food, eating and health. A similar gap existed in the literature in relation to work and the family. Sociologists had explored links between work, the family and gender, but the links between shiftwork, food and eating and the family, and the relation of men and women to these issues, had been under-researched.

My approach recognised that nutritional or biological approaches alone to food and eating were insufficient and that a sociological perspective was also needed to encompass the social and cultural aspects of shiftworkers' eating patterns. I also recognised that the topic of shiftworkers'

eating patterns was contested, and an adequate approach needed to incorporate together material from the sociology of food and eating, the sociology of work, the sociology of health, the sociology of gender and the sociology of the family. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 critically reviewed this literature.

There are both factual and subjective aspects to eating patterns. To research the topic fully, as explained in chapter 5, I collected quantitative data to describe when and where shiftworkers in my sample ate, what they ate and with whom, but I also wished to collect qualitative data to explore what they felt about their eating habits, and their perceptions of the factors which influenced their eating patterns, both at work and at home. The rationale for the research design employed was outlined in chapter 5.

The main findings of the quantitative stage of the research on shiftworkers' eating patterns were presented in chapter 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 6 presented my findings on shiftworkers' attitudes to food and eating. I found that, although the majority of respondents indicated that they enjoyed eating and thought food was important, particularly for good health, many were also dissatisfied with their eating patterns, particularly on workdays, and considered that shiftwork adversely affected their eating habits. However, between 60% and 70% of respondents thought they ate a 'healthy' diet, and around one-third indicated that they avoided some types of foods, particularly fried and fatty foods.

As outlined in chapter 7, many shiftworkers in my study had access to facilities to obtain food at work, such as vending machines, microwave ovens, snack bars or canteens and restaurants, although facilities varied between workplaces. 34% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with the facilities available. Over half of respondents were allowed 30 minutes or less for their main meal break, although, in some industries studied, meal breaks were not guaranteed and pressure of work could mean meal breaks were interrupted, delayed or not taken at all. While some shiftworkers at times enjoyed more favourable conditions than others in which to eat at work, with guaranteed breaks, subsidised canteens and a wide choice of nutritious food, others experienced rushed or non-existent mealbreaks, limited catering facilities and their choice of food tended to be limited to snacks available from vending machines or fast food outlets. Many ate their meals at work at their desk, or near their immediate place of work, and only around one-third of respondents used the canteen at work regularly.

Detailed investigation of shiftworkers' eating patterns on workdays found they tended to be disrupted and erratic. As shown in chapter 7, many shiftworkers in my study did not tend to follow a regular eating pattern, but tended to change their pattern of eating when they changed shifts, with night shifts being the most disruptive. Meal times were unpredictable and changed frequently, and the number of eating occasions each day could also vary widely. Snacks tended to be eaten rather than full meals, and some respondents complained of loss of appetite. Many

also indicated that they were unable to eat with their families as often as they wished and often ate alone.

The typology of eating patterns presented in chapter 8 suggested that around one-third (38.7%) of shiftworkers in my study could be categorised as having a 'type 1' eating pattern on their last workday. As explained in chapter 8, I distinguished between three types of eating patterns, with 'type 1' being used to describe a pattern of eating at irregular times, eating either very many or very few times during the day, and eating mostly snack-type foods.

On days when they were not working, shiftworkers in my study described their eating patterns as 'better' than on workdays, with more regular meal times and more full meals, rather than snacks. Meals on non-work days seemed more enjoyable, less subject to the constraints of time and place. Fewer shiftworkers in my study – 11% - were categorised as having 'type 1' eating patterns on their last non-work day than on their last workday. It could also have been that shiftworkers felt that the number and timing of their meals on non-work days accorded better with their idea of the norm for daily, domestic meals in British society than did their meals on workdays. Although most meals were eaten at home on non-workdays, shiftworkers in my study were also more likely to eat out in a café or restaurant, and were also more likely to eat with other members of their family than on workdays.

Shiftworkers in my study were dissatisfied with their eating patterns as a result of what they perceived as the constraints of their work. The eating patterns of many of the male and female shiftworkers in my study were structured by their shift work schedules, their work environment, their family situation and their conceptions of what was appropriate to eat, based on the dominant ideology of food in British society.

Chapter 9 presented the findings from the qualitative research on eating at work. The organisation of work structured the organisation of food and eating in the workplaces studied. Most importantly, the priority allocated to work meant that mealtimes had to be treated as secondary to the demands of work. The organisation of eating at work was related to the organisation of the labour process in the industries studied. Scientific management principles tended to govern the organisation of the labour process, and controlled the pace of work, the range of tasks performed and the skills used, although the emergency nature of some of the work also influenced the organisation of the labour process. The implications for shiftworkers' eating patterns, however, were similar in that eating could be rushed and meals missed due to the speed of the labour process.

Eating at work was also subject to informal social rules, ranging from cultural rules which defined the foods considered acceptable to eat at work, to peer pressure to be sociable and eat with colleagues. Sharing meals with colleagues was important as a demonstration of friendship and peer pressure could encourage some workers to eat when they perhaps would not

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otherwise have done so. Meals with colleagues, during or after work, could be important in creating a shared, group identity, but those who could, or chose not, to participate could also be excluded. Hospital patients also gave gifts of sweets and cakes to staff as expressions of gratitude for care received, which staff then felt obliged to eat. Informal norms tended to place pressure on workers to eat, in contradiction to the formal rules and regulations which existed in the workplaces studied, and which tended to limit the times and places at work in which eating was allowed. For example, in the bank, consumption of food and drink was prohibited near computers, and eating in all the workplaces studied was limited to authorised break times and not allowed during work time. Chapter 9 discussed instances in which workers broke the rules, and how enforcement of the rules and regulations could be open to negotiation.

Eating at work also carried different meanings to individuals; for some workers in my study, the consumption of food at work presented an 'unprofessional' image; some bank workers thought going for lunch at busy times could be interpreted as showing lack of commitment to the job. Denial of the need to eat might also have been thought by some to present a 'feminine' image. Use of different catering facilities was also seen by some interviewees to mark status distinctions between groups of workers. Finally, some shiftworkers, by eating when it was not allowed, used food to rebel against management authority.

Chapter 10 presented the findings from the qualitative research on shiftworkers' eating patterns at home. This suggested that shiftworkers in my study perceived eating at home as less subject to the controls on eating at work, but they were still constrained by their conceptions of what constituted 'proper' or appropriate family meals. The ideas about food expressed by some shiftworkers in my study could be located within the dominant ideology of food in British society, which tends to regard only certain types of meals as 'proper' meals. Many interviewees expressed the view that it was important that meals at home should be 'proper', cooked meals, consisting of meat and vegetables, eaten at 'normal' meal times, i.e. the times people who did not work shifts usually ate meals in British society. Many also considered the main meal of the day should be eaten together with other members of the family, and some went to great lengths to do so.

However, it seemed that attempts to conform to these cultural expectations concerning food and eating could contribute to development of the erratic eating patterns described in earlier chapters. For some shiftworkers in my study, eating with the family, at times which fitted their daytime schedules, could be deemed more important than their own desire, or appetite for, food. At other times, some shiftworker households seemed to have adopted an 'individualised' pattern of eating, in which members of the family ate different meals, at different times, according to their own preferences and schedules.

However, despite these pressures, eating 'proper' meals with the family could be a rare occurrence in some shiftworker households, and when such meals did take place, such as at

weekends, they seemed to be given greater emphasis and might be marked by the preparation of special food or a meal eaten out in a restaurant. I suggested this might be an attempt by some shiftworkers to use food to 'reconstitute' the family after the disruptive effects of working shifts on family life.

I also found sharply demarcated gender divisions of labour in the social organisation of food and eating in many shiftworkers' households in my sample. As chapter 11 showed, although some male shiftworkers did take responsibility for some food-work tasks, most female respondents saw food-work as their responsibility, even if they were also in paid work and working shifts. The involvement of women in shiftwork seemed not to have undermined traditional, gendered assumptions about gender divisions of labour in foodwork in most households in my study. To ensure that there was a meal ready at the times their partners and children returned home from work, even if they themselves would not be present for the meal, seemed to be seen as an important part of the woman's role, suggesting women felt they were judged on their ability to provide 'proper' meals despite their role in paid work. I outlined in chapter 11 the different patterns of gender divisions of labour in food-work of shiftworkers in my study living in households with and without children, and discussed different explanations of the patterns revealed.

Shiftworkers in my study seemed to experience certain tensions in their relationship to food and eating. While most thought food was important, their enjoyment of eating, and eating patterns, were constrained by the conditions of their shiftwork schedule, which also extended to eating at home. Gender and family patterns also impacted on shiftworkers' eating habits. Although the majority of shiftworkers claimed to consider food important, and indicated that they ate a diet they defined as 'healthy', many were also categorised as having a 'type 1' eating pattern of irregular meal times, consumption of snacks and frequently missed meals on workdays. It may have been that the dissatisfaction some shiftworkers felt with regard to their eating patterns was linked to the discrepancies they experienced between their ideals and reality. For some shiftworkers, it would seem to have been very difficult to achieve the diet and pattern of eating that they would have liked, and thought they ought to eat.

It should be stressed that my research is preliminary and offers only a tentative interpretation of the eating patterns of the shiftworkers in my study. I recognise that other factors, such as income, availability of food, and the stress of work, may also influence shiftworkers' eating patterns. Exploration of these factors has been beyond the scope of this study as I concentrated on the factors shiftworkers themselves perceived to be important. It is also important to recognise the ways in which shiftworkers' perceptions of the factors influencing their eating patterns may be mediated by gender, age, stage in the life-cycle, and the length of time they have spent working shifts. My study recognised the importance of these factors, but further research would be needed to explore the issues in more detail.

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12.3 CONTRIBUTION OF MY STUDY

My study makes an original contribution to knowledge in five main ways. First, I have contributed to the stock of empirical information available to sociologists and others interested in food and work by collecting data on the range of diets and patterns of eating of my sample of male and female shiftworkers employed in a range of industries for the first time. This material extends knowledge of the eating patterns, and patterns of food consumption of male and female shiftworkers, by relating information about their patterns of eating to the circumstances of their work. I have also collected information on the length of time shiftworkers in a range of industries were allowed for meal breaks, the range of facilities available to obtain food at work, and the use made of these facilities. I have also collected detailed information on the attitudes to food, health and eating of male and female shiftworkers of different ages and household circumstances, which will be useful in future research.

I have also offered an original interpretation of my data by developing a sociological perspective on the study of the eating patterns of male and female shiftworkers. In particular, I have collected qualitative data to explore what shiftworkers themselves felt about their eating habits, and to reveal their perceptions of the factors which influenced their choice of food, food consumption and eating patterns, both at work and at home. In this way I have extended the sociological study of food and eating to a new group, and addressed both the factual and subjective aspects of eating patterns.

Thirdly, I have developed a typology of eating patterns which enables a more analytical, and less descriptive, approach to be taken to the study of eating patterns by suggesting how eating patterns may be categorised and related to other factors. The typology could be used in future research to investigate the eating patterns of other groups of workers, so enabling a comparative approach to the sociological study of eating patterns to be developed. I have thus made a contribution to academic debates in the sociology of food.

My study makes a further contribution to the literature and to academic debates by bringing together the substantive areas of the sociology of food, work, health, gender and the family, as described above. Previous treatment of the topic by nutritional science has tended to ignore the social and cultural aspects of eating patterns, but my approach allows a fuller understanding to be gained by integrating together for the first time material from a number of substantive areas of sociology.

Finally, I have also contributed to the literature on gender as most existing studies in the sociology of food have concentrated on women's roles in the preparation and consumption of food within the context of the family. Through my study I have extended the analysis of the position of women by exploring the experiences of eating at work and at home of women in paid work, focussing on the particular situation of women in shiftwork. My study also contributes to

the literature on gender by increasing sociological understanding of the relationship of male and female shiftworkers to the purchase, preparation and consumption of food in the home, and their perceptions of the influence of shiftworking on food consumption and eating patterns.

12.4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

My research has implications for policy in a number of areas. The first relates to policies for the provision of food at work. My research suggested that many shiftworkers in my study were dissatisfied with the level of provision of facilities to obtain food at work, and some did not have access to adequate canteen facilities, particularly on nightshifts. This could affect levels of concentration and effectiveness at work and employers might be to required to provide more extensive facilities for all workers to obtain food at work, with choice of a wide range of food, including 'healthy' meals at work, whatever their preferences or work schedules. A more flexible attitude to the timing of breaks might also be beneficial, allowing workers greater control over when they take breaks according to their needs. By highlighting the impact of shiftwork on eating patterns, and providing information on the facilities in workplaces for shiftworkers to obtain food and eat at work, my research might inform the development of policies to create working environments which better meet the needs of workers.

I also found that, even though facilities may be provided, not all workers who wish to do so may be able to use the facilities due to pressure of work or insufficient times for breaks. Employers might be urged to manage workloads better to allow workers sufficient time at meal breaks to eat and relax. Meals at work should not just provide calories as fuel for work, but should allow social contact and relaxation, recognising the social and psychological benefits of meals in developing a sense of identity between work colleagues and in reducing stress. My study suggests that shiftworkers' food needs should receive the same consideration from employers as the need to provide an efficient service to customers, or the need to ensure high levels of productivity.

My study also has implications for policy in the area of shiftwork and health. Although my study was not concerned with the medical effects of shiftwork, I was concerned to explore the effects of shiftwork on shiftworkers' subjective sense of well-being and health, and their perceptions of the links between their work, what they eat and their health. By increasing understanding of the factors which shiftworkers perceived as constraining their ability to eat 'healthily', more effective 'healthy' eating policies might be developed. A move towards the consumption of less meat and more fruit and vegetables, as current 'healthy' eating advice recommends, might be made more easily if there was a willingness to consider other meal formats. Japanese cuisine, for example, makes little use of meat, but centres on soybean, rice, fish, and vegetable dishes (Meiselman (ed) 2000:178).

My research on the social organisation of food and eating in shiftworkers' households highlights issues with implications for social policies concerning family life and gender divisions. I found that most of the food-work in the households of shiftworkers' in my study tended to be seen as the woman's responsibility, and that many female shiftworkers attempted to balance the demands of domestic life and shiftwork with feeding the family. The identification of women with food-work might be challenged and men encouraged to take more responsibility for domestic work. Employers might also be required to give greater consideration to the introduction and implementation of family-friendly policies, and implement work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible working hours, to allow both male and female shiftworkers to provide for their families' needs more easily. One possibility might be to allow catering services in the workplace to offer ready-meals which workers could take home, or open workplace canteens to families.

Finally, there are policy implications for the organisation of work, and shiftwork in particular. Greater knowledge of the social effects of shiftwork, and its consequences for eating patterns, might lead to a reconsideration of the need for night shiftwork, and a move towards the introduction of shift patterns which are less disruptive to eating patterns, health and family life. The use of night shifts, which have long been seen as the most disruptive shift pattern, might be reduced, and the speed and direction of some shift rotation patterns might also be reconsidered.

12.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

The sociology of food and eating is an emergent area within the discipline which merits more attention, and my study has suggested a number of possibilities for further research. By focussing on the eating patterns of shiftworkers, my study has used food and eating to bring together the sociologies of work, the family, gender and health. A similar approach could be taken to explore the eating patterns of other occupational groups, or of workers who do not work shifts. The typology of eating patterns proposed in my study could be applied to other groups, and other groups' perceptions of the influences on their eating patterns explored, so extending knowledge of the relationship between work and eating. It would also be relevant to examine more closely the ways in which age, gender, stage in the life-course and ethnicity mediate the eating patterns of workers. These suggestions point to studies based on larger samples, able to investigate differences between groups of workers more systematically.

There would appear also to be possibilities for future research on the social uses of food in leisure. Although my study explored shiftworkers' eating patterns on non-work days, there would be opportunities to explore the eating patterns of various groups during their leisure time in greater detail, and their perceptions of the factors which influence eating at play. My study gave little, attention, for example, to activities and patterns of eating out on non-work days, and it would be relevant to explore whether different leisure activities are associated with the consumption of certain types of food.

Finally, more attention might be given to a consideration of the social uses of food, and patterns of food-work in different types of households. My study focussed on households consisting of two adult partners with and without children, yet other household types, such as single person households and same sex couple households exist, and are arguably increasing in number. We also see households of unrelated individuals, such as student households. Sociological research could usefully explore food purchase, preparation, attitudes to food and eating and gender divisions of labour in food-work in such households, so extending the sociology of food and eating.

12.6 A REFLEXIVE ENDNOTE

Finally, this study would not be complete without a mention of the effects of undertaking this study on my own eating habits. Qualitative research should involve 'critical self-scrutiny' by the researcher, or 'active reflexivity' (Mason 1996:5). Undertaking the research has undoubtedly heightened my awareness of the factors which might have shaped my own eating habits. I was led to thinking of similarities and differences between my own and my parents' eating patterns. When I was a child, my mother insisted that meals must be prepared and eaten at fixed times, irrespective of circumstances, and as she was not in paid work, she seemed to spend all day preparing these meals.

In my own household, I spend far less time preparing meals, as I am in full-time paid work, but I still consider it important to eat three meals a day and meal times are at roughly the same times each day. The pattern of eating, and structure of the meal, has retained some continuity over the years, despite the different relationship my mother and I have had to the family and paid work. I would find it very difficult to adapt to a shiftwork schedule which made it difficult to eat at regular times, possibly because of the importance given to regular meals and fixed mealtimes in my childhood.

The question remains how far my own eating habits, and those of the shiftworkers in my study, have been influenced by changes affecting the food culture of Britain more generally over the past ten years. It would seem to be the case that the consumption of fast food has become more widespread over that time, and that snacking and 'grazing' are now more a feature of the eating habits of many people. New technologies have also allowed new types of convenience foods to be developed, such as cook-chill ready meals, for instance, or pre-prepared salads. It would seem reasonable to assume that these changes have had some influence, but research can never take place in a vacuum. Economic and social change takes place, but more research would be needed to explore the impact of such changes on the choices of individuals and groups, and the ways in which such changes might be mediated by factors such as gender, income, stage in the life-cycle, family and work patterns. Purcell (1996) stated that there is a need to develop 'sensitive qualitative research to explore the subjective experiences and

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explanations' which underlie household and individual food practices (Purcell 1996:199). My study has attempted to contribute to this research endeavour by demonstrating that the sociology of food and eating is an important area, and one which merits further study. By increasing understanding of both the factual and subjective aspects of eating patterns, sociologists may be able to shed light on a vital area of social life which has previously been over-looked.

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APPENDIX 1: THE LAW RELATING TO SHIFTWORK

This section outlines the current legal position relating to shiftwork in Britain, summarising the Working Time Regulations as they apply to shiftwork, and entitlements to time off and breaks. The legislation on health and safety is also outlined, as this relates to provision of welfare facilities, such as facilities in which to eat food. It will be seen that the current health and safety regulations in the United Kingdom are fairly limited as regards provision of food at work for employees. Employers are not required to provide a canteen service for their employees, only to ensure a clean area in which to eat food and for employees to heat food brought from home.

i. The Working Time Regulations

The Working Time Regulations were introduced in Britain on October 1 1998 to implement the European Working Time directive. The regulations aim to ensure that workers do not have to work excessive hours, and state that a worker can only be required to work an average of 48 hours per week, although he/she can chose to work more if they wish. He or she has the right to 11 hours rest per day, and the right to a day off each week, and 4 weeks paid leave per year.

Young workers aged 18 or under, and those doing especially hazardous work, get better protection. For example, young workers have the right to 12 hours rest a day and 2 days off per week. Young workers also should not work at night, but no specific government regulations were in place on this issue at the time of writing in spring 2002.

Any individual worker can 'opt out' from the 48-hour average work limit in the regulations, either indefinitely or for a specified period. Employers who force employees to opt out if they do not want to are committing an offence if they then dismiss the worker or treat him or her less favourably. A worker who took their case to an employment tribunal in such circumstances would be able to claim compensation.

Some groups of workers are exempt from the regulations. These are transport workers, such as bus or train drivers; seafarers and offshore workers; junior doctors in training; armed forces and civil protection workers, such as the police, although ambulance workers, fire fighters and prison staff are covered by the regulations. Domestic staff in private households and those whose 'working time' is not measured or pre-determined are also exempt from the regulations. The European regulations saw this as a small group of workers including, for example, senior managers who are free to set their own hours of work, workers employed by members of their own family and ministers of religion, although there is debate in Britain about whether white-collar workers who voluntarily exceed the number of working hours in their contract of employment should also be exempt from the regulations.

The only type of shift work mentioned in the Working Time Regulations is night work. The regulations define a night worker as someone who normally works at least 3 hours at night in the normal course of his or her job, calculated over 17 weeks. 'Night' is defined as between 11.00pm and 6.00am, and, although workers and employers can agree to vary this, it must be at least 7 hours long and include the period from midnight to 5.00am. A worker who worked an evening shift finishing at 2.00am would not be classed as a night worker as he or she is only working two hours at night.

The basic rights and protection provided by the legislation are that night workers can only be required to work an average of 8 hours in 24, not including overtime, except where overtime is guaranteed. Night workers are also entitled to receive free medical checks from their employer, before they start working nights and afterwards on a regular basis. Workers also have the right to transfer to other shifts on medical advice where possible.

The regulations relating to weekly working time, night work limits and health assessments for night workers are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authority Environmental Health Officers. The sites covered by the HSE include factories, farms, schools, hospital and building sites; local authorities are responsible for retailing, offices, hotels and catering, leisure, sports and consumer services. Entitlements to weekly and daily rest periods, rest breaks and annual leave are enforced thorough the Employment Tribunals.

Chapter 2 ii. Entitlement to days off and breaks

As stated above, all workers are entitled under the Working Time Regulations to 11 hours uninterrupted rest between each working day, and one whole day off a week, or two days every two weeks. It does not have to be the same day off each week.

During the working day workers are also entitled to a break of at least 20 minutes if they work for more than 6 hours, and these rest breaks are in addition to lunch breaks. Workers in repetitive or hazardous occupations may be entitled to longer breaks. Breaks may be paid or unpaid, depending on any agreement reached between the worker and the employer. If a break or time off cannot be taken the worker must be given 'compensatory rest' or a break or time off at another time. Young workers aged 18 or under have the right to an in-work rest break if their working day is longer than 4.5 hours.

The entitlements to days off and breaks do not apply to security guards and caretakers; workers whose job involves travelling long distances; workers in jobs which require continuity of service, such as hospitals, post and telecommunications, police and utilities, and shift workers when they are in the process of changing shift. Provisions for breaks and time off can be varied by collective or workforce agreements between workers and the employer.

Bank holidays can count as part of the entitlement if they are paid, and workers do not have the right to choose when they have their holidays – employers can direct workers to take their holidays at certain times.

iii. Eating at work – the health and safety legislation

The Working Time regulations outlined above can be seen as specifying entitlements to meal breaks. The main pieces of legislation in Britain relating to eating at work are those relating to health and safety. These are the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act and the 1992 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) regulations. Under this legislation all workers have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. The 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act places a duty of care on employers to make the workplace safe and without risks to health, to ensure plant and machinery are safe, to ensure that safe systems of work are followed, and that employees are given information, instruction and training necessary for their health and safety. The employer must also provide adequate welfare facilities.

All employers with more than 5 employees are required to have a health and safety policy and identify the hazards worker might face at work, assess the risk those hazards pose and detail the steps taken to reduce those risks. Hazards may be physical, (e.g. unsafe scaffolding), chemical (e.g. asbestos), biological (e.g. tuberculosis) or psychosocial (e.g. stress). Workers must co-operate with their employer to protect health and safety in the workplace and take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others.

Under the 1992 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, employers must ensure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements. This includes provision of adequate lighting, temperature, ventilation, sanitary, washing and rest facilities. However, there is no requirement on employers to provide food for their workers. The regulations state that rest areas should be provided that are suitable and accessible, and include suitable facilities to eat meals where meals are regularly eaten in the workplace and the food would otherwise become contaminated. Canteens and work areas can be counted as rest areas if they are clean and there is a suitable surface on which to place food, and there is no obligation to purchase food in canteens. Facilities should also include facilities to obtain a hot drink. The regulations also state that where hot food cannot be obtained in or reasonably near to the workplace workers *'may need to be provided with a means for heating their own food'* (HSE website 'Workplace Regulations' December 2001).

APPENDIX 2: CHRONOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The main stages of the field work of the research are listed below.

DATE	
Feb – Oct 1994	Began literature review (continues throughout)
Oct – Dec 1994	Developed research design
Nov 1994	Exploratory interviews conducted. Drafted questionnaire
Jan 1995	Focus Groups conducted
Feb 1995	Pilotted questionnaire
Feb – May 1995	Began to negotiate access to sample
May 1995	Distribution of questionnaire
June 1995	Return of questionnaire
June – Feb 1995	Preliminary analysis of questionnaire data
Feb – April 1995	Drafted interview questions
July 1995 – Feb 1996	Interviews conducted
Feb – Oct 1996	Analysis of Interview and questionnaire data

- How did working a shiftwork schedule impact on the eating patterns of other family members?

- Did shiftworkers frequently eat independently of other family members?

- Did the shiftworker attempt to coordinate his or her eating patterns with those of other family members who did not follow a shiftwork cycle?

- Were eating patterns in shiftworker households different when the worker was working as compared to when he or she was not working?

- How important were shared family meals in shiftworker households?

- Did food assume a particular significance in shiftworkers households when the family did eat together?

- How did shiftworkers organise the gender division of labour around food and eating at home ?

- What types of foods, and in what circumstances, did shiftworkers eat at work?

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SAMPLE

List of interviewees

All names have been changed to ensure confidentiality. Unless otherwise stated, children are aged under 16 and living with interviewee.

1. Mick - male, aged 40 – 50, paramedic, married, 1 child aged 21
2. John - male, aged 40 – 50, ambulance technician, married, no children
3. Malcolm - male, aged 30 – 40, paramedic, married, 2 children
4. Richard - male, aged 40 – 50, paramedic, married, 2 children
5. Steve - male, aged 40 – 50, paramedic, unmarried, lives with parents
6. Dave - male, aged 40 – 50, ambulance technician, married, 1 child
7. Melanie - female, aged 20 – 30, paramedic, lives with partner, no children
8. Anita - female, aged 20 – 30, ambulance technician, married, no children
9. Mandy - female, aged 20 – 30, ambulance technician, lives with friend, no children
10. Mary - female, aged 30 – 40, paramedic, married, 1 child
11. Chris - male, aged 30 – 40, bank computer operator, married, 2 children
12. Kenneth - male, aged 20 – 30, bank computer operator, unmarried, no children
13. Kevin - male, aged 40 – 50, bank computer operator, married, no children
14. Mark - male, aged 40 – 50, bank computer shift manager, married, no children
15. Thomas - male, aged 20 – 30, bank computer operator, unmarried, no children
16. Henry - male, aged 30 – 40, bank computer operator, married, 1 child
17. Garry - male, aged 30 – 40, bank computer operator, married, no children
18. Joe - male, aged 30 – 40, bank computer shift manager, married, 2 children
19. Alan - male, aged 40 – 50, bank computer shift manager, married, 1 child aged 23
20. Susan - female, aged 40 – 50, bank computer operator, married, no children
21. Ann - female, aged 50 – 60, ward manager, lives alone, no children
22. Dot - female, aged 40 – 50, staff nurse, married, no children
23. Jennifer - female, aged 30 – 40, staff nurse, lives alone, no children
24. Linda - female, aged 40 – 50, general nurse, married, 2 children aged 11 and 16
25. Shahida - female, aged 20 – 30, general nurse, lives with friends, no children
26. Evelyn - female, aged 40 – 50, staff nurse, lives with partner, no children
27. Rosie - female, aged 20 – 30, ward sister, married, 1 child
28. Val - female, aged 20 – 30, staff nurse, married, expecting first child
29. Julie - female, aged 30 – 40, site manager/ staff nurse, married, 5 children
30. Carol - female, aged 40 – 50, general nurse, married, 1 child
31. Elaine - female, aged 40 – 50, staff nurse, lives alone, no children
32. Joanne - female, aged 30 – 40, staff nurse, married, 2 children
33. Lizzie - female, aged 30 – 40, ward sister, married, no children
34. Jenny - female, aged 20 – 30, general nurse, lives with partner, no children
35. Guy - male, aged 30 – 40, site manager/ staff nurse, lives with partner, no children
36. Kelly - female, aged 30 – 40, auxiliary/support worker, married, 4 children
37. Trish - female, aged 40 – 50, auxiliary/support worker, married, 2 children aged 18, 21
38. Janet - female, aged 30 – 40, auxiliary/support worker, married, 2 children aged 14,18
39. Ruth - female, aged 20 – 30, auxiliary/support worker, lives with friends, no children
40. Juliet - female, aged 30 – 40, auxiliary/support worker, married, 2 children
41. Sharon - female, aged 30 – 40, auxiliary/support worker, single parent, 1 child
42. Margaret - female, aged 40 – 50, director of nursing, married, no children
43. Pamela - female, aged 20 – 30, auxiliary/support worker, lives with partner, no children

APPENDIX 5: EXAMPLE OF THE AUDIT TRAIL OF A SELECTED CATEGORY

I describe below the audit trail for the category FOOD AND TIME, using the format suggested in Bryman (2001) and Wengraf (2001). A full account of the analytical process is given in chapter 5.

The first stage in the analytical process was open coding. Following the procedure described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), I began analysis of the qualitative data collected by coding all the themes in each interview which appeared relevant to my research questions. An example of the codes attached to part of one interview conducted early in the research is reproduced below as extract 1.

I continued to conduct and transcribe interviews and code the data. As this process proceeded, I began to refine the list of codes used as I thought more about the themes which were emerging and began to develop an interpretation of the material. Part of this process involved gathering together in a list all the fragments of data coded in the same way and to subjecting the set of fragments to further interpretation and analysis, for example, by considering in more detail the context, the causes and consequences of the situations discussed. This alerted me to similarities and contrasts in themes which I had coded in the same way and to the importance of certain themes for my interviewees. At this stage I was beginning to generate concepts and theoretical propositions from the themes identified in the data, using the process of 'constant comparison' outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Extract 2 reproduces the list of data fragments coded as FOOD AND TIME. I used this code to refer to any instance where food or eating was mentioned in relation to time.

On the basis of this list of all examples of data coded as FOOD AND TIME, I developed table A.1 to help me think about the data and so aid in analysis and interpretation. It shows the perceived causes of problems, such as having 'no time to eat' at work, and the consequences for eating habits suggested by interviewees. I continued the process of coding, attempting to make connections between themes, contexts and categories. Glaser and Strauss refer to this process by which the data are *put back together in new ways after open coding* as 'axial coding' (Glaser and Strauss 1990:96). The

Further interpretation and comparison of these instances led me to consider in more detail why some interviewees felt they had no time to eat and the consequences of this situation for their eating habits. This helped to illuminate the ways in which interviewees felt their eating habits were affected by a perceived lack of time, as compared to those situations in which they felt they had 'enough' time. As analysis of the data proceeded, I came to consider that other themes were contained within the broad category of FOOD AND TIME and I gave these new codes. An example of a code developed at this stage was that of NO TIME TO EAT, which was used to mean a situation when the interviewee felt there was 'insufficient time' to comfortably eat food. I was also able at this stage to begin to identify the perceived causes and consequences of there being 'no time to eat'. The category NO TIME TO EAT finally emerged as a core category, of central relevance to my analysis.

I continued to code and organise my data until I felt that most of the data could be contained within the categories I had developed, thus reaching 'theoretical saturation'. The list of codes developed during data analysis is shown as Appendix 6.

EXTRACT 1 : Open coding of one interview

Interview with Susan – bank computer operator. Lives with partner, no children

	Code
Interviewer: Can you tell me about your eating patterns when you are working a night shift?	
Susan: Generally it's because you're **eating at the wrong time that you would normally eat.** When I come home at 8.00am I always have what I call breakfast in the morning.	Food and time
I That's when you've been out at work all night?	
S Yes. And I always have a breakfast before I go to bed because if not I'll be waking up feeling either hungry or ..(laughs) so, umm, depending on how long I can sleep I have a meal, **a proper meal** before I go to work and set off for work at 11.00 at night.	Food and sleep Proper meal
I Would you try and time that main meal to fit in with your partner?	
S Well try, yes, but if he doesn't get home – 'specially in the summertime when it's still day light sometimes it's 9.00pm when he gets home, - well **I can't wait that long, I want a meal about 7.00ish at latest.** So I prepare it and I eat mine and when he comes in he has to have it finished off. So I prepare it and I eat mine and when he comes in he has to have it finished off.	Food and time
I Would you eat again at night while you're at work?	
S At work? Yes but not something very heavy, something light.	
I Can you give me some idea of what you might have?	
S Umm, maybe poached eggs on toast or a pizza.	
I Would it usually be something hot?	
S Umm, I should say 8 times out of 10 it would be hot, yes.	
I Would you go to the canteen for that?	
S Yes, yes, it's a **bit difficult** as well 'cos they finish serving at 2.30am so if you want something hot, apart from a sandwich you can get that out of the vending machine .**You've got to eat before, either by 2.30 if you want something hot.**	Food and time Canteen
I Can you to go and eat at any time?	
S No, it's reasonably flexible but **you have, err, specific times** within, umm, like you've to try and have your meal between what .. well I mean, it's what ...you get there at 11.30, if you want a hot meal **you've got to**	Food and time Rules re eating

eat before 2.30 if not it's sandwiches. And that's it, that's on nights. **It's like a rota, 2 people can go, and then they have to come back before the next people** can go.	
I Right, I see.	
S **You can't leave it unattended.**	Workplace rules
I Right, so you would need to work that out with your partner. Is that the same on every shift?	
S Yes.	
I And you said that the night shift was the most difficult, can you just tell me about that?	
S Umm, well sometimes **you feel hungry** but you don't know what to have on nights, (laughs) and then of course it upsets my metabolism and sometimes I've got to run to the toilet, you know, during the night 'cos, I'm you know, **your body thinks** you should be asleep especially when you change your shift all the time, I mean, regular nights, they might get more used to it, but when you change days, afternoons, nights and weekends, you're, you know, your body seems to take about 2 or 3 days to get	Hunger Bodyclock
I Umm, yes.	
S Then when you've adapted you're back on a different shift. Yes, well, the day that I come off nights, say on the Friday night into Saturday morning, depending on how tired I am, I try not to go to bed till the Saturday night 'cos I lose a full day and I'm busy at home, so I mean, if we're planning got go out on the Saturday night then **I'd have to go to bed** during the day 'cos I couldn't make it through, you know, if you wanted to go out on the evening. But if I know that we're not doing anything and **we have tea, you know, 6, 7.00pm** and I know I'm going to bed that night at about 10.00 I'll stay up, don't know if everybody does that but I try because I've that much to do on a weekend. **Men don't have to keep the house as** much do they, fit everybody round them?	Food and time Food and sleep Gender
I Have you got children?	
S No, no. It's a good job.(laughs) I couldn't fit those in as well, but umm, I've got a, I have a horse and he takes up a lot of my spare time. That's my main hobby, and I've got to make sure he's seen to as well as home as well so one of the girls up at the farm helps and I help her 'cos she doesn't work shifts but she works overtime a lot so whoever's there at the time we help each other.	

x

I I see, yes. Which is the easiest shift in terms of your eating, would you say?	
S Days. Days definitely. But a lot, you have to get up quite early 'cos you've to be at work at 7.30am and a **lot of people don't eat first thing do they, but I have to have something.** If not, I will either get bloated stomach or I start, if I get too hungry I start feeling a bit, not faint, but a bit light headed and so I like to have small, either, piece of toast or a banana with a drink before I set off because **you don't get your breakfast till 9.00 onwards.**	Food and shift Food and time
I Why is that?	
S At work. That's when the **canteen's open.** And your breaks, so I couldn't last getting up at 5.45 till after 9.00 for something to eat. I'd be poorly.	Workplace rules Food and time
I So what would you do when you have your first break? Would you eat again then?	
S Yes. But my, like today, this morning I had a banana and a cup of tea and then at 9.00am I had a bowl of muesli and then lunch was 12.15.	Food and time
I Do you tend to have a hot meal for lunch?	
S Err, not always, no, because I know full well I'm Going to have a **proper hot meal** at night. Depends on what - because I don't eat a lot of meat, I only eat a little bit of chicken and fish, don't eat red meat at all - and err depends what's on the menu. If the hot dish isn't what I want and sometimes the vegetarian (choices - my addition) that they put on aren't my cup of tea, so I'll end up with a jacket potato and salad and things like that. There's always a vegetarian choice but sometimes it's not always appetising so, 'cos I don't like macaroni cheese (laughs) and their vegetable bakes get a bit monotonous, you know it's all tomato, so I'd rather choose some salad and grated cheese and a jacket potato. There's always a way round.	Proper meal
I Do you ever take sandwiches, would you take something from home?	

.....the interview continued

EXTRACT 2: CODED INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

The extracts below contain all instances of themes coded as **FOOD AND TIME** at the stage of open coding. These themes are shown in bold. After further analysis of the transcripts, drawing on the memos written at the time of first coding, and with the aid of diagrams such as table a.1, the process of axial coding took place and I developed the more specific codes **PROPER MEAL, NO TIME TO EAT, NO TIME TO COOK, RULES RE FOOD** and **WORKLOAD** to interpret the data. The memos in italics below each extract were made during open coding and are reproduced here to show this stage of the analytical process.

Interview with Shahida

Interviewer: If we start with the early shift, can you just take me through a day when you would be working an early shift, and when you would eat and what you would eat during that shift ?

Susan: On an early shift **most of the time I miss the breakfast,** because get up 6.00, no, sometimes I get up half past 5, and 6.00 I leave the home so no breakfast, to come here, **no time to cook breakfast**, my blood sugar's by the time the jobs done and I have time to actually **time to eat** which is about half past nine. And which is, you know, because probably most of the time I don't pack anything **because of working shifts I don't have time**. Then perhaps if I'm lucky perhaps a slice of toast and a cup of tea. This takes till the lunch time if this is a normal day this is I can go to lunch **but sometimes I do miss the lunch because of hand-over and busy working environment,** so that's me. I don't eat **proper meal,** and I have irritable bowel syndrome which gives me a lot of problems.

(From my notes after interview) Reason for lack of time to prepare packed lunch seen as very early starting time of morning shift. No breakfast before leaving house. Lunch missed because of workload and 'hand-over ' – this is meeting held on ward to inform new shift.

Interview with Ruth

I Can you tell me about eating when you're at work?

R Coming to work in an afternoon, I think because I'm not one for eating a lot in the morning I can't , **I'm never really ready for anything before I come to work** so I tend to just eat for the sake of it because I know I'll be hungry later if I don't have anything. But then I think when it comes to **your breaktime, cos we have half an hour for our dinner and half an hour for our tea, I think depending on what you're having, you know if you go to the canteen it can take you 5 or 10 minutes to get there,** 5 or 10 minutes to get back, umm, if you've brought something to cook in the microwave it can take 10 minutes in the microwave, you know, it's a bit...sometimes if you've just brought a sandwich it's alright, but, depends on what you've got. **Can be a bit awkward with time.**

I How do you mean, a bit awkward with time?

R Umm, well what we tend to do is, **depending on how busy it is, and how many staff** are on, sometimes we have staggered breaks and sometimes we have it all together, umm, I mean if that morning shift today they would have gone for their break after we've come so they can all go together 'cos there's the staff on, but sometimes you have to take it in turns to go, so depending on, you know, if you're taking it in turns sometimes you find you've got to wait. **You might be starving and you've got to wait for someone else** to come back before you can go.

No breakfast as does not feel 'ready' to eat at that time. Reference to own body affecting eating patterns.
Time of meal seen as depending on staffing levels on ward. Why have they got to wait for member of staff to come back – is there a rule on numbers of staff who must be present at any time?
Time allowed for meal break insufficient to go to canteen – distance, queuing.
Consequences are late or missed meals

Interview with John

I Are there certain shifts when you can't have a main meal at home?
J Yes, but it's mainly if you're doing a fairly quick turn round, err, like if we're finishing say nights and going back on to afternoons, that happens sometimes. You finish at 6.00 in a morning, so not getting up till 12.30, 1.00, and you might be back on at 2.00 or back on at 4.00, and **I don't feel in that time that I could get up and eat a main meal**, I just have, like I say, like a breakfast.

I Umm, I see, yes. Does that happen very often that you've got to turn round quickly?

J Not that often, err, it's more likely to happen when we're on float duties, 'cos you're just picking odd shifts up. One of the added problems with that obviously is travel 'cos I could be working say at Doncaster. I could finish at Doncaster say at 6.00, have to travel back home, could be 7.00 before I get home, probably go to bed about half past 7, and then I could have to be at Barnsley for 2.00.

J Yes, **you tend to get into the habit of eating as and when you feel hungry, rather than, sort of having a mealtime.** I mean like when my lad was at home when he left school he used to work days regular, so sort of 5.30 that was teatime, that was the main meal, and if I was at home fine I'd have a meal with them. If not then I'd just have something whenever I could, you know.

Breakfast not seen as a 'main' meal. Refers to not feeling able to eat main meal if only short time between shifts as would be spending time sleeping.

This interviewee distinguishes pattern of eating when hungry – no set times, just 'as and when', from having a 'meal time' – a set time to eat, e.g. at 5.30 as in past. Having no set times for meals can become a habit..
Time between finish and start time of shifts, and travelling time from workplace to home, seen as affecting eating habits. Not enough time to eat a full meal.

Interview with Val

I   Yes. Could you take me through each of the shifts, say, starting with an early, then a late, and then a night, and tell me about the meals that you have on each shift?

V   Yes, if I'm on an early, do you want me to start at home, or ...?

I   Can you start at home with your first meal.

V   OK, OK, if I'm on an early I'll have my cereal before I come out to work, then when we have what is our unofficial coffee break, 'cos really we're only supposed to have half an hour all day but we, **to me, it is too long to go from 7.00 till dinner** which you might not get till 2.00 so we then have an unofficial break and we usually have some toast or something like that, a drink, then my lunch is usually a sandwich, a yoghurt and some fruit, and I go home and have a cooked meal in the evening.

I   What time would you have lunch ?

V   Depends how busy the ward is. If it's not so bad, and people can get off earlier, we start lunches from 12 but **today no way none of us could go for our lunch**, we went after the late staff had come on which was at about 2.00 we went for our lunch.

Ideas about appropriate length of time between breakfast and dinner – from 7 till 2 seen as 'too long'. Strategy to deal with this is to have an 'unofficial' break – how are these organised? What does 'unofficial' mean?
Had to go for lunch late because waiting for staff to arrive, busy, giving patients their lunch.

Interview with Rosie

I *Umm, do you have any ideas about why that might be? What it is about working shifts that seems to have that effect?* (Interviewee has previously referred to eating snacks – sweets and chocolate – while at work.)

R **You can't guarantee that you go to lunch,** for example, at 12 o clock, you can't even guarantee, I mean you could - I can't, if I'm on an early shift I cannot eat breakfast before I go to work, it's just physically impossible for me to consider eating at 6.00 in the morning but having said that my **ideal time to go for my breakfast** would be say 8 to 9 but you can't guarantee that you go in until maybe 11. So by that point you're starving so up to that point easy things to get hold of - chocolate, or sweets or anything you just, anything to just keep your blood sugar really 'cos **by that time you're starting to flag and you need the extra energy.** So you will be having I don't know how many calories worth of completely useless junk up until your break then you'll have lunch, which I'm relatively sensible, I try to be relatively sensible and have reasonably sensible meals.

Reason for snacking perceived as lack of guaranteed meal break at certain time, so eats because of hunger, for energy. Reference to 'blood sugar' – use of medical term interesting. Is she trying to justify snacking by use of medical term?
Does not eat breakfast before leaving home - 'physically impossible ' to eat early in morning. (Is this feeling widespread? Just shiftworkers ?)
Tries to be 'sensible' at lunch. What does this mean?

Interview with Kenneth

I *Can you tell me about what you eat and when on a night shift? What use would you make of it?*

K Something I don't like about the evening shift is, umm, the place that I'm working now, they're very strict on breaks and they want you to take your **breaks at certain times ....** what they do on the evening shift now is you'll **have your first break after being there for an hour and a half,** an hour later they make you go for your tea so within a two hour period you've had an hour and a half worth of breaks. And that's too **early for me cos** I will not have eaten on an evening shift until 1.00,2.00 in the afternoon, then by 6.00 I've got to have my tea which is giving me a long time before I'm getting back round to breakfast again.

K On nights again it's - I'm not too happy with that. **It's totally messed up on nights because of the timings of the food.** The chef will have finished by 2.30 so if you want anything to eat at all, you come in at 11.30 and then eating at either 1.00 or 2.00 and then you know, so you've got your hour out of the way then and you've only got a couple of broken up breaks later on throughout the night. I would much prefer to have a break at maybe 1.00, eat at 4.00, 4.00 - 5.00, and then might not even bother with another break. And again that's fitting into your pattern of your 8 hours' worth of work. Do 4 or 5 hours, have your lunch, 3 or 4 hours, go home.

Interviewee sees timing of breaks on evening shift as problematic – too close together. Makes it difficult to plan eating.
Also problems with opening times of canteen on night shifts – has to have meals before chef leaves, i.e. after 1 or 2 hours work. would prefer to eat later in night after 4 – 5 hours work. Organisation of canteen affects his eating patterns – eat to fit in to organisational constraints, when canteen is open, not according to hunger. Unable to use food as he would like to divide time.

Interview with Jenny

I *Are you happy with your eating patterns on an early shift?*

J I could probably have lunch at 10.30 in the morning, because since I've been up since 6.00 and I've done all the physical work by then I'm very very hungry and I could quite

easily eat lunch 10.30 in the morning, but then of **course to wait all the time till I get home** and I actually cook tea I should be starving again. But it's quite easy, before I've gone to break in a morning and I've had, like, a sandwich, bit of scone, a packet of crisps and I've had a chocolate bar as well.   Probably a bit excessive isn't it? But some mornings you get really hungry don't you. Some mornings **I could quite easily eat lunch at about 11.00 in the morning without any hassle at all because I've done a lot of activity, physical activity up until that point.**

I   *Do you use the canteen at all?*

J   It's just I can't be bothered to walk. It's too far. And like the Huntsman dining room, it's too far to walk. It's dangerous to walk round here in the evenings anyway. You know like people have been mugged even at 4.00 in the daytime going around and it's just not worth the effort. Nobody goes with you anyway, it's lonely eating by yourself, so no.
Plus they open at silly times. They open sort of - the charge nurse goes - they open sort of **3.30 till 5.00, but you're not ready to eat then,** but then they don't open again till 6.30,7.00 and I want to eat about 6.00. I'm hungry by that point. They don't open in the middle when I'm hungry. I appreciate they probably can't 'cos that's when most patients have their tea, but I'm sort of hungry then and they open too late for me to go like in the second half of their shift.

References to hunger in this interview interesting – sees amount of physical work she does as affecting appetite. Feels like eating lunch at 11.00am. ' Silly' opening times of canteen seen as affecting eating habits. Open too early and too late – not open when she is hungry at 5 – 6.30.

Interview with Malcolm

I   *Can you tell me about your meals and eating when you are at work?*

M   The shift pattern can make, because of the gaps in the times that you get back to station, even if your shifts do affect your eating habits at home you can always find times to have a snack, to eat. What you tend to do while you're at work what you tend to do is **take things that you can eat quickly because** you can be called at any time. Because **we work an 8-hour shift we don't have a set meal break,** we're effectively paid through our meal break.

 If we get our meal break, great, if we don't get our meal break 'cos we're exceptionally busy, tough. We don't get a set meal break. Umm and so I wouldn't say the actual pattern of the shifts affects my eating but sometimes the work load definitely does because it's one of the few jobs I've had, and I've had a few, whereby **if the work load is great enough then you just don't get a meal break,** or a drink or anything come to that. And it's just accepted. That's one of the things we're sort of arguing against at the moment, but it's very very difficult. With being in an emergency service you can't sort of, if you know full well that you've gone 5 hours without a drink and you called clear at the hospital on your radio and an emergency is waiting for you as soon as you are clear, you can't argue the case that no I should be on my meal break now, you've just got to respond to it. So it's difficult. **And you could find yourself going to right to the end of your shift without having a meal break.** And that is not uncommon.

i   *Can you describe to me what it's like when you have a meal and a break at the station? What would you typically do?*

M   Well personally I take sort of sandwiches, and err, snacks to work and in my, when it came down to my meal break - you see what you've got to think about is, in the line of our job, if you get back to station and there are three other crews there all ready, you know for a fact that you've got at least three other jobs coming in before you're going to be called out. You understand what I'm saying. So it's a nice cushion to get back and find three other crews on station because you know that the phones going to ring three times before you're going to be called.
So then you think to yourself 'Right, **I've got chance to sit down and have 20 minutes or whatever'**, so you might get your sandwiches, make a drink, sit down, put the TV on, umm and it can be quite relaxing at work, it's quite a good atmosphere and quite a relaxing sort of place to be and you have a sort of chat with all the other crews, play a game of snooker, whatever, in

between going back out, and get your, **but the temptation is always there to sort of eat your food quickly, especially on a busy station** - I don't know if you've spoke to anyone on any other stations yet but I come from Parkway ambulance station which is probably, and I think most people would agree, is probably the busiest station because it deals with Sheffield town centre. The temptation is always there to think **'I must eat my dinner quickly 'cos the phone could ring any time'. And so** that's a problem I suppose, but that's probably psychological, it's just what you're trying to do to make sure you get your meal.

Eating habits at work seen as affected by lack of set meal time, workload, and that it is an emergency service. Consequences are eating quickly when do get a break, but can go all shift without a meal. Meals also interrupted – feel phone might ring even if does not.

Interview with Trish

I Can you tell me about your meals and eating when you're at work?

T   Well, because I live where I live, which is quite a long way from here, and I don't have the car in the week I have to actually leave home early, on a late, to come on a late, at 11.30, which is early to leave home but I have to 'cos it take me a **long time to get here.** Umm so therefore, when I leave home I'll have only have had, I'll have had whatever I've had for breakfast at home, that'd be a cup of tea, cereal and toast, and then probably just before I come out for the bus I'd have a drink and umm some fruit and then come to work and then, I **wouldn't have anything else then till we get a break,** we start at quarter past one, and we get a break about 2.00, or just after 2.00 for about 20 minutes, and then I'd have something else then.

T   …You don't think, 'oh well it's half past 9.00 I'll go for my break', they're not fixed like that, it's as and when your area that you are working in is sorted out, your qualified member of staff - you see I'm not a qualified member of staff -, your qualified member of staff decides when you go for your break. No breaks are done before 9.00 anyway, they' re supposed to be fitted in, sort of, between, after quarter past 9.00 and up to half past 10 but I've **known people go at 11.00 'cos they're not been able to get off before** then, it depends on the unit and how busy. Like this morning I went for my break at 10.00 because the qualified member of staff went for hers at 9.30, she said she was going first, well she asked. I'm not bothered, she wanted to go, so she went at 9.30 while 10.00. So then I went 10 while half past. Dinners, umm, like **support workers have to give patent dinners out, which come any time** between 12 and quarter past so we take them round and then normally I would only be going for my dinner about quarter past 1.00. I've gone earlier today 'cos I knew you were coming, umm, because you have to be out when the dinners are out, that's part of our job, so you get sent for your dinner round about quarter past to half past 1.00, half an hour.

Eating seen as affected by travelling time to work and shift start time – does not eat lunch before starting work at 1.00 on afternoon shift.
Also affected by lack of set times for breaks – related to staffing on ward, workload, and lunch taken late because patients' lunch has to be given out first. Priorities of organisation / clients above needs of staff?

Interview with Sharon

I   Can you tell me about your meals when you're at work?

S   I think with working, I think the difficulty I have with working, I do three nights, sometimes four, is the fact that **you're not on a regular pattern, you know, like half of the week you're working nights and the other half you're on days. You** could have been up all day having your meals and not go in till 6.00 o'clock at night and you come in tonight, now, I don't know if anybody else has said it but when I'm tired I tend to eat. I feel as though if I have something to eat I won't feel as tired but therefore I find it hard to keep to a proper diet. And I find **it hard to like work my meals out, you know like when you're going in on that very**

first night, how to base your meals as though they were a proper day, you know what I mean so, yes, I think I would find it easier if I didn't work nights.

I   Can I just go back and pick up a point that you mentioned before about it being   quite
short   notice if they're going to want you to work, they could ring you up very late?

S   Oh, they could ring up like teatime and say that they're short tonight, would you like to do overtime. And I always say 'Yes' 'cos I want the money so therefore I've sort of had all my meals   during the day but **its very hard to work all night without having anything at** all.

Eating patterns seen as affected by lack of regular work pattern – rapid shift changes and overtime. Difficult to organise meals 'as though it were a proper day' . (What is 'proper' day here? Does it mean lunch at midnight instead of midday? When would breakfast and evening meal be?)
Reference to eating to alleviate feelings of tiredness.

Interview with Kevin

I   Can you tell me about your meals and eating on a night shift?

K   **I cannot guarantee that if I book my tea for 6.00 I can get away at 6.00 to get** it, so what I tend to do, is order things that I know are quick and easy to cook and as I'm leaving I can phone him up and say I'm on my way, Gerald can pop the chips in the chip pan and by the time I've got down there it's ready I can eat it and get back if I'm busy. What I don't want to do is order something that'll sit on a hot plate going all manky and horrible if I'm late, or that I've got to wait 20 minutes for him to prepare. **'Cos I haven't got time sometimes.**

I   So you're allowed an hours break ...

K   (interrupts) You are supposed to have an hour, at weekends an hour and a half 'cos you're in for a long shift -12 hour shift at weekends - in theory you are supposed to have that, there's all sorts of health and safety rules, not just for the fact that you need a break, it's that we work with VDU equipment, you've got to get away from stuff like that. But in practice when people are complaining that there's a problem you cannot turn round and say, well I'm off for my hours break. Umm, it's not seen as being a very good thing to do. If you keep saying, that's it, **I'm off for an hour it doesn't look well.** Some people have done it, they've gone away and refused to come back and got marked down for it, so all they did, they just started going home for lunch. Umm, nothing the bank can do about it but it's not seen as,.. you're not seen as showing much commitment to the job even thought you're legally in the right it's still perceived as not showing much commitment. What I tend to do is **I'll go away and have 15 minutes** - as long as it takes for the guy to serve it, for me to eat it, grab a cup of tea, get back – 'cos it may be that later on in the evening - this is only evening and nights -later on things may go quiet and I can clear off for another break.

Reference to no set times for breaks because of workload – similarities with hospital.
Able to order food to be prepared for him individually – unique?
'No time' to wait for food to be prepared. Why no time? How is time spent on break policed?
Rules about health and safety and breaks ignored because ' does not look well' – is showing commitment to job seen as more important than health and safety?
Has very short lunch break then another 'unofficial' break when quiet.

Interview with Elaine

I   Can you tell me about meals on a night shift?

E   Oh yes. And then on a late shift I probably have a bowl of cornflakes about 11.00, 'cos I get up, have a shower, wash my hair, have a bowl of cornflakes. We go for a quick drink about 2.30, and I get a cup of coffee, and then about 5.00 I'll go and have whatever I've taken to work with me, and then there's a problem. You get in at about half past 9.00 at night and I like my main meal at home, where I've got all my stuff, you know, but **that's really too**

late to have a big meal because then I find I'm not sleeping, so at the moment I'm trying to have, take a bit more to work and try and make my main meal at work and have just a salad sandwich, say, when I get in and go straight to bed. 'Cos I can come in here and put the television on and still be sitting up watching it at 1.00, and I think Oh God I've got to get up when I'm on earlies, so it's that between a late shift and going back on an early shift it's difficult because you're getting in at 9.30pm. If I'm off the next day and I'm staying up late **I don't mind eating that late, but when you're rushing to get to bed, I've got to get to bed cos I'm up at 5.00, so you don't know when to eat really.** When it's best.

9.30 pm seen as 'too late' to eat – affects sleep when on early shift next day. Problem of rapid turn-around. Also wants to eat at home – has 'all stuff' might suggest she wants to cook ? Similarities with ambulance workers.
Feeling of not knowing when to eat. Loss of structure to day affects meal times.

Interview with Lizzie

I   *What are your eating patterns like on afternoon shifts?*

L   Yes, but umm I mean, err, the problems with eating with me, **because of the shift starting at 1.00 I have to be out of the house**, well I usually leave at 12 and err so I mean unless I've got up particularly early, had a very early breakfast, I don't have lunch before I come here then it gets busy on the ward I suddenly find sort of 3, 4 o clock last time I ate was 10.00 in the morning.

I   *Right, yes.*

L   And the problem with that is that, you can find a biscuit somewhere, you can find chocolate somewhere or some boiled sweets, or something but err, keeping your blood . glucose up with all the things you shouldn't be eating really.

I   *How long are you allowed for breaks?*

L   Half an hour, but it's... I mean, if it's not busy it's quite allright to say the half hour break starts when you're sitting there with your plate in front of you. I mean obviously if the ward's busy the half hour's counted from the minute you leave the ward. So 5 minutes there, might be a queue, **I mean, sitting down eating time could be about quarter of an hour.**

Problem of starting time of afternoon shift – does not eat lunch before leaving home.
Long time between breakfast and second meal – 10 till 3 or 4. Consequence is snacking. Reference to 'blood glucose ' – medical term.
Main meal break seen as too short – walk, queue, eat.
Suggests rules on timing of breaks are bent depending how busy ward is.

Interview with Linda

I   *Are your eating patterns different on night shifts ? Is it different being here at night than during the day?*

L   Yes, very quiet on night, very little to do, so we don't particularly have poorly patients down there, they go to bed and sleep. You might get the odd one, get up and go and check people so **you've got a lot of free time at night down there so you can continually eat** down there.The I come home and have my breakfast and go to bed. Toast and cereal.

I   *Can you tell me about your meals and eating when you're at home, perhaps on a day off?*

L   I think we plan really well, that we don't waste a lot of food - we know who's going to be in when, where, why, and **what's suitable now for that time**. You know.

I *How do you mean?*

L It's taken a lot of years, I think, more than anything. We each know where everyone's going to be and we know what each one'll cope with at such and such a time, if you know what I mean , we've been out all this morning, **my husband's made do with burgers and chips because of time factor and he knew that's what, he was limited to that time.** But I prepared a stew for my son tonight, but that stew he'll probably have tomorrow, 'cos he's on afternoons tomorrow and he won't have to prepare anything because it'll keep for tomorrow, in between that **I'll probably won't have any of them, time-factor, err, you know 'cos of time.**

Interesting reference to lot of free time on night shifts – consequence is can eat all time.
(Are night shifts less busy? What about other aspects such as lack of supervisory staff, visitors – might eat because not in public view do much on nights)

Food at home also very much influenced by time – eat quick meal of burgers and chips when has little time to prepare / eat. Contrast drawn between 'making do' with burgers for quick meal and stew. But she does not eat either 'cos of time'? What is being meant here?

Interview with Anita

I *Is it difficult to get a break for a meal ?*

A You get something to eat when you can. Which is not very good 'cos you can go to work and have a drink and a cup of tea and a biscuit or something, **and then you're out and you may never see the station again, 'cos you're out for a full 8 hours.** That's when you start eating junk, packet of crisps and Mars Bars and things like that because there's no alternative. It's not really hygienic to carry sandwiches on the ambulance. …The reason why we'd buy sandwiches in a morning when you're out and about, is 'cos if you do get a job then at least one of you can eat. If I'm not driving then at least I can eat my sandwich. If you try and take the things to cook, **by the time you've got everything cooked you've got no chance of sitting down and eating it**. 'Cos I mean, we roughly say 15, 20 minutes out of the half hour that you normally get, on average. So by the time you've cooked the breakfast, you **don't have time to eat it,** so that's why we generally buy on route.

Reference to mobile nature of the work affecting eating – eat 'junk' as out all day. Interesting example of team work to allow one to eat, other to drive. Suggests choice of food affected by need for hygiene on ambulance – is it that crisps, chocolate is wrapped, so protected, while sandwich is not?
'No time' to prepare a meal and eat it when in station. 15 to 20 minute seems to be defined here as insufficient time to prepare and eat meal. Consequence is to buy food on route. What sort of food is bought? Will it be hot food to replace cooked meal ? Snacks? Where is food bought from? Is this allowed?

Extract 3 : TABLE A.1 - Example of diagram used to aid in analysis of data

Note: Problems, perceived cause and consequences are as identified by interviewees.

Problem	Perceived Cause	Consequences for eating
No time to eat before leaving for work	Shift start time Travelling time Would need to get up earlier	Miss breakfast, lunch, snack later
No time to eat after work, before sleep	Shift finish time	Miss evening meal, eat snack
No time to prepare and eat meal	Break too short Break interrupted by work Have to cook own meal	Interrupted meal Eat quickly Miss meal
No time to visit canteen for meal	30 min break too short Canteen too far Queues	Eat elsewhere – on ward, WRVS café Eat packed lunch Eat snacks
No regular time for meal breaks	Workload Staffing levels on ward	Get very hungry. Snack when can
Lot of free time on night shifts	Less work Less supervision? Less in public view?	Eat all time
Time important consideration for food at home	Other work or leisure commitments Attitude to time developed at work – always rushed	Eat fast food Use convenience foods that can be prepared quickly Eat out?

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF THEMES GENERATED DURING DATA ANALYSIS

Food and time
No time to eat
No time to cook
Convenience food
Rules re. food
Proper meals
Differences between eating at home and at work
Eating on the hoof
Eating out
Snacking
Violent language and food - e.g. 'Grabbing' food
Not eating
Being organised about food
Not being organised about food
Not bothering to cook
Not bothering to eat
Food and health
Men cooking
Enjoying food
Hunger
Partner and food
Children and food
Eating with family
Cooking for family
Strategies around cooking meals
Slimming
Food and sleep
Workload
Canteen
Bodyclock
Gender and food

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

Survey Questionnaire:

"Does Shiftwork Affect Workers' Eating Habits?"

This questionnaire is being sent to people who work shifts in a variety of industries in the area. It is hoped that the findings will be useful in furthering knowledge of the impact that working unsocial hours of work have on the health and diet of workers.

Even if you are not working shifts at the moment, your views and experiences are still very useful, and I would be grateful if you could find the time to complete the questionnaire. Don't worry if not all the questions apply to you - just answer those that do. If you need more space for any of your answers please continue on the back page.

AT A LATER STAGE IN THE RESEARCH I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN MORE DETAIL ABOUT THEIR WORK AND EATING HABITS. PLEASE COULD YOU WRITE IN YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER AT THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART. THANK YOU.

If you have any questions about the research, you can contact either myself, Margaret Prescott, on 0114 2885251 or the Health Research Institute, Sheffield Hallam University on 0114 2532376.

SHIFTWORK AND EATING HABITS QUESTIONNAIRE

Does working shifts make it difficult to eat at regular times, follow a 'healthy' diet and organise family meals at home ? This survey is looking at what influences the diets and eating habits of men and women employed in shiftwork. The questionnaire is being sent to people working shifts in a wide range of different industries and it is hoped that the findings will be useful in furthering knowledge of the impact that working shifts has on the health of workers.

FOOD AND EATING AT WORK

I would like to begin by asking you about your eating habits at work, and the canteen and other facilities available to you.

1. **Which of these facilities** are available to you at the place where you usually work ? *(Please tick all that are available.)*

- snack vending machines
- drink vending machines
- microwave to heat up food brought in from home/shop
- works canteen
- snacks trolley
- drinks trolley
- kettle or hot water to make drinks
- none of these
- any other places you can buy food/drinks (please say where).........,........

....

....

2. Which of these facilities do you **use regularly** (i.e more than 3 times a week ?) *(Please tick all that you use.)*

- snack vending machines
- drink vending machines
- microwave to heat up food brought in
- works canteen
- snacks trolley
- drinks trolley
- none of these
- any other places you can buy food /drinks (please say what)

....

3. **How satisfied** are you with the facilities available to obtain meals & drinks in your place of work?

  Very satisfied   Satisfied   Not at all satisfied

3a. *If you are not satisfied* with the facilities available. how might they be improved ?

....

....

....

....

4. **How long** are you allowed to take for meal and tea breaks at work ?

Main meal break. ....

Tea breaks..

SHIFTWORK AND EATING HABITS QUESTIONNAIRE

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   [] drinks trolley
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   [] any other places you can buy food/drinks (please say where)...............
   ....
   ....

2. Which of these facilities do you **use regularly** (i.e more than 3 times a week ?) *(Please tick all that you use.)*

   [] snack vending machines
   [] drink vending machines
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   ....

3. **How satisfied** are you with the facilities available to obtain meals & drinks in your place of work?

   [] Very satisfied [] Satisfied [] Not at all satisfied

3a. *If you are not satisfied* with the facilities available, how might they be improved ?
....
....
....
....

4. **How long** are you allowed to take for meal and tea breaks at work ?

Main meal break..
Tea breaks..

5. **Please write in the times** when you ate each meal and any snacks, and **what you ate** at each time **on the last day that you were at work**.

...........When ?...................What did you eat ?

Meal
1..
....

Meal
2..
....

Meal
3..
....

Meal
4..
....

Snack
1..
....

Snack
2..
....

Any Other Food..

6. How many cups of **tea / coffee / soft drinks** did you drink on the last day you were at work?

...................cups

7. If you had any **alcoholic drinks** on the last day you were at work , how many pints / cans , or measures if spirits, did you drink ?
....

8. **Where** did you eat each of these meals or snacks on the **last day that you were at work** and **who with**, if anyone? (*Please write in home with family, works canteen, pub with work colleagues etc. as appropriate.)*

..............Where ?..............Who with ?

Meal 1...

Meal 2...

Meal 3...

Meal 4...

Snack 1...

Snack 2...

Any Other Food...

FOOD AT HOME

I would now like to ask a few questions about your eating habits when you are at home, and not working, such as on days off .

9. **Please write in the times** when you ate each meal and any snacks, and **what you ate** at each time
   on the last day that you were not working and at home.

.....................When? ......What did you eat ?

Meal
1...
....

Meal
2...
....

Meal
3...
....

Meal
4...
....

Snack
1...
....

Snack
2...
....

Any Other Food...
.

10. How many cups of **tea / coffee / soft drinks** did you drink on the last day you had a day off ?
.
....cups

11. If you had any **alcoholic drinks** on the last day you were at home , how many pints or cans , or
measures if spirits, did you drink ?
....

12. **Where** did you eat each of these meals or snacks on the last day that you were at home
and **who with**, if anyone? (*Please write in home with family, works canteen, pub with work colleagues
etc. as appropriate.)*

..............Where? .... Who with?

Meal 1..

Meal 2..

Meal 3..

Meal 4..

Snack 1..

Snack 2..

Any Other Food...

13. If you have a partner and children living with you, when during the week do you usually **eat together as a family** ? *Please say for which meals and on which days you do so, if any.*

....
....
....
....

14. Are such family meals **important** to you ?   ☐Yes   ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

14a. *If family meals __are__ important to you*, is this because *(please tick as many as you like)*

☐ It is a chance to talk, be together.
☐ It is important for the children to learn good table manners.
☐ It is more convenient to prepare a meal for everyone to eat at the same time.
☐ It is the only time we see each other during the week.
☐ We only eat together on special occasions, such as birthdays, Christmas.
☐ We only eat together at Sunday lunch times.
☐ Other, please say why.

....
....
....
....

15. Thinking now more generally about your eating habits, on the whole would you say that **food is important** to you ?

☐Yes   ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

15a. *If yes*, in what ways is food important to you ?

....
....
....
....
....

16. If you were at home and could have whatever you liked to eat for your evening meal, what would you choose ? *(Please write in 3 choices.)*

1..

2..

3..

17. We are often urged today to eat a 'healthy' diet. Would you say you tend to eat a **healthy** diet ?

☐ Yes   ☐ No ☐ Don't Know

17a.*If yes*, what are the 3 **main** things that you do to try to eat a healthy diet ?

....
....
....

18 Are there any foods that you **always avoid** eating ? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

18a. *If yes*, which foods do you always avoid and why ?

....
....

19. Are you on a **slimming** diet at the moment ?
□ Yes   □ No

Please answer questions 20 and 21 only if you work shifts.

20. **Do you think** working shifts **has an adverse effect** on your eating habits ?
     □ Yes   □ No   □ Sometimes - depends which shift I'm on

21. People often make the following statements about the effects of shiftwork on their eating patterns.
Which are **true** for you ? *(Please tick as many as apply.)*

□ **Working shifts means I often miss meals.**
□ **Working shifts means that my mealtimes change frequently.**
□ **I often eat takeaway meals at home.**
□ **I often eat takeaway meals at work.**
□ **I tend to eat snacks instead of proper meals when I am on shifts.**
□ **I gained weight when I started working shifts.**
□ **I often eat at a different time to my partner / the rest of my family.**
□ **It would be easier to eat a healthy diet if I did not work shifts.**
□ **I'm often too tired and don't feel like preparing or eating a meal after work.**

21a. Are there any other ways in which you think working shifts affects **your** eating habits or what foods
you eat ?
....
....
....
....

22. When you eat a meal at home, are you usually **responsible for doing** the following tasks ? *(Please
     tick all you are responsible for doing.)*

□ **Planning what to eat**
□ **Shopping for food for the meal**
□ **Cooking the meal**
□ **Washing up after the meal**
□ **Clearing up after the meal**
□ **None of these**
□ **Anything else that you do to get meals ready (please say what)**
....
....
....

23. Do you enjoy **cooking** ?
□ **Yes, always**
□ **Yes, usually**
□ **No, not usually**
□ **No, never**

24. Do you have any of the following **kitchen equipment** at home ? *(Please tick all you have.)*
□ **dishwasher**
□ **microwave oven**
□ **cooker with automatic timer**
□ **food-processor**
□ **freezer**
□ **anything else you think saves time and effort when preparing meals (please say what)**
....
....

YOUR JOB
I would now like to ask you a few questions about your job to be able to relate your eating habits to the type of work that you do.

25. At the moment, are you
    ☐ **working full - time**
    ☐ **working part-time**
    ☐ **unemployed**
    ☐ **not working - retired / off sick / disabled / student / caring for someone**

26. If you are in full or part time employment, **what job** do you do ? *(please give your job title.)*
....
....

27. How would you describe your job ?

☐ **managerial or professional**
☐ **administrative or supervisory**
☐ **clerical or other non-manual**
☐ **skilled manual**
☐ **semi-skilled manual**
☐ **unskilled manual**
☐ **other (please say what)**
....

28. What **type of industry** or service do you work in ?
....
....

29. **On the last day that you were at work,** when did you
    start work ....
    finish work ?....................................

30. Are these your **usual times** to start and finish work ? ☐Yes ☐ No

30a. *If no*, what are your usual working times ?
    start work.......................
    finish work....................

31. Do you usually work **overtime** ? ☐Yes ☐ No ☐Sometimes

31a. *If yes or sometimes*, when do you usually finish work when you are working overtime ?
    ....

32. Do you work **shifts** ? (i.e. you change the times you work on a regular basis e.g. every few days or every week.)
    ☐Yes ☐No ☐ Sometimes *If no, please go to question 35.*

32a. *If yes or sometimes*, what **hours** do you work on each shift ?
....
....
....

33. **How long** do you work one shift **before changing** to the next ? (e.g. how long on days before changing to nights ?)
    ....

34. **How long** have you been working shifts **in total** ?..................................

YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD

I now need to ask a few questions about yourself and the people who live with you to make sure that the survey represents shiftworkers in the area. The information you give will be used for statistical purposes only and will be treated entirely confidentially.

35. Are you ☐ male or ☐ female ?

36. How **old** are you ?
☐ 16 - 19   ☐ 20 - 29   ☐ 30 - 39   ☐ 40 - 49   ☐ 50 - 59   ☐ 60 or over

37. Are you ☐ single ☐ married   ☐ divorced/ widowed/ separated ?

38. Do you consider yourself to be:

☐ White (European)	☐ White (other)	☐ Somali
☐ Bangladeshi	☐ Caribbean	☐ Other African
☐ Pakistani	☐ Indian	☐ Other Asian
☐ Vietnamese	☐ Chinese	☐ Yemeni / Arabic

☐ Other group(s) *(please specify)*..

39. Do you live
☐ alone
☐ with partner / spouse
☐ with partner / spouse & child or children
☐ with parents / other relatives
☐ with friends / others

39a. *If you have children living with you*, how many children do you have living with you and how old are they ?
....
....
....

40. Does your **partner / spouse** work shifts (either full or part time)?
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.
The information you have given will be treated confidentially and will be very valuable in the research.

IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO TALK TO ME IN MORE DETAIL ABOUT YOUR EATING HABITS AT A LATER STAGE IN THE RESEARCH, AT A TIME AND PLACE CONVENIENT FOR YOU, PLEASE COULD YOU FILL IN YOUR NAME AND A TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR ME TO CONTACT YOU. THANK YOU.

NAME & PHONE NUMBER *(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)*
....

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE USING THE PRE-PAID ENVELOPE TO SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY.