THE TRAINING NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

OF A GROUP OF YOUNG BLACK AND WHITE

WOMEN ON THE ONE YEAR YOUTH TRAINING

SCHEME IN 1984 - 1985

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the training needs, experiences and aspirations of a
group of young Black and White women on the One Year Youth Training Scheme
(YTS) in the mid-1980s. The thesis takes as its starting point the role of
the State and the Manpower Services Commission in fostering a new training
scheme, based on social market principles and a deficiency-centred model of
young people. In turn this process of labelling young people as deficient is
subjected to a critical analysis, especially in relation to the youth labour
market and the rise in youth unemployment from the late 1970s up to the
beginning of the research period in 1984. Thereafter, the issue of training
in the context of the sample's past experiences of schooling and the labour
market is examined in order to identify the most salient factors involved in
their selection of the Youth Training Scheme. A focus on two case study
training schemes is undertaken, where the main objective is to explore the
nature of relationships between the various actors involved, ie. Black and
White female trainees and staff. In doing so the central argument pursued by
this thesis is that the nature of such relations determined the quality of the
training received by the sample group on the two schemes in an area of West
London between the summer of 1984 and 1985. In conclusion the thesis argues
that based on the research evidence, the labelling of young people as
deficient in employment skills is misleading, because it fails to take into
account the complexity surrounding the transition from school to work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE POSITION OF YOUNG BLACK AND WHITE

WOMEN ON THE ONE YEAR YOUTH TRAINING

SCHEME IN THE MID-1980s

This thesis addresses the extent to which the one year Youth Training Scheme
(YTS), implemented in the mid-1980s, met the training needs and aspirations of
a small cohort of Black' and White female trainees on two Mode B1 schemes in
an area of West London in 1984 - 1985. The thesis takes up a number of
themes associated with the rise of youth training provision since the 1970s,
up to the operation of the one year YTS, launched in September 1983.
Specifically, the role of the State in fostering youth training is explored,
together with aspects of the State's depiction of the young as deficient in
terms of their position to find and maintain employment. This discussion will
include issues related to the attitude and aspirations of the sample group
and the impact which the YTS had on their understanding of the transition
from school to work. It will be argued that taken as a a whole the
transition is not a uniform process for young Black and White people and that
such differential experiences were also reflected within the YTS. Moreover,
the role of the State, together with the structure of the one year YTS,
served to reproduce sexual and racial inequalities found in the labour market.
However in order to identify the ways in which this process has worked, it is
necessary to explore what constitutes training needs in Britain.

The Construction Of Training Needs - Defining The Broad Parameters Of The
Debate

In Britain, training for young people and the policy initiatives associated
with it has since the 1960s exhibited two important approaches. The first
relates to training for occupational skills, traditionally conducted under the
auspices of the apprenticeship system, whereby young people, predominantly
men, underwent a period of time-serving, the completion of which resulted in
the ascription of a skilled worker status. The system of training nurtured by
this approach was closely linked to the nature of industrial relations in
Britain, where the craft trade unions, through bargaining agreements and other

similar measures, monopolised and controlled the rate, quality and pattern of industrial training in Britain (Perry. 1976).

During the 1960s, increasing concern about the state of industrial training in Britain, primarily couched in terms of skills shortages, led the State directly to intervene in this area. This was achieved through the passing of the 1964 Employment and Training Act, aimed at introducing a more equitable system of training amongst large sections of the British manufacturing industries. The passing of the Act also reflected a concern, accepted by the main political parties, that the country needed to prepare for the advent of new technologies and the subsequent re-structuring of its industrial base. These long term political and economic concerns were cast in relation to Britain's standing within the international economy. The State and leading industrialists recognised that unless the skills of the British workforce could be up-graded and transformed in order to meet the requirements of transforming production markets, then the economy was likely to fall behind its competitors in the international arena (Chapman and Tooze. 1987).

Throughout this debate in the 1960s the question of training for the unemployed remained a secondary concern, particularly in view of the relative buoyancy of the economy at this time. Hence at the macro level, Lindley (1983) argues that State responses to training were directed towards industrial training needs, as opposed to the individual. However, the rise in unemployment, which first appeared towards the end of the 1960s, and continued to grow in the 1970s, resulted in a shift in the State's attitude, to include the unemployed. This forms the basis of the second approach, because as unemployment rose, this shift gathered momentum, giving rise to a plethora of State initiatives aimed at job creation schemes and, importantly, the bolstering of employability skills, through 'special' provision, directed towards those deemed the 'least able' or disadvantaged.

Constructing Categories Of 'Disadvantage' - The Case Of Black Youth

This label covered unemployed youth, especially those seen as unqualified; ethnic minority[2] youth and the disabled. The other major group seen as in need of 'special' provision was women, but with an important difference, whereby their situation was not viewed by policy makers as an unemployment problem, but rather a question of sex inequalities or disadvantages accruing to the inferior status of women. In reference to these groups, ie the young unemployed, ethnic minorities (particularly Black youth), women and the disabled, political discourse framed the problem in terms of employability skills, the lack of which was said to derive from deficiencies present in the individuals themselves, which structural inequalites only amplified as oppose to gave rise to. This individual-centred theme, together with the search for causes and solutions to the problem of unemployment, has dominated the question of equality of opportunity and training (Jenkins and Solomos. 1987). It is at this point that the question of how the labels of 'least abled' and 'disadvantaged' (used interchangeably in the literature) were used as a metaphor incorporating a supposed number of characteristics about these groups, (which whilst including different arenas, that is culture, class, 'race'[3], gender and disability) nonetheless acted as a guiding principle in the nature of training provision on offer to them.

For example, in attempting to describe this process, in the case of young Black people the foundations were laid during the 1960s, when Black migrant workers settled in Britain. A brief outline of the main trends that accompanied the labelling of this group is given here in order to contextualise the terms upon which training provision has been extended to this group. Fisher and Joshua (1984) argue that the labelling of young Black people as disadvantaged reveals that the concept entailed notions about cultural deficiency, alienation and unrealistic aspirations. Consequently, solutions originating from the State and its statutory agencies were based on these criteria. Each of these labels is associated with a particular aspect of Black people's position and experience in Britain. For instance, cultural

deficiency models grew out of the whole question of immigration, in conjunction with the settlement of what was in the 1960s, described as a "stranger" or alien population. Writers such as Patterson (1965) developed a 'stranger' thesis, pointing to the cultural habits, language and attitude of Black migrant workers as alien to the British way of life; rather than the impact of racism on their position. Policies first about assimilation and later integration emerged where the onus was placed on the new communities and not the wider society to adapt.

The rise of a Black British 'second generation' increasingly challenged these notions, as it was apparent that the stranger thesis, in line with the policy approaches indicated above, could not explain the growing tide of the unemployment amongst young Black people. The point being that because explanations were rooted in models such as the stranger thesis, the question of discrimination was given secondary consideration in preference to 'disadvantage', that at first was developed in relation to culture and later extended to include the 'failure' of the younger generation within the educational system.

It is easy to see how this was linked to other issues of the day, namely youth unemployment. Whilst the specifics of characterising the question of youth unemployment as one that referred to the problem of the Youth Category will be dealt with more fully in Chapter One, two points should be noted at this stage. First, State responses to youth unemployment where lodged within a framework of vocational preparation training which, as Atkinson and Rees (1982) argue, by the late 1970s was based on a strategy of altering the work attitudes of the young. Second, the location of the Black youth category in this scenario was compounded by the cultural factor, where the general deficiency model about the young was given a racial slant and therefore amplified in relation to Black youth.

State responses to Black youth unemployment have also been predicated on the assumption that this group holds unrealistic expectations (and attitudes) given their treatment in the wider society and the world of work. At the

societal level, such responses have been textured by the supposed climate of equality of opportunity that emerged in Britain as part of the post war euphoria. Rhodes and Brahams (1987) contend that this climate was based on a belief that a commitment to full employment and later continuous economic growth would result in a reduction in economic inequalities, chiefly through rising standards of living. In turn this was thought to have a knock on effect leading to the lessening of social inequalities, through the opportunities which this opened up for greater social class mobility.

At the micro level these same authors also point to the strengthening of this view, via the launching of educational reforms and the transforming of industrial relations, where in the latter case, the locus of organisational control was decentralised and directed towards a techno-structure of skilled managerial and technical staff, as opposed to the one employer. The importance of this point lies in the belief that the new meritocracy would by itself lead to a reduction in all inequalities, as the criteria for success shifted away from class to qualifications, experience and aptitude - all of which educational reforms were assumed to open up to the working class. The legislature on 'race' and later sex were seen as supplementing this process, by removing specific instances of direct discriminatory practices, rather than the whole gamut of structural inequality.

In addition the response of policy makers towards the supposed unrealistic expectations of young Black people, was to argue that in the context of the labour market, such misconceptions produced a mis-match, resulting in their failure to achieve their aspirations and secure employment. Policy solutions therefore laid in rendering these expectations 'manageable'. Here the role of the main State agency involved in training, that is the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) was all important, because it was this institution which implemented the view that young Black people needed to be socialised into accepting that it is not discrimination, but their individual and group traits, which should be challenged (Solomos. 1983).

In sum, with regards to training the concepts of 'special needs' and 'special help', (incorporating such assumptions), was applied to young Black people; especially through the use of remedial programmes designed to compensate for the disadvantages (as opposed to discrimination) which they face (Pollert. 1985; Cross et al. 1983). Indeed one feature of the official literature in this area was the tendency to lump together ethnic minorities, young women and the disabled (Cross. 1982). Constructing disadvantage in this way means policy makers avoided analysing the specificity of discrimination effecting these groups. It also points to problems inherent in attempting to define equality of opportunity (Jenkins and Solomos. 1987).

Response to Women's Training Needs - The Construction of Gender Disadvantage

While young Black people have been the main focus of political dialogue on discrimination, albeit under the rhetoric of disadvantage, the same cannot be said for women; whose position is blatantly ignored, both in the research field and government initiatives on training (see Wickham. 1986). Responses to women's training needs have been further undermined by the lack of commitment, on the part of policy makers, to tackling structural sexual inequalities in the labour market. Where they have addressed the issue this is often confined to palliative statements, rather than instituting constructive measures. Therefore what specific policy initiatives there have been tend to focus on providing either remedial confidence boosting skills, or a limited range of training in traditional female skills, especially for women returning to work. There has been some move towards giving training in non-traditional work areas, such as engineering and the building trades; but in terms of outcome, this is hampered by the barriers to employing women in these sectors (Cockburn. 1983).

In identifying women's training needs within the context of unemployment, a distinction must be made between training provision for school leavers and adults. Furthermore within this latter age group it is important to differentiate between training for labour market returnees eg. married women

and that for existing female employees.

Indeed in attempting to cater for women, providers of training are drawn from both the public and private sector; with the educational services offering a range of facilities, mainly in the direction of either compensatory education, skills training and/or certification. Overall training provision for women has remained sketchy, with most adult women being discouraged from entering schemes usually because of poor child care arrangements. The situation for younger women is markedly different, primarily because they fall within the youth category, thereby coming within the catchment of youth training provision.

Using a similar model to that applied to unemployed youth, government training programmes are premised on the assumption that women are disadvantaged by the repertoire of skills which they possess (Wickham. 1986). State explanations are also rooted in the acknowledgement of the socialisation process, within the family and schooling system, which effectively sets up barriers to personal development outside of rigid engendered definitions of what constitutes women's work (Deem. 1980). As a result within political discourse, the rhetoric of equality of opportunity in actuality means equal treatment, rather than positive discrimination. In part this springs from what the CCCS Education Group (1981) describe as the post war 'social democratic repetoire', where emphasis was placed on class equality, to the exclusion of challenging sex inequalities. Wickham (1986) presents a useful analysis of this process. She writes:

> "Equality, however conceived, was gender-neutral
> in rhetoric but inherently male in its application and
> practice. Women slipped out of the class category.
> Equality for all became, in practice, equality for males.
> Yet the absence of women could almost go unnoticed because
> the slippage out of the class category was so generally in
> tune with the more general social ideologies that believed
> women's place was in the home."
>
> (p. 24)

Wickham's observations are also applicable to the situation of Black women, because if we transpose 'race' for class, then similar processes can be seen at work. Black women's training and employment needs are also relegated to a

secondary position which *only* finds expression at the level of rhetoric. 'Race' equality really means Black male equality towards which the definition of 'needs' and solutions are directed and implemented. Yet while all women face the prospect of inequality in the labour market, as Phizacklea (1983) argues they do so from differing positions. Bryan et al (1985) point out that Black women face discrimination from the wider society and within women's employment. The specificity of their position cuts across all other social inequalities metered out to the various groups that make up the 'anti-discrimination' arena.

Policy responses to Black women's training needs have, by default, seized upon cultural deficiency models and the 'unrealistic expectations' explanatory tool. However, the threat posed by alienated Black youth, has not been applied to young Black women, principally because such fears are not viewed as involving gender issues. In terms of training, young Black women can find themselves labelled as in need of 'remedial help' and/or confidence boosting provision. This is witnessed by the fact that no specific policy initiatives towards this group have emerged; thereby subsuming their 'needs' under the categories of Black youth and women alike.

However, common to all women is the strong underlying belief, accepted by the State, trade unions and other key institutions (education, employment and welfare), that it is women's domestic roles which should be considered above and beyond their economic function (Ungerson. 1985). To this end various injunctions and hypotheses about the desirability of investing in women's training have been constructed into a set of explanatory models about why women fail to secure equality of opportunity in the labour market. Primarily women's nurturing function (which is endowed with an assumed naturalism), is carried through to their position in the labour market and enshrined in their status within the employment field.

For example a pervasive assumption is the ascription of femininity to women's work; ie. that women don't wish to get their hands dirty, or mix with male workers in 'rough' masculine environments. Linked to this is the fact

that women are seen as poorly motivated, viewing employment as a temporary stop gap, that relieves boredom and provides pin money, with which to supplements family income (Charles. 1986).

This type of scenario is reinforced by the fact that women's jobs *are* concentrated in those sectors providing caring, welfare and domestic services, which it is believed fits in with their role in the family (Counter Information Service Report. 1981). This is further compounded by the fact that women show a preference for part-time work; an employment sphere that does not require extensive training. Indeed, the complicity of the State in underscoring the view that women's employment is detrimental to the survival of the family, has been demonstrated by Land (1985) in her analysis of the juro-legal system. Overall such examples are typical of the prejudices that many women face, where their commitment to the labour market is treated in a dismissive fashion. Even those women who are seen as more career-oriented continually work under pressure, ie. to prove that marriage and/or children are not their ultimate goals! These types of arguments and counter-arguments led the Women's National Commission (1985) to conclude that women's main roles are erroneously portrayed as ones entailing a social educative function *within* the family and not outside of it.

What makes these assumptions so persistent is the fact they do have some basis, for in reality women do have to take on board these considerations. Extensive research has shown that in nearly every case it is the interpretation of these factors which is problematic, failing to challenge structural forces that shape the nature of women's entrance and participation in the labour market. For instance Coyle (1984) and Pollert (1981) have both shown how women define employment as a natural and necessary part of their lives. Research into the working lives of women factory workers found that their attachment to work is similar to that of men's (Martin and Wallace. 1984). Research conducted on women's employment histories, (Yeandle. 1984) and on the employment of part-time women workers, (Ballard. 1984), illustrate that women are not simply working for pin money or to allieviate boredom, but

are constrained by the lack of child care facilites which would enable them to return to full-time employment. Research conducted by Brown et al (1983) reveal that part-time women workers prioritise convenient hours and proximity to home. Furthermore, Elias and Main (1982) found that many women returnees experienced downward mobility. Evidence of this kind demonstrates the complexity which surround women's employment; pointing to the interplay between demands emanating from both the employment market and the family (Beechey. 1984). In sum the attitude of policy elites towards women's employment and training remains firmly entrenched in social and cultural gender constructions, which have been resistant to change. The Women's National Commission (1985) observed this point when they wrote:

> "The training women get, including vocational studies at school and in FE, tends to be determined by the **historical pattern of women's short term involvement in the work force**, not by **realistic assessment of changes**, which have either recently taken place, or those which are likely to happen soon."

(p. 36)

Summary - The One Year YTS And State Strategies In The Mid-1980s

Returning to the nature of the State training provision for the young in the mid-1980s, all the above elements associated with defining disadvantage find expression in the one year YTS. The scheme was launched under the auspices of a Conservative government whose perspective lends itself to the operation of a free-market oriented approach to employment and training. Here the 'market' determines the recruitment and selection of workers, in conjunction to defining training needs. The approach necessarily entails a shift away from the question of providing individuals with training from which they can search for work, towards training that provides them with a range of 'skills', known as competencies from which employers then select. This shift has occurred in the context of transforming production markets, together with the rise in unemployment. It is unemployment which is the key factor here determining the nature of training in Britain, particularly since 1979. Accordingly the State has attempted through a variety of means, including the utilisation of the legislature and statutory bodies, such as the MSC, to alter the terms upon

which workers, especially new recruits, enter the labour market.

The one year YTS was therefore part of an overall strategy, whereby employers were endowed with control, via the scheme's structure, over the selection and recruitment of trainees. However, just as workers are differentiated along a number of dimensions, for instance gender, 'race', qualification, experience and age to name but a few, so too are trainees, who it is argued here now form a new labour category. The YTS, with its employer-led structure, could not ensure that all young people were located in employer- led schemes. As a result built into the programme was a two-tiered structure that corresponds to training with an employer and training within a sheltered environment that stands <u>outside</u> the labour market. It is to this latter category that the research presented here is addressed.

Black and White Girls on the Youth Training Scheme - Outline of the Research

To this end this research project is concerned with the nature of YTS Mode B provision, from the point of view of the young people who came within its remit. It is my contention that specific issues over how the YTS in practice reproduced inqualities, cannot and should not be examined without attention to how young people (in this case young Black and White women) experienced and assessed the scheme. This is because inequality is not simply about allocation and access; it is above all experiential. How it is felt invokes questions about how the young interpret their position and the factors that determine this. Such an approach also allows research to address some of the more contentious assumptions about youth, which informed policy decisions, providing as they do a justification for inequality. For instance, does the expectations of young people reflect labour market realities or do they remain, as officialdom would have us believe, unduly ignorant of the demands which work requires? Similarly if young people are making realistic assessments about their future careers, how is unemployment and training affecting their analyses? These are just some of the issues which this research project takes on board. In doing so the research starts from a premise that young people are actively engaged in making post-school

choices, but that this process is neither straightforward nor precise. Rather, it is felt that how young people make decisions in a era of high unemployment and job uncertainty, is based on the number of options open to them. In attempting to summarise this newly emerging process Cohen (1984) refers to a series of transitional patterns, where the options open to young people include various survival strategies, of which the YTS is one. One reason for this is raised by Coffield et al (1986) whose research findings suggest that unemployed youth still need to establish an occupational identity with which to make the transition to adulthood. The work of Jenkins (1983) and Griffin (1985b) respectively point to the class and gender dimension involved in this process. Hence young people entering the YTS did so from differing class-cultural *engendered* perspectives, which provide a framework for assessing the whole spectre of work, training and ultimately life futures (Cohen. 1986). These same perspectives also incorporate 'race' and gender components, that can serve as a prism through which experience is identified and measured (Hall. 1978; Griffin. 1982). From this it is apparent that the existence of 'race' and gender discrimination does not tell us how these are managed and interpreted by the recipients of such practices.

Equally important is the question of how dominant ideological assumptions about 'race', gender and class find expression within the social context of the schemes themselves. Again, while much is known about how discrimination at the point of entry works to the exclusion of girls, (Fawcett Society. 1985) and young Black people, (Cross. 1986), information about how these processes effect relations between trainers and trainees, together with the impact this had throughout the training period, still remained a significant area where more research was needed. Moreover, for young women these issues tended to be relegated to a secondary position, despite the fact that youth training appeared to be reproducing patterns of gender and racial subordination. I therefore felt that it was appropriate to focus on these two groups, to the exclusion of Black and White young men, precisely because they dominate research in the areas of youth employment, unemployment, training and

education. In spite the challenging work of feminists, social science still exhibits a tendency to ignore the specificity of gender, particularly in the analysis of political and social issues. Griffin (1985a) argues that this preoccupation with male employment and the androcentric nature of the politics of training, both undermines the importance of women's employment as an economic activity within its own right and the repercussions of this for the reproduction of the family. It also militates against a fuller understanding of the effects of unemployment on the pattern of gender relations in the home and the workplace. The work of Massey (1984) has also shown how this process also refers to transformations in the capitalist market and its utilisation of sexual divisions of labour, as a medium through which this is expressed. Generally, the current poor status of studying women's position in the social arena provided the impetus behind the research discussed in this thesis. In doing so the research seeks to prioritise the training experience and position of Black and White girls on the YTS.

In the development of Youth as a problem category, political discourse has sought to direct the behaviour of young people. However, young Black and White women remained peripheral to the analysis (McRobbie. 1980). This is borne out by the fact that the bulk of studies on youth subcultures that are largely located in the sociology of deviance, make little or no reference to young women (Stanley and Wise. 1983). It is therefore not surprising that this is true of other areas connected with youth, most notably critiques of youth training programmes, which ignore the specificity of gender in these schemes and in youth labour markets (Pollert. 1986). I therefore felt that it was important to problematise the position of Black and White girls from a resistance stand point. In doing so, the question of how Black and White girls resist their subordinated position, together with the different employment strategies utilised to make sense of their position, is elevated within the research framework. In doing so such an approach provides an opportunity to conceptualise the position of girls as active participants, rather than passive victims of their situation.

Outline of Thesis Chapters

In the following chapters these issues are raised in the context of the labour market, with specific attention paid to the pattern of State interventions in the youth labour market. Chapter One examines the role of State training initiatives with reference to the underlying objectives in the formulation of policies on youth unemployment. In analysing the development of State training policies, three periods are identified, which correspond to major policy changes on youth unemployment. The first period covers training policies up until the election of a Conservative government in 1979; the second refers to a watershed period, between 1979 and 1981, which culminated in the formulation of a New Training Initiative (NTI) 1981, representing a radical shift away from past policies, in an attempt to alter the nature of youth employment as a whole. The NTI is analysed in the context of the government's understanding of the labour market; in conjunction with the 'hidden agendas' over youth and training that underpin much of the State's assessment of the youth problem. Finally, the third period covers the introduction of the one year Youth Training Scheme in 1983 and its operations up until its expansion into a two year programme in 1986. Here an outline of the scheme's structure and the nature of its provision is presented, where emphasis is placed on those aspects of its functionings which highlight the underlying objectives of State policy.

The State in depicting the young as deficient resorted to a number of explanations about the rise in youth unemployment, together with the position of young people in the labour market. Chapter Two addresses these two issues by first focusing on the nature of youth unemployment in Britain, particularly between 1979 and 1984; this is followed by an examination of the main features of the youth labour market. Together Chapters One and Two provide the background against which the research was based. Given the size and complexity of the one year YTS and the numerous issues surrounding its operation, the research concentrates on certain aspects of the scheme in preference to others. For example, the research is located within two

training environments which exhibited a number of important differences with regards to the position and status of young Black and White women. Furthermore those aspects pertinent to the female trainees' experience of training, especially in relation to the degree of investment that they were prepared to make and the factors which affected this are also explored. As a result not all aspects of their training is reported here, partly in response to the above and because in terms of what happened to them on the schemes, certain issues emerged as more important than others.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology and practice, by situating this in the context of conducting social research in familiar settings. Specifically the aim of this chapter is to explore a number of themes associated with the role of the researcher in the 'field'. Central to the discussion is the contention that this role necessarily affects the nature of the research, the questions posed, the relationships with respondents and other key actors and ultimately the research outcome. My approach was client-centred, and directed towards examining those issues that my respondents saw as important to them. The Chapter also provides a chronicle of the research process, and the ways in which the two schemes under study were chosen.

Thereafter, interview data is organised in such a way as to reflect the transition from school to the YTS. The aim is to provide an account of the experiences of Black and White girls on the two case study schemes, in order to understand the nature of their training needs in the context of how they made or didn't make choices about their future careers; what their expectations were of the labour market, and the factors identified by them, which led them choosing the one year YTS. To this end Chapter Four focuses on the past schooling experiences of the sample group, in order to identify what factors determined their decision to leave school. In contrast Chapter Five takes a further step back by discussing those aspects of their encounters in the child/juvenile labour market prior to leaving school. The rationale for examining this feature of their lives lies with the charge that

young people upon leaving school are ill-equipped and undisciplined in applying themselves to the world of work. My research findings tend to refute this charge, by illustrating how young peoples' experiences are far more complex than is assumed within official thinking. Moreover, it is argued that participating in the child/juvenile labour market exposes the young to similar discriminatory processes as faced by their elders, including sexual segregation and harassment at work and the operation of racial discrimination in employment. Evidence of this kind also raises the question that such exposures provide young people with an understanding of their membership of racial and sexual groupings within the context of the labour market; as well as influences their understanding of what to expect from the employment.

Chapters Six and Seven are both concerned with the post-school activities and experiences of the sample group in the labour market prior to joining the YTS. Chapter Six concentrates on the nature of their job search activities, the role of the Careers Service and finally the outcomes which this had for individuals. Chapter Seven, takes a closer look at these outcomes, in terms of the employment and unemployment experiences of the sample group, by highlighting those aspects which they reported as important to them. Arising out of this a central argument developed in the discussion is that the length of time spent in the post-school labour market, together with employment status, played a crucial role in their eventual decision to enter the YTS. Furthermore, with regards to their expectations of training, it is argued that the time spent in the labour market, provided individuals with an analysis of the role of training in their transition to the world of work. Chapter Eight focuses on the experiences of Black and White girls located in the Information Technology Centre (ITeC). The focal point of the discussion rests in the nature of the gender and 'race' relations in the scheme and the impact this had on the attitude of the female trainees towards their training investment. While Chapter Nine examines the main issues effecting the quality of Black and White girls' training experience on the Community Projects (CP) scheme; together with their assessment of the impact of the scheme on their labour

market aspirations. Chapter Ten, concludes the thesis by providing an analysis of the main issues affecting the training experience of Black and White girls as discussed in the previous chapters. In sum it will be argued that the nature of their training experience, together with their understanding of employment opportunities in the mid-1980s, highlights the underlying objectives of State youth training programmes, by showing the discrepancy between State constructions of the Youth 'problem' and how young people actually perceive their position in the labour market.

The research material was collected in the early to mid-1980s, at a time when research into the position of Black Youth was still top-down in its methodological approach. In practice this meant that most studies were engaged in proving racism, and to this end presented various prescriptions about what constituted the 'problem'. Most of the studies within this sub-discipline were primarily conducted by White middle class males, and reflected their gender bias. Little information was collected on the specificity of young Black women's experiences, or the ways in which this was critical to a better understanding of racism and sexism. The ethical and political issues that this lack of academic interest on gender gives rise to, goes beyond merely giving this group a greater role within research projects, but in actuality point to questioning the nature of research on 'race' per se. Subsequently a Postscript has been added to this thesis in order to discuss some of the political and methodological issues surrounding my research. Moreover, this discussion will clarify the approach adopted in the research, by setting out the reasons why racism was not given a primary position within the research findings.

NOTES:

1. Throughout the thesis the term Black is applied to those young people of West Indian origin. Unfortunately, no Asian girls were present on the schemes studied. Though the two origin terms, that is West Indian and Afro Caribbean are often used interchangeably in the literature I have chosen to use the term West Indian, where the text requires that origin be specified. This is because of my own personal preference for the term and because my respondents tended to use the term West Indians when talking about origins. I am nevertheless aware that there is a considerable debate going on about the uses of language; and the fact that many commentators reject the term West Indian on the grounds that

it represents the language of colonial domination. Rather, the term Afro
Caribbean is utilised instead to denote the specificity of the african
experience, dating back to the days of slavery. However I would argue
that for both myself and the Black girls I interviewed, Afro Caribbean is
a fairly new term, which at the time of the research did not fit in with
the language of our parents, from whom we derived much of our West
Indian cultural experience.
Another aspect which needs clarification is that throughout the text
where mention is made of racial origins, these are written with a capital.
I have instituted this practice in order to emphasise the political
aspects of this, which goes beyond the naturalism of colour. Again this
is a personal choice, one which I feel is valid because the terms refer
to a racial (and cultural) experience, which is infused with different
meanings, depending upon the way in which they are used. In order to
bring home this point, nowhere in the text do I refer to the collective
title of the two groups studied as Blacks or Whites, which I feel is an
unfortunate short hand descriptive mechanism, which belies the political
origins of Blackness and Whiteness. Indeed one might go so far as to say
de-humanises an individual's experience as well as assumes a uniformity
in *their* understanding of their racial and cultural heritage. Instead the
terms are always qualifed in the text with reference to the specific
topic in which they arise. I found that this corresponded with my
respondents use of the terminology, since at no time did they specify
Blacks or Whites as a way of describing themselves, their communities or
each other.

2.   Ethnic Origin refers to cultural/ethnic background and not nationality.
     When considering what constitues an Ethnic Minority the following
     attributes should be taken into consideration: A common history, cultural
     tradition, religion, regional language and literature.

3.   Throughout the thesis where the term 'race' is used it is written in
     quotation marks to denote the fact that it is an ideologically
     constructed term, rather than a phenomena grounded in reality. This
     follows the argument of Phizacklea and Miles (1980) that 'race' has no
     reality other than as a social construction, and, that what needs to be
     explained is not 'race' in itself, but the social processes that underpin
     its construction.

CHAPTER ONE   THE STATE, TRAINING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE

OF THE 'YOUTH' PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

As outlined in the introduction, youth training is linked to changes in the
nature of work, that has entailed a transformation of the structure of jobs
opportunities for the general labour force and what can be typified as the
youth labour market. How labour markets work, and the place of young men and
women in them is vital to any analysis of the advantages that can be gained
from training; as well as a tool for assessing the strengths and weakness of
the initiatives currently on offer to them in the 1980s. It is with these
considerations in mind that the extent and direction of State responses to
the issue of training has been influenced by wider policy goals. In practice
this refers to what Lindley (1983) describes as:- the state of the economy;
the economic and political strategies pursued by governments and finally the
resulting contradictions which this gives rise to, especially on the question
of industrial relations. Given that training policy and practice does not take
place in isolation from these wider concerns, it is precisely against this
background that youth training provision needs to be assessed. Moreover it
is argued that since the 1960s several shifts in the definition and nature
of (youth) training can be detected, culminating in an attempt to refashion
the relationship between education and training in the mid-1980s. In what
follows a brief outline of the main trends in State responses to the issue of
training since the 1960s is undertaken in order to contextualise the nature
of youth training in the mid-1980s. Thereafter a number of important themes
are addressed which together provide an explanation of why young people have
emerged as the principal focus of interventionist State training strategies.
It will be argued that this has entailed new ways of conceptualising training
as a purely demand-related issue, where an individual centred deficiency-model
of the industrial worker has been constructed and applied to the young in
particular ways.

Prior to 1964 Britain's industrial training policy was fairly relaxed, with the State playing a minimal role in ensuring that workers received adequate training provision. However, during the late 1950s an emerging concern over the level of skills shortages in industry, was linked to the inadequacy of uncoordinated sectorial industrial training provision; it was felt that a more uniform standard of skills training was needed if British workers were to keep abreast of changes in the production process. In response to these concerns, Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) were established under the 1964 Industrial Training Act. The Boards were made responsible for coordinating training within there particular industries, by ensuring the re-allocation of an industry's resources through the levying of a collective payroll tax. In addition the Boards were entrusted with the task of establishing minimum standards, whose main objective was to improve the quality of industrial training. The Boards were also instructed to increase the number of training places through the use of incentives that were enshrined in the new system. Essentially, the grant/levy system that the Act established entailed a "carrot and stick" approach, as firms were made to bear the costs of their industry's training provision through the levying system. In return those firms who met the *acceptable* training level set by their ITB, which also included a fixed number of places, were entitled to a subsidized training allowance from the Board. The implementation of ITBs allowed for industrial consolidation, under the guise of industrial consensus, whilst also maintaining moderate wage demands by ensuring the maintenance of craft differentials that operated in the larger firms. Trade union co-operation with the ITBs and their co-option on to the Boards was agreed upon the basis that the entrance of labour supplies to firms could be regulated. This was in order to establish control over the supply so as not to upset the power balance of skills monopolised by the craft trade unions (Goldstein. 1984).

The system fostered by the ITBs was subject to growing criticism as its inability to meet the objectives laid down in the Act became increasingly

apparent. The government of the day came under pressure from small firms to relax the regulations on the levy, in order to free them from the burden associated with fulfilling the administrative duties of monitoring their training programmes. Furthermore by the late 1960s it was clear that as a solution to the country's "skills shortages", the ability of the 27 ITBs to implement new developments in skills requirements, or promote the retraining of workers in those sectors that were undergoing a decline, was severely handicapped. Moreover, there was no substantive evidence that the Boards had improved the quality of training (Chapman and Tooze. 1987).

The Rise And Role Of The Manpower Services Commission

As a result of these criticisms a review of the 1964 Act in 1971 led to changes in the funding arrangements of the ITBs. The Act reflected the State's main concern about the unwillingness of employers to pay for the costs of training through the grant/levy system. What was called for was a financial commitment not only in terms of running the ITBs, but also in the form of a coordinating body that would oversee the work of the Boards, as well as have its own input into vocational training. It was proposed that some kind of National Training Agency be established to do just that. This proposal was to form the prototype of the Department of Employment's Training Services Agency (TSA), which had responsibility for existing vocational training schemes. Another civil service department deployed as part of this new shake up of State training arrangements was the Employment Services Agency (ESA), which had responsibility for administering various mobility, recruitment and placement programmes, that included the running local Job Centres. The plan was that these two agencies would be brought under the wings of a newly created Manpower Services Commission (MSC); and that in turn the Commission would be directly accountable to the Secretary of State. The Commission was envisaged as a small scale body responsible for advising on manpower planning, and coordinating the work of the other two independent statutory bodies. Later amendments to the Act, established the Commission as a separate body - or quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation (QUANGO).

The development of training programmes fostered by the MSC, especially with reference to the young unemployed, is one which involves a complex web of initiatives, that reflect the MSC's growing realisation throughout the late 1970s, that youth and adult unemployment were problems that were not simply going to disappear. The rise of the MSC from a small scale institutional body in the early 1970s to one that had come to redefine the nature of the transition from school to work in the mid-1980s, is a history that involved the re-formulation of a number of themes, originating from earlier political concerns over the ineffectiveness of Britain's industrial training provision. A brief overview reveals the extent to which this concern informed various issues that focussed on youth unemployment, education and the need for a flexible supply of labour.

The rise in mass unemployment fundamentally altered the role and activities of the MSC, whereby it came to assume direct control of the operation and function of various schemes under the direction of the two executive agencies. The expansion of the MSC's functions was primarily aided by the change in government that occurred in 1974. In its manifesto the Labour party had made a strong commitment to establishing a 'powerful body responsible for the development and execution of a comprehensive manpower policy' (Jackson. 1986).

Thus the foundations for a more interventionist role were laid by the time the Commission as a State quango came into being in February 1974. What however provided the impetus under which the MSC was catapulted to the forefront of State responses to unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, was the re-formulation of old concerns over skills shortages, that entailed a shift in thinking away from an emphasis on shortages, to the rhetoric of 'flexible' skills training in preparation for future needs of the economy. Such a view propounded in the mid-1970s was to take shape under the newly defined role of the MSC in the late 1970s, culminating in the inauguration of the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP). The main components of this debate were aimed not at the workforce in general, but a specific

group, namely the young unemployed. Two factors are important here, because together they informed the level at which this debate was pitched. Firstly, the political exigencies over the question of youth had, in view of their rising unemployment rates, propelled them to the forefront of the debate over unemployment; and secondly, that this took place in the context of Education and its relationship to the economy. This latter aspect needs to be more closely examined because contained within it were a number of important themes about the position of young people in the labour market, together with the demands made by employers, which became known collectively as the 'needs of industry'.

The Relationship Between Education And The 'Needs Of Industry'

In the 1960s there was a prevalent assumption of educational consensus about the question of tapping into a vast pool of ability, which had previously remained hidden, because of the lack of opportunities afforded to the working class. Fostered by a climate of liberalisation in education, emphasis was placed on creating conditions in schools which were more egalitarian; aimed at preparing young people for the transition from school to citizen.

The CCCS (1981) Education Group argue that historically political attitudes towards "education for all" had been informed by two major positions, which refers to "social reforms and the attainment of equality", and human capital theories, where people are assessed in terms of the system's needs. This brought together what Finn (1982) describes as the view that expanding education would contribute to economic growth. This view was not shared by all interested parties, and during the same period there arose a broad based debate on the question of better preparing the future workforce for the realities of the new technological age. This was linked to the 'needs of industry', where young workers were required to adopt a work discipline based on learning skills, rather than one based on general knowledge. Though formulated around the question of skills shortages, there was an implicit challenge to the role of education, in determining the quality of new entrants into the labour market.

The growth of unemployment throughout the early 1970s was to sharpen these criticisms and provide it with an edge over the liberal consensus of the previous decade. Thereafter the debate was framed in the language of a 'mismatch' between educational goals and their clientele's future location as workers in the labour market. It is against this background that industrialists and other key commentators on Britain's long term industrial competitiveness, openly took up the 'needs of industry' argument and re-worked it into a critique of the inability of the young worker to adapt to the rigours of the job market. These complaints focussed on a fall in educational standards, where it was contended the teaching on offer had no relevancy for young people's future careers in the world of work. This criticism was also couched within a language of moral indignation about the supposed rise in promiscuity amongst the young. The remarks of Dan Finn (1982) on this issue provides a useful summary of the main assumptions informing the debate:

> "Not only was there a growing recognition that being a pupil means being subject to different patterns of social control, discipline and freedom but, it was argued, because of developments in schooling, this pattern of control, and its associated dispositions, was actually developing in contradiction to those required at work."
>
> (p. 43)

This view was supported by a number of surveys on employers' attitudes towards the young, the most notable of which was the 1974 National Youth Employment Council's Study (NYEC). They reported that employers were dissatisfied with the motivations and attitudes of young people, and, pointed to this factor as the reason for their lack of employability (NYEC. 1974). It is to this debate that the MSC addressed itself not long after its inception, as it became clear that the deficiency end of the human capital theory could be used quite successfully, to shift attention away from the negative impact of long term changes in the economy, that inevitably would affect the nature of the labour supply (Moos. 1983).

In 1975 the TSA produced a report on vocational preparation that was in line with the sentiments expressed by employers. The report noted that the 'social environment' of schools was at variance with the prerequisite work discipline demands made by employers: "where the need to achieve conformity within defined standards and to do so within fixed time-limits call for different patterns of behaviour" (MSC/TSA. 1975). Similarly a year later the TSA produced a small pamphlet entitled **Training for Skills**. In it the TSA argued that industrial changes were altering the nature of skills requirements, resulting in a need to prepare the future workforce, through <u>centralised</u> <u>programmes</u> (TSA. 1976a). In that same year the TSA also produced a survey report based within the context of Further Education, that talked of reforms leading to a "new-hybrid" skilled worker, who would ideally replace the traditional skills divisions enshrined in craft apprenticeships. One important shift embedded in the report was the reformulation of the problem as one of retraining workers, particularly in low paid sectors, ie the unskilled workforce; and this was seen as distinctive from a question of training for skills shortages. The report also reiterated the criticisms about young workers, especially their lack of basic education in literacy and numeracy (TSA. 1976b).

1976 was also the year of the 'Great Debate' in Education initiated by the then prime minister, James Callaghan. This debate provided the Labour government with a public platform from which to signal its shift away from the policy ideal of educational expansion which the Labour Party had propounded in the 1960s. In this debate the language of 'mismatch' prevailed, marking the beginning of the intention to intervene in the affairs of the young on two fronts, education and unemployment. During this same period figures provided by the Department of Employment in 1978 showed that unemployment amongst the under-18s was running as high as 56 per cent and 48 per cent for young men and women respectively. Indeed a total of 800,000 school leavers registered as unemployed throughout the year and by July 1976 unemployed male and female school leavers formed 14 per cent of the

unemployed. The Government faced with a potential catastrophic political situation were under pressure to respond quickly.

The Emergence Of The Youth Opportunities Programme 1978 - 1983

During the 1970s the MSC alongside its two executive wings (the TSA and ESA) initiated a bewildering number of temporary special training programmes, aimed at both young and older unemployed categories. The very nature of these programmes was part of an overall policy of counter-cyclic job creation measures designed to off-set the worse effects of the recession. However as unemployment mounted, the Labour government of the day was under increasing pressure to be seen to be doing something about the problem. Of all the programmes for the young unemployed introduced during this period, the 1976 Work Experience Programme (WEP) is the most relevant because it more clearly demonstrates the emerging ethos through which youth training was becoming defined. WEP was underpinned by a dominant belief that young people were 'disadvantaged' by their lack of experience, which could be remedied by giving them a chance to improve their 'employability' position through induction into the rigours of work. WEP was replaced by the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) announced in the autumn of 1978.

It is within this scenario that Geoffrey Holland, the MSC chairman in 1977 brought out a report which proposed a more broad-based work experience and training programme (MSC. 1977). The report made great play of the attitudes of employers towards young workers, finding that they were 'disadvantaged' by the fact of being young; especially when compared to up-graded existing employees, married women and recruits from other firms. The Holland report as it was known, also considered the economic disincentives to employing the young. It was noted that labour productivity methods lessened requirements for unskilled jobs, in which most of the young unemployed were located. The report wanted to do away with training which was rooted in one particular skill category or industry, since it was clear that structural forces would alter what these would be. Thus Holland was in the business of re-composing the labour force, whilst still maintaining the MSC's "fire-fighting" role.

The Holland report presented an overhaul of existing provision, examining the extent of youth unemployment, its causes and therefore its solution. Holland perceived that the distribution and impact of unemployment amongst the young was uneven, pointing to particular groups of young people, who were identified as the 'least able'. This category included the unqualified, young women, ethnic minorities and those other young people deemed to be on the 'margins', such as originating from working class unemployed families, ex-offenders and the disabled. The report recommended the setting up of a new training scheme called the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP).

Under YOP a primary objective was to afford young people a 'ladder of opportunity' that catered for their different needs and abilities. Another objective located within this formula was the induction of Social and Life Skills, aimed at providing a form of compensatory education, designed to build up young people's knowledge of work related matters. Atkinson et al (1982) describe this as a process of 'moral rearmament', whereby demoralised, potentially socially disruptive youngsters, are labelled as 'deficient in relevant and acceptable abilities, experience, motivations and attitudes'. Together these two objectives represented the fight against the moral decay of the young. Moreover Holland argued that precisely because the educational system had failed to instill these qualities, YOP was ideally suited to provide this service through the process of vocational preparation. In promoting this view the MSC effectively challenged the Department of Education, by offering to bridge the gap between education and training; with the exception that training would no longer be job specific, but instead seek to enhance young people's competitive skills. Thus YOP was never intended to guarantee jobs, but rather geared toward preparing specific groups of young people for the world of work, through work experience, training and preparatory education, that relied heavily on Social and Life Skills teaching.

As we have seen YOP was framed within the language of opportunity, that catered for three age categories by providing a variety of courses and work experience programmes. YOP was geared to the under-19s and offered a range

of training activities for the young unemployed, split between actual and simulated work experience for periods of up to 6 months. Originally designed to cater for up to 262,000 young people, by 1980 the MSC made a commitment to place all unemployed young people on the scheme by Easter 1979. However, the impact of the post-1979 sharp rise in youth unemployment, especially amongst school leavers, increased the numbers of young people participating in YOP to some 553,000 in 1980-1982.

YOP consisted of three elements known as:- Work Preparation Courses, an extension of previous initiatives, designed to introduce young people to specific areas of manual employment, for three months; Employment Induction Courses, lasting two weeks and aimed at improving employability, by aiding young people's career choices: in addition to improving their job search and job maintenance skills (which includes Social and Life Skills training) and Preparatory Courses aimed at disabled groups. The bulk of YOP courses were however directed towards Work Experience Schemes on Employers Premises, and Project-Based Work Experience courses in Training Workshops and Community Services. All these measures were launched under the rhetoric of a need for flexibility, which Moos (1979) argues in practice meant preparing young people for intermittent employment and unemployment. YOP therefore served to propagandise the State's interpretation of training, by giving credibility to the notion that putting people in workplaces for employers' short term needs *was* training. The introduction of the YOP initiative also marks a shift in State policy (enacted by the MSC) away from what the CCCS (1981) Education Group describe as "the repertoire of concern for justice and efficiency", to be replaced by an emphasis on "the need for 'employability'", where specific skills training was replaced by certified generic skills.

At the heart of YOP was a fusion between the need to adapt to meet new production requirements and the seeming danger of allowing young people to remain workless. Holland spoke at length over the impending catastrophe which youth unemployment would give rise to if not immediately dealt with. Holland supported the view that unemployment has a debilitating affect on the

attitudes and work motivation of the young, leading to potential social strife, if not chaos.

Fears such as these over the volatility of unemployed youth were amplified by the general increase in militancy during the 1970s. For example, the rise in trade union activity (particularly at the shop floor level) in the late 1960s spilled over into the early 1970s, eventually resulting in the collapse of the Tory government under Edward Heath in 1973. The threat of union power was also a main factor in paving the way for the return to a more social market oriented approach to industrial relations and training, under the hegemony of the Conservative Party in 1979 (Fairley and Grahl. 1983). Generally, while the specific activity of unions in the 1970s need not concern us here, what is important is the underlying fear that the atmosphere of discontent could spread to other sections of society, most notably the young and the unemployed. It is this potential threat which has remained a persistent argument underpinning State policies aimed at school leavers - a kind of 'catch them early' rhetoric shared by the main political parties.

This aspect of State responses to youth unemployment needs to be addressed in greater detail at this stage, because it is this, more than any other which has informed all subsequent debates on the category of Youth. In doing so the uptake of the Youth category highlights how the shift in State policy away from industrial skills training, towards a preoccupation with the unemployed, reconstitutes the notion of individual training needs, to one that directly refers to the deficiency model of the industrial worker.

The Youth Question - The Construction Of The Youth Category

Post war political concerns about demoralised youth originate in earlier debates responding to the changing, more visible location of teenagers in the family and wider society. The CCCS (1981) Education Group, argue that full employment in the 1950s gave families greater financial security; freeing young people from the role of 'auxiliary breadwinners', thus enabling them to have greater control over their earnings. From this the Education Group conclude that:

> "Youth became a 'thermometer' category, its dress and
> lifestyles a moral threat, acting as a powerful but concealed
> metaphor for social change."
>
> (p.234, CCCS. 1981)

However it is the threat posed directly by youth unemployment, that dominates over and above the concerns as outlined by the CCCS. Mungham (1982) arques that previous 'moral panics' about displaced youth during the depression of the 1930s, provided the framework for subsequent political debates on the repercussions of long term unemployment on this section of the population. Mungham provides a useful summary of this feature of State response. He writes:

> "Unemployed youth have always been a special cause for
> concern over and above the obvious fact of their being
> without work. Historically, workless youth have served as a
> focus for successive panics and fears as to the supposed
> social and political implications of large scale and long
> term youth unemployment. Young people in this predicament
> have been viewed, at different times, as the ' nation's
> rotting seed corn ', as prime fodder for agitators coming at
> them from both Right and Left, and as a potential source of
> chronic instability and unrest."
>
> (p. 29)

The links between this and its application to other sections of the Youth category, namely unemployed Black youth has been well established by writers such as Hall et al (1978); John (1981) and Solomos (1984). Taken together the literature in this field reveals a pervasive and persistent belief that the latter category is inherently problematic; and that this group has come to represent the medium through which 'race' relations is measured. From the early 1960s through to the 1980s, policy makers have attempted to manage what is perceived as the crisis of 'race' relations in Britain. Fears over public disorder and the ascription of criminality to this group have dominated and (especially since the late 1970s), directed racial political discourse, effecting the ways in which Black youth unemployment have been dealt with. It is worth quoting Solomos (1984) at length on this point, because he raises a number of issues that, taken together point to what has informed State policy in reference to this group. From his analysis of the literature

Solomos identifies two important elements within State responses to the 'problems' experienced by young Black people that have ironically contributed to the process of discrimination.

He notes that:

> "The first, and perhaps most important mechanism is the ascription to young blacks of certain immutable collective qualities, which are then transformed into taken for granted notions by policy-makers and officials working in control agencies. A good example of this type of ascription is represented by the way in which the 'second generation' theme developed during the 1960s out of rather imprecise notions about 'disadvantage', 'social handicap', and the 'threat of violence'. The second mechanism, which in a sense grows out of the first, is the tendency on the part of the government to intervene on the basis that through their operations they could render young blacks subjectively different. Because it is individual deviance from the norm which is defined as the problem, an inbuilt tendency exists to seek causal explanations of the problems faced by young blacks through reference to cultural and personal inadequacies rather than in relation to the inadequacies of British society.

(p. 10)

As Black youth unemployment rose in the 1970s this was fed into existing fears about Youth and social disorder. What Solomos describes as the 'threat factor', gained wider political currency as youth unemployment levels continued to accelerate. Indeed it can be argued that the construction of the Black youth category became the measure by which the question of demoralised (Black *and* White) youth was assessed. Entering into this scenario is the depiction of Black youngsters as in need of 'special help' because, following the argument outlined in the introductory chapter and by Solomos's observations, they have 'special needs'. Critical to this construction of the 'special problems' faced by young Black people is the conceptualisation of 'needs/problems', as a metaphor for social disadvantage. In principle this refers to 'handicaps' accruing to lack of educational success, employability and attitude; which in turn is linked to earlier pronouncements on first the strangeness and later the identity crisis of immigrants and their British born children - euphemistically known as the "second generation" (Gaskell and Smith. 1981; Carby. 1982a; Lawrence. 1982).

It is within this context that official responses to the position of young

Black people on youth training programmes needs to be examined. The most

significant factor in the construction of the Black Youth (unemployed)

category is the sidestepping of racism and racial discrimination in official

discourse; and its replacement with the notion of disadvantage, which as

implied above serves to depoliticise the experiences of this group. In this

way solutions are couched in a similar language of 'mis-match', that looks to

the characteristics of the young themselves. However in the case of young

Black people 'mis-match' is racialised in ways that call for their 'special

treatment' by policy makers and the like. Cross (1986) demonstrates how the

MSC has, since the 1970s consistently viewed the 'special needs' of ethnic

minority youngsters as referring to remedial provision and preparatory

courses designed to overcome employability deficiencies. In an earlier work

on training schemes Cross et al (1983) conclude that this process is at best

based on a false logic and at worse embued with a racist typification of

young Black people as located outside of the 'normal' developmental cycle of

the physically able:

> "We are appalled to see just how many times black and Asian
> youngsters are bracketed with the handicapped and the
> afflicted. How on earth can groups of normal young people –
> with all the range of human talents and diversities – develop
> their potential when they are continually referred to as
> having 'special needs' analogous to the mentally handicapped,
> the educationally disadvantaged and the ex-offenders."
>
> (p.32)

In assessing the way in which collective-individual constructions of youth,

and youth training incorporate gender and 'race' dimensions, it is important to

examine the undertaking made by the State with regards to training. If State

responses in the 1970s can be characterised as ad hoc, with the main

objective of producing jobs; the approach of the Conservative government since

1979, is to abandon this in favour of producing training. In what follows a

closer examination of this new thinking is undertaken as it directly relates

to the research period and the rise of the one year Youth Training Scheme

(YTS) as the flagship in State intervention in the youth labour market.

The Rise Of Social Market Training.

As we have seen the 1970s was witness to the emergence of a dual training strategy, which drew upon two areas of concern. State responses on the role of training in industry became increasingly overshadowed throughout the decade by a need to tackle unemployment, especially among the young. Initially unemployment was seen as a temporary phenomenon which could be offset by job creation programmes, designed to iron out imperfections in the labour market, thereby eventually returning to a state of equilibrium. Towards the end of the decade under a Labour administration, it became apparent that unemployment was likely to remain and that full employment could no longer be guaranteed by the State (Nairn. 1981).

The victory of the Conservatives in 1979 marked a shift away from the old post war social democratic consensus. The ideological and political rhetoric of this government, under Margaret Thatcher, is based on a belief that the economic problems facing Britain are due to inflation, which is seen as a monetary problem, divorced from the working of the real economy. The main assumption underlying this proposition is that as long as the growth in the money supply is kept under tight control, financial stability, particularly in prices can be maintained, thereby leading to a knock on effect in the rest of the economy. While the intricacies surrounding economic strategy need not concern us, it is important to have a rudimentary understanding of the social and economic perspectives pursued by the Conservative government since 1979. At its most simplistic level, the divergence between the policies of the 1970s and the post 1979 era, can be demonstrated by comparing the two socio-economic perspectives that have informed them.

Up until 1979, keynesian economic and political doctrines formed the inspirational basis for policies pursued by the Labour government. In its broadest sense the intellectual thrust of keynesian politics, lies in the belief that left to itself the capitalist market can not generate enough aggregate demand to guarantee full employment. The market therefore does not, according to this view work perfectly, thereby warranting some form of

State intervention. The approach advocated by the State is to adopt fiscal and monetary policies that concentrate on aggregate demand, rather than wage increases, in the belief that this will stimulate employment. Strategies around increased State spending, shifting the distribution of income through taxation, and regulating investment through the interest rate, are linked to policies designed to influence wage levels, largely through a form of incomes policy. In order to achieve a wage that sufficiently covers the cost of living, the State, under this approach is actively engaged in redistributing incomes with which to increase consumer demand, believed to indirectly stimulate employment. The approach entails a view of the labour market as one patterned by institutions, for example trade unions and employers, who it is believed together set the level of wages. Hence productivity and wage bargaining agreements are invoked as the site in which inflation can be controlled, by instituting wage restraints.

In contrast free market theorists assert that there is a 'natural' rate of unemployment. The belief is that the creation of jobs by the printing of money leads to the raising of expectations, which in reality the economy can not support. A cycle of printing money, according to this scenario, results in price rises (inflation), that causes higher wage demands, that eventually lead to an inflationary spiral, whereby newly printed money is directed not to creating jobs, by investment, but paying for wage demands. As a result of this depiction free market theorists argue that unemployment exists because wages are too high, and, that this is largely due to the activities of trade unions, and other institutional barriers, which constrain the 'natural' operation of the labour market. Keynesians would argue that aggregate wages are not high enough, and that buying power and increases in consumer spending stimulates production. In contrast the free market approach, argues that wages are related to productivity, rather than consumption. The free market approach therefore seeks to regulate wage increases from the demand side alone. The market according to this doctrine must be free to establish wages based on a profitability criteria, which of necessity means lowering the wage.

Moreover, the dominant belief is that a state of equilibrium will be achieved, under which the level of unemployment is just high enough to prevent workers' expectations from becoming too high.

To this end the Conservative government since 1979 has embarked on a series of anti-inflationary measures designed to restrict the growth in the money supply, by for example cutting public sector spending in order to reduce public borrowing and increasing interest rates, which effects private sector borrowing respectively. These type of measures have led to job losses in both the public and private sector, in the latter case because of a decrease in investment, which is usually funded by borrowing. In pursuing these type of policies the government, ironically perhaps, has actively been engaged in attempting to refashion the nature of industrial relations in Britain, in order to reduce the power of workers to demand high wages. Such policies have entailed a desire to weaken trade union power, lower wages and remove public regulations over the use of labour and the workings of labour markets. Whereas keynesian politics demanded some kind of agreement between labour and capital, headed under the leadership of the State, (described as corporatist strategies); free market politicians require no such cooperation.

Instead through a variety of means, the Conservatives have intervened in the jobs market, propagating the belief that full employment is neither viable nor the responsibility of the State. Rather according to this criteria levels of employment depend soley on the needs of the market — market dynamics determining how many workers should be employed; which workers will be recruited and how the level and distribution of wages should be evaluated. The role of the State in this instance then becomes one of ensuring that the market is free to do exactly that. Free market theorists thus view labour as a commodity, the selling of which is hampered by the pressure which trade unions bring to bear on this process, resulting in what is seen as artificial inflationary wage levels that do not reflect the level of production. Gamble (1979) in an analysis of the impact of social (free) market principles, suggests that trade unions are viewed as impeding the introduction of

technology, so reducing mobility and freezing the pattern of employment, whilst the pattern of demand is shifting.

From this scenario it becomes apparent that wider State concerns over the reorganisation and restructuring of the economy through technological transformation will, from the free market theorist point of view, be severely curtailed by the existence of strong trade unions, who seek to defend and maintain existing jobs. Although the strategies adopted by the free market perspective are much more complex and far reaching than identified here, our main concern is with how this has influenced Conservative training policy, especially for the young in the mid-1980s.

Conservative Training Strategies - The New Training Initiative (NTI) 1981

During its first three years of office the government could not be said to have a concrete youth training strategy. Between 1979 and 1981 the State was more concerned to remove what it deemed as unnecessary bureaucratic rules and regulations from the labour market. In the context of training the government stepped up YOP funding to meet the growing tide of unemployed school leavers and other 'older' youth, ie. 17 to 19 year olds. It was however in response to this situation that the MSC proposed a more comprehensive training package for the young unemployed.

In a 1981 report entitled The New Training Initiative: A Consultative Document (MSC. 1981) the Commission outlined a series of proposals for the expansion of YOP. The MSC recommended the modernisation of skills training and apprenticeships; the offering of training and work experience to all unemployed school leavers; and improving adult training equivalent to that of young people. The Conservative government's response to these proposals was to announce the setting up of a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in a White Paper entitled A New Training Initiative: A Programme of Action in 1981, (Department of Employment. 1981) that although using a similar framework, went much further than the MSC's initial proposition. In the State's version, adult training and high level skills training assumed a secondary role, (to be reviewed in 1985), and youth training and work experience were extended to

include all unemployed and employed young people. The actual mechanics of the new proposals were worked out by a MSC led Youth Task Group, who made only a limited number of changes to the government's proposals, especially over the size of the training allowance. Thus while YOP had been primarily directed towards the unemployed, the new YTS programme aimed to include all school leaver labour market participants, ie. both those in work and unemployed.

The 1981 NTI, as it became known, marked a new phase in the government's thinking, where an attempt was made to establish a more market oriented approach to training. Several reasons for this sudden gearing up of State policy can be detected, representing a fusion of different policy concerns over the state of the economy; industrial relations and the government's sensitivity to growing criticism that it was failing Britain's youth.

Firstly between 1979 and 1982 a series of State deregulation policy measures together with long term transformations in Britain's economic base, gave rise to a sharp rise in unemployment, effecting all sections of the workforce; but which was particularly acute in the North of England and within urban centres. These measures brought about a rise in the exchange rate adversely effecting British imports and exports; resulting in domestic producers facing increased competition from foreign imports. This led to job shedding on a excessive scale, on a par with that experienced in the 1930s depression. Secondly, the government's industrial relations legislature, in the form of the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts, together with the removal a significant number of employment protection rights, had the cumulative effect of creating an army of dispossessed workers either through redundancy or a further weakening of their position in low paid sectors.

Taken together the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts served to attack the trade union power base by introducing new rules concerning union membership, closed shop agreements, restrictions on secondary picketing and a general reduction in legislative immunities. This gave employers greater access to punitive measures, such as suing unions for financial losses as a result of

strike action. Lewis (1986) argues, that the legal regulation of trade unions is designed to free employers from the constraints of union power; thus complementing a range of other 'free market' economic and social policies of deregulation. Lewis also notes that this has been accompanied by the exclusion of trade union representation from public policy-making, reflecting the decline in the post war collective bargaining consensus of the 1960s and 1970s. Finally in relation to the young, the collective works of Cowell et al (1982) and Benyon (1982) graphically demonstrate how the public disorder riots of 1980 and 1981 was turned into a mass media hysteria campaign. Solomos (1984) and Fairley and Grahl (1983) both argue that the riots galvanised State action on youth unemployment, culminating in the implementation of the new YTS in 1983.

The State's NTI also represents a significant shift in training policy, one that is firmly linked to the labour market strategies of the Conservative government. The NTI and subsequent statements by the government clearly reveal the State's desire to once again return the question of training back to employers. However, the duality found in past State initiatives was fused under the new YTS proposals, because employers were being asked to train both unemployed and employed youngsters. The government could then claim to take a back seat in this process, since its projected role was one of encouraging employers to take on this task. Government policy between 1979 and 1983 was still mainly rhetorical in nature, but by 1984, (after the YTS had been in operation for 1 year), the role of the State had become more sharply defined. In a White Paper entitled Training For Jobs the government argues that its role is limited to:

> "...ensure that general and vocational education are provided
> in such a way as to improve the transition to work and
> respond to changing needs of employment ...and it will remain
> the Government's role, exercised largely through the Manpower
> Services Commission to assist the flow of information about
> skills needs, training provision, especially at local level; to
> encourage the application and development of nationally
> recognised standards of competence, complementing those set
> by professional bodies ...and where necessary, to provide
> special help for training the unemployed and disabled
> people."   Department of Employment (1984)

At first glance this statement has all the elements of a non-interventionist approach to training, where the role of the State is simply to foster a climate in which training activity can be elevated to a more prominent status. Yet Fairley and Grahl (1983) raise two very important observations about the role the government is carving out for itself. These two authors argue that far from being a non-interventionist proposal the NTI is representative of a policy of 'decisive innovations', that in reality requires an inordinate amount of State intervention in the functioning of the economy. Secondly, underlying these type of policies is a particular conceptualisation of the jobs market. Taking up this latter point it can be seen that the Conservative government views unemployment purely in terms of a failure of the jobs market, which has been circumscribed by past State interventions. Within this scenario, the failure of industrial training policy is linked to a wider inability of the workforce as a whole to adapt to changing labour market conditions. Goldstein (1984) argues that this approach directs analysis away from the idiosyncrasy of capital accumulation, towards the supposed deficiency of the labour commodity, who fail to present the right credentials and skills necessary to meet these changes.

This view was forcefully expressed by the government itself in 1985:

> "To think of workers as part of a market is not to devalue them; it is to recognise the realities of economic life are not waived just because the factors are people and not things. Skill and effort are traded between workers as sellers and employers as customers; and here as in all markets, the customer cannot be expected to buy unless he is getting what he needs at a price he can afford. In the labour market the employer is looking for the right people and the right price in order to carry on his business."
>
> (Department of Employment. 1985)

Several points arise from this which will be outlined here and subjected to further analysis in the Chapter Two in relation to the Youth Labour Market. Firstly, in order to shift the blame for unemployment on to the individual, a deficiency model of the worker is constructed in which attitudes are pinpointed as the key factor determining employability. According to this model the British workforce, with its history of militancy, linked to full

employment expectations, does not possess realistic work attitudes. Expectations over employment and the wage should be based on commodity principles, where labour presents the right skills and demeanour with which to attract employers. Workers must in order to remain competitive be prepared to moderate their demands, by being flexible over employment conditions, in ways dissimilar to the old style of industrial relations, especially in terms of training (Department of Employment. 1985).

Secondly, and following on from the above point, nowhere is this need to transform the work ethic seen as more urgent than amongst the young. There are two strands to this, springing from earlier debates about the role of education and the inadequacy of systematic training provision for the young. On the one hand debates about a mis-match between the 'needs of industry', together with the supposed lack of knowledge which new entrants possess arose in the 1970s, with specific reference to the function of schooling. Led by industrialists and taken up by the State, young workers (as previously discussed) were seen as being poorly motivated, ignorant about the world of work and hence poorly prepared for working life (Finn. 1982).

It is easy to see how such propositions could be utilised by a social market approach to training, in which the young need to be imbibed with expectations about work that do not include a 'right' over full employment; resulting in the acceptance that unemployment will be a feature of their future experience of the labour market. Indeed, by the mid 1980s the climate of training *en masse*, produced a generation of young adults exposed to job uncertainties, where there were no guarantees of employment and where getting a job was therefore seen as a bonus. For young people it was not so much a case of retraining as nurturing new attitudes towards employment; thereby conditioning them to accept a weakened labour market position. The advantage which this new scenario had for the market and by implication society as a whole, was the minimising of the kinds of social unrest witnessed in the social disturbances of the early 1980s.

The political rhetoric used to foster and give credence to this new thinking seized upon earlier political discourse on training needs. However, this was framed in reference to a more generic model that utilised notions of **competency, flexibility and adaptation.** In this context the ideology of vocational preparation represented a merger between the role of education (as a site of learning) and training (as a function of employment), in which general skills learning was given precedence over specific skills requirements. This was applicable to all young people within the State educational system, drawing upon what Frith and Finn (1982) describe as class differentials; with the middle and ruling classes being able to call upon their own alternative model of vocational preparation, in the private sector.

Thirdly, in order to facilitate this process, social pathological constructions about youth were utilised to win over a broad consensus that it is the individual and not the market which was at fault. Our earlier discussion about how various groups within the labour market are treated as individual-collectivities, illustrates how such models could be used to justify inequality, by exchanging demand factors for ones accruing to proposed deficient characteristics of the labour supply. Individuals identified as educationally and socially disadvantaged; as poorly qualified and therefore prone to unemployment could therefore be offered a form of compensatory vocational preparation rather than be guaranteed a place in the labour market.

There is another strand to this strategy which needs to be touched on here. This relates to the fact that the government was not just in the business of transforming training, towards the principles described above. The State was also actively involved in attempting to refashion the relationship between training and education, by blurring the boundaries between them. The link between education and vocational preparation was brought even closer together by the introduction of the Training Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in schools, announced a year after the YTS; but piloted in 16 Local Education Authorities at the same time as the new one year YTS was launched. Part of the State's proposals found in the NTI had placed emphasis upon education

within schools and colleges to run parallel with the pre-vocational training offered in the new YTS. The TVEI offered a 4 year course of technical and vocational elements (including work experience) directed towards employment opportunities for students across the ability range. The basis for this initiative lay in the government's desire to strengthen the role of the private sector in Education. Thus public sector policy in this domain was directed at making the education sector less dependent on public expenditure (Finn. 1987).

While the intricacies and nature of the TVEI are beyond the scope of this thesis; in relation to State strategies on training and education Blackman (1987) argues that the introduction of the TVEI, together with cutbacks in Further Education and the transferring of 25 per cent of the sector's funding to the MSC, in conjunction with the one year YTS were all examples of the New Vocationalism. In defining what this was Brown (1987) contends that State activities in this area were based on the view that young people's perceptions of jobs were out dated; with the problem cast as one where pupils' family backgrounds and peer group influences needed to be overcome. Subsequently, Blackman (1987) further notes that under this new perspective the purpose of education was no longer the provision of equality of educational opportunity but training for pupils which afforded them the opportunity to gain employment in relation to their social class, gender and ethnic origin. This is because the content of TVEI, that is work experience and vocational courses drew upon existing social inequalities, brought into the classroom "where the power of stereotypes and the pupils' own collusion to 'get a secure job' reinforces their location in the social and sexual division of labour" (p.42). In conclusion the underlying result was to nurture a new 'hybrid' industrial worker, where according to Blackman:

> "The flexible learner/worker is capable of being employed or re-employed in a variety of jobs, but all at the same level ...Generic skills training is not an expression of employers' demands but as Gleeson (1985) argues, it is 'an idealised conception of how industrial relations ought to function under free market conditions' p.64.."
>
> (Blackman (1987) p. 38)

The observation in the above quote that training does not refer to employers' demands is interesting, because much of State interventionist strategies in the education and youth labour market were premised on the assumption that employers (and therefore the 'market') knew in advance what their 'needs' were. However, as argued by Finn (1982) and Brown (1987), employers are far from certain, precisely because the demands of production are never uniform, but based on dynamics where employers are responsive to a variety of 'needs'. In reality this calls for deeper (flexible) capabilities, ie. skills training as opposed to the watered down, broad based training pioneered by the MSC. Thus it can be seen that the shift towards 'competence' enshrined in the new one year YTS, allowed employers to do away with costly training in 'transferable occupational skills' in favour of task-specific 'competences' more closely allied to immediate production needs. Hence the difference between the concepts of skill and competence can be seen to refer to the objectification of the latter, where the notion of compatibility with a given task, is now to be defined by the employer, as opposed to the worker, as was the case for apprenticeship training. Subsequently the objectives outlined by industrialists in the 1970s and early 1980s for a more flexible highly trained workforce, were never part of the YTS strategy. It is precisely within this context that the NTI and the scheme it gave rise to represented one aspect of a 'free market' ideology that sought to replace employer responsibility, that is the provision of skills training, with that of employer control, under the guise of broad-based transferable skills. Critics of government policy saw such moves as part of a wider objective of undermining trade union power; especially over the appropriation and control of skills training, which was seen as a mainstay of their authority (Fairley and Grahl. 1983).

The Role Of Experience And Qualifications In The State's Training Policy

It is within the bi-modal structure of the YTS that key issues about training, qualifications and experience emerge. Overall the political thinking behind the YTS went beyond an attempt to establish a national training system, but rather sought to alter the very definition of training which has been

propagated in Britain since the 1960s. Contrary to the government's later pronouncements, training was no longer defined in terms of jobs, but over the notion of work. Underscoring this approach was a belief that youth unemployment was an inevitable feature because of the lack of experience which this group had, thereby making them less attractive to employers, who could recruit from further up in the jobs queue (see Chapter Two for a fuller discussion of this point). It was therefore envisaged that for the majority of young people, experience and qualification now rested in the assessment of competency, rather than formal credentials.

A year after the new scheme had been implemented the government provided a more coherent set of policy objectives where it was envisaged that agreed standards of training would be developed through a new recognised system of certification, derived from both training and educational institutions. The direction of the government's thinking was formalised in its _1984 Training for Jobs White Paper_, where this objective was presented as part of its plans for a national training system, that linked education and training. Specifically the government identified the TVEI as part of a programme of action, that overall aimed to:

> "...seek to define standards of performance and to develop a
> system of certification which can be applied to both and
> which will link with other training standards and
> qualifications..."

The direct issue of removing barriers erected by the pattern of industrial skills training, was deemed to be resolvable through:

> "...a coherent system of training standards and certificates
> of competence, covering achievement in vocational education
> and training, both initially and throughout working life."

The importance of these two statements lies in the fact that the client group were specifically those youngsters who could could not afford to by-pass State programmes, via the private sector education. Thus the justification for State intervention was predicated on the notion of providing young working class people access to training as opposed to employment, by transforming the educational services and employment relations for this group.

The Youth Training Scheme And State Strategies In The 1980s

All of the above elements find expression within the Youth Training Scheme
(YTS) which came into operation in September 1983. To reiterate unlike its
predecessors this programme of training was geared not only to the young
unemployed but also those young people already in jobs. The YTS was designed
to offer a planned programme of training and work experience, supplemented by
a period of off-the-job training for up to 13 weeks. The schemes were to
provide training for a period of 50 weeks and included an induction course of
between 2 and 3 weeks. Participation in the scheme was voluntary, although
later on in the scheme's history young people were 'helped' into choosing the
YTS through restrictions placed on Social Security benefits, where a refusal
to accept a placement resulted in the penalising of these payments (TURC.
1984). Trainees received an allowance, which at the time of the research was
£26 per week; they could also claim supplementary travel payments. However,
the fixing of the allowance below the rate of inflation was designed to
socialise young people into accepting that "in moving into the work they are
young adults not older children" and therefore needed to contribute to an
employer's profitability. This stance is further evidenced by the fact that
trainees were not accorded employee status, and were not subject to the same
employment protection rights. This served the objective of making young
workers more attractive to employers, whilst simultaneously lowering the
expectations of the young with regard to such rights.

In order to fund the programme the Youth Task Group established the
principle of additionality, which in effect provided employers with a financial
incentive to take on YTS trainees. Each employer would take on three YTS
trainees for every two young people who would have normally been recruited.
In this way an employer qualified for a grant with respect of all the five
young people taken on, ie. the two normal employee recruits and the three
additional YTS trainees. Goldstein (1983) argues that the system of financing
the YTS was part of the government's strategy of cheapening the costs of
training for employers. This is because young people were construed as being

a higher 'risk' group for employers, by virtue of the greater job mobility (cast as instability) of young workers, that was seen as providing less of a 'return' on a firm's investment. The MSC undertook to monitor the scheme, largely through the setting up of 55 **Area Management Boards (AMBs)**, who were also charged with the vetting of employers applying to be included in the YTS. Structurally, the scheme was divided into two main Modes of delivery, but hidden within them schemes were ordered along hierarchical lines which refers to whether or not a scheme was employer-led (Fenton et al. 1984).

Mode A, represented the bulk of provision under the one year YTS, where private sector interests ran a programme of training. Under a Managing Agent system employer or business consortia acted as Managing Agents, responsible for 'designing, managing and delivering' of the scheme. In addition a system of Sponsorship was instituted where individual employers or voluntary organisations provided placements, but were subject to overall guidance and administration by a Managing Agent.

A number of researchers have shown how Mode A provision actually entailed further divisions based on the type of employer a trainee was placed with. For example, there were schemes operated by private sector employers offering Work Preparation, who in all probability contracted their off-the-job element out to a College of Further Education. Within this category, some schemes offered high quality skills training associated with the apprenticeship industrial training system. However these particular schemes were never meant to provide more than 10 per cent of places. Young people on these schemes therefore gained direct access to occupational skills training, with a higher chance of being retained by employers at the end of their training year (Cross. 1986). The elitism involved in sectioning off schemes offering skills training was exhibited in other benefits accruing to better and longer off-the-job training, in addition to the topping up of the training allowance, on average £41 per week in 1984 (Pollert. 1985). Another major division found in the private sector category referred to the participation of large national employers. The MSC in recognition of the problem of duplication, set

up a **Large Companies Unit** (LCU), to negotiate and approve YTS places at the national level. Companies involved in this aspect of the YTS, included public and private sector interests, such as British Rail and Marks and Spencers. The significance of the LCU related to its ability to provide quality places, with employers with a prestigious reputation. The LCU and the agreements made with national employers were not accountable to the AMBs, but only liased with them on matters of local policy. Furthermore unlike other Managing Agents, employers operating out of the LCU were exempt from monitoring by the local AMB. Under such conditions the enforcement of equal opportunity measures became more difficult, thereby revealing yet another example of the way in which free market principles were enshrined in the new system of training.

Other divisions within Mode A provision included schemes ran by public sector employers and those ran by **Private Training Companies** (PTAs). In the case of the latter, PTAs as they were known, performed either a solely administrative function by acting as a Managing Agent, or as Sponsors that provided work experience and/or off-the-job training. In this way PTAs either contracted work experience placements out to smaller firms, or undertook directly to provide this. Evidence of abuse by the PTAs, which were encouraged under the rhetoric of the 'spirit of enterprise', demonstrated the unscrupulous use of government funds, with an eye to profiteering amongst many of the training companies set up under the YTS. For example, a report on the activities of PTAs in the Birmingham and Solihull area found that a large number of companies were breaking company law; contracted out a substantial part of their programme, averaging nine months of the training year to small firms that replicated the quality of work placements denounced under YOP. They also attempted to cut costs both in the recruitment of staff and in the nature of their training programmes, for instance one firm was reported as giving trainees 8 weeks of home study as a substitute for off-the-job training. Moreover, the poor system of monitoring of schemes in the first few years of the one year YTS, meant that the potential for racial and

sexual discrimination remained rife (TURC. 1984).

Thus in essence whilst some PTAs were employer-led, the majority were not offering training themselves, but contracting work experience and the off-the-job elements out. Why this occurred referred to the system of funding, where the MSC undertook to pay Managing Agents fees for administering the programme. Briefly under the funding arrangements Mode A employers received a Block grant that covered the cost of the allowance and off-the-job training. In 1984/85 the cost of the allowance was £1,312.50. Managing agents were also paid an administrative fee of £110 pounds for every place offered, with £627.50 towards the cost of off-the-job training, bringing the total up to £2,050. The system of additionality allowed an employer to take advantage of this arrangement, because for every three extra training places created above the normal intake of two, an employer received a block grant for all five young people, giving a total of £10,250. Therefore as long as costs could be kept down, either through the off-the-job training or in placing trainees in low paying firms, PTAs, together with other Mode A employers could reap a financial return.

The other Mode of delivery in the YTS was directed towards sponsoring places, derived mainly from the public and voluntary sectors. **Mode B** entailed a number of divisions referring to the nature of the training site; **Mode B1**, incorporated Information Technology Centres (ITeCs); Community Projects (CPs) and Training Workshops (TWs). **Mode B2** was directly funded by the MSC and was usually ran in Colleges of Further Education; this latter Mode provided training places in those areas where there were shortfalls in the provision of Modes A and B1 placements. The funding of Mode B provision was significantly different to that of Mode A, because the MSC directly paid for this part of the YTS package. Under Mode B1, capital grants were pre-fixed at the start of the training year, with sponsoring organisations providing small imputs of capital derived from the voluntary and public sector, such as charities. The Commission had responsibility for operating costs, that included the terms and conditions of scheme staff, in addition to staff salaries and trainee

allowances. Mode B1 was more expensive than Mode A provision because costings were much higher; in 1984/85 the estimated annual cost for Mode B1 was £3,800 and for Mode B2 £2,300. Within Mode B1 provision ITeCs were the most expensive at £4,300 per filled place; Training Workshops amounted to £4000, and Community Projects £3,550. The structure of Mode B provision gave the MSC greater control over the running of the Scheme than was found in Mode A, which was in all but name privately run. The aims underpinning the overall establishment of Mode B provision referred to the categorising of young people into three camps, as witnessed by the structure of the YTS. There were those young people suitable for occupational skills training, the elite who formed 10 per cent of the YTS trainee population. The second group included the majority of trainees, who were to be offered work experience on employers' premises. The third category referred to the 'least able', who either because of their lack of qualifications or social characteristics, were deemed in 'need' of special provision, based in principle on the old YOP objectives where this group was 'treated' outside of labour market structure.

Arising out of this is the question of equality of opportunity for young working class people on the scheme, with specific reference to those groups identified as in need of special provision. From its inception the YTS was deemed to be a scheme offering 'equality of access and treatment'. The NTI made no specific reference to equality of opportunity; while the Youth Task Group which established the YTS structure stated that in terms of equality of opportunity, the new scheme would:

> "...treat young people taking part both fairly and equitably.
> It will, of course, need to comply with the legislation
> forbidding discrimination, but, more that this, should provide
> positive opportunities for disadvantaged groups."
>
> (MSC (1982): para 3:12)

This vacuous statement was not out of keeping with the State's desire to make the YTS an employer-led initiative. For example, though the Youth Training Board did formally adopt an equal opportunity policy, employers were not compelled to comply with its implementation. Fears over compulsion and bureaucratic control ensured that such a policy would remain peripheral to

the main task of implementing the scheme. In this sense the notion of 'positive opportunities' referred to access to the scheme, which as we have seen was already structured in ways that differentiated young people entering the programme.

Whilst this intention was cast in a slightly different language, in terms of outcomes, research evidence across the country has concretely demonstrated the tendency of ethnic minority youth to be located in Mode B provision (Pollert. 1985; Cross. 1986). For example, research in the West Midlands found that there was a systematic exclusion of ethnic minority youth from the 'cream' of employer-led Mode A schemes, including those involved in the LCU. While in the case of young women, their distribution across the YTS, confirms the sex stereotyping of training in line with dominant conceptions of 'women's work (Fawcett Society. 1985; Pollert. 1986). Contributing to this pattern of inequality was the role of the Careers Service who, as the main placement organisation, were responsible for directing new recruits to the various locations within the YTS structure. Once again, research on this issue revealed that behind the activities of the Careers Service, together with Managing Agents (who could directly recruit trainees in preference to going through the Service), were assumptions about the 'acceptability of Black and Asian trainees (Fenton et al. 1984), or in the case of young women, their suitability for particular types of training, (Cockburn. 1987; and with reference to Black girls, Austen. 1984).

In conclusion the NTI and the scheme which it gave rise to provided a framework within which employers were able to take 'key' decisions about skill, training and employment. The NTI thus represented an attempt by the State to socialise the young to accept new forms of labour relations, where workers are subjected to the vagaries of the market. That young people were singled out in this way harked back to earlier concerns about the 'needs of industry' and the 'catch them early' syndrome. However underlying all of this was a variety of assumptions about the functioning of the labour market and the characteristics of the young worker. Nowhere in the government's

pronouncements on youth unemployment is the question of discrimination raised. Rather following a similar logic to that imposed on young Black people, it is individual-centred deficiency models of the young which were lifted to an explanatory status in the search for causes of why it is young people who are particularly vulnerable to unemployment. In the next chapter this depiction of the young workers and their pattern of employment and unemployment is addressed. It will be shown that viewed from another stance, the spectacle of youth unemployment is a problem of the combination of demand and supply factors. A central theme taken up in Chapter Two is the need to examine the pattern of young people's entrance into the world of work. This is because the operation of structural inequality in the labour market holds different outcomes for the various groups that make up the youth labour supply. It also points to the inefficacy of many State training initiatives, premised as they are on supply rather than demand factors.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 1970s young people increasingly experienced unemployment as part of their labour market careers. These increases during this period were mainly confined to unqualified school leavers, but by the early 1980s the size of the problem grew to incorporate both qualified and unqualified youth. For example, in January 1970 teenagers accounted for 11 per cent of total unemployment, by 1984 this proportion had climbed to 18 per cent (Raffe. 1987). In the discussion to follow the issue of youth unemployment is examined in the context of the youth labour market. While there is some controversy as to whether or not the concept of the youth labour market is empirically valid, it is nevertheless true that young people exhibit certain labour market features which are characteristic of their location within the general labour market. It is also the case that changes occurring in the labour market have disproportionately effected the pattern of demand for youth labour and it is at this juncture that the impact of State intervention, mainly through its training programmes, needs to be assessed.

We begin with a focus on the rise of youth unemployment, with attention being paid to those youth categories who have been particularly effected by unemployment. Thereafter the pattern of employment amongst the young is examined. It will be shown that even the term youth has altered its age boundaries as a consequence of unemployment, as more young people face longer spells of joblessness. Subsequently, an examination of the various explanations that have been put forward to account for the rise in youth unemployment is undertaken. These roughly correspond to supply and demand sided approaches, where emphasis on the characteristics of the young and/or the labour market are utilised in the analysis of why young people experience high rates of unemployment. In concluding the Chapter a closer examination is made of the factors that impinge on the operation of youth labour markets, in particular the rise in State intervention in this area. It will be argued that the State in the early 1980s intervened in the youth labour market on the

basis of its own conception of what constituted youth labour. Throughout the analysis attention is paid to the specificity of gender and 'race' factors, which in effect offer potentially different outcomes for the young.

The Pattern Of Youth Unemployment In Britain From The 1970s

Young people's experience of unemployment steadily mounted throughout the 1970s, culminating in a sharp increase after 1979. This is expressed not only by the numbers who experienced unemployment but also the increase in the duration of unemployment for this group. Moreover the pattern of unemployment was unevenly distributed, with areas in the North of England exhibiting the greatest increases. In addition higher rates of unemployment within particular areas also highlights the variegated nature of unemployment found within local labour markets.

Statistical evidence on youth unemployment is complicated by the way official data are collected. Generally, because a number of categories were excluded from the list, the spread of unemployment, particularly amongst the young, women and ethnic minorities was to some extent hidden. One aspect of the official method of counting unemployment worth noting was that those who were on 'special' programmes, ie. youth and adult training schemes, were not considered as being either unemployed or as part of the workforce; hence these groupings were temporarily removed from the unemployment register. For example, one set of estimates provided by the youth charity Youthaid found that if those under-18s on special programmes were included in the official headcount, then a discrepancy of some 29 per cent exists between the official and actual number of unemployed in this age category (Hirsch. 1983). On the basis of this example the available figures need to be treated with caution as in all probability they under-estimate the real situation. Furthermore changes in the official employment count in 1982 effectively removed a sizable number of those registrants who were available for work but not claiming benefits. This new counting method switched people from registrants to claimants ie. those claiming unemployment or supplementary benefit and National Insurance credits. The effect of this was reported in the Employment

Gazette (1982) were it was stated that the official total rate had been lowered, through the removal of some 246,000 registrants from the calculations; with the youth unemployment count being reduced from an estimated 655,300 by 51,700 in October 1982 .

Another important change that the new system made was the removal of ethnic monitoring from the unemployed headcount. Thereafter information on the national and regional distribution of ethnic minority unemployment has had to be gauged from a variety of sources, that include the annual Labour Force Surveys and more local based community studies. Whilst the latter has become an invaluable source of information, especially on the specificity of local labour market conditions, they still only provide a less than totally reliable account of ethnic minority unemployment in Britain. Added to this is the issue of non-registration, where people are available for work but fail to register; either because of the restrictions placed upon them over claiming benefit, or because they have become 'discouraged' from seeking work. In the case of ethnic minority youth, two groups within this category have been singled out as more prone to non-registration, namely women and 'older' youth. Since the early 1970s recognition that non-registration is a significant factor in the experiences of ethnic minority youth has been noted by the CRC (1974) and latterly the CRE (1980a) who stated that the problem was 'unquantifiable'.

Trends In Youth Unemployment 1979 -1984

Youth unemployment appears to mirror that of adults, with trends established since the 1960s revealing that in periods of upswing unemployment rates for adults and youth were approximate, however, in periods of downswing when adult unemployment rose, those at the end of the employment queue experienced greater losses. This pattern was noted by a Department of Employment time series analysis of a comparison between national youth unemployment rates and adults. The report concluded that youth unemployment is closely associated with events in the adult labour market, but at a higher rate:

"Changes in youth unemployment are closely associated with changes in overall unemployment, but move with greater amplitude. If the unemployment rate for males rises by one percentage point, then the unemployment rate for males under-20 excluding school leavers rises by about 1.7 percentage points. So far the same relationship has also held when unemployment has been falling."

(quoted in Hirsch. 1983. p.32)

However it is the dramatic shift in the numbers facing unemployment after 1979 which is significant. The chronic under-usage of youth labour was heralded by the sharp decline in the number of job vacancies after 1979. An examination of the number of vacancies notified to Employment and Careers Offices between October 1979 and October 1980 reveal a startling drop of approximately 137,000 notifications taking place during this period; hence effecting young people who were traditionally at the end of the employment queue (Hirsch. 1983).

This trend is further accentuated by the uneven distribution of unemployment and the rate at which it occurs. Thus young people in those areas that experienced greater job loss exhibited unemployment rates far higher than adults. For example in the period immediately after 1979, when the general level of unemployment under went a new surge, unemployment amongst school leavers rose overall by 138 per cent.

In the East Midlands, which incidentally experienced the greatest percentage increase, unemployment amongst school leavers rose by 272 per cent compared to the regional total of 80 per cent; in the South East the comparable figures were 258 per cent and 78 per cent respectively (Runnymede Trust. 1981). An analysis of the period between 1979 and 1982 reveals that the percentage increase amongst school leavers rose overall by 153 per cent, but regional variations ranged from 402 per cent in Greater London, 200 per cent in the East Midlands, 176 per cent in the West Midlands and 189 per cent in Yorkshire and Humberside (Hirsch. 1983). Within this scenario urban unemployment tended to be higher, effecting young people to the extent, that for example in one area where unemployment ran at 20 per cent in 1982, the rate amongst school leavers, including those on the Youth Opportunities

Programme was just under 90 per cent (Youthaid. 1983).

One significant aspect of the rise in youth unemployment is the increase in duration rates for young people. Expressed in weeks in 1970 the median duration for young men was 3 weeks, climbing to 6 weeks in 1972 and by 1977 had reached approximately 10 weeks; for young women in the under-18s age group the median duration was just under 3 weeks in 1970, 5 weeks in 1972 increasing to 13 weeks in 1977 (MSC. 1977). After 1979 the duration of unemployment amongst young people increased; for the under-18s between 1979 and 1980 the percentage experiencing unemployment of up to 6 weeks rose from 37.6 per cent to 41.3 per cent. Thereafter the rate reduced to 29.6 per cent in 1981, 27.1 per cent in 1982, but rose again to 29 per cent in 1983 and by 1984 dropped to 25.3 per cent. Even on the basis of this evidence it is clear that the duration of unemployment amongst the young had increased, despite the effect of special measures, such as the YTS, which obscured the actual numbers involved.

The rise in youth unemployment in the 1970s effected girls more than boys. Unemployment amongst 16 to 17 year old females as a proportion of all unemployed youth in this age category, rose from 35 per cent in January 1970 to 49 per cent in January 1977 (MSC. 1977). Unemployment amongst young women, like that of their male counterparts was found to mirror that of older women, again with the exception that they experience greater unemployment rates. The proportion of female school leavers as a percentage of registered women's unemployment was 1.5 per cent in 1971 rising to 16.3 per cent in 1980, and dropping slightly in 1981 to 12.8 per cent primarily as a result of the removal of youth trainees from the unemployment register.

In contrast, one of the most striking differences amongst the young unemployed is the higher rates exhibited by ethnic minority youth. The history of Black youth unemployment in Britain is characterised by a marked pattern of joblessness, which despite fluctuations in the economy, remains consistently high. They have tended to experience a higher rate of unemployment than the national average; this remaining the case both within

the total number of young unemployed and as a percentage of the total Black unemployed. For example aggregate figures for New Commonwealth and Pakistan minorities produced by the Runnymede Trust, reveal that between the years of 1973 and 1981, the number of unemployed United Kingdom born Black people increased by a percentage of 0.1% to 0.5%; while as a proportion of all Black unemployed rose from 3.6 per cent to 13.6 per cent during the same period (Runnymede Trust. 1981). Black youth rates also increased at a faster pace, suggesting that they are more prone to becoming unemployed; for example, during the 12 months up to January 1980 unemployment amongst the under-18s fell slightly by 2.4 per cent, but for ethnic minority youth increased by 7.3 per cent (CRE. 1980a). Overall between 1978 and 1982 (the period marked by a rapid growth in youth unemployment), Black youth rates increased for young men by 132 per cent and for young Black women by 98.5 per cent (Newnham. 1986). More recent data on the level of Black unemployment of relevance to the period of study in this thesis is derived from the 1984 Labour Force Survey. This found that in the age group of 16 to 24, over 41 per cent of West Indian males were unemployed and 26 per cent of Asian men, compared to less than 19 per cent of White males in this age group. For women the comparative figures were 26 and 35 per cent of West Indian and Asian women respectively, compared to approximately 16 per cent of White women (Labour Force Survey. 1984).

Evidence of inter-ethnic differences tended to show that West Indian youth bear a disproportionate burden of unemployment. In 1982 the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) conducted a survey in six urban areas throughout the country; they found that unemployment amongst West Indian youth was just under 60 per cent for young men and women, compared to an average of 43 per cent for White and Asian young people. West Indian youth were one and a half times as likely to be unemployed or on a youth training programme as were White and Asian youth. Young West Indian people had a consistently lower rate of employment than either of the other two groups, and were more likely to enter training than their Asian counterparts (CRE. 1982). Such figures

however need to be treated with caution as they refer to specific instances and not an overall picture of unemployment amongst Black and Asian young people. Moreover the size and spread of different ethnic minority settlements should be taken into account, as their experience of unemployment will be effected by these two factors. Thus a study conducted in Bradford in 1981, found that a year after leaving school 17 year old Asian youngsters were less likely to be in employment than their White peers (Campbell and Jones, 1982). Moreover in areas where unemployment amongst Asian workers is high, despite their on average higher qualifications, young Asian people find it difficult to move into sectors outside of those in which their parents have predominated. Other researchers, such as Clough and Drew (1985) conclude that an important factor is the inheritance of racial categorisation (racism), where young Asians are drawn into certain areas of work based on employers' stereotypic perceptions of their suitability for particular types of work and job levels.

The above, general overview of the early 1980s illustrates the fact that youth unemployment was not a temporary phenomenon that would eventually be righted by market forces. Thus while unemployment can amount to short spells, the cumulative effect of this is an employment career which has unemployment as its strongest feature. In the 1970s and earlier decades youth unemployment mainly comprised of short intervals between jobs, part of what Raffe (1987) describes as a pattern of 'frequent job changing'. Typically in the early 1980s a young person's employment profile showed a pattern of recurring unemployment interspersed with periods of work, or (increasingly) youth training. .

Hence whilst temporary measures in the late 1970s and early 1980s initially curbed the flow of unemployment amongst school leavers, upon leaving such schemes for many there was no guarantee that they would not re-enter the labour market as members of the unemployed. The importance of this observation lies in the fact that unemployment amongst the 'older' youth categories rose more rapidly, than for school leavers, suggesting that by the early 1980s it was no longer viable to view school leavers as the sole

proprietors of youth unemployment. Furthermore given the rise in total
unemployment, together with the effect of training programmes on the
under-18s, it is necessary to make a distinction between three age cohorts
that correspond to the under-18s (ie school leavers), the 18 to 19 age group
and finally the 20 to 24 age bracket.

In Table One the unemployment figures for the age cohorts identified
clearly demonstrate the changing pattern of 'youth' unemployment and its
extension to 'older' youth categories, which together form a pool of the long
term unemployed. The figures in Table One confirm the view that unemployment
amongst the under-25s is a much more realistic depiction of the youth labour
market, than the pre-1980 view which laid stress on school leaver
unemployment. Two other conclusions at this stage can be drawn from these
figures. Firstly, unemployment amongst the 18 to 19 age group is
significantly worse for young men than young women, and comparatively greater
than for the under-18s. Secondly, young people in the 20 to 24 age group
exhibited lower rates than the under-20s category, especially amongst women.

Table One

Unemployment Rates By Age -1979 - 1982

October Months Percentages

Age	1979	1980	1981	1982
Males				
Under 18s	10.5	19.5	25.1	26.0
18-19	9.8	16.0	25.0	29.4
20-24	8.1	13.5	20.1	22.2
Females				
Under 18	12.4	20.7	24.8	24.0
18-19	10.0	14.5	20.8	24.4
20-24	7.9	11.2	15.3	16.0

Source Department of Employment Gazette, January 1983

This suggests that the relationship between age and unemployment is intersected by gender divisions that operate in the labour market. A crucial factor here is the assessment that employers make with regards to gender and age, which Ashton and Maguire (1983) suggest reflects the fact that the evaluation of the time taken to reach employment maturity is principally defined by employers. For example from the data in Table One it would appear that despite some slight difference, men and women in the under-18s age category exhibit similar rates; however by 1982 in the 18 to 20 age group there is a fairly noticeable difference between young men and women, approximately 30 and 25 per cent respectively; with this gap increasing by the time they reach the top age bracket.

Information on young Black people is as we have seen harder to gauge, especially after 1982. Nevertheless unemployment amongst 'older' youth remains quite high. This suggests that the general effects of the inexperience bar as applied to school leavers, does not hold as an explanation for the high levels of unemployment which all young Black people appear to face. For example in a comparison of regional statistics, unemployment amongst 19 to 24 year olds Black people is even more rife than among the under-18s. In the twelve months leading up to February 1980, regional analysis of ethnic minority registered unemployment as a percentage of the total number unemployed in the 19 to 24 age category increased by 14.6 per cent in the South East compared to a general *decrease* of 2.3 per cent; in the West Midlands the equivalent figure was 11.6 per cent increase for ethnic minority youth as opposed to 9.4 per cent increase for the general population in this age category; and in the East Midlands by a staggering 19.7 per cent increase for ethnic minority youth compared to a rise of 4.3. per cent for all registered unemployed 19 to 24 age group (CRE. 1980a).

One final aspect of youth unemployment is its association with qualifications. Generally those possessing fewer qualifications have been hit hardest by unemployment. However official statistics are not broken down by educational qualification and we are instead dependent on other sources. One

important source has been youth training programmes, as statistics on several characteristics that accrue to young participants have, on the whole been well documented. For example information derived from YOP is useful because the programme was particularly geared towards those school leavers labelled the 'least able'. Bedeman and Courtenay's (1983) analysis of the characteristics of YOP participants found that at the beginning of the programme almost 50 per cent entering the scheme had no qualifications; with only 26 per cent of trainees having at least one 'O' level or its CSE equivalent. By 1980/81, the year in which unemployment amongst the young exhibited the most dramatic increase, unqualified entrants constituted a third of the YOP intake, compared to 18 per cent of all minimum age school leavers who were unqualified for that year. Young men on the programme were less qualified than young women, with just over 4:10 females having an 'O' level or equivalent, compared to a quarter of males; and fewer females than males had no qualifications at all.

The situation for Black young people is qualitatively distinct. Whether qualified or not young Black people find it harder to obtain jobs and experience unemployment at a higher rate. For example Roberts et al (1981) in a study of non-registered unemployed youth found that their relative lack of success in gaining employment was not due to lack of qualifications; 19 per cent of Black qualified males experienced unemployment compared to 11 per cent of young White men in the survey sample. For young qualified females their rates were roughly the same, although Black girls exhibited a slightly higher rate, 22 per cent as opposed to 19 per cent for White women.
In addition amongst unqualified young people, Black youngsters encountered a greater amount of unemployment than their White counterparts; amongst young men 41 per cent and 22 per cent of Black and White respectively, and 61 per cent and 34 per cent for young Black and White women respectively. In general, studies on the position of young Black people in the labour market have tended to find similar results, ie that the relationship between qualification and unemployment amongst both young and older Black people, occupies a secondary explanatory position in accounting for their higher rates

of unemployment (Smith. 1981; Sillitoe and Meltzer. 1986).

Youth Unemployment - The Search For Causes And The Youth Labour Market

Explanations for the exaggerated rise in youth unemployment during the 1970s
centred on cyclical changes in the economy. Recession was given as the main
reason for what was considered to be a 'temporary spurt' in youth
unemployment; especially amongst those identified as unqualified within the
semi and unskilled youth labour category. The State's response during this
period was, as we have seen, one of temporary remedial measures, designed to
stimulate employment, through job creation initiatives. Another important
State response to rising youth unemployment was the raising of the school
leaving age (ROSLA) in 1974, which had the net effect of reducing (for that
year) the number of school leavers registering as unemployed. This initiative
was in direct response to the belief that the effects of the 1960s 'baby
boom' had increased the youth labour supply. Hence the State was in the
business of trying to slow down the rate at which the young entered the
labour market. Moreover the range of State programmes for the unemployed in
effect created work outside the normal pattern of employment as a way of
reducing the rate of unemployment, which it was thought would eventually
return to an acceptable level. In the case of young people the type of
initiatives on offer to them was approached from a supply-sided approach,
where attention was paid to the characteristics of the young themselves, as
opposed to the structure of job opportunities for this age group.

Another strong explanation proffered by this approach is the increase in
competition from married women employees. However it is the deficiency model
of the young worker which is of particular interest, because it is the one
explanation which has continually emerged within official discourse on youth
unemployment and, as we shall see, is part of the philosophy inherent in the
new Youth Training Scheme. It is this aspect of the supply-sided approach
which needs to be examined because the assumptions informing this perspective
have important consequences for the round of State intervention into the
youth labour market in the mid-1980s.

The supply-sided approach has not however gone unchallenged. In answer to some of its basic premises, research on the nature of the youth labour market, offers a structuralist approach to the issues of youth employment and unemployment. Here the key questions raised focus on the nature of demand for youth labour in view of the changing structure of jobs in Britain over the last three decades. In particular emphasis is placed on ascertaining how the practices of employers in the demand for youth labour influences the pattern of employment and unemployment amongst the young. Moreover despite the varying stances taken by researchers working in this field, there is a general agreement that the labour market offers differential outcomes for young workers, arising out of a combination of skill, sex, age and other social factors (namely 'race'), thereby imparting several distinctive features across and within the youth labour market arena.

In what follows attention is paid to the pattern of youth employment in Britain, and the factors said to have affected its operation since the late 1970s. Thereafter the various explanations emanating from the supply versus structuralist approach is examined, with a view to understanding the dynamics of young people's entrance into the world of work. Finally an assessment of the impact of unemployment on the youth labour market is made in conjunction with the impact which State intervention in this area is having on the transition from school to work. It will be argued that what is emerging is in fact a series of different transitions, where young people are offered differential access to the labour market, depending upon their point of entry.

The Industrial And Occupational Distribution Of Young Workers In Britain

In what follows information on the pattern of employment amongst young people in the under-19s age category is drawn primarily from the 1971 Census in order to highlight subsequent changes in the nature of youth employment, especially in view of the rise in unemployment and the accompanying transformation of the structure of job opportunities for the young.

Industrial Distribution. Analysis of a 10 per cent sample of the 1971 Census shows that young people are concentrated in a total of 9 industrial orders,

with the Distributive Trades accounting for the largest proportion of both male and female young workers. However, the sexual divisions of jobs in industry finds young men concentrated in Agriculture, Mechanical Engineering, Metal Goods, Construction, Distribution and the Miscellaneous Services. In contrast young women are mainly located in 4 categories: Textiles, Clothing and Footwear; the Distributive Trades, and Insurance, Banking and Finance. The pattern of industrial location is clearly segregated by sex, emulating trends found amongst male and female employment in general; as well as exhibiting a distinctive pattern within gender categories, effecting the employment of young women in particular (Ashton and Maguire. 1983).

Occupational Distribution. An examination of the distribution of young people by occupational category reveals that they are concentrated in a narrow range of jobs, that are sexually segregated. For example the Engineering and Allied Trades accounts for 15.7 per cent of total male employment, and 22.6 per cent of young men's occupations; figures for other occupations are as follows: Electrical - Electronic workers 3.3 per cent and 5.7 per cent respectively; Labourers, 6.9 per cent and 8.3 per cent: Warehouse, Store Keeping, Packers and Bottlers, 3.2 per cent and 3.6 per cent; Clerical Workers 6.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent; Sales Workers 7.4 per cent and 6.0 per cent; and finally Service, Sport and Recreation workers, 5.7 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively. The numbers of young women employed in these occupations varies according to the total employment share held by female labour. For example in Sales women have a greater employment share than men, some 11.6 per cent compared to 7.4 per cent. When younger women working in Sales is compared to that of men in the same age group it can be seen that young men only command 6 per cent of the total share of male employment in this occupation, compared to 12.8 per cent for young women. Indeed the slightly higher percentage rate of young women in this occupation suggests that it is an area of work particularly attractive to this age group. Other areas where differences in the employment ratio of young women compared to both men and older women exists include Clerical Work, which accounts for 27.2

per cent of total female employment but interestingly nearly 40 per cent of young women's employment. Young men as the figures above reveal have a slightly higher percentage level compared to older male age groups in Clerical Work, once again suggesting that it is a popular area of work for younger men, but because of sex segregation affords them less opportunity than for young women. This point is more amply demonstrated in one occupational category, which highlights differences between age and gender groups. In Service, Sport and Recreation the differences between younger and older women is startling with this occupation accounting for a staggering 96.6 per cent of young women's employment compared to a total female employment share of 22.3 per cent. In contrast young and older men are less well represented in this category. (Source: 1971 Census, Economic Activity Part II, 10 per cent Sample)

From the above presentation it is clear that young people are concentrated in a narrow range of jobs available by industry and occupation. More recent evidence for the 1980s suggests that this situation has not altered a great deal, with the under-19s still continuing to exhibit sexual differences in the pattern of industrial and occupational distribution. For example a survey of the first jobs of 16 year old new entrants (excluding YTS participants) in 1983 found that in relation to industrial distribution Manufacturing provided approximately one-third of jobs for 16 year old new entrants; with Other Production Industries accounting for 15 per cent of jobs for this age group. The survey found that there were similar proportions of male and female youngsters in Manufacturing, although in the Other Production Industries category male jobs amounted to 25 per cent compared to 3 per cent for young women entering this sector. In contrast over a third of female jobs were in the Service sector compared to just over a fifth of male jobs. With regards to occupational distribution the survey found similar patterns of segregation between young men and women. Hence while over 10 per cent of male jobs were in the Transport and Securities category, virtually no female jobs existed in this occupational sector. Conversely, nearly a quarter of young women's jobs was located in Clerical and Related, five times the proportion for males.

Finally in Selling there were twice as many young women some 19.6 per cent compared to 9.2 per cent of young men; while Agriculture, Construction, Mining and Related claimed 17.3 per cent of male new entrants compared to 3.4 per cent of young women.

Another important aspect of this pattern is that overall new entrants to the labour market, tend to occupy subordinate positions within employment structures, and are located in lower skill levels, ie.unskilled and semi-skilled manual jobs, junior non-manual posts, with proportionately less in the craft skilled status. One reason for this is that employers tend to assess young people as unskilled workers and therefore make assumptions about their suitability for particular work areas.

Following the evidence presented by Cockburn (1983) that the ascription of skill is a 'social' process, rather than a technical one, then it can be seen that the labelling of young people as unskilled is another feature that distinguishes the youth labour market. Similarly Phillips and Taylor (1980) make the point that in reality, the process of dividing labour into skill categories is one that refers to the ability of workers to define and defend their skills status. Historically this has been achieved through a variety of measures and agreements negotiated by trade unions and other worker representatives, and has influenced the nature of work and pay conditions, as well as special benefits and incentives (Rubery. 1978). Thus as a general rule what tends to define unskilled labour as opposed to semi or skilled work refers less to the content of jobs, which will require varying degrees of competence, and more to the power of workers to defend and maintain their skilled status. Traditionally because young workers are an unorganised group, they hold little political or employment power and as a result are disadvantaged with respect to demanding better pay and work facilities. Moreover given the fact that unskilled workers are generally located in those jobs that offer little remunerative rewards, poor working conditions and little or no training content, it follows that in times of recession they will be adversely affected by unemployment. For instance figures quoted in Moos

(1979) show that in 1977 the ratio of skilled jobs to the number of unemployed workers who had the qualifications to fill these posts was 3:1, for unskilled jobs and the number of unemployed unskilled workers this ratio was 10:1. Thus the propensity of young people to enter into the unskilled jobs category means that they are more likely to experience job loss.

Supply and Demand Centred Explanations Of The Rise In Youth Unemployment

It is against this background that researchers favouring either a supply-sided or more structuralist demand-sided approach have analysed the pattern of employment and unemployment amongst the young. Demand related evidence points to the impact of the Recession in the decline in the level of recruitment of labour, where young people have been adversely effected by virtue of their new entrant status. It is at this point that several different arguments about the precise nature of the changes occurring in the British economy arise. Under the broad heading of **Changes in the Demand for Youth Labour** several pertinent factors have been cited as evidence of the increasing vulnerability of the young to unemployment. The work of Ashton and Maguire (1983) points to the job losses in those Manufacturing sectors where young people have been traditionally located. Job losses in Mechanical Engineering, and Metal Goods and Construction between 1971 and 1980 are all examples of industries where young males have disproportionately been affected. The female equivalent of job loss in those industries where young women are overly represented are Textiles, which in the same period experienced a 54 per cent loss and Clothing and Footwear, which exhibited a 42 per cent reduction in jobs. These same authors point to two other important variables affecting youth employment which together also reflect the underlying sectorial shift towards the Service sectors.

Briefly, it is argued by them that along side the expansion of jobs in Insurance, Banking and Finance, as well as the Scientific and Professional Services, has been a concommitant rise in the level of qualifications demanded by these sectors, what Ashton and Maguire describe as a 'qualifications inflation' process. Unemployment has led to a 'trading down' or 'bumping

effect', whereby young people possessing higher level qualifications, such as 'A' levels and Degrees have found themselves searching for jobs lower down in the occupational hierarchy. As a result of this downward pressure those with fewer or no qualifications, who are therefore unable to move up or down the ladder, find their mobility restricted to unemployment or government training programmes.

The other variable noted by Ashton and Maguire is the increasing number of married women participating in the labour market which has swollen the labour supply. The Institute of Employment Research [IER] (1987) estimate that between 1951 and 1986 female participation rates rose from 34.7 per cent to 46.8 per cent; and that between 1971 and 1986 the increase in the labour force, by some 1.8 million was almost entirely due to the rise in the number of women workers. Women's share of overall employment also increased from 29.8 per cent in 1954 to 39.4 per cent in 1986. This growth being closely related to changes in the organisation of work, especially the growth in part-time employment. Hakim (1987) estimates that in 1951 part-timers represented 4 per cent of total employment, but by 1987 this figures had risen to 23 per cent. Other research evidence suggest that part-time workers are drawn mainly from married women with dependent children, whom Martin and Roberts (1984) note are deemed a more attractive flexible labour supply. The fact that women are concentrated within particular occupations adds yet another competitive dimension to young women's pattern of entry into the jobs market. For instance, in its Eight Annual Report in 1983-1984 the Equal Opportunities Commission reported that women constituted 67 per cent of Professional and Related (Education, Welfare and Health), 77 per cent of Clerical (non-manual), 59 per cent of of Selling and 76 per cent of Catering, Hairdressing and Other Personal Services workers.

Both the 'qualifications inflation' process and the increase in the female labour force are part of wider long term changes that are occurring in the British economy. Generally analysis of changes in the occupational structure reveal that there has been a sizable shift away from manual to non-manual

work. For example, IER (1987) reported that between 1951 and 1981 the Professional, Managerial and Administrative categories incurred the fastest sectorial increase; while the manual job categories declined throughout this period. Manual workers constituted 80 per cent of the work force in the pre-first world war decades, but by the 1980s the difference between manual and non-manual occupations was practically negligible.

It is within this context that the structuralist approach points to the effects which changes in occupational demand, in the form of both the deskilling and upskilling of jobs, has had on the recruitment of new inexperienced and untrained entrants to the labour market. The deskilling thesis focuses on the content of work and the relationship between 'man and machine', where it is contended that many manual and lower level non-manual jobs are becoming *simplified* by means of new technologies. Research on this issue points to the confrontational aspect of deskilling where worker resistance to this process involves the maintenance of skill status differentials, usually in the form of exclusionary practices against other groups of workers (Cockburn. 1985). In the context of the youth labour market it is the 'social' aspects of deskilling which has drawn the attention of some commentators who argue that the process entails the inculcation of young people to accept routinized tasks, and, the adoption of work attitudes that reflect their weak position (Finn and Frith. 1981). In contrast the upskilling thesis argues that changes are occurring in the up-grading of jobs from unskilled to nominally skilled occupations. Given that a large number of young people traditionally enter work at the unskilled grades, together with the increased demand for qualifications, they are said to be adversely affected by this process, especially because of their poor representation in non-manual jobs within the white collar grades.

One other important dimension in the structuralist/demand analysis of occupational change, referenced in part to the upskilling thesis, is the impact of New Technology on the recruitment strategies of employers, where increased productivity, through the use of computers, has lessened the need for a

corresponding rise in staffing levels. Ashton and Maguire (1983) point to the effect which the acquisition of New Technology is having on women's jobs, within the various segments that make up the Service sector. Areas identified by them include Office Work and Distribution, in addition to the recent growth areas of Banking, Insurance and Finance - incidentally those occupational areas traditionally associated with young women's employment.

In relation to young people's employment Raffe (1984) challenges both the notion of deskilling and upskilling, by first pointing to the lack of hard evidence to support either thesis. He notes that most of the evidence for the upskilling thesis rests on the increasing role of qualifications in occupational selection, which he argues is often a lesser consideration for employers than the thesis suggests. Secondly in approaching the issue of youth employment, Raffe puts forward the idea that the major factor effecting the recruitment of young people is where they are located in the jobs queue. He contends that less qualified youngsters are more likely to be by-passed in favour of more qualified applicants. While acknowledging that young people do encounter some restrictions in the range of jobs open to them, Raffe further argues that most jobs undertaken by the young are also open to adults. As a result he posits that the issue is not so much a question of the demand for youth labour, but rather one of unemployment, as evidenced by the fact that youth unemployment closely mirrors adult unemployment. He writes that:

> "Young people tend to be at the bottom of the hiring queue;
> they have less experience of working life, fewer general or
> specific skills and (arguably) few personal characteristics
> desired by employers. Consequently they tend to lose out at
> times of high unemployment when employers can be more
> selective."
>
> (Raffe. 1984. pp.2-3).

The above quotation points to the need to problematise the role played by employers in determining the extent and quality of youth employment. This is because employers' recruitment and selection practices effectively control not only the rate at which young people enter the labour market, but also which groups of the Youth category are drawn into the labour market at a quicker rate in preference to others.

The Recruitment And Selection Of New Entrants Into The Labour Market

Employers have recourse to a number of methods for recruiting labour associated with formal and informal practices. For instance formal recruitment refers to direct advertising of vacancies in a number of sites; the Careers Service, Job Centres, factory noticeboards, newspaper and other media agencies. Employers may recruit from one school or a group of schools in their locality. Whatever the method chosen, formal recruitment channels act as a way of screening young applicants. Informal methods largely refer to word of mouth recruitment, where employers utilise social networks from amongst existing staff. With respect to particular groups, this can effectively bar entrance to employment especially if the complement of workers fall within the remit of one social grouping eg. White men and/or women or older workers. Another informal method relates to the retainment of lists of past applicants. This can operate to exclude new applicants, thereby adding another competitive dimension faced by young workers. Informal practices such as these constitute indirect discrimination and are especially rife during periods of unemployment, when in attempting to keep down costs employers will often make greater use of them .

The method of selection used to appoint staff involves similar strategies in the screening of young applicants, where the criteria employed by managers refers to broader considerations about suitability. Other factors influencing selection decisions are the class, racial, sexual and age composition of the workforce; the costs of training and/or supervising inexperienced staff and finally the effect of legal barriers on conditions of the employment of young workers. In addition the use made by employers of qualifications as part of the selection process is often more symbolic than real, because young people do not usually leave school with the specific vocational skills required for a particular job. Rather, employers attribute to educational success work attitudes and qualities associated with 'steadiness', 'reliability' and 'flexibility'. In a collection of papers edited by Troyna and Smith (1983) research evidence of the discrimination against young Black applicants is

presented, from which it is apparent that broader social relations, for example 'race' and gender divisions, impinge on the recruitment and selection process.

In sum young people are subject to restrictions with regards to entry into jobs, they are often disbarred from competing with adults, as employers prefer to recruit from an experienced labour supply as opposed to inexperienced one. The youth labour market therefore competes with adult workers but from different job levels; the majority of young people gradually move up, with the passing of time, into the 'older' youth market and eventually take their places in the adult labour market.

Up until the time of mass youth unemployment, the youth labour market could be said to operate a dual pattern of entrance, in that some young people left school at an earlier date to enter into apprenticeships, whilst the vast majority were left to the vagaries of local employers, sampling a variety of jobs before sustaining a permanent career. In some instances young people were afforded training by their employers, although the extent and quality of training varied according to industry, size of the workforce and the numbers of young people being recruited. In effect the youth labour market, excluding those who went on into higher education, was split between formal apprenticeships and general trainees, and those in the unskilled and unqualified categories who gathered work experience in what was usually unregulated casual employment markets (Sawdon et al. 1981). Therefore as a general rule where young people are eventually located within the labour market, to some extent depends upon their initial level of entrance into the world of work; the vocational experience and qualification which they achieve during the course of time, and the structure of opportunities that are available to them.

However, within political discourse on the Youth question it is the deficiency model of the young worker which has been the most pervasive influence in State responses to youth unemployment and training. In essence young people are said to be deficient by virtue of their inexperience and

unrealistic aspirations, supposedly reflected in their demand for pay levels
equitable with that of adults. This description should be familiar to the
reader because as outlined in the Chapter One it is precisely this
typification which is invoked by policy elites when presenting their version
of the youth labour market. In concluding the present discussion on youth
unemployment and the search for causes, the deficiency model of young
people's expectations and attitudes towards the labour market is considered in
conjunction with an analysis of the options available to this age group in the
mid-1980s.

State Intervention - Lowering The Wage Expectation Of Young Workers

In relation to young people's labour market activities, the deficiency model
has not been concerned with the quality of young people's experiences, so
much as the need to subordinate their expectations to the demands of
employers. Since 1979 the gap between youth and adult pay has widened as a
deliberate result of government policies. Part of the market solution offered
by the Conservative government is to lower the wage expectation of the young.
Justification for this rests on the assumption that young people's inordinate
undeserved wage demands is pricing them out of the jobs market, thus
significantly contributing to the rise in youth unemployment. In the search
for solutions the government deliberately floated youth rates downwards by
subsidising employers who take on young workers at a lower rate than the
average earnings for this group. The Young Workers' Scheme (YWS) introduced
in 1982 is just one example of this, where employers were able to claim £15
per week in respect of each employee under 18 years of age whose gross
average earnings were less than £40 or less per week; or where a young
employee earned less than £45 per week the subsidy was £7.50 per week.
After April 1, 1984 the scheme was effectively limited to young people near
17 years of age who were no longer eligible for the YTS. In effect the YWS
was being used to provide a safety net for those young people leaving the
YTS who failed to gain employment. An evaluation of the YWS conducted in
1986 found that in respect of pay, in the long term the scheme had been

successful in lowering the rate of pay for the under-18s, relative to those aged 18 and over (Bushell. 1986).

The assumption that inflated youth wages is a cause of youth unemployment has been challenged. During the 1960s and early 1970s the gap between youth and adults rates of pay narrowed, but by the mid to late 1970s this was beginning to open up again. After 1979 youth-adult pay differentials widened, aided by State policy, where both the YWS and the trainee allowance offered in the YTS consistently remained below that of average youth earnings nor were they kept abreast with inflation. However Roberts et al (1986) clearly demonstrate that lowering youth rates of pay has not led to an increase in employment for young people. Rather the position held by a firm within its product market and the effects of restructuring on this process all impinge on the decisions of employers to increase or cutback on recruitment. These authors have even gone so far as to suggest that low rates of pay may well contribute to youth unemployment by leading young adults into dead end jobs. This is because low youth rates of pay are more strongly associated with relatively high youth recruitment and employment in those sectors offering unskilled, low paid jobs. Based on their findings Roberts et al argue that under these circumstances, young people who mainly fall into the unqualified category, are more likely to seek alternative jobs. Moreover, unemployment has hit unskilled jobs the hardest, suggesting that those young people employed in these sectors encounter greater job losses, returning them to a cycle of unemployment. More qualitative research based evidence highlights the erroneous depiction of young workers as holding over-priced wage expectations. In an age of high unemployment Main (1987) illustrates that school leavers are more interested in gaining a job than worrying about the rate of pay.

The Youth Labour Market In the 1980s - A Question Of Transition?

The above discussion on the pattern of employment amongst young people identified a number of important variables effecting the entrance and location of young people in the labour market. The discussion also pointed to some of

the factors said to determine the degree of vulnerability which young workers face in relation to unemployment. Supply related factors concentrate on the adverse relationship between the expansion of the youth and female labour force. Structuralist explanations point to changes in the demand for labour, and the impact which the qualifications inflation has had on this process. Youth unemployment, especially in the late 1970s, effected the less qualified youngster, corresponding to Raffe's queue theory of selection and recruitment. Yet evidence on employers' selection strategies indicate that qualifications do not by themselves explain why some youngsters are drawn into the labour market at a faster rate than others.

Factors determining the diverse experience of young people in the labour market can be summarised under a number of headings. As shown throughout this chapter Age differentials plays a critical role in fashioning the experiences of new entrants to the world of work. Certain jobs are closed to young people, primarily because of the assumptions that employers make about their reliability. From a young person's point of view, research has shown that their employment attitudes change as a result of moving from the immediate post-16 to the 'older' youth category, from where they eventually make the transition to an adult worker status (Ashton et al. 1982). Differences accruing to sex and gender factors represent an important dimension in the transition of young people into the labour market. The work of Griffin (1985b) demonstrates the impact of gender differences on this process, where the role of the domestic sphere, female heterosexuality and pressures 'to get a man', are all factors influencing what in essence is for young women a different transition, from that of young working class men. In contrast the transition for young Black people entails all the above elements with the exception that racial discrimination amplifies these 'disadvantages' and gender elements to a much greater extent.

On closer examination a sizable body of research evidence demonstrates that the operation of racial discrimination is a key factor in the post-school labour market careers of young Black people (CRE. 1978; Roberts et al. 1983).

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Whether it be in job search, Sillitoe and Meltzer (1986), or related to qualifications, either poorly qualified, Roberts et al (1981), or highly qualified, Ballard and Holden (1975), young Black people face discrimination right across the occupational hierarchy. From a study of the pattern of recruitment experienced by Black teenagers in Nottingham, the CRE (1980b) concluded that Black applicants are discriminated against on the grounds of colour, with employers effectively boycotting them on the assumption that they are unsuited and unfit for work on their premises. Indeed the gravity of this situation is summed up by Brown and Gay (1985) who in a study of the recruitment practices of employers designed to measure the extent of progress achieved since the first Race Relations Act, concluded that:

> "a conservative estimate would put the figure at tens of thousands of acts of racial discrimination in job recruitment every year ...In the majority of cases of discrimination in our tests a polite letter of refusal was sent to the victim, often 'explaining' that other applicants were better qualified and even in some cases wishing the applicant well in his or her search for a job."

(pp. 31-32)

In total, evidence of the differential pattern of entrance into the labour market and the factors affecting this process suggests that the transition from school to work is not a singular experience dependent upon age alone. This is because young people enter similar employment structures and hierarchies to adults, but in doing so, encounter the same pattern of structural inequality, that operate along 'race' class and gender dimensions. Added to this the effects of class on this situation arises out of what job levels working class Black and White young people can reasonably expect to enter. The social class of a young person in the labour market is closely related to their possession of educational qualifications and their general performance within the educational system. This in itself is associated with family background in terms of social class. Thus because middle class youngsters' have greater recourse to further and higher education they can effectively delay entrance into the labour market; as well as by virtue of their qualifications compete for jobs at different work levels within a

broader range of occupational sectors. Working class youngsters entrance to the labour market has traditionally come much sooner. As a result Clarke and Willis (1984) contend that the transition from school to work encompasses a variety of transitions, that afford different outcomes for young people by:

> "locating individuals in different starting points and secondly, through the social division of labour, they determine the different destinations to be arrived at; skilled worker, white collar worker, manager, wife and mother, or unemployed."
>
> (p. 7)

The Impact Of State Intervention On The Transition From School To Work

The above description illustrates the need to problematise the employment experiences of Black and White young men and women. The transition from school to work in the early 1980s is substantially different from that of the 1960s when young people had greater access to the jobs market and could therefore test out various job sites or occupations prior to settling in an area of work. The rise in youth unemployment altered this pattern because the young have placed before them a limited range of options that refer to either remaining in the relatively sheltered environment of the educational system or delaying unemployment by entering State training programmes, which it is said act as a bridge between school and the labour market. Thus the effect of structural and recession induced changes in the economy have resulted in a transitional pattern, that in principle, refers to at what point a new entrant to the labour market will experience unemployment. Roberts (1984) suggests that the combined effect of unemployment and the emergence of State interventionist training schemes on the youth labour market, has created four different transitional typologies: a) the traditional transition, straight from school into occupations that can be extended into adulthood; b) protracted transitions which eventually lead to adult employment via a combination of schemes, youth jobs and spells of unemployment; c) early careers in which the young become trapped in special training programmes, youth jobs and secondary (unstable) labour markets: and d) careers where young people descend into long term unemployment.

This scenario although not without its problems does point to three factors. First, the importance which education/qualifications can have as a way of attempting to launch into the traditional transition. Following this the second factor is the quality of training schemes on offer to young people and the degree to which 'better' schemes can launch a young person into the labour market. Here evidence on the structure of the YTS, with its employer-led emphasis suggests that this has given rise to differential outcomes for young people, which Lee et al (1987) and Roberts et al (1986) both demonstrate is strongly related to local labour market conditions. Finally, the third factor suggested by Roberts' typology relates to the attitude of young people themselves, especially over the question of the *kind* of choices that they make depending upon which transitional category they fall into. For instance are different attitudes towards employment arising as a result of this segmented transitional pattern? Furthermore how does this relate to the State's conception of the problem, based as it is on an individual-centred deficiency model of the young worker? Are young people accepting this model or actively engaged in resisting it?, and, if so which group/category, if any, do they fall into?

The role of the State and the 'enterprise culture' which it seeks to develop is a crucial factor in answering these questions. By approaching the issue of youth employment in terms of a deficiency model, the nature of the solutions on offer point to an increase in individualism, competition and employment 'realism', where an attempt (active or otherwise) is being made to alter the life expectations of the young towards a more instrumental approach; where outcome is seen as dependent on effort, rather than determined by structural inequalities. The dangers of this development, as yet uncharted, have been alluded to by Lee et al (op cit p.157) who note the potentially divisive nature of the YTS, where new fragments within the youth strata are being created on the basis of those trainees who can benefit from the scheme, and, those who are becoming located in the lower segments of the youth training market — what Roberts' typology characterises as the 'early careers' trapped

in special training programmes and cycles of long term unemployment.

The above discussion concludes the examination of the background against which the experiences of Black and White young women on two Mode B1 schemes will be explored. The evidence presented up to this point has demonstrated the complexity that surrounds the whole question of youth, youth training and the role of the State in attempting to foster new patterns of labour market activity amongst the young. Much of the State's activities were certainly during the first three years of the government's term of office, not part of a clearly thought out strategy. Rather the political exigencies of youth unemployment, forced the government into prescribing hastily constructed measures.

Within this scenario the question of equality of opportunity was relegated to a peripheral policy concern, where the aim seems to have been to appease critics, rather than adhere to the spirit of social justice for all. However, our focus is on the nature of the experiences and aspirations of young Black and White women entering the one year YTS, at a time when it was relatively new, and thus ill-prepared in its design and operations. In what follows Chapter Three provides an outline of how the sample group was selected and the main issues effecting the research design. In particular the role of the researcher with regards to field research is explored. Here the question of what constitutes the research process is addressed, with reference to the nature of the interaction between the social researcher and the research environment. This is undertaken in order to explain the approach adopted in conducting the interviews, and in the reporting of the research findings.

> "Field research involves the activities of the researcher,
> the influence of the researcher on the researched, the
> practices and procedures of doing research and the method of
> data collection and data analysis."
>
> (Burgess 1982 p.2)

INTRODUCTION

The discussion in Chapter Two ended by noting that while much is known about

the Youth Training Scheme and the pattern of its intervention in the youth

labour market, how young people interpret what is happening to them still

remains an important area of research. My research grew out of concern to

investigate the nature of the YTS in practice, that is, what factors

influenced it and how it is experienced by trainees. Yet running alongside

this central aim are other related issues that add important dimensions to

the question of youth training. For example, given that the focus of my

research is the position of young working class Black and White women on the

YTS, factors associated with 'race' and gender inequalities, in conjunction

with the ideologies that inform them, necessitated the broadening of my

research to take into account how these operate at the level of the scheme.

However, because my analysis is directed at describing the experiences of

young women from *their* point of view, the examination of 'race' and gender

relations is framed in a different way than in other studies on the YTS

experience. In principle the aim is to show how institutional gender and

'race' inequalities interact with the specificity of the girls' own perception,

experience and interpretation of their location within these training arenas.

Such an analysis aims at revealing that 'race' and gender divisions are not

clear cut in their operations. In social relations individuals bring their own

understanding of these divisions to bear on their institutional experience.

Hence, underlying the main focus of the research is the belief that

institutional forms of inequality are enmeshed in class-cultural gender and

'race'/ethnicity relations, that also help fashion social actors responses to a

given situation. In other words, if we accept that patterns of inequality are

textured by dominant ideologies, that serve to explain and legitimize the subordination of women and Black people; it equally valid to accept that this does not occur in isolation. Precisely because these two groups are also located in class-cultural formations, which have specific patterns of engendered cultural relations, these will also affect decisions about employment and training.

How this way of approaching the question of young Black and White women on the YTS developed is the subject of this Chapter. In writing about my methodological practice the approach starts off with the premise that what is important is how young women interpreted their experiences. Hence a conscious decision was made not to objectify their position through, for example survey or quantitative methods. To this end I decided to present an account of 'social researching' as a central part of the work of this thesis; one which will give the reader a better understanding of objectives underpinning my discussion of young Black and White women's training experience. Throughout this discussion it will be evident that I see research as a personal, problematic and often contradictory process. It will become apparent that there is an implicit (or at times explicit) renunciation of traditional ways of writing about research. This is also reflected in my style of writing, where the first person singular is used. I want to highlight that *who I* am and *what I did* affected this research, how it transpired, as well as the issues which conducting research raised for me.

In conclusion I have presented the problems of my 'social researching' experience in order to highlight the fact that it is neither a clear cut or hygienic process. Another aspect of this, relates to the way in which methodology is discussed as part of the research process. Nothing in my research training prepared me for some of the situations I encountered in the 'field'. Therefore whatever solutions I came up with, ie how I 'managed' these situations were based on my own personal experiences and abilities in interacting with other people. All of this played a crucial role in directing the research and ultimately the final product - an experience which I think

provides useful information about the realities of conducting field research, especially in familiar settings. Stanley and Wise (1983) make a number of valid criticisms about the inherent contradictions found in the presentation of research findings. They point at the discrepancy between objectivity, with its fear of bias, and subjectivity, where researchers are part of the social arena which they undertake to observe. How all of this gets translated into academic discourse, is part of a research ideology, with its emphasis on rational, unemotional scientific techniques. In essence this entails a process of deconstruction where in the name of objectivity a researcher is removed from the analysis. An insight in this, and into the pressures on social scientists to conform, is given by the two authors in the quote below which I believe is pertinent to the way in which I tackled the issue of writing about my research. Stanley and Wise argue that:

> "...the point at which we begin to realize that this 'hygienic research' in which no problems occur, no emotions are involved, is research as it is 'described' and not 'research as it is experienced', is frequently a crucial one. It tends to be the point at which we are required to present our research products to academic colleagues, supervisors, publishers and so forth. And so it is precisely the point at which we are most vulnerable, most likely to find pressures to conform to 'normal science' most difficult to resist, should we want to...This problem is generally 'solved' because most of us fail to confront the contradiction between consciousness and research ideology".
>
> (p. 153. 1983)

In the discussion to follow an outline of the mechanics of 'doing' field research, and the particular methodologies utilised by the research is given. From the outset it will be apparent that I do not see the two as inseparable for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact that there is no one overriding method for conducting field research. Moreover, in discussing both methodology and the research process 'in the field', the role of the researcher is given a central role, because he/she represents, to coin a phrase quoted in Burgess (1982. p.2), a 'methodological strategist', engaged in problem oriented methodology. What the nature of these 'problems' are in relation to my own study, informs the discussion to follow. The Chapter ends with a brief description of two case study schemes, and the style of

interviewing carried out throughout the research period.

Research Methodology - Approaches In The 'Field'

Social scientists working in the 'field', defined as circumscribed areas of study, have at their disposal a number of methodological orientations and strategies for conducting research. Terms known as *fieldwork, ethnography, case study, qualitative research, interpretative procedures and field research* all refer to types of data collecting activities, which constitute a substantial part of the research process. Burgess (1984) suggests that each of these terms results from slightly different conceptual frameworks, under which umbrella social scientists construct their particular research.projects. Within all of these research strategies, certain features of the research process appear to be constant. For example, participant observation, data collection, recording and analysis are all central features of field researching. The differences which emerge relate to the ways in which these aspects are used, and the techniques used to obtain and record data. For instance, social researching involves various degrees of observation where a researcher, depending upon what he/she is investigating, can use a number of covert methods for recording data; eg. they can actively participate in what is being studied; conduct interviews of either a structured or unstructured manner, with a certain amount of leeway between these two, known as semi-indepth interview schedules. Also the participant observer can more or less be active or passive within the research setting, in terms of how much contact he/she establishes with the group being studied. Contact with a sample group can involve establishing friendship and other social relationships; or alternatively entail little social interaction with the sample group. Other techniques available to a social researcher, include the use of historical data, life histories and other personal documentation. However, whatever methodology a researcher employs, remains integrally linked to the nature of the 'problem' addressed by his/her research project.

Conducting field research often starts with a set of assumptions of what constitutes the ideal conditions. As the research progresses, information

coming out from the research group and its environment often challenges a researcher; forcing a reappraisal of the research design, methodology and role strategies that together act as guidelines in the 'field'. The implication for research methodology is that in reality there is no hard and fast rule about sticking to a set methodology. This is because the 'field', cannot be controlled in the traditional scientific sense. Consequently field research cannot be fitted into a linear step by step laboratory process. Rather a researcher is continually engaged in a responsive process - responding to what is being observed, how the social actors involved interpret 'events', and the impact of that on the researcher's own perspectives (Bell and Roberts. 1984).

Another crucial aspect of social researching is who the researcher is and the roles which he/she adopts in the 'field'. Who the researcher is refers to biographical and other personal details, as well as to the individual's particular academic/political perspective(s). Biographical factors associated with age, sex, ethnicity, 'race', religion and class background, all play a part in the positioning of social scientists in the research process. This is not merely confined to the influences that impinge on the formulation of a research project; but include both how respondents react to a social researcher and how he/she responds to them. Moreover, as Burgess (1984) points out all of the above have repercussions on the interpretation and analyses of information:

> "The influence of the researcher's own experience upon the research findings has been clearly argued by Dawe (1973)' who maintains that sociologists are participants in their analyses. For Dawe considers that any statement of subjective meaning will incorporate elements of the sociologist's experience as well as the experience of those who are studied."
>
> (Burgess 1984 p.89.)

In my research I was for a variety of reasons an active participant. In other words this research affected me academically and personally; it affected my thinking by for example making me constantly reassess my motives. By implication who I am, my choice of topic and my relations with other individuals, questions the degree to which value free research in the field

can be attained. This is because my personal background, my biographical details, are intimately related to the group I studied and the area in which the research was conducted. For example, my ethnic origin, racial identity and gender are an integral part of my experience in social researching. The response of other social actors in my project, was not divorced from who I am. This is an inevitable outcome of a society which acts on and from phenotypical, sex and class differences. It effects the nature of social interaction, as well as playing an important role in shaping research strategies, such as those employed in gaining access to and maintaining contacts with respondents (Pryce. 1979). Simultaneously, these factors also underpin the choice of research methodology. A researcher needs to consider the best method for gaining the information looked for in answering the research question. A researcher also needs to be comfortable with his/her chosen method(s).

As stated earlier, the approach adopted by a social researcher, is reflected in the kind of techniques utilised to obtain the data. In my research the views, thoughts and interests of a small sample of young Black and White women on the YTS is prioritised, over and above that of a more formal analysis of YTS structures and patterns of inequality. The style of research invoked by this approach relates to qualitative methods. In principle this refers to a number of strategies, where the researcher utilises participant observation methods and in-depth semi-structured interview techniques. Linked to this is the question of interviewing style and how information is handled in the reporting of the research findings. Oakley (1981) makes the point that less structured research strategies avoid hierarchical relationships between interviewer and interviewee. Added to this is the belief shared by female researchers like Finch (1984) that women interview women better than men interview women. Both Finch and Oakley advocate the informal exchange to get at how the respondents' interpret 'events'. Interviews are usually taped, with additional background information collected in the form of field notes. Field notes can be used to provide further interpretative information about the

social setting; and is a useful way of contextualising 'events' as they occur during the course of the research. These can be either written down as 'events' unfold, or be written up afterwards. Depending on what kinds of information is required, qualitative research strategies allows the social scientist to collect both 'hard' and 'soft' data; referring to both factual information and more qualitative material.

The nature of qualitative data, and the quantity of information obtained, reflects the degree of flexibility of a researcher on how much he/she wants to discover. It also provides a useful way of getting close to respondents, whilst still maintaining a degree of control over the research. In my research some control over the material was essential for two reasons. Firstly, it was tempting to include a whole range of other issues on the subject of 'girls', eg. leisure activities, relationships with boys, girls' sub-culture etc. Although these areas are all interesting from a research point of view, the extent of information collected had to be limited to what was useful for the main aspects of the research topic. This is because no one research project can examine all the infinite range of issues, concepts and theories which these topics entail or touch upon. Following this decision to limit the areas covered by my project, the research focussed on a set of questions about young women's experiences within particular areas of youth training; in principle this relates to examining the validity of some of the underlying policy characterisations of the young 'hidden' within the objectives of the YTS. In order to achieve this my research explored a number of areas, related to the transition from school to work and the assessments which my respondents made about this process.

Initial Contacts in the Field — Reformulating the Research Design

Bearing this in mind, and by way of introducing the research project, I want to describe what 'ideal' conditions first informed the research design. The structure of the YTS, with its bi-modal level of provision, split between the private and voluntary/public sectors provided the setting for the research.

Initially, I wanted to conduct research on the experiences of Black girls within both Mode A (employer-led) and Mode B (voluntary based) provision. I also chose to conduct the research in West London because the West Midlands where I was based, had various on-going research projects on the YTS[2], and I felt that a focus on the London experience would provide an important contribution to the growing body of research literature in this field.

I decided to concentrate on one Borough[3] in West London and looked at the range of schemes falling into its catchment area. My decision to focus on this Borough rests on the fact that it represents the part of London I grew up in, and where most of my family still live. Hence I am familiar with the territory, and with the local population. For more pragmatic reasons I believed that this familiarity would give me a head start, since I would have no problem getting to know the community in which the research is based. This is especially true of this area, where it has been a traditional stronghold of what is described as 'small island people'; ie. those people from the smaller islands in the (British) West Indies, such as St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago.

Black people are fairly well represented in this Borough, although exact figures are unobtainable, due to the way in which census data on racial or ethnic origin is collected. In 1981, the number of people residing in the Borough exceeded just over 140,000; of these households with a New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NWC/P) born head, formed 11.7 per cent of the population. Information relating to private households, reveal that NWC/P born head residents represent 15.3 per cent of this category. Obviously because census data refers to birthplace, rather than racial/ethnic origin, the number of young British born Black people cannot accurately be collated, the result being that in all probability the total number of Black residents in the Borough is under-estimated. In 1981 nearly two-thirds of Borough residents who were born in the NWC/P came from the Caribbean or Africa, and about a fifth came from the Indian Sub-Continent. On the basis of this information, it is likely that a higher proportion of the "second generation" born Black

population, are in households where the head was born in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the 1981 Census figures indicate that a substantial number of the 5 to 15 age category would been entering the labour market by 1984 - 1985; a time which corresponds with the operation of the one year Youth Training Scheme.

In relation to unemployment the Borough reflects wider patterns of change that are affecting London labour markets. For example, the total rate of unemployment in this Borough had been rising since the early 1980s, and by 1984 was just under 15 per cent. Between 1982 and 1984 the unemployment rate of males in the Borough rose from 15.4 per cent to 19 per cent, the figures for females are 7.4 per cent to 9.8 per cent for the same period. Although the rates for women appear to be relatively low, in the same period, 1982 to 1984, their share of the total rate of unemployment rose from 27.5 per cent to 29.2 per cent. Overall the unemployment rate of the Borough rose by 22 per cent, between 1982 and 1984.

However it was the long term unemployed (defined as those out of work for at least a year), that witnessed the greatest percentage rises. Between October 1978 and October 1984 the number of long term unemployed claimants rose by 395 per cent. Amongst long term unemployed males the rate increased by 336 per cent, compared to a female rate of 521 per cent. When age is taken into consideration, the biggest rise in the long term unemployed was amongst the 16 to 19 age group, who experienced a rise 1060 per cent, compared to 648 per cent amongst the 25 to 44 age group. As mentioned above, specific information on Black residents in the Borough is hard to obtain because of the way the census is conducted. However, an earlier survey conducted by the 1978 National Dwellings and Housing Survey, found that West Indians/Africans residents had an unemployment rate of 9.3 per cent, while the residents classified as originating from the Indian Sub-Continent were experiencing an unemployment rate of 8.2 per cent. Whilst it is difficult to calculate the precise rate of unemployment amongst young Black people, the 1981 Census did show that the highest rates of unemployment were

in those wards where the Black populace is concentrated.

The evidence of high rates of Black people's unemployment in the Borough although sketchy, did convince me that there was a case for examining the impact of the youth training scheme on the 'transition' for Black youngsters in the area. Also given the size and extent of the YTS, I felt confident that the Borough would have a large number of both types of schemes, to which it was hoped I would gain access. Armed with a set of criteria of the what kind of schemes I was interested in I made a number of trips to London, visiting the Careers Service, youth and community groups and the Local Authority.

I also wrote to the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), requesting permission to conduct research on YTS trainees, by looking at the placement activities of the Careers Service in the part of West London I wanted to concentrate on; which would be followed up by interviews with trainees on a selected number of schemes. In 1984 the ILEA Careers Service had 4,710 placements in the YTS, which amounted to 25 per cent of the total number of 16,388 YTS provision in London. The occupancy rate for the YTS in London was 52 per cent, which was lower than the national average, but higher than the true rate for Inner London school leavers. The destination of school leavers in ILEA in the November 1983, reveal that 32 per cent chose to remain in school, 3 per cent went into Higher Education; 12 per cent into Further Education; 18 per cent into employment, 7 per cent into the YTS; 9 per cent registered as unemployed and 19 per cent were unaccounted for. These figures indicate that the YTS was not an attractive proposition for school leavers, who it appears were opting for the labour market or unemployment (Greater London Council. 1986). Unfortunately the ILEA Careers Service turned down my request on the grounds that their resources were being over stretched, because of implementing the new initiatives. My project was also one of several competing claims for research facilities which they felt could not be given priority. The rejection of the Authority presented a problem, which I decided to overcome by contacting the schemes directly, thereby by-passing the Careers Service. Three factors should be noted at this stage: firstly, my

primary interest in Black young women meant that I needed to gain access to schemes in which they, alongside White girls were well represented. Secondly, I was interested in gaining access to schemes where I could follow female trainees throughout their year of training. Thirdly because of the nature of my research, in which it is vital that trainees attitudes and experiences are reported, I wanted to avoid any unnecessary bureaucratic complications which going through the MSC might incur. This is because the MSC, especially in London were sensitive about the way in which the new scheme was being depicted. Accusations of racist and sexist practices, and criticisms about Mode B provision were already surfacing, even at this early stage of the YTS (GLC. 1983). I therefore felt it would be better to avoid involving the MSC if possible. As it turned out my caution was confirmed by many of the scheme managers I contacted, who expressed their reservations about how the MSC would view my research.

My contacts were drawn from a list of eight Mode B1 schemes which the local Careers Service had given me. Given the size of the MSC's operations, I was surprised at the relatively small number of schemes operating in the Borough, but it was explained that at the time I made my inquiries, a number of new schemes (a large proportion of which were designated Mode A status) were in the pipeline. However, the exact number of Mode A placements were not known by the local Careers Offices that I visited. Officers were unclear about how many trainees were participating on Mode A schemes, nor could they give any information on the ethnic origin of trainees on schemes for that year. One reason for this was the poor monitoring of the YTS, especially in its first year. In my discussions with Careers Officers at this stage of the research I found that because the implementation of the scheme had been rushed, they were still unclear as to how best to monitor its operations in the Borough, coupled to the fact Mode A Managing Agency could by-pass the Careers Service in the recruitment of trainees.

Each of the schemes on the list were written to and followed up by a phone call arranging a time when I could make an initial visit. In the letter I

explained that I was a research student, based at the University of Warwick, conducting research on the provision of training for Black and White girls. I also made it clear that at this stage all I wanted to do was talk to them about the nature of their provision, with a view to possibly conducting some research on their schemes. Out of a list of eight schemes, five agreed to meet me. Of the three that refused to take part, two were Training Workshops with only a few girls on their schemes, while the remaining scheme finally rejected my request after three weeks of deliberations by the scheme manager. This was the first scheme I visited and was of particular interest to me because, it was a Black female dominated scheme run by Black female staff, training in the area of catering services. The scheme manager after receiving my letter and phone call said that she would think about it. She had reservations about the research, because she could not decide whether it was really a 'spying exercise', from which I inferred she meant, that it would be critical of her management of the scheme. I finally persuaded her to meet me so that I could give her a better picture of what the research was about, and who I was; but in the end she decided not to cooperate and unfortunately I was not able to conduct research on what appeared to be a unique scheme in the Borough.

I have stated that after approaching a number of schemes, five gave permission for the research to be conducted on their premises. Of the five schemes, one is a Information Technology Centre (ITeC), while the other four were Community Projects, offering a variety of training in arts and craft, fashion and textiles, manual trades and clerical skills. The racial composition of three schemes consisted of entirely Black male and female trainees, while the other two remaining schemes, (one Community Project and the ITeC scheme) are racially mixed. All the schemes were based in the community; catering for trainees across the Borough. All the schemes had management committees, made up of community representatives and the funding bodies. Scheme managers were accountable to these management committees, and reported to them on a regular basis. The degree of autonomy which scheme

managers had varied, and this proved to be an important factor in whether or not the research was finally accepted. This is because my initial contacts with the schemes were established through scheme managers, rather than their management committees; thus decisions about the research at this stage were made by them.

I visited each of the schemes in order to discuss my research in greater detail, as well as to assess whether they were suitable for my project. My experience of what happened during this period and the effect it had on the research project, is discussed below. Through a process of local politics, the final number of schemes upon which the research is based was whittled down to two. Indeed the politics of being a Black female researcher, investigating the experiences of Black people, set within a context of strained relations between MSC and the voluntary sector (in which most of Mode B1 provision is found), proved in many ways, to be a nightmare experience. My encounters in the 'field' also raised a number of important issues about the role of the researcher, as well as the ethics of conducting research in familiar settings, where the researcher is also a *native*. What conflicts of interest arise? How, if at all, are these conflicts negotiated, and, where does that leave the researcher, in terms of her objectives. These issues are examined in the context of two factors which necessarily influenced my research – the fact of being female and of simultaneously being a member of the one of the racial groups studied.

Some Initial Observations on Researching in the 'Field'

For the sake of clarity the three schemes in which I established contact, but eventually had to discount from my study will be refered to as Scheme A, B and C respectively. Of these three, the first was in the end rejected by me, because despite initial reassurances that the scheme was fully operational, it never exceeded more than five trainees, of which only one was female. My experience of this scheme is interesting because it highlighted some of the complexity surrounding the question of gender relations for female

researchers working in the 'field'.

Scheme A offered training in arts and craft, including skills training in welding, and fabric and textile design. This community project was specifically aimed at local Black youngsters, which the scheme manager, Mr. A, described as a way of getting them off the streets where they were likely to be harassed by the police.

My first visit to the scheme was after closing hours because the manager said that he could not meet me during the training day. My meeting with him seemed to go well, because he readily agreed to give me access to *his* scheme. He gave me the impression that the scheme was an up and running concern, and certainly, I knew that it had been long established as part of the old YOP scheme, which the YTS had replaced. However during the course of this interview, the nature of his questions were more personal than related to my project. To be frank he kept on staring at various parts of my anatomy; he was flirtatious and although a desk was between us I definitely felt uneasy. I was aware that he was manipulating the situation, because he knew that my objective was to gain access; which meant that I would, in *his* view, have to accept his control over the direction of our conversation. Despite all of this I was determined to press on, as his description of the scheme's facilities and what the scheme was trying to do, made researching in it an attractive proposition. I agreed to meet him again, for what he described as further consultation, in which I would have a chance to meet other staff members and trainees. When the time came for this meeting, only one other male member of staff was present, and even then only briefly because he was getting ready to leave. There was only one female trainee on the premises, and two boys, working in the welding section of the scheme. The scheme manager explained that the 'other' trainees had left earlier because it was a Friday. I spoke to the young woman on the scheme, whose name was Janet, and she agreed to meet me for lunch in the following week. At this stage, all appeared to be well, and I was expecting to be based at the scheme for some time. I reasoned that I could handle the scheme manager's advances by maintaining an air of

detachment and professionalism!; besides which I did not expect to have much contact with him because he did not actually give any classes, and was more concerned with the administrative side of the scheme.

I met Janet the following week and my discussion with her made me reassess whether or not it was worth conducting research on her scheme. Janet told me that contrary to what I had been led to believe, she was the only female trainee in attendance, as the other three girls had dropped out some time ago. Janet also told me that most of her time was spent sitting around, as the sewing instructor did not always turn up for a lesson; and even when she did they went over the same old things. Janet was obviously getting ready to leave the scheme, which she found boring and isolating. She told me that the only reason she had stuck it out for so long was because her mother was putting pressure on her to 'do *something*'. Janet did not like Mr A, and said she had stopped attending the welding classes, because the boys just ignored her and made her feel stupid.

All in all Janet's account of the scheme, made me realise that Mr. A had just been stringing me along, because in reality there was nothing to do the research on. Needless to say I was annoyed, but because I told Janet that anything she said to me was in confidence, I could not charge over to the scheme to confront Mr.A. Instead I made one final visit to the scheme, where I pressed him to give me a list of all the trainees currently on the programme. After making his excuses he finally admitted that there was no point in my continuing with the project at this stage, but that I should contact him at a later date, to see if more trainees had arrived on the scheme. He did not contact me again, and I decided not to pursue the matter because of my subsequent experience with the other four schemes.

Having established contact with Schemes B and C, both the managers of these schemes told me that they would have to consult their management committees for final approval, which would involve me being directly interviewed by committee members. It is at this moment that the politics of researching on Black people comes into to play. My experiences arising out of these two

meetings led me directly to change my approach, by adopting a new strategy, which underplayed the significance of 'race' in my research.

Scheme B, was based in a community where the local politics are quite volatile and had attracted both State and media attention. There are a number of local activists, who are well established in the community, and have a long history of what I would describe as 'confrontational' politics, especially over issues of policing. Some of these mainly Black activists are engaged in a number of projects on Black youth employment, education and training.

My first contacts with the scheme manager and staff were quite favourable. The manager was quite enthusiastic about the fact that I, as a local girl 'made good', was undertaking a doctorate, which he told me was a mark of success for the Black community. His sentiments as it happened were not shared by the mainly Black dominated management committee. I arranged to meet one of them at his place of work, which was a local community information centre, giving advice on issues over housing, education, policing and welfare services. My interview with him proved fraught as he questioned my motives for conducting research on the Black community and made vilifying statements about 'Black intellectuals' and research institutions in general. He went so far as to accuse me of wanting to break up the Black family!, because he said that "all these Black feminists were just causing trouble". He questioned me about my sexuality, asking whether I was a lesbian or not, because he could not understand why I wanted to focus on Black girls; implying that there is nothing special about them. I found myself on the defensive as I sought to justify myself and the research, while still attempting to assure him that in the final analysis I was politically 'conscious' and felt accountable to the Black community.

My experience of Scheme C, proved to be similar in that I found myself in a situation where I had to justify the research aims, namely the focus on girls, especially Black girls. The management committee of this scheme were highly critical of the MSC, especially because of the threat which hung over Mode B

provision. I attended one of the meetings of the committee, and found myself being questioned on a number of issues. They were concerned about how the MSC would respond to my research and whether or not this would be deemed by them as critical of their operations; especially those located in Black communities. They also expressed doubts about the validity of the research because of its focus on girls, which given the view that it is racism which is all pervasive, they felt that the exclusion of boys presented only one side of the equation. I tried not to appear *too* academic when arguing the point that very little is known about girls, but I was up against a predominantly male group who were not especially sympathetic to the plight of young women. By this I mean that the politics of 'race' at grassroots level, especially those emanating from a male perspective, does not appear to question the specificity of engendered racism, which is a relatively new dimension within racial political discourse. This also reflects a hostility towards Black 'feminist' activists who are seen as challenging the way in which grassroots politics have been pitched. Although the committee were sympathetic to my cause, I could not overcome their doubts, and amongst some members outright hostility, about academic research.

The above encounters in the 'field' raise several important issues that refer to: a) the question of conducting research on Black communities and b) the role of the Black researcher in the context of the Black community. Not surprisingly, little has been written about these issues in Britain, with most of the debate emanating from the American experience (Ladner. 1973a). As the above account makes clear, the fact that I am a Black woman of West Indian origin did not guarantee success, with regards to gaining the confidence of what are essentially 'gate keeper' professionals and key persons. The hostile reactions towards me and my research illustrate some of the problems arising from studying what Sawyer (1973), describes as those communities seen as 'deviant'. Although writing from an American perspective Sawyer's comments are worth quoting at length because she highlights the basic problematic which Black researchers working within 'race relations' face.

She writes:

> "But in the case of Black researchers studying the Black
> populations, the problems of role and identity, objectivity and
> distance are crystallized and assume new importance. Black
> populations, regardless of other specific characteristics, are
> a priori deviant when viewed through white middle-class eyes
> - be they the Black middle class, a warring gang or the Black
> lower class. The Black researcher, then, is also deviant with
> respect to the same characteristic - skin color - and all the
> other elements white America has seen fit to link with that
> color which together make up the status of Black people in
> American society. There is also a whole set of attitudes and
> feelings which Black people hold towards the dominant white
> society, whether or not they express them verbally.
> Therefore, the mere fact of being Black presents the
> researcher with a number of problems. These are compounded
> when the researcher studies populations that, in addition to
> being Black, are perceived as deviant with respect to a number
> of characteristics - say, a population dominated by
> female-headed welfare dependent households, high rates of
> unemployment, high conventional crime rates, high rates of
> illegitimate children, etc".
>
> (Sawyer p.367. 1973)

The underlying problematic of Black researchers also refers to the tensions

that exist in working in institutions, which by very definition, reflect

relations of dominance between class, 'race' and gender divisions. This is

propounded by the need to address (or redress) some of the criticisms which

emerge about how best to conceptualise the position of Black people - that

in essence means trying to present information in ways which do not feed into

existing racist (and sexist) stereotypes and assumptions. For those Black

researchers who take these issues on board, (since it does not follow that all

will) the real problem is one of accountability, which in turn suggests a

sense of responsibility. The wariness with which these two schemes viewed my

research included the issue of control and accountability over the research

and its findings. Because this research is not 'action' research emanating

from the community, I could not really allay their fears, but rather sought to

promote my integrity in these matters.

Generally, as my experience within the 'field' progressed I was constantly

faced with questioning my motives for doing the research, and whether from a

community point of view anything useful would come out of it. I must admit

that as a result of these encounters, which were by no means limited to the

two examples presented here, I did change my strategy by underplaying the significance of 'race' in favour of the more *neutral* terrain of gender. However, despite this new slant the fact of my biographical background and upbringing never allowed me to divorce myself from the research and my respondents. Indeed following Ladner's (1973b) discussion of subjectivity versus objectivity in her own research on Black women, I would argue that like her, objectivity assumed less importance, as the researcher can not help but identify with the researched. Indeed, the criteria of objectivity is already in question before the commencement of the actual field research, because by very definition the selection of the topic itself reflects a bias - that is, my strong interest in the subject of women and Black women in particular. (see Postscript for a fuller discussion of this issue)

Prior to discussing how I gained access to the two case study schemes, and the strategies which I employed throughout my time in them, one other aspect of my approach should be mentioned. This refers to the issue of interviewing White respondents, and whether or not this presented any problems for the research. When I embarked on this project the central question which preoccupied my thinking was, "what is the nature of young Black women's experiences on the Youth Training Scheme?" Added to this is the question of how and in what ways is the YTS transforming their labour market experience; is it for example instilling new attitudes towards work amongst this group? Though Black girls formed the focus of my research questions, these cannot be divorced from the issue of women's employment and training. Hence, although my initial approach was directed to those schemes which were predominantly Black, in terms of trainees and staff, I did not discount the possibility of including White girls in my sample. Unlike the problems referred to earlier ie. the role of the Black researcher conducting research on Black communities, I did not feel as apprehensive about talking to White girls. One of the reasons for this is because I have worked with both Black and White girls as a part-time youth worker. Moreover my upbringing was based in a Black and White working class community, where I attended school with both Black and

White girls. Apart from discussing the specifics of racism, and whether or not I could raise this when talking to young White women, I did not feel that the fact of being a Black woman would be an obstacle in relations with them.

The Research Setting - The Information Technology Centre And The Community Project

Contact with these schemes was established at the same time with the other schemes on the list of eight provided by the local Careers Office. In both cases I wrote and arranged to meet the scheme manager and visited the schemes in turn.

The ITeC Programme:

When I visited the ITeC I was surprised to find that after initial introductions, the scheme manager, who was a man, passed me on to the Social and Life Skills tutor, who took me around the scheme, showing me the various departments and discussed with me the aims of my research project. The majority of trainees at the Centre were boys, with a smaller representation of girls. The Centre's trainees came from the local area and were drawn from both the Black and White communities. I must admit that given my experience of the last three schemes, I decided to playdown my interest in young Black women, in favour of a broader focus on gender issues. Penny, the Social and Life Skills tutor, was keen to have research on the issue of girls and training at the Centre. From my discussion with her I learnt that gender issues had only recently been placed on the scheme's agenda, and that Penny had been the main catalyst behind this. Penny was also aware of 'race' issues, because she felt that the position of young Black people at the Centre was qualitatively different from that of young White people. Penny told me that she had included the issue of racism in her sessions on Social and Life Skills, but felt ill-equipped to deal with the subject. The end result of our meeting was that she promised to present my project to staff members for approval, which she felt would be forthcoming. Penny informed me that I would have to attend a staff meeting, in which individual members would be able to question me about the research. However she said that she would have

a private word with the scheme manager, who was not unsympathetic, and once

he was on-side so to speak, this would provide a powerful ally, if need be,

for pushing my project through.

This meeting went ahead and I was introduced to staff members. There were

only two female trainers on the scheme, of which Penny was one, and one Black

member of staff. In this meeting I started off by outlining the broad aims

of the research, which I couched in terms of identifying the needs of young

women in relation to training. I also stressed the confidential nature of my

research; assuring them that the scheme would not be identified by name in my

project. I also informed them that my discussions with trainees would be on

a voluntary basis, and that any information provided by them would be treated

confidentially. I was quite blunt about this, stressing that I did not wish to

be identified by trainees as being a member of staff. In terms of how my

project would run, I told the meeting that it was envisaged that each

department would be visited by me, where I would, with the permission of the

trainer, sit in on the sessions, as an observer, but that I would not be

taking notes. Staff questioned me about whether or not I expected to

interview them. One or two of the male staff were apprehensive about this,

suggesting that they did not want to come under scrutiny. Once again I

stressed that if I did decide to interview staff, (which at this stage was not

my immediate concern), then it would be on a voluntary basis. They asked me

how long my project would take, and I stated that I would like to follow

trainees through the course. This would mean that I put in a weekly

appearance, in order to establish a relationship with the girls, as well

keeping up with what was happening on the scheme. Staff said that they

would be keen to integrate my research into the scheme, by requiring me to

make oral reports about some of my findings, if I thought this would be

useful. This I agreed to do, but with the reservation that I would not be

spying for staff members. I told them I envisaged conducting a series of

interviews at different stages of the course, in order to establish how the

girls were coming along in the scheme. I gave a verbal account of the type

of questions I would be asking, although I was careful to avoid any mention of controversial subjects, such as sexism and racism. This did not mean that staff members were unaware that this would be an aspect of my research, but rather I sought to assuage fears about it being the sole purpose of my project. By pitching my argument in the context of training issues, I presented the project as placing greater weight on identifying training needs. In this sense I held back on disclosing all the aims of the project, partly because of my previous experiences, and partly because I did not wish to be seen pointing an accusing finger at the mainly White male trainers.

It was at this meeting that I realised there were underlying tensions between members of staff, especially between Penny and her male colleagues. Subsequently this was to have important repercussions on the research and my relations with various members of staff, but in this phase of the project my primary goal was gaining access to the scheme. I was told at this meeting that there was no objection to my research, as long as it did not interfere with the trainees' work schedules. Penny said she would make arrangements for interviewing time in her Social and Life Skill classes, when individual girls could be excused in order to have their 'chats' with me. In this way my work was identified as being part of the Social and Life Skills course, assuming a kind of remedial education and training mantle. Indeed, in retrospect I think staff members were more willing to accept the project in these terms, than as a 'serious' piece of research. In this way my research appeared less threatening, less likely to cause upset, and therefore less likely to interfere with or be critical of the running of the scheme.

There were 10 girls on the ITeC programme, 5 White girls and 5 girls of West Indian origin. All the trainees had recently arrived on the scheme, and this proved to be an advantage for my research. I started off with them, and right from the word 'go' I was identified as a part of their training experience. I met all the girls after the staff meeting, where they were told that I was going to interview them over the course of their training year. I was also introduced to the boys on the scheme, and although one or two did

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say it was unfair that they were not going to be interviewed by me, they accepted me as a new addition to the scheme. At this stage in the research I did not want to set up an 'us or them' relationship, vis-a-vis girls versus boys. As a result I spent time with *all* the trainees, getting to know them, sitting in on their break times, and generally disassociating myself from the staff as much as possible. This 'getting to know you' period took approximately a month or more, during which times, trainees got to know me on a first name basis, and became familiar with some of my background. I decided to 'own up' that I was at university, which may seem surprising, but in the past I found that this fact had often proved a barrier between me and other members of my community. The fear of being seen as different is a problem that springs from the personal conflicts arising from belonging to two different class-cultural worlds, of having divided loyalties and perspectives - of simultaneously being a middle class academic and a member of a working class community, whose members occupy a subordinate position. Certainly in the context of my experience of the other schemes I contacted, my loyalty to 'the Black community' had been called into question. It was imperative that the Black and White girls in my sample both accepted and trusted me, which in reality meant that we shared a common language, interest and understanding. Similar considerations and strategies also informed my relations with staff and trainees in the Community Project scheme.

The Community Project (CP) Scheme:

This scheme offered training in fashion and textiles, needlework, knitwear, graphics and photography. Unlike the ITeC programme, girls were overly represented in this scheme; and trainees were drawn from both the local Black and White communities. My first contact was with Carol, the scheme manager, who had been running the project when it had been part of the old Youth Opportunities Programme. From the very beginning Carol was keen on my research. In our telephone conversation, she had given me the impression that my research would be welcome, as there was a need to give trainees a chance to express their opinions about the scheme. Following our meeting, I also

realised that Carol thought my project to be a way of boosting the confidence of trainees because, as the focus of my research interest, they were being treated as important individuals, something which apparently did not happen a lot. There were 13 female trainees on the scheme, 9 girls of West Indian origin and 5 White girls. I explained the aims of my project, and unlike the ITeC project did talk in greater detail about the potential problems facing young Black women, in terms of racism in the job market. I told Carol that I wanted to follow all the female trainees throughout the year, and that this would involve regular visits to the scheme. Carol did not raise any objections about my exclusion of the young men on the scheme, partly because there were so few of them. She felt that as long as I got to know all the trainees then this would not be a problem. During this meeting Carol also introduced me to other staff members, who did not object to the research, and were quite keen to have another Black woman coming into the project.

The scheme had 4 members of staff, of whom 3 were female. There was only 1 Black member of staff, and she felt that more positive examples of Black people were needed, a view acknowledged by the other trainers. Like the ITeC scheme I informed them that the information collected would be treated confidentially, and that trainee participation was voluntary. I also stressed that I wanted to remain a neutral 'insider', ie. neither identified with staff, nor would I interfere with their relations with trainees. As it turned out, the way in which the scheme functioned and the social relations that informed its operations meant that this was never a source of conflict. Thereafter I was introduced to the trainees, who were told exactly what I would be doing on the scheme. My work was presented to them in a way which made it clear that it was up to them how far my project went, and whether or not I remained on the scheme. None of them raised any objections and I quickly established a rapport with all the trainees to the extent that, although I did not formally interview the boys, they played a central role in my being accepted into the scheme.

In general the difference between the two schemes in terms of access and my first impressions of them, was that access to the ITeC had been more difficult, requiring me to set out a number of assurances about my role. Relations between staff on the scheme appeared to be more strained, and the structure of training provision was more rigid, than the CP programme. In contrast, access to the CP scheme had been relatively easy. Staff had readily accepted me on to the scheme and did not implicitly question my motives, unlike the ITeC training staff. I was made to feel that I would become part of the family on the CP scheme and that my activities would not be monitored strictly by the staff. As stated, a certain amount of time was spent getting to know the schemes and the trainees, before starting interviewing. My first interviews with the girls were based upon finding out general information about their educational backgrounds. I also asked questions about when and how they had come into the YTS and whether they had worked or sought work prior to joining the scheme. Thereafter the style of interviewing was more informal and took place throughout the research period, which lasted for 11 months.

At the start of the interview period I attempted to make my respondents comfortable so that they did not feel that I was merely asking them questions and therefore in command, but rather that we were chatting together about the YTS and other matters about their experience of schooling and work. All the interviews were taped, but there were times when the tape recording was halted, either because the conversations became too personal, or because of interruptions (see Appendix B for a guide to the quotations key). I made it clear to trainees that they could stop the discussion and/or have the machine switched off at any time. My tape recorder was pocket sized, and I took care not to place it in a prominent position. All my respondents, 23 in total, were aware that our conversations were private and that they could have access to the tapes at any time. Sometimes the girls and I listened to the tape recordings, which were generally treated as a laugh! I interviewed trainees on a two to three monthly basis, trying to fit in with their various

training schedules, such as the off-the-job element, work experience and free
time, which they had. I never interviewed any of my respondents outside of
the schemes, and was only able to identify them on a first name basis. Given
this type of familiarity, the names used in the reporting of the research
findings are not pseudonyms, with the exception of scheme staff, who for the
sake of keeping the identity of the schemes confidential, are referred to
through this means. I did conduct interviews with the staff on both schemes,
although in the case of the CP scheme this tended to be quite informal.
Staff on the ITeC programme were briefly interviewed about their particular
departmental interests and how female trainees fitted into this. However,
most of the male ITeC staff were reluctant about being interviewed and I did
not push the issue with them. Instead I relied on what the girls said to me
about the attitude of trainers towards them. (For a full list of the names
and racial origin of the female trainees interviewed see Appendix A. Appendix
B provides a copy of the interview schedule and a quotations key).

The interview material is organised in such a way as to reflect the
transition from school to the youth training scheme. Chapter Four provides
information based on the Black and White girls' account of their past
schooling experience. Chapter Five concentrates on their earlier encounters
with employment in the juvenile labour market. Chapter Six focuses on their
post school activity, in the form of job searching and the occupations which
this was directed towards. Chapter Seven explores the nature of their
employment and unemployment experience prior to entering their respective
schemes, ending with a focus on what forces propelled them into choosing the
YTS. Chapter Eight addresses the experiences of Black and White female
trainees located in the ITeC programme, with particular attention paid to the
nature of gender relations on the scheme. In contrast Chapter Nine outlines
the experiences of Black and White CP trainees, exploring a different set of
issues that arose in the context of the scheme. Finally, Chapter Ten
concludes the thesis by addressing the main issues that arose throughout the
previous chapters. The discussion ends by assessing the ways in which the

research findings relates to State training policy in the 1980s.

Throughout the presentation of the research findings I have supplemented the range of topics which each area of information covered with an analysis based on other research findings and comments about similar issues. Furthermore, in line with the approach outlined in this chapter, I have chosen to concentrate on those aspects of the training experiences of the young Black and White women in the two case study schemes, which they saw as important to them.

NOTES:

1. See References.
2. Research Projects based in the West Midlands included: the YTS Monitoring Unit (1985); Racial Equality in Training Schemes (1985); the West Midlands YTS Research Project, see Pollert (1985); Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations, pub. under Cross (1986) — are just a few examples and exclude the work of individual researchers based at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

3. I have chosen not to identify the Borough in which the case studies were based, because this was a specific undertaking made to both schemes. The main sources of data on the structure of the local population, the local labour market and employment and unemployment trends are derived from a collection of the Greater London Council (GLC) documents. These include statistics on women's employment, GLC (1982); London labour markets, GLC (1986), unemployment, GLC (1985a); and the racial composition of the local community, GLC (1985b).

CHAPTER FOUR   PAST SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE OF BLACK AND WHITE

                    YOUNG WOMEN ON THE ITEC AND CP

                    YOUTH TRAINING MODE B1 PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is directed towards the issue of how this

particular group of Black and White young women arrived at decisions about

their future careers in relation to their past schooling experience. With the

exception of 2 women, all the girls in this study opted for joining the labour

market at the age of 16. In choosing this path their experience of school

had two important outcomes; first on their choice of occupation and second in

determining their early entrance into the world of work. The aim of this

chapter is to examine the relationship between schooling experience and

employment, in terms of their decision not to prolong their educational

careers. Therefore the analysis presented here is very much about how these

young women perceived and assessed their time spent at school.

    There exists an enormous volume of research about the relationship between

gender, 'race' and inequalities situated in the educational system. The work

of Stanworth (1981) amongst others, demonstrates how the range of subjects

promoted amongst young women falls far short of that offered to young men.

In a similar fashion research conducted by Coard (1971) and Eggleston (1986)

reveals that young Black people encounter a primary and secondary schooling

system which offers them little chance of educational success; and instead

relegates the majority to lower levels of academic attainment (Swan. 1985).

These inequalities refer not only to the engenderisation of subjects as

described by Delamont (1980); but also the dissemination of cultural

identities in which young working class women learn to be exactly that, and,

young Black people are taught that Whiteness is the predominant and normative

social expression, with anything else being negatively compared to it (Brittan

and Maynard. 1984). These observations, whilst simplistic, embody to some

extent the main thrust of the arguments that have arisen out of critical

debates over the nature of gender and 'race' inequalities within schools. It

is not the task of the present study to provide an in-depth presentation or analysis of the various debates that surround this question, since this is not the primary focus of the thesis. Rather, if we accept that both gender and racial inequalities have produced negative outcomes for women and ethnic minorities, then in relation to the specific focus of this chapter a number of observations can be made. First, in terms of education Black and White working class girls share a restricted range of subjects; resulting in for example their subtle exclusion from science based topics. Although, researchers such as Measor (1984) note that girls also actively choose against science because of wider gender pressures upon them, such as those which refer to the culture of femininity. Second, for those who have not made an investment in education, the only viable alternatives lies in the direction of the female labour market. Finally, that in relation to job choice Black and White working class girls share a similar limited range of options from which to choose. In this context it is hard to distinguish the relative impact of 'race' and gender precisely because both categories look towards similar but not necessarily identical niches in the female labour market. These three observations structure how the research material presented in this chapter will be discussed. Our analysis concentrates on the girls' own interpretation of schooling and what education in general meant to them. Information was collected on the type of school they went to; the range of subjects studied; the level of qualifications attained and finally their attitudes on a number of issues that fall into broad categories associated with aspirations and perception of the labour market.

In concluding this account of my respondents' past schooling experience, their decision to enter the labour market is examined. Only 2 girls chose to 'stay on' at school; with the majority of respondents leaving in the spring or summer of 1984. The reasons behind these individual decisions to leave or stay on at school were neither clearcut nor uniform. In general at this stage in the life cycle, young people are exposed to a varying number of pressures, thereby making the transition from child to adult a problematic one.

Conflicts can and do arise because, as the evidence presented here will show, such demands often derive from different perspectives, for example, between parents and children and amongst peers. However, before arriving at this decision-making time these young women had gained 10 to 11 years of schooling. During this time they were exposed not only to processes of learning that foster the development of appropriate gender identities, but also to a host of relationships, enabling them to assess both their abilities and importantly, how these related to the adult world of work. Together all these themes had a determining influence on the post-16 options of the group.

Sex And Gender - Subjects And Teachers At School

There is a general agreement amongst researchers and other commentators that women learn about areas of knowledge which conform to their role as future wives and mothers (Sharpe. 1976; Oakley. 1981). In addition to this ethnic minority children are exposed to a process of learning that assumes that only White western forms of knowledge are valid (Carby. 1982a). Sex stereotyping and racialisation in schools, occur within diverse number of ways, which in totality serve to reproduce and nurture dominant divisions based on sex, class and 'race'. From the learning material used, the language in which it is taught, through to the interaction between pupil and teacher, young people are bombarded with images about appropriate behaviour, attitudes and above all interpretative skills. Hence schools are major sites where the construction and representation of knowledge provide the critical forum through which dominant social divisions are displayed and reproduced.

Furthermore, on closer examination the link between subjects taken at school and occupational choice is not straight forward. The process by which girls opt for certain subjects refers to; a) the type of school attended; b) the range of topics on offer; c) the content and style of teaching materials; d) pupil and teacher assessment about ability and, finally, e) the degree of commitment which pupils have to learning. In turn all these factors are embedded within class relations that pattern the schooling environment. For example the schooling of middle class girls is orientated towards the female

professions and overtly influenced to a much greater degree by notions of equality of opportunity (Bryne. 1978). In contrast the sexual division of knowledge is more stringently applied to those seen as the 'least able'. In the case of young White working class girls, subjects on offer to them tend to be familiar by virtue of their position within the family. Millman (1982) argues that they are less likely than boys to link their choice of subject to their future careers; precisely because this is intimately tied to expectations about mothering and other domestic roles. Studies such as that undertaken by McRobbie (1978) also highlight the importance that working class girls attach to "getting a man"; influencing both their commitment to school and to the labour market.

However, our main concern focuses on how the sample's experience of schooling led them to opt out of education in favour of direct participation in the labour market. Information about the type of school attended was collected from all trainees. Generally, most of them had gone to mixed comprehensives, within their Borough of residence. Four girls had gone to special schools for disruptive pupils, where they experienced a less stringent form of schooling. With the exception of 1 White CP trainee, all the girls stated that there had been a fair number of ethnic minority pupils in their schools, but that ethnic minority teaching staff were rare. All the girls had complained about the level of teaching and the continual flux of temporary teachers. Certain lessons were picked out as being more prone to staff shortages than others. For those girls who specified this as one reason why they had not been interested in the lessons; Maths, French and Combined Science were the subjects most frequently cited. I asked them whether they considered their schools to have a good reputation. In the majority of cases the answer was no. They complained about the lack of discipline, or the lack of teacher interest in classes. Statements like: "they didn't care", or " the teachers couldn't be bothered", were often used to describe the standard of teaching. This was not one-sided however, as they also expressed views about their behaviour as a factor contributing to poor schooling performance. Again

common statements made along the lines of: "they used to let us get away with it", or "I didn't show an interest, so they didn't bother about me", were quoted as instances where pupils felt they had failed to discipline themselves.

Conflicts with individual teachers was another factor that influenced assessments made about their schools; as was "run ins" (trouble) with other pupils. Commonly, the distinction between "good" and "bad" schools was interpreted as the difference between those schools where "you learned something", and places where you did not. Individuals also stated that differences within schools between the "bright kids" and those seen as academically inferior, effected the level of education received. On the issue of co-education, from the outset of their secondary school careers the girls reported mixing with boys; however by the fourth form, in which potential examination subjects were chosen, some divisions appeared. For example, those who had undertaken Office Practice, all stated that boys had not been present in these classes. Similarly such options as 'Family & Science' were predominantly taken up by girls. Moreover, their accounts about schooling invariably focussed on themselves and attitudes towards teachers and other girl pupils. Rarely did they volunteer information on the question of how boys influenced their schooling experience.

I asked the girls to tell me about the kind of subjects they had taken at school. At this stage I was not so much interested in their academic performance as the nature of their schooling experience. I found it difficult talking to the girls about the subjects they had taken at school. This is because they tended to focus on the topics that had interested them. Also some girls had changed school at least twice during their secondary education and as a result were exposed to a varying number of subjects within each school. However, below is set out the range of topics studied by the sample throughout their secondary school careers. The list reveals the predominance of Arts subjects.

List of Subjects Taken at School

English	Religious Studies	Mathematics
Art	Combined Science	Geography
History	Social Studies	Film Studies
Music	Fashion & Design	Home Economics
Typing	Office Practice	Family & Science
French	Dance & Drama	Commerce

None of the girls reported taking up subjects that are traditionally associated with masculine topics, such as Technical Drawing or Woodwork. All the girls had undertaken the core subjects of English and Maths, and, dependent upon the nature of the curriculum in their particular schools, had followed some of the other topics on the list. The degree to which these were studied varied greatly. In some instances the girls reported taking these up as examination topics, whilst others did not result in an examination. Some subjects were dropped at an early stage, such as Music or Home Economics, whilst others had been initiated after the third year; Family & Science and Office Practice both fall into this latter category. Because the trainees had attended different schools it was hard to ascertain whether or not girls were being offered different subjects to that of boys. For example none of the girls stated that they had undertaken "hard science" subjects, such as Physics and Chemistry. Some girls reported that they had not studied Typing or Office Practice, either because they were not on offer in the schools they attended, or because they were not interested in them. Some of the girls also complained that they were not allowed to do subjects in what was the seen as non traditional areas. For example despite Gloria's inclination towards Child Care, she did express her disappointment about not being allowed to do Technical Drawing:

Gloria   "Technical Drawing, yeah I wanted to do that, but they said I couldn't do it ...that's for the boys' side. Even though our school was mixed ...[I asked Gloria why she wanted to do this subject?] ...I don't know I just wanted to see what it was like."

                                                                (Black CP Trainee)

Linked to this is the relevance of subjects on offer to pupils. In particular, some of the Black girls expressed dissatisfaction with lessons where they felt that Black people were being misrepresented:

Kim   "All we did was English and European History, we did do
        something about the slave trade, but that was with one
        teacher who didn't stay long. Some of us did complain, but
        all they would say was that it was not part of the syllabus.
        I was well grieved about it because a lot of the kids in
        that school were Black and we weren't learning about who we
        were or where we come from."
                                              (Black ITeC Trainee)

From Kim's account, outside of the specificity of 'race' issues, it is apparent that teachers had an important role in determining whether or not pupils developed an interest in a given subject. Moreover, the lack of continuity in teaching staff was also cited as a reason effecting an individual's decision about how far they wanted to progress in a given subject. For example Joan, a Black girl on the ITeC programme, had this to say about Home Economics:

Joan   "In the first year we did do cookery but the teacher was so
        stupid that all we did was muck around. When she left they
        got all sorts of people in to take over the class but they
        never stayed too long, so when I had to choose my options
        for the fourth year I didn't even think about doing cookery."
                                              (Black ITeC Trainee)

Teachers also play a central role in fuelling pupil interest in subjects, by generally nurturing confidence about their abilities. Equally teachers were often cited as gatekeepers, that decided which pupils were suited for a given subject:

Karen   "I wanted to do something in Art you know, but they wouldn't
        let me do it at school. My form teacher said that I should
        go in for the more academic subjects, but I wasn't interested
        in studying like that. Eventually they phoned my parents
        and they came to the school to discuss my future! I mean
        what a cheek it was up to me to decide what I wanted to do,
        but no, there they were telling me I should do Geography or
        something boring like that."
                                              (White CP Trainee)

Some girls expressed the view that personal relationships with teachers affected whether or not a subject was taken up. For example Eileen told me that her interest in Needlework was severely hampered by the attitude of her teacher:

Eileen   "The Needlework teacher just didn't like me and there was no
                way she was gonna let me into her class. She knew that I
                wanted to do Needlework but she said I was a trouble maker
                and that was it really, so I ended up going to these special
                classes instead."   (Black CP Trainee)

All the girls were asked whether or not they had a particular job in mind

when choosing their fourth year options. The response to this was mixed,

with some of the girls stating that they had not, whilst others reported that

they had not given it much thought. Amongst the more ambitious ITeC

trainees, the single most important choice which they made was in Office

Practice/Typing:

Sonia   "I didn't really think about it too much ...I sorta knew that
                the Office Practice would come in handy cos I could always
                get into office work. It's hard to say really what it is I
                wanted back then, I mean when you're that age you don't
                really think about things like that do you?"
                                                              (Black ITeC Trainee)

Shirley   "I did Office Practice at school but I wasn't interested in it
                all that much ...My older sister had done it, and she's
                working in a Bank so I thought that if nothing else turned
                up at least I could do that" [later Shirley added] "...but
                from what she [her sister] says it isn't all that great, but
                at least there are jobs going in office work."
                                                              (White ITeC Trainee)

Given the predominance of office/clerical work in the female labour market,

this kind of assessment is in all probability quite correct. However for

girls who had not opted for clerical work and who were not academically

inclined, their range of realistic career opportunities was severely

constrained. This was found to be the case for the majority of young women

who were eventually located on the CP scheme. Two subjects taken at school

which appeared to predominate in terms of future careers was Needlework,

Fashion and Design and Child Care. In the case of Fashion and Design the

most important aspect was Design. For instance none of the girls reported

that they pictured work in this field in terms of factory work. Rather their

aspirations were more in line with the glamorous side of fashion, ie.

designing clothes or textiles. Such jobs were not only described as "good"

secure occupations, but also ones which were interesting and exciting.

Unfortunately most of these young women did not have a clear picture as to

how to achieve this goal and stated that they had been surprised that
qualification rather than aptitude was the primary criteria. For example
Marie had relied on her skill rather than qualification when deciding about a
career in fashion design:

Marie   "I guess the only thing I was interested in was Needlework,
         that's the one thing that I was good at ...I've always done
         sewing at home, and I knew I wasn't good at Maths or
         nothing like that. ...Anyway that was the only thing my
         teachers ever said I was capable of doing and I sorta went
         along with them. [later Marie added] ...Trouble is the
         teacher I really got along with left in the middle of my
         fourth year and after that things started to go wrong, I
         just lost interest in school after that, so I left ...I did
         go to the Careers place but they said I'd need things like
         English to get in to do Fashion at college. I was really
         surprised cos I didn't think I'd need all that."
                                                   (Black CP Trainee)

While Jackie, a Black CP trainee, described how she had altered her ambitions
over the years, eventually settling for Fashion and Design, and had chosen one
of her subjects with this in mind:

Jackie   "Well, let me see - first of all I wanted to be a lawyer,
         that was when I first went to school; then my parents
         wanted me to do something in medicine, but I've never really
         been into dem [sic them] lines ...but I wasn't all that good
         at a lot of things [subjects] in school and when it came to
         choosing, by then I decided I wanted to do 'O' level in
         Textiles, becos I was into fashion designing."
                                                   (Black CP Trainee)

Hence, as Jackie's statement implies, choosing examination subjects at school
did (however vaguely) incorporate some consideration of a potential job or
career. For example, a career in Child Care was cited by a number of young
women on the CP scheme as the main reason why they had taken up the subject
of Family and Science at school. Upon further investigation I discovered that
their liking for children had been transformed into a potential career option
long before they had embarked on the topic. This gives some weight to the
proposition that in the face of a limited range of options from which to
select a career, young women were choosing those that most fitted their
perception of what constitutes 'girls' work'. Furthermore, another facet of
this is that the skills required for this area of work were, so to speak,

already imbibed by many of the young women, and did not, in their eyes,

necessarily entail excessive academic study.

Emily   "...I wasn't sure what I wanted to do right, I mean I like
          kids and that, and I'm used do them - see my brother is
          always bringing his down at the weekend and I look after
          them ...so I suppose I did think Child Care wouldn't be all
          that hard...
                                              (Black CP Trainee)

While the predicament Eileen found herself in, indicated both the lack of

available options and the realisation that *even* Child Care involved academic

study:

Eileen   "...outside of Needlework, Child Care was the only other
          thing I was interested in, I mean I wasn't good at English
          or Maths and they weren't doing much else at that school.."
          [later Eileen added] ..."Yeah, I suppose I did think that I
          could get a job doing that kind of work, but you need 'O'
          levels and I don't have any, so that was it really."
                                              (Black CP Trainee)

How did the trainees feel about their schooling experience? A number of

questions were posed with a view to teasing out the reasons why girls had

chosen to leave school at this stage rather than stay on. First they were

questioned about how they felt about their teachers. Two different responses

emerged: those directed towards a specific teacher, and those which were more

general depictions about the school years. Amongst the less academic girls,

there was a general feeling that teachers had not been committed to providing

them with an education:

Rose   "We just mucked about and the teachers, they weren't
          bothered what we did so long as they didn't have to do too
          much. I mean to say what kinda of teaching is it when all
          they do is come in and tell you to read a book!"
                                              (White ITeC Trainee)

Nina   "...they were useless, half of them didn't know what they
          were doing, they was more interested in whether you kept up
          the school uniform ...and once they thought you was a trouble
          maker, you only had to laugh and they'd send you for
          detention. "
                                              (Black ITeC Trainee)

While for someone like Christina, teachers were in her opinion objects of

contempt because their attitude was one of failing to provide a service for

their pupils:

Christina   "The kind of school I went to all those teachers just wanted was their pay cheque and to drink coffee in the staff room (choops) [sic sound of derision]. They didn't care what you did, and yeah there was some good ones but the majority of them were bad ...most of them just didn't know how to deal with the class and they did care anyway."

                       (Black CP Trainee)

In a similar vein the girls often expressed the opinion that even where they were keen to participate, teachers because of preconceived notions, tended to pay less attention to them, by favouring those pupils seen as bright. Jackie, a Black CP trainee, when asked whether she had felt disadvantaged at school had this to say:

Jackie   "In some ways yeah, I could say so ...I didn't get in trouble with the teachers, but sometimes when I needed a lot of help, you know, they weren't really willing ...Sometimes I thought they favoured people who knew more, because in the first year, the classes were done like, people with high IQ in one set of classes and people who were low all in one class. And the people that were better at things, teachers seemed to take more notice of them. If you weren't so good they just helped you a little bit."

                       (Black CP Trainee)

Alternatively some girls reported that their success in a subject was often due to the encouragement of a particular teacher:

Samm   "I might have stayed on at school to do Social Studies but the teacher left and I'd really liked her. She always told me I could do it you know, not like the rest of them, who just saw me as stupid. Mrs Collins was good like that, she really cared about what happened to you. And if you got in trouble with another teacher, you could always go to her to put your side of the story. I enjoyed Social Studies but she [Mrs Collins] left so I didn't really study it after that."

                       (Black ITeC Trainee)

Another pertinent factor here was the amount of peer group pressure to conform to what was seen as the norm. Going round in a group, living up to a certain reputation and conforming in other ways, such as dress style, leisure interests etc, formed a powerful mechanism for ensuring that peers fulfil the label attributed by other girls and teachers. Joan, who was a leading figure amongst the female trainees on the ITeC programme, in giving this account of her experience at school illustrates this aspect:

Joan   "I could have done a lot better in my exams but it wasn't
                all that easy. Some of my friends were in lower classes and
                if they saw me studying they thought I was being stuck up
                or something. I used to get a lot of stick sometimes ...I
                guess in the end I didn't take my studies too seriously,
                because most of the time we'd go around having a laugh. I
                regret it now though, because if I hadn't followed them I'd
                be at college now instead of here."
                                                        (Black ITeC Trainee)

From Joan's account it is clear that friendship networks were was also a vital

factor in the decision over what subjects to study and importantly, whether to

stay on in the sixth form. This held true for both the academically inclined

and those who had no interest in studying. For example Jackie, a Black girl

on the ITeC programme, stated that she had not stayed on at school because

most of her friends had left. She reasoned that this would mean having to

start afresh with girls whom she did not particularly like:

Jackie   "...I just couldn't get on with them lot [other pupils] and
                some of the teachers, they were - ah, upperty, like they
                was special, and I know that they didn't like me and I
                didn't like them, so why stay amongst them ...no, I knew my
                grades wasn't gonna be all that, so I tried for a job
                instead."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Whilst in contrast, Gloria and Emily had jointly made the decision to leave at

sixteen:

Gloria   "I just didn't want to stay any longer ...it was alright but I
                was fed up with all of it, the teachers, lessons, everything.
                Thinking about it now I can't say for definite what I wanted
                to do then, all I was thinking about was leaving..."

                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Emily's account was similar but with the added dimension that she and Gloria

were best friends and she could not imagine being in school without her:

Emily   "...yeah, it's true, I just can't do with her (laugh)
                ...I didn't like school either, so when Gloria said she was
                gonna leave, I knew it would be worse, so what was the
                point of staying..."

                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Other girls reported that they had not been encouraged to stay on, either

through a form of direct statement or by the ways in which teachers had not

overtly shown interest in whether they attended or not:

Vanessa   "Most of my friends were gonna leave and I sorta went along
                 with it. None of us stayed in the end cos we were bored
                 with school anyway, and I couldn't wait to get out."
                                                              (White ITeC Trainee)

Rose   "My form teacher told me plain that I should leave and get a
                 job. She said I wasn't doing well and there was no point in
                 me staying... [I asked Rose how she felt about that] ...I dunno
                 really, part of me wanted to argue cos I felt like they
                 shouldn't be able to make me go but I knew she was right
                 really so I didn't make a fuss and besides I was glad to
                 leave."
                                                              (White ITeC Trainee)

Jackie B   "There was no point me staying at school cos I hardly ever
                 went anyway. They [her teachers] didn't even ask me about
                 why I bunked off, and they didn't care whether I catched up
                 with the lesson. It was just a waste of time really..."
                                                              (White CP Trainee)

In general such attitudes often go hand in hand with the round of

intimidation that girls experience at school. In essence young women are not

encouraged to speak for themselves, answer questions or generally participate

in ways described by Spender and Dale (1980) as assertive. Research on how

such mechanisms which specifically operate to the detriment of Black girls is

sadly spread thin on the ground. What evidence there is suggests that

amongst Black pupils in the lower streams, there is a greater tendency to

label them as boisterous or aggressive; such behaviour being classed as

hostile, provocative and insolent (Taylor. 1981; Coard. 1971). Other

research focussing on young West Indian women suggests that Black girls are,

according to Driver (1980) more committed to achieving success in education,

but by the same token Fuller (1980) argues they are not necessarily prepared

to conform to the 'good' pupil role model that typifies middle class schooling

environments.

From the accounts given by my Black respondents it is apparent that some

form of cultural resistance was at work. None of these young Black women

gave the impression of passively accepting what appeared to them as racist

attitudes; yet ironically the terms upon which they 'fought back', further

reduced their chances of obtaining some gains from their situation. Fighting

the system whilst remaining at the bottom of the pile acted for some as a

catalyst for leaving school or at least provided the rationale for doing so.

For example Sonia and Nina both touched on the racist attitude of teachers towards them or Black people in general:

Sonia   "..I hated the way they called you by your last name like
               they didn't have any respect for you. Just because they
               heard us say it amongst ourselves, they seem to think it
               made them more Black if they talked like that. We used to
               curse some of them down but what could *we* really do against
               them..."

                                                        (Black ITeC Trainee)

Nina   "The Science teacher, I hated him the way he used to make us
               Black girls feel like we was really stupid or something
               ...like you didn't have any brains. We got him back though,
               we used to muck around and speak real heavy for him and
               then he'd tell us to speak English and we'd say "But sir we
               are" and laugh boy! ...with that kind of teacher you didn't
               stand a chance, ...they're all the same ...I was glad to
               leave."

                                                        (Black ITeC Trainee)

In sum for both Nina and Sonia, in common with the rest of the Black and White girls, what had been a central element in their decision to leave school was the belief, or hope that the labour market would receive them on different terms. That their powerlessness within the schooling system, due to their status as adolescent Black and White women would be shed once they had acquired a new worker status. This belief was in turn closely allied to notions of what constitutes independence which brought with it the right to exercise new found freedoms to control their destinies.

The Level Of Academic Achievement Of ITeC And CP Trainees

It is at this juncture that the level of qualification achieved by the trainees needs to be assessed. Generally, the level of qualification achieved was low, with over half the sample gaining marginal grades at CSE 1 or less. Examination subjects for both 'O' level and CSE candidates tended to fall into the traditional remit of English, Mathematics, followed by a mixture of subjects as outlined in the list of topics studied at school. None of the girls who had undertaken 'O' levels had gained pass marks above grade C; whilst for those who had taken CSEs, all of these were under grade 3. Most of the girls who had actually sat an exam had taken more than one, however the data presented here refers to exam success.

Table Two

Level of Educational Achievement Amongst

Black and White ITeC Trainees

Qualification Level	Black	White	Total
No qualifications	0	3	3
At least 1 CSE less than grade 1	0	1	1
At least 1 'O' level below grade C.	3	1	4
2 or more 'O' levels grade C or below.	2	0	2
Total	5	5	10

Notes   1] No qualifications refers to those young women who had either failed to sit any exams or could not provide details of their results.

Table Three

Level of Educational Achievement Amongst

Black and White CP Trainees

Qualification Level	Black	White	Total
No qualifications	3	1	4
At least 1 CSE less than grade 1	4	1	5
At least 1 'O' level below grade C.	2	2	4
2 or more 'O' levels grade C or below.	0	0	0
Total	9	4	13

Notes   1] No qualifications refers to those young women who had either failed to sit any exams or could not provide details of their results.

Information about the number of exams sat and failed was not tabulated, partly because amongst CSE candidates, their recall was vague to say the least. On average very few trainees had gone in for more than 4 CSEs, this also being the case for those who had studied to 'O' level standard. 30 per cent of the girls had no qualifications, having either failed to take them at school or had not gained a grading. All the girls in this category had sat CSEs, with none reporting that they had attempted an 'O' level exam. Out of the 7 young women located in this category, 4 reported that they had sat at least 3 exams at CSE level, but had not returned to school to find out their results. I found this puzzling because exam results are usually posted to the student's home - (During the interviews the girls who had responded in this way remained vague about this issue and I decided not to pursue the matter. On reflection I would suggest that these young women were possibly lying about their ignorance of what their grades had been, because they felt embarrassed to state them.) - Overall if we combine the unqualified trainees and those who had gained at least one CSE below grade one, then it can be seen that over half the sample, some 57 per cent, could be classed as achieving minimal or no qualifications.

Comparisons between Black and White trainees show a clear division between the level of academic qualification and trainee status. This refers to the division between Information Technology Centres (ITeCs) and Community Projects (CPs), where the latter operated more on the old social welfare principle found in earlier youth training programmes. Taking the ITeC first, Table Two clearly shows a division between Black and White trainees with regards to qualification. All the Black trainees had achieved a modicum of success, with at least one 'O' level and a mixture of CSEs; in contrast, with the exception of one girl, White trainees exhibited minimal or non-existent qualifications. Table Three on the level of the CP Black and White girls' qualifications reveals that the majority of Black trainees had achieved very poor examination results, 7 out of the total of 9 Black girls on the scheme, compared to 2 White CP trainees. Only 2 Black and 2 White girls on the CP scheme had

gained 'O' levels, but in all cases these were however below Grade C; indeed none of the girls had gained more than one 'O' level, despite the fact that they reported sitting more than one 'O' level exam.

Each trainee was asked how they had felt about their examination results. Generally all were disappointed at the level of their achievement but for those girls who had made some kind of investment in schooling, (ie. they had studied for their exams) this was more acute:

Jackie   "I would have liked to get something in English at least, even if it was only a low grade, but I didn't do well in that at all."

(Black CP 'O' level candidate)

In the case of Kim, a Black girl on the ITeC programme, staying on at school had been an option taken by her. However, failure to achieve exam success the second time around, had found her leaving school at the age of 17, to enter the YTS.

Kim   "The first time I wasn't that surprised that I didn't do better because I'd hadn't really worked for them. My parents were well disappointed and they said I should stay on at school and take them again ...but my second year wasn't any better, and I was really upset about that because this time I did try my best."

(Black ITeC 'O' level candidate)

Shirley   "I did mostly 'O' levels and a couple of CSEs, in Maths and Social Studies. I can't say that I killed myself you know, I didn't exactly muck around but I wasn't that bothered either. So yes I know that I could have done better, but I just wanted to leave and do something different, cos I couldn't stand school any longer."

(White ITeC 'O' level candidate)

Whatever the level of examination success achieved by my respondents, many of the Black and White girls explained their failure in terms of their general lack of commitment to schooling. Jane's response amply illustrates this point:

Jane   "I did a couple of CSEs in Social Studies, English, Art and Textiles ...but I knew I wasn't gonna do well. I know I shoulda tried harder, but it was more of a laugh than anything else. I wasn't planning to go to college anyway. I just wanted to get out and I suppose get a job or something."

(White CP CSE candidate)

As Emily's statement below highlights, lack of commitment was intimately bound up with the whole gamut of other factors touched on in this chapter:

Emily
"I guess I could have done better but I didn't really think much about exams. You know I told you that I'd had problems at school, well I'd been moved around so much I guess I never settled down ...I didn't think I had much of a chance really, so I just kinda took them thinking that I might do well, but in the end I didn't ...[I asked Emily whether she was disappointed or not about her performance] ... Yeah I guess so, I mean to say if the teachers had been better and like more willing to help then things might have been different; but now I feel it's too late for me to go back to school or something like that, because I've done with school now. What I want is some work experience, that's why I'm in this place."

(Black CP CSE candidate)

The lack of commitment to examinations does not automatically mean that qualifications were seen as irrelevant. Rather it is the attitude towards schooling which is central in determining the degree of investment made in education. Even amongst the more academically inclined, time spent at school was problematic, with none of the girls reporting that they had liked school. It would appear that in weighing up the range of options available to them within the education system, these young women were confronted by two factors pulling them in different directions. An individual could either stay on in education in the hope of improving their academic performance, or could leave and attempt to establish themselves in the labour market.

Another factor contributing to this process was the real lack of vocational choices that the subjects on offer at school gave them. For example for the majority of girls in the sample, the potential opportunities made possible by the age of new technology, were for the most part unavailable to them. None of the subjects on offer at school had given them a grounding in or familiarity with the principles of new technology (such as computers), resulting in a lack of awareness about the higher job levels to which skills in this field can lead. None of the girls reported that they owned or had regular access to a computer; with only some trainees reporting that they had experienced using a computer whilst at school. The most contact that they seemed to achieve with computers was in relation to computer games, but this

was usually through a brother or his friends:

Vanessa   "No I'd never had much to do with computers and that ...I mean I've played computer games and stuff, but studying like, no I haven't done that before. [Vanessa was then asked whether she had ever been interested in the subject before joining the ITeC] ...No not really, I mean I did know about it, but at my school we'd never had one, so I didn't think about it."

<div align="right">(White ITeC Trainee)</div>

The exclusion of girls from a grounding in science and technology starts at an early age. Computer science and its connotation of practical and technical know-how is by definition seen as a male preserve (Cockburn. 1985). Technical toys, such as Mechano sets, are usually reserved for boys, and when something needs to be constructed or repaired at home, it is boys who are usually taught, not girls. Similarly in the world of the classroom, practical subjects and the language used to impart technical knowledge as Stanworth (1981) argues reinforces the sexual divisions embodied in the 'hidden curriculum'. Shaw (1983) suggests that boys and girls are taught in different ways. For example areas of knowledge that are stereotypically depicted as male topics, such as the 'hard' Sciences and Maths are taught in ways that stress deductive logic, cumulative argument and analysis. In contrast the 'Arts' and so called 'soft' options that are traditionally seen as 'girls subjects', are represented as requiring less intellectual prowess, by placing reliance on what Kelly (1981) describes as imaginative and secondary analytical skills that do not require the translation of theory into practice. For the young women on both YTS schemes the almost total absence of technical and/or practical subjects, outside of those depicted as feminine areas of knowledge in their schooling experience, such as Home Economics or Office Practice, prevented them from broadening their horizons towards new forms of work that the supposedly technological age offers.

<u>Summary - The Effects Of Schooling On The Decision To Leave School</u>

In sum, research findings in this area have demonstrated the existence of a multiplicity of factors that impinge on the education of working class girls. Processes of learning are structured in ways that serve effectively to

exclude young women from entering not only male preserves, but also the higher echelons within female employment. Moreover, in general, pressures to conform to normative definitions about sexuality also pervade school life. Schools prescribe modes of behaviour and areas of knowledge that fit in with existing gender relations. In doing so girls are exposed to a milieu of social cues about what constitutes femininity; including definitions of suitable feminine knowledge. Research in this area has also demonstrated how what is described as 'difficult' subjects for girls is often a euphemism for masculine subjects, which is why girls fail to become established within them. For instance, by the time that pupils are given some leeway in deciding what options to take in their fourth year, they implicitly do so in relation to the opposite sex (Measor. 1984). While the specificity of my respondents' interaction with male pupils was not made explicit by them, during the interviews, it is reasonable to conclude from their statements about subject choice that they were not opting for those subjects areas typified as boys' topics. Furthermore, relationships with teachers, friends and parents all affected how the girls responded to school.

In attempting to interpret what lay behind the general ambivalence towards education, which the majority of girls in my study exhibited, a number of important features of their experience and attitude towards schooling emerge. Firstly, they all appeared to draw a distinction between the institutional setting of schooling and its role as the site where investments for the future are made. Secondly, studying and committing oneself to education was not envisaged in terms of acquiring knowledge; instead the latter was perceived as part of the controlling function of schools, which in principle seek to discipline young people into conforming with the status quo. Thirdly, from the discussions I had with these young women throughout the period of study, I gained the impression that their failure to 'do well' at school contained doubts about their abilities and their sense of intellectual prowess. Finally, in line with rejecting schooling on these terms was the belief that entering the labour market would replace the criteria of

qualification (which the majority felt unable to achieve), with that of ability. However, it is important not to confuse this with the **criteria of experience**. For the young women I interviewed, the concept of ability referred implicitly to a belief that they could fulfil task requirements which, outside of specific occupational skills, forms the basic component of employment. In comparison **experience** was something that was acquired over time. It is precisely at this point that participation in a juvenile/child labour market provides an added dimension to the relationship between schooling and the world of work, and the factors that texture the girls' understanding of the labour market and their ability to enter it.

Many of the girls had experienced working prior to leaving school - they were therefore not ignorant about the world of work and had developed opinions about it, including their place within it. In general, it is not being suggested that participation in the juvenile labour market provides a thorough grounding about the world of work. Rather it does give a young person first hand experience of what it is like to be an employee - either a female employee or a Black female employee, etc.. This kind of exposure fosters an understanding of what their potential or future roles as female workers are likely to be. However, it should not then be concluded that this experience leads to a clinical or cynical attitude towards employment, because 16 year olds by definition have the future to look forward to; they are also according to Roberts (1984) still cushioned from many of the responsibilities that arise from family and household commitments. For instance, the cost of living at this stage in a young adult's life can be offset by dependence on the family. For the young women in my sample, by the time they left school they had formed opinions about jobs, together with some of the social relations involved in working, which I believe played an important role in their decision to leave school and search for work. These issues are explored in the Chapter Five.

INTRODUCTION

It is often the case that young people gain work experience before leaving
school. It has been estimated that at any one time approximately a quarter
to a third of all 13 to 16 year olds are involved in the labour market
(MacLennan. 1980). In practice this means that many young people experience
at first hand the rigours of working life and the social divisions that inform
the job market. The existence of a child labour market serves as a cheap
source of labour, open to exploitation because the ascription of the label of
'child' hides the fact that this group often works side by side with adults,
performing the same tasks but for far less remuneration. In attempting to
describe this aspect of the labour market, one of its most salient features is
that it is almost exclusively confined to the informal economy; characterising
those who work within it as a vulnerable, 'invisible' source of labour. These
workers are subject to the full vagaries of the labour market since they can
be drawn in and disposed of without any effective recourse to the law. It is
precisely this feature which makes them a valuable resource for local
economies, especially small businesses in the private sector; as well as
representing a flexible pool of temporary workers for the larger business
corporations in the retail and service sectors (Finn. 1984b).

Young people therefore work across a range of occupational settings, as
part-time workers, either after school hours or at the weekends. Examples of
jobs undertaken by young people include: Baby sitting/child minding, paper and
milk rounds, shop assistants, cleaning, junior office work, assembly work in
factories and piecework in the 'rag trade', hairdressing, waitressing and other
domestic work, together with garage and other forms of shop floor work found
in the electrical and engineering fields. Even from these limited examples it
is clear that differences exist between male and female employment
opportunities within the child labour market. Young women gain employment in

areas where their role is either one of carers or servicing the public; young men find work as casual labour in a number of sites including the manual trades, the construction industries and retail sector.

Recruitment to the child labour market operates mainly through the existence of informal networks, established amongst family and friends. Within a given locality certain shops and types of work become 'known' as areas in which young people can seek work. Child employment is further characterised by a high rate of turnover, reflecting not only the appalling lack of job security that the young incur, but also the continuous movement of labour as new supplies emerge from the pool of child labour that presents itself for work.

Participation in the child labour market provides the young with an important frame of reference, utilised in their assessment of the local labour market and their place within it. That this is highly related to class can not be denied; family background is an important factor in determining *which* young people enter the world of work before leaving school. Child workers are also exposed to processes of sexual and racial discrimination which adds to their store of knowledge about what jobs are open to them and which are not. For example, it would be reasonable to assume that the presence of young Black and White people in particular shops or other types of work within the local economy, acts as an indicator of where potential success can be gained. This is confirmed by the present research findings where some respondents made comment upon this fact. For instance this is illustrated in the following statements made by Joan, Rose and Nina about how they obtained their first jobs:

Joan   "...I was lucky to get the job because it [the boutique] was kind of posh ...[I asked Joan if any other Black people worked in the shop?] ...No, I was the only one - I don't think they would get more of us in anyway [I asked Joan why that was?] ...I think she [her manager] thought it would put the customers off, I mean to say, Julie [her manager] didn't even like my friends coming in to see me."

                                          (Black ITeC Trainee)

Nina   "I guess you do learn which places to go ...there are some
            shops where you just know there is no point trying."
                                                      (Black ITeC Trainee)

Rose   "yeah well, I mean I wouldn't work in a garage or nothing like
            that, would I? (laugh)."
                                                      (White ITeC Trainee)

There is one other significant outlet that acts as an important determinant
in channelling young people into the child labour market. Domestic labour,
that is work done within the home, often provides the first practice that
young women have in performing tasks that could later yield a remuneration.
This is of particular significance in relation to young women's entry into the
world of work, because it gives a grounding in the type of tasks and roles
which they can expect to perform in their future homes and in the labour
market. For example, looking after younger siblings can graduate to paid
baby-sitting, which in turn might fuel interest in developing a career in
child-rearing, such a Nursery Nursing. Despite the simplicity of this example,
since it in no way reflects the myriad of complex processes through which the
young come to make decisions about their future careers, it is reasonable to
argue that exposure to existing divisions of gender within the home is
carried over into the labour market (Griffin. 1982).

Whether young people work directly in the labour market or gain experience
of working for pay within the domestic environment, eg. as a baby sitter,
what remains central is the fact that they are commanding a wage (or as in
the case of the latter, extra financial benefits). Money and the ability to
spend it on leisure activities is crucial to the social survival of many
youngsters. Today the young are faced with a barrage of media hype about
how to look and behave. Emphasis is laid on having the *right* clothes, looking
good and being able to spend money on such activities as going out for a
drink, going to discos and even just hanging out on the streets (Griffin.
1985b). Money is also spent on making contributions to the family unit,
either directly, or indirectly by not placing excessive demands on parents to
provide for all their leisure expenses and clothes.

Thus the use of money by the young has a double edge to it - Money enables the young to participate in activities along with the rest of their peer group, thereby giving them a sense of independence and choice. Earning money also reinforces notions about femininity and masculinity, since where and how they obtain a wage is already structured by the sexual division of labour, and imbued with notions of what constitutes girls' and boys' work. Evidence drawn from a number of studies confirm that for young working class people, earning a wage represents a further confirmation of gender identities; which in turn reflect the complex round of cultural (class) expectations about the type of jobs suitable for working class people (Moore. 1984; Cohen. 1984).

The above discussion illustrates the importance which participation in the world of work holds for many young people prior to formally making the transition from school to work. Indeed it becomes apparent that this 'transition' is itself socially constructed, hiding the fact that a large number of young people have already made the 'leap' well before the official idea of post-school work experience. This fact has implications for the ways in which official discourse has misleadingly propagated the notion that young people are ignorant about the world of work. The representation of the young as irresponsible is a political pronouncement which serves to render 'invisible' the actual workings of the labour market in relation to this group. In doing so, official discourse and policy fail to take into account the fact that many young people are familiar with not only the rigours of working life, but also have a understanding about the nature of exploitation in employment. As a result young peoples' rejection of certain types of work, together with their desire for what is seen as more practical competitive skills in an ever diminishing youth labour market, informs their choices in either opting for youth training or conversely leaving it.

Experiencing The World Of Work - The Juvenile Labour Market

With the exception of 2 Black girls, all the young women in the YTS sample had experienced some form of paid employment prior to leaving school, that is a total of 21 out of a sample of 23 young women. Most of the jobs which

they had performed fell within the remit of the service and retail sectors, representing a narrow range of jobs associated with part-time work. Saturday jobs were the most predominant form of part-time work undertaken by the group, with a few girls working after school hours either all or part of the week. Interestingly 15 of this group, representing 71 per cent, had more than one job during their time at school, especially amongst the White girls. This suggests that despite an overall lack of employment opportunity, the young White women had been in a position to sample jobs to a much greater extent than their Black counterparts. One of the reasons for this refer to the operation of informal recruitment networks, which young White working class people have greater access to (Jenkin. 1983). Young White women are not subject to the effects of racism, which militate against young Black people from gaining entrance to certain types of work within a given locale. Thus while young Black women in the sample did have recourse to a jobs network, this was based on an understanding of what jobs were available to them as young Black people. This point will be addressed more fully later on in the discussion.

Below is Table Four listing the occupations that they had experienced. Between them the girls had a total of 60 individual experiences of paid employment, with a large degree of overlap in the type of work undertaken. Of these, supermarket work represents 20 per cent of their total occupational experience, closely followed by shop work, either as a sales assistants or stock takers. Thereafter and in descending order catering, baby sitting, hairdressing and cleaning all hold approximately the same degree of pull in attracting young school girls. Several points arise from Table Four, not least of which is that within these occupational categories the actual tasks performed varied. For example Supermarket work involved packing, shelving and checkout tasks, whilst working in a Fast Food chain included counter work, cooking and cleaning. Those young women that had worked as shop assistants reported that this involved a variety of small businesses, including: Newsagents, Grocers, Shoe and Clothes shops and a Camera shop.

Incidents Of Paid Employment Prior To Leaving School

Occupations	Black	White	Total
Hairdressing	2	4	6
Shop Assistant (small business)	3	7	10
Retail (Supermarket)	5	7	12
Catering (small establishment)	0	3	3
" (Fast Food)	4	4	8
Market Stall	1	3	4
Cleaning	3	3	6
Baby Sitting *	2	5	7
Other	1	3	4
Total number of incidents	21	39	60
Total	n.12	n.9	n.60

Please note that because respondents were often unclear about dates, especially about when they started a job, only the number of jobs has been identified.
* Baby Sitting refers to private work outside of family and friendship networks.

In some instances the young women had been directly selling to the public; in others working at the back of the shop doing stock-taking and storage.

In the case of cleaning work this often entailed working for private office cleaning companies, which are notorious not only for their poor rates of pay but also for their ruthlessness in shedding staff. One feature of this type of work is that just about all the girls had been introduced to it by either their mothers or family friends; and whilst they were vague about their length of stay in these jobs they did report that it had always been for short periods. In contrast Hairdressing has traditionally been a main source of employment for young women. It is a popular option which despite its air of glamour, in reality often entails menial work for long hours, poor working conditions and poor rates of pay. Another feature about hairdressing in relation to young women's employment, and one that is evident in the above

figures is that it has largely been monopolised by young White women (Ashton and Maguire. 1983). This is not just because of racial discrimination, premised on notions that 'the customer wouldn't like it', but also reflects different cultural emphases, with the majority of hair salons catering for White women. Thus it is interesting that of the two Black girls who had listed hairdressing as part of their work experience, both had worked in salons catering largely for Black (West Indian and African) women; indeed one girl had been enterprising enough to start up a small side-line of her own, specialising in braiding and hair weaving. All the White girls had worked in establishments catering largely for White women.

This kind of division can also be seen in the lack of Black girls waitressing in small establishments like cafes, or bakeries that have a self-service section. Again while it is important not to speculate, it is reasonable to assume that on the whole this type of work either does not attract young Black women or is unavailable to them. Certainly it is clear that the degree to which either young women per se, or particular sections of the young female labour force gain entry into either the retail or service sectors is dependent upon local labour market conditions and the degree of familiarity which employers have in hiring either of these groups.
In the case of young Black women regional variations in the employment of Black youngsters in these spheres appear to confirm this assertion (CRE. 1985).

The 'Other' category in Table Four is made up of what can be described as 'one off' instances of employment that reflect a range of jobs or work-type situations. For example one girl, Emily, from the Black sample at the CP scheme, reported that she had intermittent spells of paid work, helping her dad do a private painting and decorating job, for which she had been paid. Whilst Sam, a White girl on the CP scheme, had been employed one day a week by a local elderly woman to do her shopping. The only Black girl, Merille, who came into this category had done "carding"; this refers to handing out minicab phone numbers around local shops. Along with some of her friends she

had got this job through her brother who knew people who worked at a minicab office.

When we turn to employment found in the local street market the importance of family networking becomes clear. All the young women who had worked on market stalls had gained their jobs directly from family members. Of the White girls, 2 had worked on a vegetable stall, with the other girl working on a stall selling clothes. In all three cases a close family relative had been in charge of the stall; with most of the girls getting hired for Saturday work. In addition, because of these close family links, the young women were called upon to help out when required; this could mean working mid-week or on Sundays. With regards to the one Black girl who had done this type of job, she had obtained her job from her uncle who had a small music stall catering mainly for West Indian youngsters. What is of interest is that none of the girls thought working in the market was boring and seemed to enjoy doing it, treating it as a back-up job for when times were hard. 'Interesting work' was associated with the tasks performed, ie. listening to music, selling records and socialising with customers, while 'boring work' included situations where a girl was isolated or doing routine tasks. Simply put, 'interesting work' was where the girls could have a 'laugh' and 'boring' work was where they could not. Once again we find that they did not consider taking this up in the long run, but saw it for what it was, casual work. Finally those young women who reported baby sitting as a means of employment had previous experience derived from their domestic responsibilities. Again White girls appear to predominate in this area of work. Generally, amongst Black and White girls where there were younger siblings in the domestic unit, young women had undertaken child care, including baby sitting; although some expressed their resentment at having to take on this role.

How did the young women in the sample feel about the experience which they had gained at this stage of their life cycle? A large number of girls reported that they had taken up part-time work because it was something to do after school. For example Merille, a Black trainee on the Community

Project, had this to say in response to the question of why she had worked as a part-time cleaner while still at school:

Merille   "Well my mum was working in this office and the supervisor
                 asked her if she knew anyone that wanted a job, mum kinda
                 volunteered me and cos I didn't have nothing to do I sorta
                 agreed. [I asked her what she meant by saying she had
                 nothing to do?] ...Well it wasn't as if I was studying or
                 anything and I needed the money, so I just went along with
                 it - besides, I wasn't the only one, lots of people I know
                 have done it. [I asked Merille to explain who she meant by
                 this?] ...mostly older women and people like that ...anyway
                 I didn't stick it for long."
                                                           (Black CP Trainee)

It would appear that parental encouragement to take up a part-time job was an important factor not just in terms of networking but also because parents seem to be making assessments about their daughters' educational achievements. For example, one White girl on the ITeC course gave this reason for getting part-time work in her local supermarket:

Rose   "When I was in the fourth year my mum went up to the school
                 and my teachers told her I wasn't interested in studying,
                 mum after that never really said much about school and
                 when I told her that there was jobs going in the
                 supermarket she said I might as well since I wasn't doing
                 much at school ...See she knew that I was bunking off
                 (laugh) and said I might as well earn my keep."
                                                           (White ITeC Trainee)

From the above it becomes apparent that such assessments were closely linked to the material circumstances of the family, textured by cultural expectations of the labour market. Where parents appeared to be more ambitious with regards to their children's futures, their acceptance of work outside of school hours was tinged with doubts. For example one Black CP trainee had not had a job prior to leaving school. This was not for want of trying, but as she states:

Jackie   "Yeah I did try and find work but there was nothing doing
                 ...I even went to all the local shops but I was either *too*
                 young or too Black (laugh). Anyway it wasn't a problem at
                 home cos my mum wasn't really keen on it ...she wanted me
                 to concentrate on my studies so I wasn't really that
                 bothered. Only thing is when you don't have that kind of
                 money some of your friends look down on you. I mean even
                 though your parents help out it still looks like you're
                 scrounging off them ...It's as if to say you're not earning
                 so what you do get you can't spend it just as you want and
                 your friends know it."
                                                           (Black CP Trainee)

One issue that arises from these few accounts is the degree to which parents are prepared to support their daughters financially and what sacrifices they are willing to make. All the girls interviewed lived at home and all had reported their financial dependence upon parents. For the majority of young women who had worked prior to leaving school, earning money gave them a sense of independence in following their outside interests. Parental support was for the most part taken as given, where conflicts arose these were over how the young women spent their leisure time and the amounts of money this involved. This can be illustrated with the case of Joan, a Black trainee on the ITeC programme. Joan was very concerned with her appearance, spending considerable time on making herself look good. Out of all the girls on the course Joan was the most fashion conscious. I noticed that Joan always took the trouble to ensure that she never wore the same outfit two days running. However my conversations with Joan revealed that this was not without conflict, especially with her mum. When responding to the question of why she had worked whilst still at school she had this to say:

Joan   "I had to really, my mum gave me pocket money but it wasn't
                 enough to live on. She says that money don't grow off the
                 trees, and anyway I knew she wasn't gonna waste her money
                 on my things - she's always complaining that I only wear
                 them once, but that's not true ...going to work on Saturdays
                 gave me an excuse to get out of the house... "
                                                    (Black ITeC Trainee)

I asked Joan how her mum felt about her working when she was at school?

Joan   "...I don't know, I mean she was happy on the one hand,
                 although she complained about me spending the money on what
                 she says is stupid clothes but then as my exams were coming
                 up she went on about the amount of time I was wasting going
                 out and she wanted me to give up the job." [I asked Joan
                 whether she had given up her job?] ..."Yes cos the pressure
                 got too much you know and I just couldn't take her going on
                 about it - but I think the real reason was that she didn't
                 like my boyfriend, she didn't want me to go out with him, so
                 I think she use the school thing as an excuse."
                                                    (Black ITeC Trainee)

Joan's situation was not unique, many of the girls interviewed complained about their parents' responses to their going out. In this context many of them viewed their jobs as enabling them to take some of the 'pressure' off by getting them out of the house and giving them, albeit in a limited way,

financial independence.

However the degrees of pressure were markedly different between the ITeC and CP girls, reflecting their differential status in terms of access into the YTS. As the data on educational performance in Chapter Four outlined, most of the young women on the CP programme had failed to achieve educational success, in a few cases rejecting school to such an extent that they had (apparently) not even attempted to find out their exam results. In contrast, a substantial number of the Black girls on the ITeC programme had achieved some success, although for most the results gained had been below what they expected. When comparing trainees on the two schemes, in the main it was the Black ITeC girls who reported most parental pressure against working, with schooling being given as the main reason for this parental disapproval.

There were however other factors involved that related to parents' concerns about their daughters' activities, as indicated by Joan's last statement. For the CP girls pressure from parents, like the ITeC girls, varied between individuals; some girls reported that they had faced little or no opposition from parents about going out to work. Indeed instances were recounted to me where some of the Black and White girls had been pressured to get a job by their families even while they were 'officially' still at school.

On the question of how they viewed the labour market as a result of their experience at this time, quite a number of girls stated that they hated the 'hassle' which employers often gave them. For example, in Gloria's case working for a large fast food chain had been made difficult by the imposition of rules governing employees:

Gloria   "Working in MacDonalds was a pain you know. The manager was
                all ways running around after us, we couldn't even have a
                laugh without him coming down on us. I like working there
                though some of us used to have a laugh but in the end the
                manager and me didn't agree, you know what I mean, and I
                just left."
                                                    (Black CP Trainee)

For Vanessa her experience had entailed being submitted to the 'rigours of work' in the form of time-keeping and other rules governing employer and employee relations:

Vanessa   "Working in the shoe shop was bad. The manager was this old man he was always watching you - Checking to see if you were pinching stuff, checking your times and how long you took for lunch. If you was late he docked your pay and I really hated him for that. You know even when the shop wasn't busy you had to act like you were otherwise he'd find something for you to do. In the end we had a row about me being late and he sacked me, and I told him he could stuff his bloody job!"

<div align="right">(White ITeC Trainee)</div>

Before discussing their post school experiences of the labour market, one important aspect of their earlier labour market experience is that they were exposed to the prejudices and stereotypes that act as barriers within women's employment. It would seem that being young and therefore being perceived as both impressionable and vulnerable had repercussions for how young women at this stage were treated by respective employers:

Sam   "When I first started working there (in the camera shop) the manager was really friendly, getting one of the other workers to show me around and that. But after a while I noticed he was too friendly if *you know what I mean*? He started putting his arm around my shoulder when he talked to me and asked me stuff about boy friends. Then I noticed that he was always keeping me back to do stock taking but we always chatted instead. The other staff noticed it but nobody said nothing. It was kind of creepy you know."

I asked Sam what she did about it, for instance did she tell anyone?

Sam   "I told my mates, but I wouldn't tell my parents that, they would have made me leave and I needed the money and anyway I liked it there. It's just that cos he was the boss I couldn't say much anyway, and it wasn't as if he was doing anything serious ...besides he treated me alright, like he didn't mind if I was late coming back from lunch or if I made mistakes so I didn't make a fuss."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee)</div>

Sexual harassment and intimidation under the guise of paternalism is not just confined to the work environment. Any situation that entails opportunities for sexual power, where young women clearly occupy subordinate positions, is open to abuse. Thus within the family, at school, in work or leisure activities where these power relations are manifest, such encounters form a fundamental experience in the lives of young women; shaping their perceptions about their future roles and the limitations that are placed upon them. In this context racial harassment is intimately connected to this process of sexual subordination. Young Black women are subject to sexual intimidation in

common with their White peers. However insofar as these relations are
informed by stereotypical and commonsense notions based upon the erroneous
link between sex, youth and promiscuity, their experience is textured by
racist assumptions rooted in slavery and colonialism (Carby, 1982a). This is
amply illustrated in the case of Emily, who described to me an incident that
happened when she worked for a small business in her local area:

Emily   "I worked in this Hardware shop run by this English man and
                 his wife. I was really lucky to get the job cos they don't
                 usually like West Indians ...they [shop keepers] are always
                 watching you if you go into their shops like you're gonna
                 steal something ...I worked with one other English girl and
                 boy on Saturdays and sometimes Sundays to do stock taking.
                 When I got the job I was well pleased and thought they
                 were nice people, *you know*? I soon found out different
                 though, he [the boss] got really friendly, specially when his
                 wife wasn't there ...One Sunday afternoon he'd let the others
                 go early and asked me to stay to help him close up, who
                 tell me to do that, the man just came and jumped on me,
                 trying to kiss me and stuff. You know I just couldn't
                 believe it and all I kept saying was get off me ...and you
                 know what he said? He said that all us Black girls were
                 kinda slack and anyway he'd thought I liked him! Then when
                 he could see that I was well upset he started apologising
                 asking me not to tell anyone, anyway I left after that!"
                                                         (Black CP Trainee)

Summary - The Impact Of The Juvenile Labour Market On Career Choices

Clearly such encounters as described by these young women served to add to

their store of knowledge about the quality of social relations within the work

environment. However the terms upon which they entered the labour market

were inscribed within the child labour market. Put another way these young

women when recounting their experiences of paid employment at this stage in

their life cycles did not consider what they did to be 'real' work. These jobs

did not live up to their expectations of future careers and in answer to the

question of whether they would consider taking up these jobs full-time all

replied with an emphatic 'no'.

The one exception was Sam, a White CP trainee who had worked in the camera

shop and expressed a genuine interest in taking up photography as a career.

Gaining part-time employment prior to leaving school was therefore related to

the girls' need for money to support their leisure activities. They did not

see these jobs or the conditions under which they were working as part of the

normal adult labour market. Rather, given that their rates of pay were small, averaging £10 to £15 a week (dependent upon whether they worked more than one day or not), meant that they identified the roles that they undertook as child's work. Thus from their point of view the low rates of pay reflected this aspect regardless of whether or not they were performing the same tasks as adults.

What was being learned was that the interface of sex and 'race' divisions had, alongside with their child status, a direct bearing on their position within the labour market. Whilst they could expect the latter to change with the passing of time, sex and 'race' factors were here to stay. This point does not lessen the fact that there exists a multiplicity of factors effecting an individual's labour market status, such as qualification and class position. However our point here is a simple one that refers to how young people adapt to the labour market, especially over the acceptance of a youth status that commands less money. Furthermore, what my respondents were learning in the labour market was reinforced by their experiences in the wider social arena at both the macro and micro levels. As Sharpe (1976) illustrates in her study, family life, schooling and exposure to media representations of appropriate gender identities, together with social interaction with young men are just some of the examples of how girls learned *how* to be girls.

It is being argued here that participation in what is seen as the child labour market is qualitatively different from post-school entrance into the world of work. For example, Griffin (1985b) shows the movement into this latter stage in the life cycle marks the transition from child to adult status. The demands for financial independence coupled with the expectation of a more permanent career, carries with it new areas of personal responsibility. The social and technical skills learnt during the phase prior to leaving school is incorporated in the post school experience, where young people are faced with the prospect of establishing a foothold in the labour market. Thus whether or not an individual achieved success in the child labour market does not have the same importance attached to it as when

making the transition from school to work. As we have seen nearly all of the young women in the sample had not opted for remaining in those jobs which they had undertaken whilst still at school. This should not be viewed as conclusive because other studies in this field have demonstrated that this is not always the case, with some youngsters, as Finn (1984) shows, seeking to transform their jobs into full-time employment upon leaving school.

One further aspect of this phase is that it also marks the time when 16 year olds are forced to make decisions about their futures. For example, do they stay on at school, enter college, enter the labour market; go on a youth training scheme or remain unemployed? These types of options are themselves subject to an array of other factors, such as the interaction of schooling, family and work expectations. In the final section of this chapter we will consider how the young women in my sample came to make decisions at this stage and the factors that influenced their choices.

Making Decisions At Sixteen - Staying On Or Leaving?

For the young women interviewed the question of what options to take at sixteen were framed with reference to a) their schooling experience and b) the degree to which they decided upon a particular career. Central to this is the level of expectation which each individual had regarding the job market. To some extent this depended upon the amount of information they possessed about the viable opportunities they could look forward to. For some the option was one of staying on in education either at school or at college; while for others this option was either unattainable or undesirable. As a result the young women in the sample were pushed into making life decisions that eventually had repercussions for their subsequent entrance into the labour market.

Occupational choice in this context is not merely a question of choosing a career. In this sense the term is misleading because it fails to capture the complexity that surrounds the transition from child to adult, which involves a whole host of inter-related decisions and expectations about the future. How these are reached involves not only the young person in question, but also

family, friends and other 'key' figures such as teachers and Careers Officers. As Griffin (1985b) and Chisholm (1987) both highlight, all the above is structured by gender, producing a differential pattern of occupational choice, referenced to class, 'race' and class-cultural constructions of gender identity. In this sense no two individual girls choose a particular career for exactly the same reason. The influence of 'key' characters mentioned above effects an individual's perception of their place within the world of work. The attitudes of parents and teachers and the assessments which they make about a youngster's potential are also crucial factors for a young woman at this stage in the life cycle.

For example, parental aspirations play an important role in shaping a child's outlook on education and employment. A young person can either conform to such wishes or reject them; they can thus identify with their parents' perceptions of what constitutes a "good" job or see this as another form of control. However, parental involvement should not be taken as given, since there will be instances where this is minimal. Rather what is important to grasp is that regardless of the degree of involvement which parents have in their child's education, they, alongside other adults, expect their young at this age to make some kind of decision about their futures as young adults. A few examples drawn from the sample study group illustrates the influence which family and friends have on this process:

Shirley	"Well I had taken Typing and Office Practice at school and was interested in it, although I wasn't that keen on doing it full-time. ...because my sister works at the Midlands [Bank] and my dad thinks just because she's doing alright, I should do the same thing. I didn't really want to, so I didn't apply for college."...[I asked Shirley what her parents had thought about this?] ..."Well er..I didn't tell them (laugh) till it was too late, then I made up some excuse about the careers teacher giving me the wrong information. They weren't too happy about it but I just didn't want to follow my sister..." **(White ITeC Trainee)**
Karen	"Definitely, they wanted me to go into teaching but I'm not cut out for that. I really wanted to do something different and I knew I wasn't gonna do well at school and that they would get upset about it, especially Mum. My Dad just wanted what he calls a bit of peace and quiet (laugh) ...me and Mum are always fighting, so when I told my Dad about doing a business he got all keen and started coming up with all these ideas."

Karen   [I asked Karen whether she had thought about any other kinds
            of jobs?] ..."Not really except I knew it would be something
            in craft work because I like the idea of working with my
            hands ...I don't want a boss who's lording it over me and
            most of the jobs I can think of are like that. At least with
            jewellery I could set up with some of my mates ...I don't
            know maybe a stall in the market."
                                                        (White CP Trainee)

These two examples illustrate the gap that exists between the girls and their

parents in terms of the former mapping out their future careers. In general

one important feature here is that conflicts arise over the question of

responsibility. At this stage in the life cycle young people are faced with

the responsibilities that accrue to becoming an adult. Their parents expected

them to make mature decisions that fall in line with their own interpretation

of how the 'transition' should be tackled. In doing so parents present their

view of the world of work and what it entails. Taking responsible decisions,

planning for the future and making an investment in education describe, in

part, an ethos that finds its roots in the organisation of the adult world of

employment. In the case of Shirley and Karen they were in their own way both

making a statement about their resistance to the ethos which their parents

identified. For these young women the 'transition' was neither clear cut nor

unproblematic. As individuals they attempted to assert their right to decide

their futures, albeit based upon their own vague aspirations.

The situation that many Black parents and their children find themselves in

points to the interaction of cultural forms and the emergence of a younger

Black British community. The subordinate position of West Indian communities

means that for them the educational success of the next generation is crucial

if this group is to make some kind of economic and social progress in Britain.

For young Black women, conflicts embodied in the 'transition' contains this

aspect; with the issue of parental disappointment being a major area of

concern. Racial disadvantage in education has been grafted on to the existing

structure of class and gender inequalities, as exhibited in the education of

working class girls. As a result of the imposition of this triple form of

subordination, the effects of racial discrimination have perhaps been more

keenly felt by younger Black women, as it throws up the contradictory nature
of their position as a Black British class fraction. They want what their
White peers are entitled to; they look towards similar, if not higher job
levels. They have to face the prospect of discrimination not as foreigners,
who can look towards a different homeland, but as British born workers who
are distinguished by virtue of their colour. Moreover just as any social
group has its own cognitive maps of the occupational structure, the younger
Black generation has been exposed to new patterns of employment, which has
influenced their assessment about the relationship between education and work.
The statements made by Marie and Hildreth illustrate this point:

Marie   "When I was getting ready to leave school my mum kept on
                 about me going to college, like it was what I should do. I
                 tried telling her that I didn't want to go cos I'd rather get
                 a job, but she just kept on about how it was different in
                 her days when you couldn't get it for free. [I asked Marie
                 whether her mum was disappointed about how she had done at
                 school?] ..."*Oh yes* we had big arguments about it ...my mum
                 couldn't understand why I didn't like school, you know how
                 they stay [sic: means 'are'], she used to keep saying how
                 without an education I couldn't get a job, and worse still
                 she'd keep telling me that if she had known I wasn't gonna
                 study she wouldn't have worked so hard."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

Hildreth continued in a similar fashion:

Hildreth   "My parents were really angry when I left school in October.
                 They really went mad, my dad wouldn't talk to me at first,
                 which was better really cos otherwise he'd just end up
                 shouting! I couldn't really explain it to them because they
                 just think being at school is what it's all about. See I
                 didn't like it in the sixth form and I could see that
                 nothing was gonna change, same teachers, same boring
                 lessons, it was just a waste of time. I wanted to do
                 something different, maybe get a job, but the Careers
                 teacher said I should try and get some training first, so
                 that's why I'm here really."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

The decisions made by these two Black girls are, to some extent, at variance
with existing pronouncements about the educational aspirations of Black girls;
the work of Driver (1980), Fuller (1980) and Sharpe (1976) stand out here.
These authors point to the educational investment which Black girls make in
relation to their future careers. Links with familial background textured by

gender relations, together with parental ambition, personal identity, self worth and survival strategies, (drawing upon the Caribbean and British cultural formations) have all been cited as reasons why Black girls seem to be doing better in schools than their male counterparts. However the evidence presented here, albeit in cursory fashion, suggests that such investments are strongly related to their interpretation of developing occupational relations and criteria. The fact is that labour market opportunities have shrunk not only for those who are described as the 'least able', but also for those young people who gain better qualifications. The effects of racial discrimination upon this scenario has perhaps heightened their awareness that educational achievement is not enough to guarantee success in the labour market. Rather other criteria have also impinged on the labour market awareness of this group of young women.

It is not being argued here that the Black and White girls in my sample were rejecting the significance of gaining qualifications, but rather that the impact of unemployment had become enmeshed in how these young people viewed their futures at this time. Precisely because unemployment has increased the level of competition amongst different sections of the youth labour force, there is for some a sense of urgency behind their desire to establish themselves in the labour market. Once again we find this to be linked to other kinds of pressures that affect young people in general, for example, the pressure to attain some form of independence, to test out new experiences, to participate in new social arenas that are strongly allied to adulthood - the list in this sense is endless. Whatever the particular circumstances that each individual experiences, the common denominator running throughout is that it takes place within the context of what Moore (1984) describes as class-cultural fields, that are continually responding (through processes of negotiation, accommodation and resistance) to social change at the macro and micro levels.

The social meaning and the value of a given level of educational attainment is, in terms of the labour market, related to what the perceived criteria are for entering work. Academic work on this question has tended to focus on the White working class, paying less attention to how similar values operate amongst other sections of that class community (Willis. 1978). The educational and occupational performance of Black youth is usually addressed in the context of discrimination and disadvantage. Yet these same communities are to all intents and purposes part of the working class; sharing a similar value system especially amongst the young. Just as it has been identified that the extension of educational careers is not embedded in the normal social career path of working class kids, this is equally applicable to working class Black kids occupying similar positions. They, in spite of their awareness of racial discrimination, are making choices that reflect the logic of their Black working class experience. For some young Black women, in keeping with some of their White working class counterparts, it is precisely leaving school that is important; whilst for others, gaining qualifications with which to enter more secure areas of work informs their decision to remain in education. Added to this will be those pupils who have failed in their attempt to gain qualifications, resulting in a re-evaluation of whether to stay at school, go out to work, or seek training and work experience. All of these examples are found amongst the young Black and White girls in the present study.

Making Choices - What Happened To College As An Option?

One of the problems that arise in attempting to characterise different post-16 strategies is that in providing this kind of framework, the mutability and unpreparedness of how these choices are made is lost. Hence the girls in this sample presented differing and often contradictory attitudes. They were at one level sceptical about the benefits of staying on at school as a means of improving employability; similarly, they also recognised the importance which qualifications have in determining success in the labour market. Alternatively they were responding to new and unstable forms of work in which

education could no longer guarantee a job. Within this scenario their indecision over what exactly they wanted to do and how to achieve it produced varying answers that are difficult to characterise as falling within a particular category. This can best be demonstrated by the attitude which some of them had towards college.

In the present study a number of the trainees had considered entering college but had failed to do so either because of poor examination results or because college places were already full for that year. The overall number of young women who had either made an application for college or who had intended to do so was 44 per cent. However what is of interest is the differences that emerge between girls on the two schemes. Just over half of the ITeC trainees had seriously considered college, some 69 per cent. In contrast 70 per cent of the CP trainees had _rejected_ the idea of going to college. What is of particular significance is the differences that emerge between Black and White trainees both within and across the two schemes. Out of the sub-set of girls in the ITeC programme who had seriously considered college, all but one were Black. Amongst the CP trainees all the young women who had aspirations towards entering college were Black. Whatever the particular desires of individuals were, for those who had considered college, such options were closely aligned to those job aspirations that necessitated some kind of further education or training:

Kim   "Yeah I was disappointed about my grades specially since I
                    wanted to get into college to do word processing and
                    computer programming. I don't know what happened! I really
                    thought I was going to do well and all my teachers were
                    confident that I'd pass. I decided to stay on in the sixth
                    form and you know try again, but things didn't work out -
                    it wasn't the same. Most of my friends had left and I was
                    stuck with these White girls who I didn't like much. Anyway
                    the Office Practice teacher had left and Miss Clarke who
                    took over wasn't really good, she just didn't know what she
                    was doing, and most of us mucked around in her lesson so
                    she didn't bother ...My retake results weren't any better and
                    I just knew I had to get out... [I asked Kim whether or not
                    she had attempted to get into college after this
                    experience?] ...No I was fed up by then and I knew that I'd
                    need experience so I decided to leave and look for a job in
                    office work or something...but I didn't get what I was really
                    looking for and decided to go for some training."
                                                                (Black ITeC Trainee)

Joan   "Yes I did think about going to college but by the time I
        got around to it places were full. My friends went but I
        didn't in the end. Oh I don't know, I guess I didn't think
        about it, you know - I just thought I would go ...[I asked
        Joan whether she regretted not going to college?] ...Yes and
        no because although this place is ok, if I had gone at least
        I'd be getting some qualifications out of it on the other
        hand this place [the ITeC] does give you direct
        experience ...you know what I mean? ...At least you get to
        try out different things and go on work placements. It's
        really hard to say how it will work out, maybe I'll go after
        I finished here."

                      (Black ITeC Trainee)

Samm   "I had planned to go to college but I didn't do too well in
        my exams ...I was well upset about it and I felt there was
        no point in staying on. I thought that if I worked for a
        year I'd go to college the following year, but things didn't
        work out too good there. One thing I do know the last year
        has really opened my eyes ...anyway I look at it I couldn't
        win, if I'da gone to college I would still be facing
        unemployment cos it's hard out there, *you know*, I don't know
        what they [employers] want, people don't have a chance. At
        least training gives you a choice and you can say you've
        trained for this kind of work..."

                      (Black ITeC Trainee)

Similarly the 4 young Black women on the CP scheme who <u>had</u> considered going

on to college also accepted that it represented in educational terms a second

chance strategy. However going into further education was not necessarily a

well thought out plan of action. Whilst the benefits of further education

were recognised, the lack of commitment to studying had tipped the balance

for this group. In this sense entering college was more about prolonging

school life, that is, remaining in a sheltered environment where life decisions

could be delayed. There was also a certain naivety at work here based, to

some extent, on the lack of urgency and information about the different kinds

of careers that exist in what was perceived as more secure and long term

occupations:

Gloria   "Yes, I did think about going to college but it was too late
        by then. When I was at school all I wanted to do was get
        out of there, but I knew some of my friends were going to
        college and I thought why not ...I asked my Family & Science
        teacher about doing a fashion course but she said they were
        probably full for September and that I didn't stand much of
        a chance because of my poor school work (laugh) ...I
        wouldn't have minded going cos I thought it wouldn't be as
        bad as school, *you know*, but cos I couldn't get in I just
        decided to leave anyway."

                      (Black CP Trainee)

Jackie   "Yeah, I really wanted to go to fashion college but I never
                got in, so I decided to go and look for some fashion based
                jobs - you know, anything to do with fashion, sorta shop
                assistant, selling clothes and that. I got a job through my
                teacher in this dress factory, but in the end I left cos I
                wasn't getting anywhere and I wanted more training."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

For the young White women on the ITeC programme who had not included further

education as part of their post-16 career strategy, the lack of any apparent

commitment to schooling played an important role in shaping their attitudes

towards entering college. The accounts of Isabel and Cathy demonstrate some

of the problems that young women who are unqualified and do not want to

remain in education face when making the transition out of school into the

labour market:

Isabel   "...there was no point in going to college cos I wasn't into
                studying ...I had liked Office Practice and although I didn't
                take any exam or nothing, I still tried to get a job in it,
                but they [employers] kept on asking for qualifications or
                experience and that's when someone told me about this place
                [the ITeC], so I went to the Careers Office and they put me
                in touch with the scheme."
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Cathy   "I went to one of these special schools for kids who have
                problems, you know? There you studied what you liked and
                none of the teachers bothered you ...when I left I didn't
                really know what I was going to do and my social worker
                suggested the YTS. I had told her I'd like to do something
                with computers - don't know why really, anyway she told me
                about the Centre and I came along for an interview."
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Peer group pressure also affects the decisions that are reached at this stage.

Several of the examples here refer to the presence or absence of close

friends as a reason for either not investing in schooling, or rejecting the

option of staying on. Ironically in retrospect quite a few of the trainees

recognised that such influences had not necessarily been in their best

interest:

Joan   "I do sorta regret it cos coming to this place is good but
                like I said I'm not gonna get any qualifications out of it,
                and those do count you know? In a sense mum was right I
                shouldn't have followed other people so much, cos then I
                would definitely have gone to college. "
                                                            (Black ITeC Trainee)

Rose   "Looking back on it I shouldn't have bunked off as much
                    cos it meant I didn't learn as much. It was something that
                    me and my mates did, we went round in a group and sorta
                    mucked around. Now, come to think of it none of us have
                    done well. Most of them are unemployed or doing work that
                    don't pay much ...me being here gives me a chance to learn
                    something, so that I can get work in an office or
                    something."
                                                          (White ITeC Trainee)

Merille   "Having a reputation at school gave me a lot of friends
                    when I think about it we did things together, but you know
                    I was the one who always got blamed and put in detention."
                                                           (Black CP Trainee)

Karen   "I didn't like school right cos most of my friends were older
                    anyway and I always used to get teased about being at
                    school. I don't think that was the main reason why I left,
                    I just didn't like it ...but now I realise that at least they
                    had jobs while I ended up here."
                                                           (White CP Trainee)

Summary - Knowledge Of The Labour Market And Choosing To Leave School

In sum, we have seen that the paths by which this group of young women

decided to leave school was based on a number of factors, influencing whether

or not schooling, or at least further education was the best option. We have

also seen that the notion of leaving school to get a job is not necessarily a

well thought out one. Decisions about the future, including career choices

are set within a framework of existing knowledge about the labour market.

How decisions were reached in practice referred to the assessment young

women made about their academic futures, including the degree of

understanding which they had about how best to achieve their ambitions. Set

against these considerations is the extent of discontent and disillusionment

about their experiences in school. The rush towards attaining adulthood

status provided another important rationale underpinning decisions about

whether to leave school or remain within its confines. Expectations about the

labour market were also formulated via the degree of contact which the young

women had gained in the juvenile labour market. This provided them with a

familiarity about modes of behaviour appropriate for their age group. It

prepared them to expect new forms of authoritative structures which, unlike

schooling, is identified with acquiring a worker status. However, as has been

shown here, the young women involved in juvenile employment did not see it as 'real' work, because of its lack of permanency. Such experiences did however make them more sensitised to the differential demand for workers expressed by employers. In Chapter Six, a closer examination of this process is undertaken in the context of the Job Search methods employed by the Black and White young women in my sample and the effect which this had on both their understanding of how the post-16 labour market works in relation to them; together with the outcomes which they experienced in terms of whether or not they secured a job.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the discussion to follow focuses on the post-school

experiences of the sample group of 23 Black and White young women prior to

joining the YTS. The chapter examines the nature of their job search methods

and how this is related to occupational choice at this stage.

All of the young women interviewed were asked about the nature of their

job search activities. During the interview each girl was given a job search

check list to fill out (see Appendix C), as well as questioned on a number of

issues relating to their individual job search methods. This research method

provided the basis for the analysis of the extent of their knowledge about

where and how to search for work. I was aware that the check list is

somewhat artificial in so far as it demands a response. It would by itself

not describe the frequency with which each individual girl had made an effort

to seek employment. As a result data drawn from the informal interviews were

used to assess the degree of commitment each respondent had demonstrated in

finding employment.

In what follows the research results are presented in the form of a chart

documenting the range of job search methods that individuals used, or said

they used, as identified on the check list. This is followed by an analysis,

based on interview material, about the frequency with which they actually

utilised these techniques. Preliminary analysis of the data did not reveal

any significant differences between the ITeC or CP girls. Rather attention

was paid to the potential differences accruing to Black and White young women

in relation to the reliance which they placed on the varying methods available

to them. Previous research on the question of job search amongst young West

Indians has revealed the importance of statutory sources for this group in

their post-school experience (Lee and Wrench. 1983).

One question which therefore emerged was whether the present research
indicated that a similar pattern existed for either one or both groups of the
YTS trainees. It should be noted that a straight comparison between Black
and White trainees was difficult because the number of respondents on the two
schemes was not equal. In the CP scheme young Black women represented 69
per cent of total number of female trainees at the time of the research; in
contrast Black and White young women were split fifty-fifty on the ITeC
programme. Another factor is the length of time spent in the labour market.
Most of the young women interviewed had experienced a relatively short period
in work between leaving school and joining the YTS. However, there were a
few exceptions found in both the ITeC and CP schemes. For instance, one Black
girl on the ITeC programme and three Black girls on the CP scheme entered the
YTS a year after leaving school, having done a variety of jobs, as well as
having encountered periods of unemployment. Within both schemes none of the
young White women had undergone long spells in the labour market, and this
was also true for the remaining 14 Black girls on both schemes. Thus whether
or not the period spent in the labour market effected either the frequency or
nature of job searching by these young women is hard to establish. Certainly,
in the case of the slightly 'older' Black trainees, who had a more extensive
period of economic activity, job searching became more erratic as time went
by.

Nature Of Job Search Activity

Table Five shows the frequency of a variety of job search methods utilised by
all trainees. All the girls were asked to tick in order of preference their
job search methods. The frequency categories refer to 'Regularly',
'Occasionally' or 'Never', and are divided between Black and White girls
respectively. The columns in the Table Five indicate the number of girls who
stated they used a particular method, and, the degree to which this had been
favoured by them. Some caution needs to be observed because the young women
were being asked in retrospect as to what methods they most favoured when
seeking work. It was made clear to all the respondents that 'Regularly'

referred to a weekly activity, while 'Occasionally' designated an infrequent use of these methods. Hence each individual was asked to remember what method she had favoured most, or had used at some stage in her search for work.

Table Five

Job Search Methods

METHOD	BLACK			WHITE		
	REG	OCC	NEVER	REG	OCC	NEVER
Newspapers etc.	3	10	1	2	6	1
Radio [1]	0	10	4	2	3	4
Job Centre	7	5	2	6	3	0
Private Job Agency	3	3	7	1	6	2
Writing Directly [2]	0	4	9	1	1	7
Careers Office	8	6	0	5	3	1
Family/Friends	1	6	7	3	4	2
Places of Work [3]	7	5	0	6	3	0
Local Shops	3	9	2	7	1	1
TOTAL	28	62	32	30	33	18

Notes 1. This refers to both the London wide Capital Radio and local radio stations.
2. This relates to writing to employers directly asking them about possible vacancies.
3. This refers to directly approaching employers on their work premises.

Starting with the Black trainees on the CP scheme, the three most favoured methods exhibited by them were Places of Work, the Careers Service and the Job Centre. Where they had actively sought work, apart from applying directly at employers' premises, statutory agents predominated in their attempt to gain

information about vacancies in the jobs market. At first glance it may appear surprising that directly approaching an employer was favoured by this group on a regular basis. However, it is important to distinguish what type of employers were being approached. Primarily work in Sales, especially with High Street retailers, formed their main target group. Few of these young women chose to look for work in small based industries and where this was the case, had a specific area of work in mind.

Working in the retail sector is an important source of employment for women in London, with just over half of the sector's workforce being comprised of female workers. Despite this fact only 1 in 5 girls leaving school enter shop work, suggesting that employers are favouring older and married women to a greater extent than female school leavers (GLC. 1986). The desire for work in this area exhibited by the young Black women in the sample represents two important features. First, their desire in principle refers to the high visibility of women in this occupation, especially amongst married women, as well as suggesting that jobs are available. Second, working in Sales in the retail sector does not require extensive qualifications.

As a result, girls leaving school with few or no qualifications can legitimately look to employment in this sector, but in doing so face a high level of competition from older women. There is one other factor here that relates to young Black women in particular. Traditionally the pattern of employment amongst West Indian women has been confined to lower levels of semi and unskilled manual labour. In London there is a marked concentration of 'older' Black women in the Health Services, as well as in jobs that involve catering and cleaning (Bryan et al. 1985). Very few of the Black respondents aspired to work in these areas (in fact only one girl on the CP scheme), suggesting these young women were seeking work avenues away from that associated with older Black women's employment.

Amongst the White ITeC and CP girls, looking in local shops was listed as the most popular job search method. Noticeboards in local newsagents or small supermarkets were examples of local job networking that almost

invariably involved smaller businesses. One reason why these young women chose to seek work in this way was their general reluctance to go outside of their local area. Local in this context did not just refer to residential areas but includes places which are considered to be part of their local 'turf'. This extended beyond the Borough of residence to adjacent areas, including the West End of London. Interestingly, the Black respondents did not show a preference for this method; suggesting that for the most part their aspirations were directed to what can be described as the more established, visibly recognizable firms. The reasons for this are hard to gauge. Evidence based on the check list where 9 Black girls stated that they made infrequent use of this method, does suggest that these young women were not attaching importance to jobs which in all probability were un/semi-skilled manual work.

An examination of the use of family/friendship networks by Black and White girls, reveals that the latter group exhibited a greater preference for this method. Only 7 Black girls reported that they had never used this method compared to 2 young White women. Several commentators have mentioned the greater use which young White people make of family/friendship networks, coining such phrases as the 'lads for dads' syndrome to describe this process (Willis. 1977). In general, research on this question demonstrates that the operation of 'word of mouth' recruitment strategies puts Black youngsters at a disadvantage in their search for work.

There is however another aspect to the job aspirations of young Black women which has received less attention from writers in the field, but which I feel is an important factor underlying this phenomenon. This refers to the degree to which young Black people wish to enter into the occupations and job levels that their parents have achieved. Evidence drawn from studies on Black youth education and employment, such as Fuller (1980), have generally pointed to the higher employment aspirations which young Black women have; and the emphasis which they place on gaining qualifications, as witnessed by the greater numbers that choose to stay on in further education (Dex. 1983). For the

'least able', ie. those who are unqualified and who are not necessarily motivated to seek qualifications by, for instance entering Colleges of Further Education, their aspirations do not appear to lessen as a result of their lack of certification. This should be viewed in conjunction with the greater awareness about occupational levels that young Black people appear to have (Roberts et al. 1983). Thus if approached from this particular angle it is not surprising that the Black girls in the sample made less use of family and friendship networks; especially when we take into consideration a number of other factors.

First, the traditional level of job attainment which Black people have achieved. Arising out of this is the greater degree of uncertainty which Black people face, especially in those work areas that have witnessed a contraction in the number of jobs, ie. semi- and unskilled manual levels. Second, the exposure of Black youngsters to changes in the pattern of employment, including the glamourisation of occupations associated with non-manual work. Put another way, as opportunities have opened up in the labour market, as illustrated by the growth of clerical work, young Black women in common with their White counterparts have been exposed to a range of employment possibilities, previously denied to their parents.

Prior to examining the role played by statutory agencies in relation to job search methods, a brief comment on the other four categories will be given. Writing to employers directly was not on the whole a popular method utilised by my sample. Only one young White woman reported that she had frequently written off to employers asking about possible vacancies. Again this was not surprising given the background of this particular group of young women, especially those on the CP scheme. Lack of confidence over writing skills, coupled with an uncertainty about how to present oneself, would most certainly inhibit an individual from taking this kind of direct action. This does not contradict approaching an employer face to face, because selling yourself in this way does not necessarily entail presenting a curriculum vitae, in which there are a number of blank spaces!. What is surprising is

the unpopularity of looking in newspapers etc. In London certain daily and
local newspapers devote most of their advertising space to job vacancies, yet
it would appear that this was not used as a primary source by the sample
group. There does not appear to be a ready explanation for this, although
when questioned informally about this it seemed that disappointment over the
outcomes had affected attitudes towards hunting for jobs in this way. Samm,
a Black girl on the ITeC programme, one of the trainees who had experienced a
longer spell in the labour·market, recounted her experience of using this
method to search for work:

Samm "When I phoned up this woman started telling me about how
       much about money I could earn, and if I could work at
       nights. It turns out that it wasn't a proper job, but what
       they call telephone sales where what you earn depends on
       how much you sell. I told her that the job advert hadn't
       said all that and she just kept on like she hadn't heard me.
       I did ring up a couple of other places but the job was
       always taken. I got fed up in the end, after all it was
       costing me money to ring these people up."
                                              (Black ITeC Trainee)

Specifically listening to the radio for job vacancies was not taken too
seriously by my respondents; this being reflected in the higher number who
stated that they occasionally did so. If a job came up, which they happened
to hear about they might respond; however on the whole this was haphazard,
with only two young White women reporting that they frequently did so.
Knowing the two girls in question I believe that this was not a
straightforward job seeking strategy, but one which arose as a result of the
frequent use with which they listened to the radio. In comparison I was not
surprised that none of the Black young women chose this method because it
reflected the lack of interest they had towards the more popular radio
networks which, in the main, did not cater for their taste in reggae and soul
music.

Finally, registering with a private employment agency had a mixed response.
Three Black girls said they made regular use of these agencies, compared to
one White respondent. Private job agencies fall into roughly two categories:
those that cater for a specific area of employment and those which offer a

more general range of occupations. Both types tend to offer temporary work of either a part- or full-time nature. In London 'temping' agencies for office work predominate, having a particularly high profile in the West End. These, in conjunction with a few general employment agencies in the Borough of residence provided the main source of private job search institutions open to these young women. However, such clerical agencies cannot be used by those who do not have the appropriate qualifications, hence the larger number of girls in my sample who made infrequent or no use of them. In addition most of the young women interviewed, the majority of whom had left school in the summer of 1984, were not interested in temporary or part-time work, but rather sought full-time employment.

It is at this juncture that the question of statutory agencies comes in. To reiterate, inquiring at the local Careers Office or Job Centre was the most important channel open to my respondents. In both cases over half of the group reported that they had made frequent use of these services; the main reason for doing so was the belief that these agencies held the most up-to-date and reliable information about job vacancies. Only 3 girls reported that they never used these statutory agents. When asked to elaborate, they stated either that they had never had any contact with the Service or had relied on family or friends. However, these statements must be viewed with caution as the answers given were in response to the check list which I provided. How far they were merely filling out this form without giving it due consideration is open to question.

Research on the nature of the Careers Service since the late 1970s reveals that its careers guidance function has assumed a secondary role in favour of aiding unemployed youngsters to find work (Cockburn. 1987). In general this has been in direct response to the effects of the 1980s recession which greatly reduced the number of job vacancies reported to the Careers Service, particularly with regard to those who are seen as the 'least able'. This assertion is not unreasonable when we consider that one important post-16 strategy to emerge entailed remaining in Education. For example in the case

of London just under half of all 16-17 year olds falling within the remit of the ILEA remained in full-time education for the academic year of 1984/5 (GLC. 1986). Although it should noted that in the case of my respondents 'staying on' at school was not seen as a desirable option.

Most of the young women in the sample group had already established some kind of contact with the Careers Service while still at school. My respondents initially used the Service as an employment finding agency. After a period of a few months in the labour market, for some of the girls their job search motivation waned as a result of failure to secure a job. For those young women who had secured a job, discontent with the nature of their employment gradually increased, leading them to re-assess their position in the labour market. Consequently the career guidance function of the Service gained importance for the girls as a way of finding alternatives to their individual situations. This was an important step leading to their eventual entry into the YTS programme, whereby opting for training was a seen as a mechanism to increase their level of employability.

From the figures presented above no apparent differences emerged between the CP and ITeC groups in terms of the contact made with either the Job Centre or Careers Office at the time of leaving school. The evidence gathered here does suggest however that overall the Black girls were relying on these services in the same way as their White peers, but that the latter had recourse to a greater selection of job search methods, which meant that dependence on these agencies was not as critical to them as it was for the young Black women. The figures presented in Table Five are difficult to interpret with no clear pattern emerging. However, evidence drawn from interview data suggests that going to the Careers Office was more often than not the first step in the search for work. In addition the use of other job search methods became more combined with approaching the Service with the passing of time. For example, Isabel's account of her encounter with the Careers Service after leaving school illustrates this point:

Isabel   "...yeah, I did try the Careers Officer when I left school,
                and she gave me the phone number for two jobs, but when we
                phoned up they had already gone ...I didn't go every day
                (laugh), there was no point really because they'd either
                have the same jobs up on the board which were already gone
                anyway..."

                                                    (White ITeC Trainee)

What we are witnessing amongst these young women was a variegated pattern
of job search activity, whereby statutory services appeared to lose their
initial prominence. As fortunes varied the amount of commitment to actually
searching for work by this means lessened. Some of the girls stated that
they would plan when to visit the two services; other girls reported that
their visits coincided with whether or not they were in the vicinity. The
point is that disappointments breed degrees of apathy that vary from day to
day. Moreover, going to the Job Centre often replaced the Careers Office as
the main statutory agency visited, with some of the young women expressing
the view that they had a better chance of finding vacancies through this
agency as it seemed to them that there was a wider range of jobs on offer.
Evidence drawn from the interview data suggests that one reason for this lies
in the nature of their post-school activity which initially focuses on getting
a job. The Careers Service with its history of career guidance and its
association with schooling does not necessarily project an image of an
employment agency. The large degree of overlap between the two services in
terms of information about vacancies, underpins the lack of faith which they
generally had in the Careers Service.

  Whatever the circumstances, job search marked for them the end of schooling
and the establishment of adulthood, but this process is not an automatic one.
It is more apt, in this sense, to see it as a time of transition. Making up
their minds about what jobs they wanted to do was problematic for most of
the young women, who did not have either the necessary skills or information
about the range of occupations which might be open to them. These young
women had for the most part not chosen to stay on at school, nor had they
gone to college. Thus the range of possibilities open to them was reduced,
especially in the view of the magnitude of unemployment amongst the young.

Aspirations And The Search For Work

We have dwelt on the question of job search and the varying degrees of reliance which the sample group placed on methods for seeking work. It was argued that job searching is not a straightforward affair because a multitude of factors effect when, how and where an individual looks for work. Yet this does not tell us about the girls' expectations towards the labour market, ie. what occupations they ideally aspired to. 'Ideally' as used here refers not just to the availability of jobs in their chosen areas of employment, but also their realistic chances of succeeding given the general level of their qualifications.

With this in mind my respondents were asked about the kind of jobs they originally wanted to attain prior to joining the YTS. Their replies revealed not only an awareness of status differences patterning the labour market, but also a degree of realism over the extent to which they could achieve these desires. It is this fact which needs to be remembered when viewing both the girls' search for work, and, the employment areas these were directed towards. Moreover, what remains important for the present study is the relation between the ITeC and CP girls' aspirations and their decision to enter the YTS. There is therefore a certain amount of similarity between employment aspirations before and after entering the YTS, with changes occurring as a result of exposure to a slightly broader range of occupations, (one or two of the young women on the CP scheme). Table Six refers to answers given to the question about what kinds of jobs the sample ideally had in mind when they left school. What is striking about Table Six is the fact that it is almost entirely skewed towards stereotypical female occupations. None of the girls showed an interest in non-traditional areas of work, with the exception of three respondents who favoured photography and graphics. On the whole, the samples' choices indicate a desire to work in either servicing or caring occupations, which ironically entailed some kind of qualification or skills training. I was therefore interested to elucidate whether or not these choices had been long term or had arisen during the last months of schooling.

Occupational Aspirations Of Black and White Trainees

Ideal Occupations	Black	White	TOTAL
Clerical/Office Work	3	3	6
Computer Programming	2	1	3
Fashion Design	3	2ª	5
Retail/Sales	1	1	2
Photography/Graphics	1	1	2
Hairdressing	1	0	1
Child Care	3	1	4
TOTAL	14	9	23

Note a) specifies design in fashion accessories

This was in order to ascertain how committed they had been to pursuing these careers, or alternatively whether they had been vaguely formulated as a result of the pressure to make some kind of decision upon leaving school. Subsequently it emerged that their choices had not for the most part been formed at an earlier age - generally their knowledge about these occupations was confined to general pronouncements about what they entailed, but not specific information pertaining to the formal requirements that they would need in order gain entry into these jobs. Here the role of the educational services, especially the Careers Service, is all important.

The Attitude Of Black And White Trainees Towards The Careers Service

The previous account of the use made of the Careers Service by Black and White girls showed that this varied according to a number of factors, associated with what other job search methods were readily available to the group. Differences between Black and White girls were eluded to as the former group appeared to place greater reliance on the statutory services than their White counterparts. In the following discussion the role of the Careers Service from the viewpoint of the young women in the sample is re-examined.

The part played by Careers Officers in directing the girls' entrance, initially into the world of work and later the YTS was problematic from the girls' point of view. Given the emphasis on recounting what trainees felt about a whole range of issues associated with the transition from school to the YTS, the attitudes of Careers Officers are measured according to the girls' own account, rather than directly derived from what Officers had to say. The reason for this is that whatever the individual opinion of Officers, the central issue in this context relates to how the girls interpreted and responded to 'events'. It is the impact which this had on their choice to enter the YTS, which is prioritised here as opposed to the system of allocation, which led to their placement on either the ITeC or CP schemes.

However, in order to contextualise how Black and White ITeC and CP trainees encountered the Service, a few observations will be made here. First, the ILEA Careers Service is split between those Officers providing auxiliary careers guidance to the work undertaken by schools careers teachers, and those based solely on Careers Officers working as employment specialists, whose main function is to provide information to the young about vacancies and other job related matters. Second, the Service's contact with young people at school ideally starts during the third year of their schooling. Officers attend parents' meetings and by a pupil's fifth year arrange group sessions where further information about the Service is given. The Officer attempts to establish what young people want to do, usually through the use

of a careers form which is followed up by individual counselling.

From my discussions with the trainees it was apparent that the nature of their contact with the Service during their schooling years was highly unsatisfactory and often erratic in nature. In particular girls complained about the inadequate dissemination of information on job specific skill and certification requirements. Some girls who had only minimal contact with the Careers Service had received no information on these matters except through informal chats with teachers and friends. To be fair, Careers Officers more often than not have to deal with school leavers who do not necessarily have concrete ideas about what they want to do after leaving school, thereby undermining the effectiveness which Officers can have in counselling youngsters about their futures. On the other hand Careers Officers are often placed in situations where they are making choices *for* young people and it is in this context that most of the young women reported their dissatisfaction with the Service. Complaints centred on the aspirations of the girls conflicting with what was proposed by local Officers, for example:

Elaine   "The woman that I saw didn't really help me ...I told her I
                was interested in child care but when she looked at my
                reports she said that I should try something else like
                catering! I told her I didn't want to do that ...I didn't
                want to be a cook!"
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Karen's account demonstrates how class and gender differentials impinged on her discussion with the Careers Officer:

Karen   "Yeah, all of us had an interview with the careers teacher
                in the fifth form. She was this old biddy who kept on
                telling me I should go to college. I kept on telling her I
                wasn't interested, but all she kept on going on about was
                the mistake *I* was making. I did tell her about the
                jewellery idea, you know, just to see what she'd say, but
                she didn't take it seriously ...I just thought it was a
                waste of time, I mean she wasn't gonna tell me anything
                new, and acted like I was some kind of freak!"
                                                        (White CP Trainee)

Emily's account of her visit to the Careers Office highlights the confusion between Officers and school leavers over the precise nature of the latter's post-school needs:

Emily   "I went along to the Careers Office a week after I left
                school and they told me about what jobs they had, they
                also told me about the YTS but I said I wanted to get a
                job. They kept on asking me all sorts of stuff, like what I
                wanted to do, she mentioned going to college, but I'm just
                not interested in doing that, and she [the Careers Officer]
                couldn't tell me anything really. "

                                                    (Black CP Trainee)

The level of discontentment with the Careers Service was higher amongst the

Black sample group. One important element of this was their feeling that

Careers Officers and teachers had low expectations about their ability to

achieve their aspirations. These two Black respondents expressed the opinion

that such labelling involved a racial component:

Sonia   "I did want to go to college but I sort of left it too late
                for that year, I guess I mucked around too much. When I
                did see the Careers Officer, he didn't tell me much, you
                know, like he was afraid or something. You know how they
                stay [are], they seem to think we ain't good for much
                ...and the way he looked at me I just knew that he thought
                all I was good for was cleaning or something. That's why
                when I left I decided to look for myself. I did go back to
                them but that was just for jobs and stuff."

                                                    (Black ITeC Trainee)

Christina's account of her relationship with the Careers Officer shows how

the impact of racial stereotyping effected the quality of work placements

offered to her:

Christina   "I was unemployed for a long time before I came here and I
                tried all sorts of places, but I just couldn't get a job.
                I had this one careers woman that I'd go and see and she
                would try and help me, she was good like that ...now when I
                think about it she didn't tell me about going to do a
                training course or even college. All the jobs she told me
                about were really bad, I'm not saying it was racial or
                anything, but I wonder whether she treated White girls like
                that, *you know* ? "

                                                    (Black CP Trainee)

These young women were not alluding to direct acts of racial discrimination

but the insidious nature of racial stereotyping that serves to denigrate their

capabilities. This was, for them, further compounded by their choice to enter

directly into the labour market which highlighted the disadvantage,

educational and otherwise, which **they** perceived themselves to have. In

conclusion the Careers Service as reported by the trainees appears to have

assumed a gate-keeper function, attempting to channel girls into employment

areas which they (the Officers) saw as suitable and realistic. The accounts
by trainees did not suggest that Black and White girls were treated
differently with regards to advice, but that how they were judged included
class and 'race' elements, informing Officers' assessments of their
capabilities.

Entering The Labour Market And Factors Effecting Employment Opportunities

Overall the young women reported that they had started out with a fair
amount of optimism about getting a job despite acknowledging widespread
unemployment. Contributing to this was the importance of earlier work
experience gained in the juvenile labour market, because this gave the
impression that 'getting a job' was not impossible:

Emily   "I was glad to get out of school and started looking for
work straight away but nothing turned up. I was a bit
surprised yeah, because like I said I worked before when I
was at school and thought it would be easy ...I tried some
of the other big stores in Oxford Street and places like
that, but I couldn't get anything ...I tried up this side
[her local area] but there's not much happening down this
way."

                                                (Black CP Trainee)

Several factors underpin the experiences of school leavers in their search
for work. In the present study the realities of the labour market,
especially over employers' selection criteria, had the effect of further
reducing their competitiveness in an already restricted local economy. Jane
and Jackie B's experience of searching for work illustrate that the demand for
qualifications plays a significant role in determining the level of a young
person's chances of finding work. Their remarks also highlight the way in
which qualifications versus experience is in fact a false dichotomy, since
employers call upon other social cues designed to sift out potential recruits:

Jane   "When they [employers] asked me what qualifications I had
what was I gonna to say! so usually I didn't get further than
that. Sometimes I lied a bit but even then that didn't help
cos they always came up with the excuse about experience."

                                                (White CP Trainee)

The account given by Jackie B demonstrates the ironic position which young
people find themselves in:

Jackie B   "I thought about working with kids, but you need that
                  nursery nurse qualification ...I tried other things and
                  some of the places we [her friends] went to were just
                  rubbish places, you know real holes ...we did try for the
                  posher places but they wouldn't look at us lot, anyway, most
                  of the people we asked said we needed experience, you tell
                  me how you're 'spose to get that if they won't give you the
                  job in the first place."
                                                          (White CP Trainee)

In this context the significance of qualifications does not lie in the use of

formal academic requirements as found in the 'better jobs' market, as implied

by Jackie B's comments. Rather they act as yet another social cue,

distinguishing different groups of workers within those sectors traditionally

associated with unqualified semi-and unskilled youth labour. For example, in

a study of the recruitment practices amongst Central London firms, Davies and

Mason (1986) found that inner city workers are indirectly discriminated

against by the assumptions employers hold about their 'suitability'; where

personal appearance and local accent are but two variables used to assess

whether an individual will 'fit in' with either their workforce or client

group. In Jackie B's case it was clear that her accent (which was a form of

central London cockney slang) met with prejudice from the 'posher' high street

employers. Local accent is a factor affecting Black working class girls who

are no more exempt from this type of social prejudice than White girls.

Such 'hidden' criteria was something which all the trainees were forced to

acknowledge. Sam and Rose both describe how potential employers responded to

them, in ways where it was obvious social class and gender differentials were

in operation:

Sam   "Just for a laugh me and some of my mates went into some of
                  the posh clothes shops, you know the type, where all the
                  girls are dressed up like real tarts ...anyway this one
                  woman came up to me like I was a shop-lifter or something
                  and asked me if I needed any help. So I asked her if she
                  had any jobs going and she asked me how old I was. When I
                  told her I was sixteen she said I'd need experience ...but
                  I knew she was just saying that, you know, I could see that
                  she was a stuck up old cow!"
                                                          (White CP Trainee)

Rose's account shows that she was well aware that her 'cockney' accent

immediately identified has as a member of the working class; and that this

was not positively viewed by the 'posher' employers:

Rose   "Before I got my job with mum, I tried a couple of places. In one of them right, this shoe shop, the manager came up to me all snooty like and asked if I needed any help. When I told him I came about the job he looked at me like he was embarrassed or something and said they didn't need anyone ...I knew that wasn't true cos he'd got a vacancy up in the window. I dunno I just lost my temper and had a go at him (laugh)..."

                   (White ITeC Trainee)

Amongst the young Black women evidence of a similar process of exclusion was found. The effect of perceptions of the labour market status of Black people was evident in their answers. For example, Gloria's account of why she had returned to MacDonald's after leaving school, reveals her understanding of the low status jobs on offer to Black people:

Gloria   "Well they ain't asking for qualifications are they? All you do is some cleaning, counter work and sometimes cooking. They don't really care what you look like as long as you're clean, and they give you a uniform and stuff, so it's not as if you have to dress smart on anything. Besides they use a lot of Black people there and I think that makes it easier for them, cos a lot of people who eat there are Black anyway."

                   (Black CP Trainee)

The Black girls also complained about the attitudes of potential employers towards either their lack of qualification or experience. Refusals by employers based on these two criteria were interpreted by the Black trainees as excuses that hid the real reason. However their understanding of this process was not exclusively related to 'race'. There was a feeling amongst them that their lack of qualification was a genuine hindrance, and that despite an underlying belief that rejections contained a racial element, it was the former which presented the singular most important factor in their failure to gain work.

This is illustrated in the following discussion with a Black CP trainee:

Jackie   "The way I see it having 'O' levels does make a difference when you're going for a job because even if they [employers] don't like your colour, you can say I've got the same levels ['O' levels] like the next person, so you've got them [employers] there haven't you. But if you've got nothing to show them that you are as good as a White person, then what can you fight them with."

                   (Black CP Trainee)

I asked Jackie to explain what she meant by fighting them?

Jackie
"...people are always gonna be prejudice ain't they? You can't stop that, but you've gotta show them that you are just as good as them, that's why you need to get qualified, otherwise they just think they can treat you like rubbish, *you know what I mean*, it [qualifications] gives you respect."

(Black CP Trainee)

Kim, a Black ITeC trainee, also viewed experience as important:

Kim
"Yes definitely, without them you can't get far becos you haven't got anything else to offer, have you ...but that's only one thing because these days you must have experience otherwise they [employers] don't want to know, so really I think you're better off working for a bit, becos you can have that to fall back on - ah I don't know, it just seems to me that you can't have one without the other..."

(Black ITeC Trainee)

From my discussions with the Black girls it became clear that they were much more aware of the role of qualifications than their White peers. One reason for this lies in the higher aspirations which they held; ones which were either directed towards jobs that did require certification, or those seen as giving a higher employment status. Awareness about status differentials within the labour market also arises here.

For example, the 5 Black ITeC trainees had all aspired to some form of office work, with 2 specifying computer programming. Of the 3 who had held jobs prior to entering the scheme, none had worked in their desired occupations. Of these young women 2 had left school that same year and had undertaken sales work; yet both had later opted for training in new technologies (especially word processing), in order to gain experience and familiarity with office skills. In doing so they both assumed that such work provided better employment prospects and financial rewards:

Joan
"Working in the boutique was ok I guess, but I didn't want to get stuck there. My parents kept on telling me that I should go into typing, because I would get more money, and like they said it's a *good* job to go into."

(Black ITeC Trainee)

Sonia
"Like I said working in Woolworth's is not my idea of a career. I wanted something that was a bit more, you know, exciting ...I thought at least doing word processing was a good idea, because that's where the jobs are gonna be."

(Black ITeC Trainee)

In their eyes these two young women had made positive assessments about the jobs market and where the rewards could be gained. Their awareness of status differentials within women's employment, together with their belief that office work represented a step up the ladder, points to changes in the level of expectations as exhibited by Black youngsters compared to their parents (Dex, 1983). Unlike their parents who were largely excluded from these types of jobs, younger Black women alongside their White peers viewed office work as something which is legitimately within their reach. What excluded them therefore was not based on low levels of expectation but rather their lack of qualifications and experience.

Summary - Factors Involved In The Search For Work: 'Race', Gender And Class

In sum, factors effecting entrance into the labour market as far as the young women in my sample were concerned, related to their understanding of the nature of jobs available to them, and, the stress which employers placed on qualifications. However, this was textured by their awareness that 'other' hidden criteria in the labour market effected their employment chances. For example, class relations and the 'social cues' used to pigeon hole the workforce affected both Black and White girls. The fact that Careers Officers often played a significant role in this process was alluded to by many of the girls in their account of the advice offered to them by statutory agents. In addition, the Black girls were highly sensitised to the impact which racism had on their employment opportunities. They too were aware of the varying 'social cues' utilised to deny them access to jobs, but unlike their White counterparts, believed that qualifications could offset this. In other words, these young Black women exhibited a belief that racism as experienced by them in the labour market could be surmounted and resisted through the acquisition of qualifications. This is an important aspect in their attitudes towards the labour market, because for some it played a significant role in their decision to enter the YTS. Equally, the experiences of young White women at this stage, revealed some of the contradictions which entering the world of work in a time of high unemployment throws up. They too faced disappointments,

and discrimination based on class differentials. Their aspirations were directed to sections of female employment associated with 'better paid', better status jobs for working class women, such as working in Marks & Spencers or other High Street retailers. Once again how these aspirations were translated into a reason to enter the YTS, points to the segregated nature of women's employment, set within the context of a fragmented labour market.

MAKING THE TRANSITION TO THE YTS:

ENCOUNTERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

INTRODUCTION

Having left school and searched for work, Black and White girls had varying

degrees of success in the labour market. Some girls obtained full-time jobs

which they tended to keep for some time; whilst others had shorter periods of

work interspersed with unemployment. However the majority of girls

experienced unemployment from the time of leaving school to joining the YTS.

The discussion to follow concentrates on the pattern of labour market

activity exhibited by Black and White girls prior to joining the YTS. Two

main concerns inform the nature of the evidence presented here. First, how

the young women interpreted their encounters in the post-16 labour market

and second, the effect this had on their decision to enter the YTS. This

latter point is important because where as it might be expected that

unemployed youngsters choose the YTS, some of the girls in my sample could

have remained employed but chose to enter the YTS instead (this was

particularly true of the ITeC Black trainees).

Given the variegated pattern of post-school experience amongst Black and

White trainees, the interview data are divided in such a way as to reflect the

potential differences arising out of age and length of time spent in the

labour market. Thus an examination of 16 year old Black and White trainees

on both schemes is outlined first, followed by a focus on the experiences of

17 year old trainees who had left school one year prior to joining their

respective schemes.

Starting with a breakdown of the ITeC girls' post-16 experience, it was

found that out of a total of 10 female trainees on the ITeC programme, 8 of

the girls were aged 16 and had left school in the summer of 1984; of these 3

were Black and 4 White. All of them had attempted to find work during this

interval phase but only 2 Black and 2 White ITeC girls had obtained full-time

employment in this age category. The remaining 1 Black and 3 White girls

aged 16 were unemployed right up to the time of joining the programme. Two

ITeC girls were aged 17 at the time of entering the scheme and had
experienced different entrance routes into the programme. Samm had joined
the scheme after spending a year in the labour market, while Kim had stayed
on in the 6th form at school, but having failed to gain the examination
grades she required to go to college, had opted for the YTS in the Autumn of
1984.

Racial and age ratios amongst Black and White 16 year olds on the CP
scheme were similar to the ITeC programme. Out of a total of 13 trainees, 9
were aged 16 at the time of joining the scheme; of these 5 Black trainees and
4 White trainees. Only 3 Black girls in this age category had obtained work
prior to joining the scheme, with the remaining 2 Black and 4 White trainees
having failed to secure a job. Four Black trainees on the CP scheme
constituted the older age category who had joined the scheme at the age of
17. Three of this group had experienced employment at some point during this
period, with the fourth Black girl remaining unemployed from the time she left
school.

In sum out of 17 trainees aged 16 on both schemes, only 7 had obtained
work, 5 Black and 2 White girls. The remaining 10 Black and White girls had
all been jobless during their stay in the labour market, that is, 3 Black and
7 White girls. Six girls were located in the 17 year age category, 4 Black CP
trainees and 2 Black ITeC trainees, bringing the total to 22 girls in all. The
remaining Black CP trainee aged 16 was Hildreth, who left school in the Winter
of 1984, having dropped out of staying in the 6th form at school. Hildreth
joined the CP scheme approximately two months after the start date of the
research (see Appendix A for a summary of the above).

In presenting the girls' account of what happened to them, the analysis is
not separated by scheme location. This is because the central research
interest at this stage relates to the past experiences as school leavers,
rather than as trainees. A number of themes are taken up throughout the
discussion that refer to: the duration of unemployment spells prior to
obtaining work; the nature of the jobs acquired and whether or not this

matched their aspirations (all my respondents were asked to define what they considered to be a good job); and finally the nature of their unemployment experience. Thereafter, the experiences of the four 17 year old Black girls who had the longest spells in the labour market are examined. Finally, in closing this discussion, the issue of how the girls' post-16 experiences effected both their choice and location on the YTS will be raised.

The Past Pattern Of Employment Amongst 16 Year Old Black And White Trainees

An analysis of the length of time spent before attaining their first and only jobs suggests that for Black and White 16 year olds, there was no significant differences. All 7 girls who found work took a month or less after leaving school to secure their first job; 5 of them secured full-time employment, with the 2 remaining (Black) girls taking on part-time work (one in Macdonalds, the other as a part-time cleaner). In relation to job search, only 1 young (Black) trainee had obtained her job in Sales through a statutory agency; whilst the other 6 young women had relied on either directly approaching an employer, or obtained work through a informal family/friendship network. The part-time cleaner and the shop floor factory worker had both found jobs through this latter means.

Unfortunately, information about the precise number of attempts before acquiring their first job was unobtainable. This is because by the time the girls were interviewed, their recollection over the number of rejections that they experienced was patchy and unclear. However as the previous discussion of job searching showed, the impetus to get a job gradually declined during the first few weeks after leaving school. Also, although the above mentioned young women gained work via two main mechanisms, it is amongst the White girls that reliance on family/friendship networks was greatest, compared to Black girls, who were more disposed to either contacting an employer directly or going through the Careers Service.

In relation to job interviews, all of them had undergone some form of interview, although the degree to which these constituted formal selection

procedures was in the main low. Interviews usually consisted of informal chats, with in some cases specific reference being made to formal education. Generally the girls were asked a series of questions about where they were schooled; what subjects they had taken; any previous work experience and finally whether or not they were interested in the type of work being applied for. Their accounts about how they responded to such questions demonstrate their shrewd assessment of what was required, and none of them were averse to dressing up their skills and experience. Sonia, a Black ITeC trainee who had secured a job as a retail assistant in well known store, gave this assessment of her interview:

Sonia   "When I went to Woolworth's for the job interview they asked
        me all sorts of questions about what experience I had and
        whether I'd worked with the public, you know stuff like
        that. I could see they wanted someone that was willing to
        answer questions so I made out I was real interested and
        you know sorta polite ...[I asked Sonia why she had acted
        like that?] ... I wanted the job didn't I! I would have said
        anything they wanted (laugh) ..."
                    (Black ITeC Trainee)

Jackie, a Black CP trainee had also found work after 3 weeks, through a teacher at school. Jackie was interested in fashion design, but because of her poor expectation about her exam performance, had decided to go straight out to work:

Jackie   "...my teacher told me about it, see, she knows this man who
        owns a dress making factory out by Ealing ...yeah, I went
        along with it because I needed work and it was a chance, *you
        know* ...what was the interview like choops [sic sound of
        derision] - the man didn't even ask me what I could do! -
        when I got down there he just asked when I could start, I
        mean to say! I wanted to do fashion design or learn
        something like that and he just put me on one of the
        machines... "
                    (Black CP Trainee)

Jackie's account also illustrates how recruitment to this industry is not rigidly structured by qualifications.

In Table Seven, a summary of the post-school occupations of the seven Black and White girls who found work is given. The interesting fact emerging from Table Seven is that most of the young women obtained work that was fairly similar to the kind of jobs they had occupied in the juvenile labour market.

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Table Seven

List Of Post-School Occupations Of Girls Aged Sixteen

Occupations	Black	White	TOTAL
Sales Assistant	2	0	2
Hairdressing	0	1	1
Clothing Factory	1	0	1
Electronics Factory	0	1	1
Fast Foods (MacDonalds)	1	0	1
Cleaning Company	1	0	1
TOTAL	5	2	7

This observation, although based on a small sample, nevertheless confirms the view previously put forward, that young people's knowledge of local labour markets is utilised in their post-school job searching. The case of Shirley, a White young woman on the ITeC programme illustrates this point:

Shirley "I went back to the hairdressers because they told me I could come back if I needed a job ...I didn't have any definite ideas, and I knew they'd have me back, so I was lucky I guess ...[I asked Shirley whether she had planned to stay?] ..." No, I knew what the work was about and I wasn't keen on it, but at least I could earn a bit ...My mum had told me to go back there so I wasn't unemployed for long really, only two weeks ...[I then asked Shirley whether in general she felt that getting a job was easy?] ..."No, I mean it was easy for me because the manageress liked me so I wasn't in for a hard time getting a job there again. But I know that for most kids my age it's tough"...[later on in the interview Shirley expressed an opinion that] ..."No I wasn't doing what I wanted to but I needed to do something ...after a while I got fed up with it like I had before. All you did there was sweep up, make tea and sometimes wash clients' hair. I wasn't allowed to do anything else and it was just boring ...I mean hairdressing is no big deal, it's not as if we all live like Vidal Sassoons or something."

(White ITeC Trainee)

Shirley's account on first examination suggests that she did not experience difficulties in finding a job; however, underlying her success is the lack of choice which she felt she had. This was a common complaint among the sample group, pointing to an important aspect about the relationship between aspiration and actual employment experience. In specifying what their ideal

jobs were, these young women were alluding to what they considered to be interesting and rewarding careers. The designation of a career in this context, refers to a belief that it will lead to personal satisfaction. Actual labour market experience often operates to the negation of these desires, with young people being socialised in the work place to accept that such ambitions remain ideals. Obviously this is not always the case, but it is applicable to a large extent to the least academically successful, whom, as we have seen, represent some 53 per cent of the 16 to 19 age group, largely consisting of the unskilled, unemployed and unemployable (Gleeson. 1983). Based on their knowledge of the world of work, young people do construct images of the labour market by making an assessment of what constitutes desirable and undesirable occupations. Such judgements exist not only in the dichotomy between the primary and secondary labour markets, but also *within* these two spheres.

For example, the job levels obtained by Rose and Merille stand in contrast to that achieved by Shirley and Gloria. Rose worked in a small factory producing electrical components; Merille worked as a part-time cleaner for an office cleaning company. In comparison, Shirley worked ostensibly in the glamour world of hairdressing; whilst Gloria found work in the equally hectic world of fast food chains. Given that Shirley was not undergoing an apprenticeship, none of these jobs could be classified as being located at the "better" end of the youth labour market. Yet the obvious distinction between the two sets of occupations immediately springs to mind; namely the drudgery associated with factory and office cleaning work, where employees are seen as being at the 'bottom of the pile' and, the supposedly more exciting, fashion conscious and fast pace world of hairdressing and (certainly in London) fast food restaurants like MacDonalds.

All of these young women were aware of such distinctions, but by the same token actual labour market experience also served, in the case of the two glamorised jobs, to challenge the idea that what they were doing was

rewarding:

Rose   "No factory work isn't a good job. I really hated it and
            only stuck it out because my mum had got it for me. Most
            of the people that worked there were older and I kinda felt
            left out ...you could have a laugh but at the end of the day
            it wasn't what I wanted to do. It wasn't the kind of job
            that I could see me doing it for the rest of my life!"
                            (White ITeC Trainee who had been employed)

Merille   "Are you serious, course I don't think cleaning is the career
            for me! I want to work with children, maybe in a nursery or
            something. I only took the cleaning job to help me out, but
            I didn't like it. The people that work in the floor where I
            was cleaning really looked down on you like you was dirt or
            something. I hated it but I couldn't get another job so I
            had to keep it."
                            (Black CP Trainee who had been employed)

Gloria   "The only good thing about working in MacDonalds was that
            you can have a laugh with your mates ...but they don't pay
            good ...No I don't think it's a good job. When you work
            there at first you kinda think it's special, but it's not you
            know ...It was hard work, you know, and if you didn't have
            friends there you'd go mad! ...I knew I wasn't gonna stay
            long, specially with the boss I had."
                            (Black CP Trainee who had been employed)

Shirley   "Hairdressing is not as exciting as *you think* it is. Most of
            the time you aren't doing much, just cleaning up and stuff,
            you know like filling up the shampoo bottles, cleaning the
            basins and just being a dogsbody. You do get to meet a lot
            of people, but where I worked most of the clients were
            local women and they didn't come in much anyways."
                            (White ITeC Trainee who had been employed)

Nearly all the young women who had gained employment were destined to leave

within a relatively short space of time. Their reasons for leaving varied,

with some experiencing involuntary job loss; however whether or not this was

the case their lack of full commitment to retaining their jobs played an

important role in determining both when they left and their subsequent

activities. Dissatisfaction over career development was common to both the

employed and unemployed categories; however unlike the latter group, employed

girls did have a choice about continuing to work.

What appears to have been the critical factor was their assessment of how

far they could progress in these occupations. None of the young women who

had worked entered into occupations to which they had previously aspired.

Therefore whether or not they found work immediately after leaving school,

the fact that they were dissatisfied with the level of their achievement,

meant that the employed sample views on the labour market were similar to that of their unemployed counterparts. Joan's relatively brief participation in the labour market ended because of her feeling that she could do better:

Joan   "I left the boutique after about three months because I knew
             I wasn't gonna get far. They were alright I suppose, but the
             money wasn't that good. The only thing that was really
             good was that I got a discount at the shop! [I then asked
             Joan why she had left?] ...I got bored with it and it wasn't
             as if I wanted to do that type of work forever ...it
             was just a summer job to give me some cash really. You
             know I said that I sort of wanted to go to college to do
             Office Practice, well I knew that if I stayed in the shop I
             would just get stuck there and forget my typing. So I
             decided to leave and try and get into college, but they
             were already full and I couldn't get a grant anyway ...one
             of my friends told me about here and I came up with her to
             see them and they offered me a place."
                                 (Black ITeC Trainee who had been employed)

Between the Black and White girls there was no apparent difference of attitude in relation to the underlying reasons for leaving work. All had felt that they could achieve greater standards than their jobs had set; they also felt that they were missing out on future opportunities which other occupations would offer them. Again at this stage I do not wish to intimate that they had well thought out intentions, but rather that their motivation to seek new avenues strongly related to their perception of the occupational hierarchy and their position in it.

The Pattern And Experience Of Unemployment Amongst 16 Year Old Black And White Trainees

Amongst the unemployed such considerations are often subsumed by the frustrations which arise from failing to obtain work. For the girls who had not worked since leaving school, the alternatives available to them were few and far between. Four ITeC trainees had remained unemployed after leaving school; the comparative figure for girls on the CP scheme was 5 - with Hildreth, a 16 year old Black CP trainee, arriving at the project after remaining approximately six weeks in the sixth form - making a total of 10 unemployed. In contrast, Kim a Black ITeC trainee was the only other trainee

who had stayed on in the sixth form and had therefore left school in the summer of 1984, having failed to get into college for the following September; she had then opted for training in order to obtain skills in word processing and computer programming.

Overall, the number of Black and White 16 year olds who had failed to find any kind of work was approximately the same for both schemes. As previously noted the scale of their job search had lessened over this period; producing a sense of resignation over their plight which was in fact a vital component in their decision to enter the YTS. In spite of this, they all exhibited a determination not to enter those areas which they considered to be demeaning forms of work. In practice what these young women were saying was that they held aspirations which when compared to the availability of jobs, produced a mixed response. At one level they *were* aware that they had needed to get a job; whilst simultaneously rejecting areas of work which they had considered beneath them. Whether or not this was in retrospect, ie. that it served as a justification as to why they had failed to find work, is hard to say. For example, when asking Jane about which job(s) she considered as worthwhile, her reply was based on not wanting to be demeaned by her work experience:

Jane "Good job prospects, you know, where they'd give you training, maybe even send you to college. I wouldn't want a boss who was always watching me, but would let me get on with it."
(White CP Trainee who had remained unemployed)

The other girls who had remained unemployed displayed varying attitudes about their experiences. Cathy a White ITeC trainee had desperately searched for work:

Cathy "I really wanted a job when I left school but I just couldn't get anywhere ...At first I used to go to the Careers place and the Centre [Job Centre] and that, but they never had anything for me... [I asked Cathy what she did in the Summer?] ...I did keep on looking but not as hard, cos there wasn't much point was there?"
(White ITeC Trainee who had remained unemployed)

Jackie B, a White CP trainee, seemed to have taken the experience of being unemployed in her stride:

Jackie B   "I knew I didn't leave school with much ...Yeah I did look for work and that, but like I said, they [employers] always went on about qualifications, so most of the time I lied [laugh] but it didn't make any difference ...Nah, I didn't keep it up, I mean it *was* the holidays you know (laugh) - seriously though, I couldn't think about what to do so I came on this place."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee who had remained unemployed)</div>

The attitudes expressed by Jackie B, imply that failing to find work had not been as traumatic an experience as some would suggest, was shared by some of the other girls in the unemployed 16 year old category. Isabel from the ITeC programme and Karen and Sam from the CP scheme, all indicated that while not getting a job had been frustrating, it was not the end of the world. However, the one complaint present in all their accounts was the lack of money that had come with being out of work. Karen's feelings about this represents fairly well the veiws of all the girls who were in this situation:

Karen   "...I did mind not having a job but the worse thing was not having any money ...there's not a lot of things you can do without it, specially when you've got mates who are working it's really bad."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee who had remained unemployed)</div>

Another aspect of being unemployed that was raised by some but not all of the girls was the attitude of family members towards them at the time:

Isabel   "...your family can give you a hard time sometimes, cos they keep on at you. *you know*, like when are ya gonna get a job ...I useta [sic] pretend I was going out looking, just to get out of the house."

<div align="right">(White ITeC Trainee who had remained unemployed)</div>

I asked all the girls who had been unemployed whether they would have accepted any job rather than remain out of work. Vanessa's answer is quite illuminating:

Vanessa   "I didn't really think about factory work or anything like that I always knew I wanted to work somewhere like Marks & Spencers, you know somewhere like that ...[Would you have looked at factory work if there were jobs going?] ..."I dunno really ...if there was *I* didn't see them (laugh). Seriously though, I don't think so because that's not what I wanted to do ...anyway I spent most of the summer hanging around with my friends, so I wasn't that bothered."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee who had remained unemployed)</div>

This selective attitude was more pronounced for the Black girls, suggesting that their knowledge of the labour market was textured by their resistance to

the disadvantages that Black people have faced in gaining access to "good"
jobs. Employment rejections are part of conditions under which the younger
generation has been socialised. Hence the level of their expectations is
based, in part, on the knowledge that the occupational achievements of their
parents had, in their eyes, contributed to the lowly status which West Indians
have attained. The discussions which I had with them over this issue were
not as sophisticated as summed up here. They were not necessarily all aware
of the underlying historical factors that had determined where and how Black
workers were "inserted" into the British economy. Rather their analyses of
this scenario were rudimentary, drawing upon critical assessments about their
parents' reaction to life in Britain - for these young women their parents
were not merely "victims" of the system:

Nina   "I don't want to get into the kind of work my parents did,
                like working in the hospital down the road! That's what they
                wanted, *you know!* ...they don't mind doing that kind of work,
                but I always said to myself that wasn't gonna happen to me
                ...[later on in the interview when pressed to explain what
                she meant by saying that her parents did not mind that kind
                of work Nina replied] ...No I don't mean that they enjoy it,
                because they both work really hard but it's just that they
                think having any job is better than nothing and I don't..."
                          (Black ITeC Trainee who had remained unemployed)

Emily continued in a similar vein, because like Nina she did not want to do

the same type of work as her parents:

Emily   "...as for my mum she's a auxiliary nurse and I definitely
                know I wouldn't want to do that. She always comes home
                tired ...she don't say much about it but I know she finds it
                really hard ...I mean what kind of career is that? I wanna
                do something different, where I could be more independent."
                          (Black CP Trainee who had remained unemployed)

Whether these young Black women were clear or not about the specific

occupations they wanted to go into, their assessment of the labour market was

textured by more than one set of attitudes; derived from the various social

relations that informed their position as the "second" generation. The

experience of unemployment had not lessened the strength of their convictions

that they had wanted a different occupational experience. I believe that one

reason for this lay in the long term optimism which the Black unemployed

girls had that either things would get better, or, that it had only been their

lack of qualifications and skills that had disbarred them from achieving their goals. They had believed implicitly that such a disadvantage could be overcome, not necessarily by obtaining qualifications, but rather through acquiring more or new experiences; which represent the other selection criteria found in the work place.

<u>Summary - Attitude Of 16 Year Old Black And White Girls In The Labour Market</u>. In sum, what is being argued here with reference to all the 16 year old women who had been economically active is that despite the increasing uncertainity associated with youth employment, these young women were retaining an optimistic attitude. The belief that unemployment could be overcome through the acquirement of either qualifications or experience was based, in part, on their encounters in the labour market where they had been exposed to selection criteria that ostensibly called upon these two factors. Experience and qualifications were also seen as a way of improving their employability (for the unemployed girls) as well as aiding some of the girls to attain "better" jobs. I would also argue that their attitude towards unemployment, as something to be overcome, together with their eventual decision to enter the YTS was influenced by the length of time spent in and out of work. For those girls who had found work, this exposure alerted them to the dangers of remaining in jobs which did not fulfil their expectations. Hence how far their decision to enter the YTS was based on their analysis of what skills they would require, either to gain <u>any</u> type of employment or within their <u>desired</u> occupations was I believe coloured by the nature of their post-school labour market activity.

It is at this point that closer examination of those young women who had a more extensive stay in the labour market is appropriate. Amongst the sample of four Black women who fall into this category, the onslaught of intermittent periods of short term employment more readily demonstrates the fact that the YTS has, for many young people who can be described as the 'least able', become the last resort open to them, in the face of rising unemployment.

Previous Occupational Experiences Of 17 Year Old Black Trainees

Out of the 6 Black CP and ITeC trainees aged 17, 4 girls on the CP scheme had been economically active, while of the remaining 2 girls from the ITeC programme, only Samm had worked, but Kim as we have stated had stayed at school for an extra year. Generally, a lengthy period of time elapsed before 4 obtained their first jobs; 2 girls had waited 8 weeks, with 12 and 24 weeks respectively for the other two girls. One young woman had remained unemployed. None of these women had been able to secure a job for up to six months. Below is set out brief summaries of their post-school activity prior to entering the YTS:-

Samm, an ITeC trainee, started her first job eight weeks after officially leaving school; she then worked as a full-time office junior for 16 weeks and this was followed by a period of 12 weeks unemployed. She then worked as a filing clerk for another 12 weeks before being asked to leave, and had remained unemployed up to the time of joining the YTS.

Marie, a CP trainee, unemployed for 8 weeks after officially leaving school followed by 21 weeks in the labour market as a checkout girl in a large supermarket. Left after approximately 20 weeks and stayed unemployed throughout the remaining period. She survived by supplementing her dole money by moonlighting as a sessional worker in a local youth club.

Christina, a CP trainee, registered with a private employment agency after being disgruntled with the inadequate provision of the two statutory bodies. Prior to registering with this company she had been unemployed for 12 weeks, followed by approximately 17 weeks of sporadic temporary employment covering a wide range of service jobs. Thereafter she went into the YTS for 4 weeks but left after expressing disgust over the quality of training. Remained unemployed for a further 11 to 12 weeks. Returned to youth training and enrolled in the CP scheme.

Elaine, a CP trainee, upon leaving school unemployed for approximately 24 weeks. Thereafter found work through the job centre as a canteen assistant in the general hospital for just over 12 weeks. Was sacked for allegedly pilfering and remained unemployed for a further 20.

Eileen, the fifth Black 17 year old had remained unemployed from the time of leaving school.

Overall the above five examples are indicative of a nationwide pattern of employment effecting the under-19s as a result of the rise in unemployment and the contraction in the number of jobs for this group. Previously, this cycle could, with a few adjustments, be interpreted as part of the normal pattern of youth employment, whereby young people were able to exert a high degree of job change; sampling the market before establishing themselves in a particular career. For these young women no such opportunity existed. They were being forced into unemployment with chequered periods of paid work - they were therefore failing to achieve any permanent foothold in the labour market, regardless of their disappointments over the non-materialisation of their aspirations. The experience of Elaine, a Black CP trainee, illustrates the sense of frustration and resignation which these young women had felt:

Elaine   "When I left school I spent nearly six months out of work
                and that was the hardest thing I've had to do. I did try at
                first but, you know it just got too much. I went every
                where! I went to the Job Centre, to the Careers Office, I
                asked my old teachers; I asked my friends, my social worker
                - just about everybody ...Going on the dole wasn't easy
                either, but at least it gave me some cash. I couldn't really
                go out with my friends and it was tough having to stay a
                home cos mum really came down on me. At first not working
                is a bit of a laugh, but then some of my friends got work,
                and that changed things. I couldn't keep up with them, and
                me and Eileen ended up moving together. We did look but in
                the end not as much ...I was luckier though cos I got a job
                in the hospital canteen, cooking and stuff; but the
                supervisor was a real bitch and she made sure I left." [I
                asked her whether she wanted to work there?] ..."No not
                really but I'd turned down other jobs and the dole officer
                was trying to give me a tough time over my money ...I'd got
                use to it because I knew there wasn't anything out there
                that I wanted to do, I mean I know it sounds fussy like,
                but I didn't want to do any old job, not that it made any
                difference, I wasn't getting any work anyway (laugh).
                Anyway working at the hospital was better then nothing, it
                got me out of the house and made my mum feel happier ...but
                I didn't like it, specially with that woman on my back all
                the time I worked there."
                                                       (Black CP Trainee aged 17)

Elaine's obvious frustration had been matched by a degree of apathy about finding work. As time passed she told me that her search for work diminished and in talking with her, I could detect how depressing a time this had actually been for her. The strain of unemployment has, as in the case of the long term unemployed, been well documented. The work of Sinfield (1980)

amongst others highlights the fact that the social effects of unemployment
increase over time; giving rise to a host of problems associated with
financial, familial and psychological pressures. Young people who at the
start of their search are still fairly optimistic, can find themselves trapped
in a cycle of despair, whereby they come to accept the label of
unemployability. The experience of Christina illustrates the sense of
desperation that accompanied her entrance into the YTS as a second chance
route:

Christina   "I've done so many jobs you know I was fed up ...I could be
out of work for weeks then I'd get a temping job for a week
and there was always problems about the money, sometimes
they'd pay on time, other times I had to keep on going back
to the agency to see if it had come in. I still tried the
Job Centre but nothing good used to come up ...I got fed up
in the end and I went for the YTS, see I'd seen the Careers
Officer and she was saying at least I'd get proper training,
so I thought why not ...The scheme was shit though, I mean
real crap. I was suppose to be doing sales work, but all
this guy wanted was a slave worker. He had me stacking
boxes at the back of the shop, running around, and doing
real heavy work man! ...When I took my break the man acted
like I'd gone for ten hours, and was always going on about
time keeping. In the end I left, at least with the other
places they didn't treat you like shit and anyway I could
make more money ...[I asked her why she had come back to
the YTS?] ..."Well the agency work wasn't coming up and
besides I knew I had to do something. I've always been
good with my hands and I was good at sewing at school, so
when I met up with the woman who had told me about the
scheme, she suggested I try again in another scheme that
was doing fashion. She was the one who told me about
Uncle Sam's and she set it up with Carol, so I joined and
it's not as bad as the other place, at least Carol's trying
to help me look for fashion work which is what I really
want to do."
                                    (Black CP Trainee aged 17)

There is one other important aspect of these two accounts which needs to be
discussed. Both girls had encountered hostile reactions metered out by their
employers, both had attributed this to the fact that they are Black, stating
that White workers had not come in for the same type of harassment. The
question of racial harassment is usually associated with some form of
physical or verbal abuse, directed at those groups defined as outsiders,
foreigners etc. There is however another way of construing racial
harassment,whereby Black people are treated in ways which do not readily fit

in with "official" definitions of either racial discrimination or harassment, but which never the less informs their experiences of employment. This is because harassment can be tacit, yet devastating in its effect. For example Elaine and Christiana had both reported their feelings that they were being picked on; that their employers were placing pressures on them by for instance applying more rigorous supervision; or by the way in which they addressed them or complained about their work. These instances are on the surface applicable to all types of work situation and categories of labour; but for Black people the racial content of oppressive working conditions is the variable which is often the most pronounced. It is not something that can necessarily be proved, as one of the most common responses by people who perpetuate this form of racial harassment is to blame the victim by referring to the old argument about an individual having a "chip on the shoulder". The rhetoric of equal treatment, ie. " we treat all our workers the same". is in practice often the disguise under which racial prejudice is hidden; further adding to an individual's frustration, precisely because it is something which can be readily denied simply by stating that it is in *the victim's* imagination.

Young Black people are from an early age aware of these subtleties but may not have developed the skills with which to challenge this type of abuse. In the context of employment, racial discrimination and harassment often work hand in hand; discrimination at the selection stage may be overcome, ie. they are still selected, but once in the work situation, the mapping out of social relations often entails a racial and sexual element, with power relations being established to the detriment of either category. For example continuing with Christina's account of her past work experience reveals how she perceived these type of divisions:

Christina   "Most of the people I met were ok, but some of them, well
                  (sigh) - I remember one place where I was doing reception
                  work for two weeks, when I'd gone up to the counter and
                  told them who I was the woman had acted funny, like there
                  was some kind of mistake (laugh) ...Yeah of course I *knew*
                  what she was thinking, but I just thought well gal you need
                  the money, but *you know* how these things can get you down,
                  you just have to deal with it."
                                          (Black CP Trainee aged 17)

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From the above it can be seen that the frustration about unemployability did not just arise from being out of work, but also from compromises which were made once a job was found. For these young women, racial prejudice had to be endured; they had to weigh up the pros and cons of their situation and accept racism as a normal part of the work environment. However, they also expressed the view that their lack of qualifications made them more vulnerable to this type of oppression because to quote one young woman "If I was qualified I wouldn't have to take that kind of shit because I could apply for different jobs." Hence there was a general feeling that one way of countering racial harassment and prejudice is to have qualifications and experience which allow them, in their view, to compete on equal terms.

In conclusion the examples given in this chapter point to a myriad of different factors that had affected both attitudes to and experience of the labour market. The distinction drawn between 16 and 17 year old trainees helps us to identify how age and importantly, exposure to the vagaries of the world of work fashions choices over the question of youth training. For 16 year olds the degree of commitment which they have towards employment, is under-scored by the fact of their status as new participants to the jobs market. Interviews conducted with this group of young women revealed a mixed response to their situation, in that depending upon their employment status, they were either expressing disillusionment with their careers or responding to the lack of choice over which direction to take. They often viewed their past situation as relating to poor prospects rather than a question of the limited range open to them. Thus the degree to which they had perceived unemployment as a long term reality was countered by this attitude.

The Choice Of The YTS In The Context Of Employment And Unemployment

Considering the issue of how these young women entered the YTS involves a series of questions about what their perception of the scheme was; how much information they had about its bi-modal structure; who had recommended the scheme; and finally what their principle reason for joining was.

Each of the girls was asked whether they had been aware of the YTS prior to joining the scheme. Most of them had heard about it whilst still at school although on the whole the amount of information they had received was minimal. None of the girls were aware of the precise nature of the YTS, for example, information on the different modes was either very vague or non-existent. They were also, for the most part unaware of the nature of provision in the Borough, although the ITeC popularity had given it a slight edge over the other local schemes. The number of girls on the ITeC programme who had heard about their scheme prior to joining was 7 out of 10 female trainees; amongst CP trainees the equivalent figure was 9 out of 13 trainees. In both cases a higher proportion of young Black women had heard of their schemes prior to joining. Out of the 7 ITeC girls all 5 Black girls knew about the scheme; whilst all the girls on the CP scheme who had answered in the affirmative were Black.

Following on from this the next question to arise was who or where their main source of information on the YTS had come from? Specific information pertaining to their schemes derived largely from two sources: Careers Officers and/or other statutory personnel concerned with the young, ie. school teachers, social workers and youth workers; and secondly, family members and friends. Underlying this is a disparity between the two schemes. In the case of the ITeC girls, 7 obtained information initially from the Careers Service or a teacher. In comparison only 3 out of the 9 CP trainees had obtained information from these sources while the remaining 6 girls had been told about the scheme through friends. In relation to how they had been introduced to their respective schemes, the Careers Service had been a primary source. Upon leaving school, initial contact with the Service involved some discussion of the YTS. For those girls who had established contact with the Service at this time, all rejected the option of going on a youth training course, by preferring to directly enter the workforce. It was only *after* this experience, that the group considered going on a scheme.

It must be remembered that the schemes studied came under the category of Mode B provision; where this was more in keeping with the old YOP scheme. Mode B schemes were geared to the 'least able'. How far young people were aware of the more attractive, employer led Mode A programme is questionable. Only a few of the girls had any concrete understanding of this division; none were aware of the extent of Mode A provision in the Borough. What attitudes they had formed about training on employers' premises was derived from the past controversy that had surrounded the old Youth Opportunities Programme. Images of 'sweat shops' using cheap supplies of youth labour was often the main theme offered by the sample as reason enough to view the new scheme with scepticism. Nevertheless these girls *had* chosen to go on the scheme, and had not knowingly rejected the idea of what constitutes Mode A provision. Where they had gone through the Careers Service, none had been told about Mode A provision, but instead had been directed towards their subsequent schemes. Based on the answers given by the sample it would appear that the Careers Service was acting as a gate-keeper with regards to offering Mode A training. I asked Cathy, a White ITeC trainee, why she had joined the YTS:

Cathy   "I could have joined sooner but I wasn't keen cos I really
               wanted a job. My social worker said that this place [the
               ITeC] would give me a good chance of getting a job as a
               typist, so I applied...[I then asked Cathy whether she had
               been told about the different schemes?] ..."No, not really,
               least I don't think so. All I remember is that she said that
               they would give me more help here, cos she knew I hadn't
               done all that well in school."
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Nina, a Black ITeC trainee aged 16, had been unemployed right through the summer months after leaving school. She told me that in the end anything was better than being unemployed. I asked her what kind of training she had been interested in:

Nina   "Some kind of office work really, where I could do typing and
               maybe learn about computers ...I went to the Careers Office
               and they told me about this place. [I asked Nina whether she
               was aware of any other schemes in the Borough?] ..."No, he [
               the Careers Officer] just told me about this one and said it
               would be the best place for me."
                                                            (Black ITeC Trainee)

The account given by most of the ITeC girls' of how they first came to know about the scheme was similar to that of Cathy and Nina's answers. Although, some trainees like Kim had deliberately wanted a scheme where she could learn about computer programming. Kim had failed to get the grades she needed to go to college:

Kim   "I talked to my careers teacher about what kind of things I could do, she recommended coming to this scheme, rather than me trying to get a job straightaway. [I asked Kim why that was so?] ..."Well, I decided I'd had enough of studying, you know for exams. Really though what I wanted to do was to learn a skill and she said coming on the scheme would give me that, so I applied and got in!"

            (Black ITeC Trainee)

The lack of information about what type of provision is available is compounded by the extensive rumour and gossip concerning unsatisfactory accounts about the YTS. Most of this is found at grass roots level amongst family and friendship networks. For the majority of Black and White girls on the CP scheme, family and friends were the main source of information about the YTS. The description offered by Jackie B, a White 16 year old about how she entered the scheme is typical of many of the trainees' accounts:

Jackie B   "...I did know about the YTS but I thought it was a waste of time, but then one of my mates whose a friend of Merille told me about this place [Uncle Sam's] so I came to just look around and Carol said I could start the next Monday, so I thought why not."

            (White CP Trainee)

As a result of this kind of dissemination of information the young women I interviewed revealed that they had not had a positive opinion of the YTS prior to joining. The single most important factor to emerge was the controversy surrounding the issue of the training allowance. Complaints about the inability of £26 to cover the cost of living, were equally matched by a sense of outrage that young people were being asked to work for next to nothing:

Eileen   "No I don't think it's fair how do they expect you to live on that kind of money! I mean after your parents take a bit what are you left with - nothing!"

            (Black CP Trainee)

I then asked Eileen why she had joined the scheme? Her answer reveals one of the numerous pressures facing the long term unemployed:

Eileen   ..."I'd been unemployed for a year and the dole people were troubling me and giving me a tough time ...really though it was Elaine that persuaded me, she figured at least we would be learning something."

                                                          (Black CP Trainee)

Why then had the sample group gone on the scheme? The evidence cited in this chapter suggests that the unemployed 16 year olds had drifted into it, as a result of their inability to establish themselves in the jobs market; coupled with a sense of bewilderment over what to do next. Leaving school at a time considered to be a holiday, had the effect of off-setting the seriousness of the full impact of being unemployed; but by the end of the summer this could no longer be ignored.

For more than half of those young women who had been successful in finding a job, the question of choice appears to be more in line with traditional patterns of youth employment, whereby young people sample the labour market through the mechanism of job change. In their case 'sampling the market', refers to decisions about future careers and how best to achieve them. It also refers at the present time to the decline in. the number of jobs through which to "sample" the market. It is not the case that they left their jobs in order to take up a place on the YTS, nor is it the case that in seeking new avenues they simply drifted into the scheme. Rather the rationale for taking up a place relates to the importance which they attached to training; that is, training in specific areas of skill. Thus those girls who had found employment realised that they were in jobs they were unahppy with. These young women were no more absolutely clear about how they were going to progress in the labour market than those young women who had remained unemployed.

In contrast, the 17 year olds who had been exposed to a lengthier unemployment spell were more likely to see the YTS as a last resort - a second chance; viewing it as a way of boosting skills with which to gain entrance into permanent employment. In opting for training they were

acknowledging that their general lack of expertise was preventing them from having a clearer picture about what career futures they could look forward to. For the most part, college was not seen as a realistic proposition; rather the YTS with its rhetoric of "training for jobs" appeared to offer the most viable option.

Training for what was seen as the 'least able' takes on a more extrinsic value; for them it is no longer a case of not knowing what to do, but how to achieve these goals in the face of their educational and social status. Unfortunately comparisons with an older White sample of 17 year olds was not possible due to the fact that none of the White girls on the two schemes had reached this age at the time of entry into their schemes. Thus in relation to the issue of whether White girls differed in their attitudes towards training after greater exposure to the labour market is impossible to ascertain. However, common to Black and White young women, regardless of age differences was the view that training was about acquiring specific skills; as well as providing a breathing space in which to decide about career futures.

This is an important point which has implications for the way in which we conceptualise how young people have entered the world of work in the 1980s. In so far as just over half the girls had found work, they were in fact responding to shrunken opportunities, which had reduced the degree of choice open to them. This still holds true despite the fact that this group of young women were not amongst the academically successful. They had few choices with regards to their post-school futures. In reality what they were facing was not so much a transition, but rather a collapse of opportunity, with either intermittent employment or the YTS as the two most viable options. In this context the scheme took on the role of a new, institutionally controlled, transitionary phase that in appearance attempts to give youngsters a grounding in work experience and flexible skills training, but which in reality seeks to socialise the young into accepting uncertainty in the labour market, which is precisely what they are seeking to avoid. It is therefore apparent that in relation to choice, why this group of young

women were opting for youth training is at odds with the logic that is inscribed within the YTS. They were looking to the scheme to either further their aspirations or provide specific skills with which to enter into a given area of work.

How far their actual experience of training meets these criteria, is explored in the context in Chapter 8 and 9 of this thesis. Here issues relating to the nature of the schemes and environment fostered by them will be analysed alongside the assessment of the female trainees about their time spent in the YTS. The aim is to provide an account of not only how these two processes interacted, but also the affect which this had on the attitudes of Black and White trainees towards their training. Chapter 8 focuses on the Information Technology Centre (ITeC) and Chapter 9 concentrates on the Community Projects scheme (CP).

INTRODUCTION

In the discussion to follow certain aspects of the training environment and
content of the ITeC programme experienced by Black and White girls will be
explored. The issues that are raised were those that had a determinant
influence on the training experience of the female trainees on the programme.
These issues also helped shape what the training needs of the young women on
the programme were, as it became obvious that because of the nature of the
scheme, their training was being directed towards those areas deemed to be in
line with the location of women's employment within the labour market. The
central questions posed in this chapter therefore refer to how this process
came about and, from the point of view of the female trainees, whether this
in fact altered the degree to which they were prepared to invest in their
training.

   In attempting to depict what fashioned the experiences of the young women
on the ITeC programme, the most salient factor identified by the research was
the nature of gender relations that patterned the scheme. Within this
scenario, the positioning of female trainees was structured along racial lines.
Black and White girls therefore had different experiences, vis-a-vis the
social relations that were inscribed in the scheme. It will be shown that the
interface of 'race' and gender relations produced a situation whereby young
Black and White women were distinguished by the level and quality of training
on offer to them.

   The chapter takes up these themes under a series of headings, based on the
nature of the training environment and the relationships that informed them.
Evidence of the kind of approach outlined above is necessarily selective. The
main criteria for presenting particular aspects of the girls' training
experience is based on a) that it best illustrates the pattern and quality of
their location on the scheme; and, b) that in terms of the labour market, the

over-riding attraction of the Office Practice training module came to define what were the training needs of both young Black and White female ITeC trainees.

Profile Of The ITeC Programme

The Centre was situated at the back of a residential estate with a large Black population, close to an old industrial site, where new small enterprises were being established. The Centre's premises were relatively spacious, with departments being spread across different floors of a three storey building. The Centre had access to an adjoining local community centre, which also ran a youth club. One of the objectives of the ITeC scheme was to attempt to provide a realistic working environment, in line with an overall Borough programme of generating local employment opportunities. Hence the Centre encouraged the use of its premises as a community resource for local groups, educational establishments, small businesses, and individuals. Thus the close proximity of the local community centre gave the ITeC scheme greater access to community groups in the area and across the Borough. The reputation of the ITeC as an information technology resource centre was well known throughout the Borough, and in some of the surrounding districts. The ITeC's user population was therefore not limited to the Borough, but was drawn from across the West London area.

Funding of the scheme was made up of MSC and Department of Trade and Industry monies, together with a contribution from the Local Authority, through the Urban Aid Programme. The Local Authority also provided the ITeC premises at a minimal rent, as well as giving staff a degree of job security by employing them on permanent contracts. The Centre was administered by a management committee, made up of representatives from the sponsor organisations and key institutions in the local community. The latter included youth and community services and members of the local business community. The committee met once a month to review the Centre's progress and discuss future planning and development. The scheme manager was directly accountable to the committee, but in practice was the key member in

developing the Centre's activities. He was busily involved in promoting the ITeC in the community, and was well known for his work in encouraging business development, especially amongst local people. Because of his expertise and competence in the teaching and promotion of new technology, especially in relation to the wider community, he not only had a considerable degree of autonomy in managing the Centre but also in delegating responsibility for the the day to day running of the scheme to staff members.

Two guiding principles informed the nature of the ITeC scheme activities with regards to youth training. Firstly, the Centre was attempting to set up an environment corresponding to many of the objectives enshrined in the YTS. Secondly, and running concomitant with these objectives, the Centre combined its YTS provision with broader concerns related to the management committee's specific interest in ethnic minority (Black) youth. The reasons for this approach refer to the committee's understanding of the local labour market, the changes taking place in it, and the resulting growing tide of unemployment amongst the Borough's young Black population. Moreover, in targeting Black youth and other young people also labelled as the 'least able', the management committee were keenly aware that racism and other forms of inequality, (especially those accruing to lack of qualifications) severely disadvantage young people in their search for work. The committee was also alerted to the fact that the long term impact of new technologies on the Borough's economic base, was going to adversely affect this group. Hence one of aims behind the ITeC scheme's focus on disadvantaged youth was to redress this 'handicap', by providing a means through which the 'least abled', could gain a measure of technical skills.

The ITeC scheme offered training in electronics, computing, keyboard skills, (including word processing) data manipulation, Prestel, networking, and interestingly Social and Life Skills. By providing training in these areas, it was hoped that the employment expectations of disadvantaged youngsters would be raised. In the Centre's view this could be achieved by boosting the confidence of trainees and by imparting to them a degree of competence,

enabling trainees to compete for jobs in fields associated with servicing micro-processor based equipment; assembly work; using a computing system; using a digital based system; word processing and related skills.

Seven full-time staff made up the ITeC team, with additional part-time workers for specific areas of the training module employed on temporary contracts. Staff were drawn from both the private and public sector, with the former predominating on the micro-electronics side of the training provision. In contrast the two White female members of staff, who respectively taught the Social and Life Skills (SLS) and Office Practice/Word Processing courses, came from teaching backgrounds. With the exception of the electronics instructor, a Black man of West Indian origin, the rest of the staff were White males working in computer programming, computer literacy, maintenance and repair. Part-time workers were also drawn from this group, with no female trainers being employed. Training was offered for one full year, ie. fifty weeks. The Centre's intake was based on a roll on/roll off system, where an attempt was made to recruit batches of trainees, usually between five and ten, at different intervals throughout the training year. This was timed to coincide with the completion of the course by the different starter groups of trainees who had commenced their training at various times in the year. Where a vacancy arose, as long as this did not exceed more than one training place, the scheme did not seek an immediate replacement, but chose to wait until the rest of the starter group had finnished the course. The ITeC scheme did not require any formal qualifications in selecting trainees, instead potential recruits underwent a semi-formal interview, from which the manager and another member of staff (usually the Social and Life Skills tutor) assessed their suitability for the scheme. Emphasis was placed on a recruit's willingness to learn and the degree of interest they showed in New Technology. However, these criteria were flexible, tying in with other considerations relating to the social welfare principles of the scheme.

The ITeC's intake at any given time never exceeded thirty trainees, and the high demand for places ensured that the scheme's occupancy rate was almost

always a 100 per cent. Trainees were recruited from the Borough of residence either through a process of direct entrance or referral by local Careers Officers. The sex ratio (as previously stated) was skewed towards males, with some 20 boys on the programme compared to 10 girls. The racial composition of trainees was also heavily tipped in favour of West Indian youth and there were, for instance, no other ethnic minority group in attendance at the scheme. Thus out of 30 trainees, 19 were of West Indian origin, forming 63 per cent of the Centre's male and female intake.

The presence of girls on the scheme had only been established for one year. Up until the previous year's intake (1983-1984), the ITeC had failed to attract girls and apparently not actively encouraged girls. One reason for this was that the ITeC's main source of recruitment was the Careers Service, who it seems had tended to favour young men in preference to young women. Evidence of the role of the Careers Service in perpetuating existing gender inequalities and sex stereotyping is well established. Researchers working in areas related to the 'transition from school to work', Benett and Carter (1982), and the YTS, Cockburn (1987) demonstrate how the decisions and advice of Careers Officers is heavily inlaid with assumptions about the occupational choice of girls; justified in terms of the intransigence of the sexual division of work. In the context of the ITeC programme, given the deliberate policy of attracting disadvantaged youngsters to the Centre, it would appear that both the ITeC and the local Careers Service, were until recently, defining the 'least able' as referring to young men (predominantly young Black men) in preference to either Black or White young women. The arrival of Penny, the Social and Life Skills (SLS) tutor to the Centre, in the second year of the scheme's operations had signalled an increased awareness of issues about girls' training needs. The scheme manager, at Penny's insistence, extended the office technology facilities, and introduced a unofficial quota for the recruitment of girls, as a way of encouraging them to join the programme - and that is why a large batch of girls (10 in all) had been recruited at the same time of the year, so that they would not feel intimidated by the

male trainees. Thus the appointment of Penny to the scheme played a considerable role in challenging, what was in effect a male dominated environment.

The Structure Of YTS Provision In The ITeC Programme

New starters underwent a four weeks induction period during which time trainees were introduced to the ITeC's training programme. The system devised to deal with new intakes ensured that at this stage new trainees were not yet fully integrated into the programme. This was because the trainers wanted to establish what the different levels of ability were amongst the new starters, as well as give them time in which to familiarize themselves with the running of the scheme. All existing trainees were introduced to new recruits and were encouraged to mix during free periods, such as lunch times, in order to get to know each other. After the induction period, trainees from the new starter-groups attended mixed courses, where 'older' (males as there were no 'older' girls) trainees worked alongside (male and female) new starters. It was felt that this mixing of ability, in terms of familiarity with the programme, enabled trainees to learn from each other.

Staff were expected to make continual assessments of a trainee's progress in their particular module, although the aim was that after an initial period, they would assume a more supervisory role, with less emphasis being paid to teaching as proscribed in more 'educational' settings. In this way trainees were encouraged eventually to work at their own pace, and where necessary were given individual coaching. Trainees after a period of roughly three months were required to undertake a series of mini-projects in the different modules, but by the end of a six month period were allowed to specialise in their chosen area of interest. Each trainee received personal counselling from the SLS tutor, who also doubled as the post-YTS adviser, aiding trainees in their search for work on completion of the course.

Other features of YTS provision included: off-the-job training, commencing approximately three months after a trainee began their training. This took the form of a weekly attendance at a local College of Further Education,

equivalent to thirteen weeks over the full period of training. The scheme did not offer an internally validated vocational qualification, although those trainees who had shown an aptitude towards a given module, were encouraged to enrol on such courses at the local college. However, for the majority of trainees not pursuing vocational qualifications, and who were dissatisfied with the basic (and in their terms) infantile nature of college courses (as desribed by them during the general forum sessions), the Centre was able to give in-house off-the-job training, conducted by the SLS tutor. Work placements were also given to trainees for a period of up to 15 weeks. This was started around the fifth month of the new starter's training schedule. There was a certain degree of flexibility with regards to work placements because, where a trainee was liked and offered extra time with an employer this was accepted by the scheme. The scheme manager and the SLS tutor tried to place trainees across the Borough. Through a network of established contacts with local firms, the scheme manager was able to give trainees reasonable access to employers, but these tended to be on small premises in the world of high pressure technologies. Training on the SLS course was relatively eclectic. Penny, the SLS tutor, while fulfilling some of the more basic aspects of social education, (which included some literacy and numeracy teaching; job application and interview techniques) attempted to engage trainees in a series of discussions and debates on a number of issues. For example Penny invited guest speakers from local community groups, including other women trainers working on a TOPs course for women in non-traditional skills. She also had speakers on sex education and women's reproductive rights; as well as speakers on career development and further education.

The Nature Of Trainee And Staff Relations At The Centre

In general relations between staff and trainees on the ITeC programme were at one level quite friendly, but at the same time exhibited contradictions about the precise status of young people participating in the YTS. All the Centre's trainers were known on a first name basis, and addressed trainees in a similar fashion. Trainees were encouraged to air their views in a weekly

forum between them and the staff. While this was conducive to establishing a kind of work-type relation, it was nevertheless the case that staff members had control over the training environment and trainees. This was because they, like teachers were in a position to discipline trainees, especially over issues associated with attendance, punctuality and general behaviour. This took the form of invoking MSC sanctions on the training allowance, where trainees could be docked for non-attendance, time-keeping etc. In fact the tensions which this practice gave rise to clearly demonstrated the ambiguity of a trainee's position, vis-a-vis the pattern of State intervention in the youth labour market.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the way in which staff and trainees described the trainee allowance. To staff it was simply that, an allowance, similar to a college maintenance grant. In this sense the allowance marked the dependency of young people, removed as they are from the labour market, yet clearly standing outside of schooling, whereas to trainees the allowance was a wage. When talking or arguing with staff about being penalised for some misdemeanour, I observed that both male and female trainees referred to the allowance as "my wages". Having a wage as opposed to an allowance clearly placed the trainees outside of either a student or unemployed status. The "wage" to them, marked the transition to labour market, albeit via the YTS, but one which provided them with an adult status. It was the struggle over identity, that is, trainees' objection to being treated as juveniles and their attempt to gain reciprocal consideration as adults from trainers, that was for the most part the dominant issue underscoring their relations with staff.

There were other areas in which this struggle over identity was evident. For instance, the question of work placements and the position which trainees held on their respective 'jobs', proved another source of conflict between staff and trainees. Discontent with placements focussed on the nature of their work experience. In the forum sessions trainees often complained about the quality of their work placement, and what was expected of them. Generally,

issues about what tasks they were being made to perform, where they were located in the firm and how they were treated by permanent staff, surfaced on more than one occasion. Boys complaints centred on their belief that they were being exploited; while girls tended to bemoan the fact that they were expected to play office junior, and were not really being integrated into the organisation or given the chance to expand their skills outside of clerical based activities.

My observations of the young people at the Centre, as well as my interviews with female trainees, did not suggest to me that they were expecting to be treated with kid gloves, but rather that they took their participation in the labour market seriously. For example, I could always tell when a trainee had been on a work experience placement because when they returned to the scheme, at the end of the working day or week, they were usually more smartly dressed than when they were spending all their time at the Centre. Going out into the 'real' world and experiencing work in a 'real' setting, served to sharpen the confusion surrounding the status of being a *trainee* at the Centre. Returning to the scheme, trainees had to once again assume a scheme-centred identity, where the attitude of staff remained one of treating them like students, while simultaneously not giving them the same level of attention as would be expected of a classroom setting. On the other hand my respondents' attitudes towards work placements were couched in terms of their labour market status as youth labour, rather than as trainees. In essence this refers to a contradiction in terms which the YTS trainee found themselves in. Their expectation about training, ie. that they would be taught valuable skills, which took place in the scheme as well as the in the 'world of work', stood in contrast to their need to be treated *as workers* - as adults having the same rights as other workers, which clearly they did not.

The other area of Staff and trainee conflict was enshrined in the gender relations operating in the scheme. How this was manifested in terms of training experience will be examined in detail in the interview material which follows shortly.

Pattern Of Gender Relations At The ITeC - A Few Preliminary Observations

A few observations will be made here however in order to set out the level at which gender relations were pitched on the scheme. My first impressions of the scheme indicated that Penny's relationship with male members of staff were fraught with tension. I discovered that Penny's attempts to expand the content of her training module to take in issues of sexism and racism had not been greeted with enthusiasm by her male colleagues. This was surprising given the social objectives of the Centre and its focus on disadvantaged youth. What this pointed to was the discrepancy between the management committee's social welfare objectives and how staff interpreted them in the context of the YTS. In establishing a friendly relationship with Penny, I was aware that male members of staff viewed some of her activities as an attempt to move the "feminist brigade" in, thereby challenging their domination of the scheme. By implication my research was viewed in a similar fashion, eventually resulting in the tacit withdrawal of male trainers co-operation with my project. Initially I was surprised at their reactions, given their unanimous approval of my research when I first made contact with the Centre. However as I became more familiar with the Centre, I realised that this agreement was based more on the 'fear' of being labelled sexist (and racist), rather than as a result of a belief that the training of girls was an important issue. As time progressed my work at the scheme became more constrained and limited to those areas in which women predominated, namely Office Practice/Word Processing and the Social and Life Skills classes.

Another aspect of this situation was that such tensions between Penny and the rest of the male staff reverberated throughout the scheme, affecting male and female trainees alike. Penny's affiliation with girls at the Centre type-cast her SLS lessons as referring to 'women's issues' - a soft option which had very little to do with training. As a result the ITeC boys tended to give her a harder time, while the ITeC girls were defensive about her and the classes she taught. For instance the type of guest speakers Penny invited to the Centre were greeted with outright derision by some of the ITeC boys, who

in general did not always find the topics socially relevant to them. In contrast female trainees seemed to enjoy them, especially when it was a girls' only session. Precisely because Penny's role in the scheme was seen by male staff as secondary to the main business of giving disadvantaged (male) youth more of a head start, her apparent emphasis on girls was similarly tainted, ie. as being a peripheral concern. The ITeC girls' awareness of this, together with their position in what was seen as male areas of training, created tensions between them and male trainees. Such tensions were manifest in a number of ways, for example during 'free' periods girls and boys did not, on the whole, inter-mix; this was especially true for the Black girls on the programme. A further example of this is the fact that the girls responses to issues related to sexism were influenced by the presence or absence of boys, and this was particularly true for the White female trainees.

The process at work here was one where gender subordination was mediated through racial divisions. Black girls on the ITeC programme were on the whole more vociferous than their White female counterparts. There was a certain amount of hostility towards the boys, from the Black girls, for reasons which will become apparent later. However, one important factor which can be alluded to here, was the higher regard which the Black ITeC girls were held in, especially by the two female trainers. To some extent the Black girls took this on board by adopting a superior stance vis-a-vis other trainees. This served to heighten tensions between Black and White female trainees, which had consequences for the nature of their interaction on the scheme. For example, the White ITeC girls tried to form alliances with the boys on the scheme in ways which excluded the Black girls. The specifics of this and the impact which this had on trainee interaction is discussed in the context of the Electronics and Office Practice classes.

I have chosen to examine a number of pertinent questions about the experiences of girls in these two sections of the ITeC programme, because they more clearly represent the sharp divide between male and female training domains. Moreover the specificity of gender relations in the positioning of

Black and White girls within the training environment was more crystallized in these two training modules than for instance in the Computer Programming section. Here the subsequent rapid loss of interest by all the ITeC girls as a result of the course being rejected by them on the grounds that it was too hard had repercussions for the nature of their training experience in this field. Prior to this discussion I want to draw attention to the kind of expectations the ITeC girls, as new trainees had about the scheme. One reason for this is that right from the start differences between Black and White trainees affected the nature of their position on the scheme in terms of ability and commitment. The interview material thus begins with the ITeC girls' impressions of the scheme during the first three months of their training. Thereafter their experience of the Electronics course is described, followed by the nature of their training in Office Practice.

Some Observations Of The First Three Months Of Girls On The ITeC Programme. New trainees began the ITeC scheme with a four week induction period, during which time they were introduced to the various training modules on offer at the Centre. As previously stated, new starters (as they were known) were kept separate from other trainees until the end of this period and thereafter fully integrated into the programme. I asked the ITeC girls what they thought about the scheme at this stage as well as what they expected to get out of it. During our conversation Sonia explained to me what she thought was expected of her:

Sonia   "This place is a bit like school, except it's up to you how much work you do, and if you want to push yourself or not. I mean, they do encourage you, but it's up to you to learn for yourself, cos if you don't someone else is waiting to take your place. [I asked Sonia what she meant by this?]. I mean there are so many kids wanting to get into a place like this, where you can learn about computers, electronics and stuff like that."

                                          (Black ITeC Trainee)

Sonia's belief that it was up to the individual to make the effort was shared by many of the Black and White girls at this stage of their training. There was a general view that making an effort would pay off in the end. Kim, a

Black trainee, summed up this belief when she told me that:

Kim   "The scheme has a good reputation and I heard a lot of the
        trainees get jobs afterwards. I think that if I work hard I
        will get something out of it and yeah I do think it will
        make a difference in getting a job."
                         (Black ITeC Trainee)

While Vanessa thought that she was lucky to be on a scheme like the ITeC

compared to other types of YTS provision:

Vanessa   "If I was on a different scheme I don't think they [the
        trainers] would bother so much, but at least here they try
        and teach yah something - besides, least I getta chance to
        do something useful like - better than doing catering or
        something stupid like that!"
                       (White ITeC Trainee)

The promise of training in attractive areas of work, and of gaining skills

outside of their previous experience motivated most of the ITeC girls at this

stage. As Kim's observation implies, the high expectation about the ITeC was

based on its good reputation in the Borough.

 However, the exact nature of the ITeC girls' belief that the scheme was

giving them access to quality training is compounded by two factors. The

first relates to the degree of exposure to New Technology especially

computers, which each girl had prior to joining the scheme. And following on

from this, the second factor refers to their understanding of what New

Technology at the Centre entailed. The testimony of Rose, a White trainee,

interviewed in the second month of her training illustrates how decisions

about training even at this early stage involved the above two considerations.

Rose complained about the Computer Programming course and its lack of

relevance for her:

Rose   "I mean if I wanted to study I'd have stayed at school,
        wouldn't I! ...the computers is alright but I don't think I
        wanna do that anymore seeing as its hard [I asked Rose what
        was hard about the class] ...well you've gotta learn the
        language [computer] and stuff and I just can't get into it
        ...*you should know*, you've gotta be smart to do it (laugh)
        ...anyway I think they [the trainers] should make it more
        interesting for us lot, I mean all we're doing is just going
        through the same boring stuff. [I then asked Rose whether
        she had used computers before coming on the scheme?]. No I
        just thought ah, I dunno [sic] what I thought really, it just
        seemed a good idea, learning things like that."
                       (White ITeC Trainee)

Taken together the above remarks of the ITeC girls at this stage raises important questions about the context in which the desire for training in New Technology should be seen. Firstly, Rose's disenchantment with the Computer Programming course highlights one of the problems which all the girls faced, namely a lack of familiarity in defining and handling New Technology. All the girls arriving at the ITeC had been keen to take up the various training courses on offer. However, outside of a basic understanding that New Technology involved computers and the like, none of the girls could clarify what this meant in practice. Hence their expectations about what this field could offer, vis-a-vis the labour market, was based on a commonly held belief that New Technology led to better employment opportunities. Framed in these terms what made the scheme attractive to the girls at this stage was the promise of gaining technical know-how.

Secondly the emphasis placed on individual effort by both Sonia and Kim, demonstrated that it was _effort_ translated as commitment which was needed, in order to offset their ignorance about the specifics of New Technology. This led these two girls to exhibit a degree of commitment to their training courses, regardless of whether they were good at them or not. In doing so they still retained the belief that such New Technology skills would provide them with a _career_, as opposed to mundane jobs which hitherto they had been faced with. Hence individual effort was positively viewed by Sonia and Kim as a key factor in determining what they got out of training. However the competitive spirit which this gave rise to, (since one individual's _effort_ was pitted against another, as well as recognised by others in the class) was not greeted with enthusiasm by all the girls. In particular the White ITeC girls, the majority of whom had shown no commitment to getting on while at school, found this aspect of the scheme offputting:

Cathy   "When I first got here I was a bit nervous, see I'm not good
               at learning things, I find the computering and programming
               hard. I don't mind the typing, I like that, but the other
               things I'm just not good at, and I kinda feel stupid asking
               them to explain things all the time ...I do think it's a
               good scheme, but you need to be clever to get on here."
                                                       (White ITeC Trainee)

The idea that a trainee needed to be "clever" to get on was just one aspect of the White ITeC girls' expressions of concern about how well they could expect to do on the course. Isabel, another White girl, was concerned about whether she would be able to keep up with the other girls. She told me that even by the end of her second week on the scheme, she felt that she was already falling behind them. Isabel's account of her feelings demonstrates some of the pressure which the ITeC girls were under. I spoke to Isabel sometime during the first three months of her training:

Isabel   "Between you and me it's [her training] not going too well. I
                just can't get into it, you know, half the time I'm not even
                listening to them [the trainers] when they're going on about
                some stupid machine. [I asked Isabel to tell me what kind
                of things were bothering her]. Well, they knew that some
                of us weren't all that good, you know at school, but they
                just carry on like we're the same with [sic] [standard] the
                other girls, and you don't wanna be shown up, so I just
                make out like I know what I'm doing (laugh)"
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Isabel was particularly concerned that she was not "shown up" in front of the other trainees. However, the question remains about *which trainees?* By the time of my first interviews in the Centre, the ITeC girls had already established friendship groups. These were not simply based upon personal likes and dislikes, but also upon status differentials between female trainees, where a racial dimension had surfaced. Those girls (mainly Black trainees) seen as having potential, which was exhibited by their highly visible commitment to the course and those trainees, (mainly the White girls) who were labelled by staff and other trainees as uncommitted, with little chance of success. The effect of this categorisation is illustrated in the comments made by Rose about certain aspects of her training. In particular she complained about the inflexibility of the Centre's insistence on trainees attending all the courses:

Rose   "I like the Word Processing and I wish I could just stick to
               that, but they [the staff] said we've gotta attend the other
               classes, which I think is really stupid ..."

Rose also expressed a feeling of resentment about the way in which the staff treated her. However she referenced her complaint to what she saw as the

more favourable treatment which other girls were receiving:

Rose   "Between you and me I think they [the staff] think we lot
                [the White ITeC girls] are stupid you know? I mean in the
                class they don't take us seriously, while the other lot [the
                Black ITeC girls], are always sucking up to 'em, like they're
                are just quicker [at learning] than us ...it just makes them
                [the Black ITeC girls] think they're better than us and the
                trainers just go along with it... "

                                                        (White ITeC Trainee)

In sum, Rose's belief that the Black ITeC girls were being viewed as 'better'

than their White counterparts by staff, reflects a growing divide building up

between the two groups of girls. This is an important feature of how Black

and White girls understood their position on the scheme. Despite the fact

that the previous educational commitment of the trainees was an important

factor acknowledged by all the girls; the White girls nevertheless felt that

it was how their capabilities (as opposed to expertise/competence) was being

judged by staff, which placed them in a subordinate position in relation to

the Black female trainees. Feelings of less favourable treatment was

translated by the majority of the White ITeC girls as based on the inherent

preferential treatment metered out to Black trainees, as a result of the

scheme's obvious bias towards West Indian youth. The reasons for this are

complex, but I would argue that 'race' was not the main issue. Rather what

was assuming greater relevance was the fact that because training in New

Technology was seen as relevant to boys rather than girls, the overall

process of gender subordination operating in the scheme was being expressed

through other divisions, one of which was 'race'.

Electronics - "Maybe Interesting - But No Thanks"

The Electronics department was the dingiest of all the rooms in the building.

It was a relatively small room dominated by a large work bench, in the middle

of which were numerous pieces of electronics repair equipment. Trainees were

introduced to the topic through a series of practical tasks, in which they

were guided through the basic terminology and principles of electronics.

Trainees were taught to design circuits, as well as repair basic electronic

equipment, including microcomputers. Ken the trainer running this department was a qualified electrician, and apart from teaching he was also involved in a small business, specialising in repair work. This interest led to an emphasis on repair and maintenance training, away from other aspects of electronics, such as design and application. Trainees were shown how to mend televisions, domestic appliances, radios and speakers, as well as how to set up a hi-fi system. The obvious attractions for boys in the examples used to demonstrate electrical maintenance and repair, meant that this class was the most popular amongst the young men; whilst girls tended to find this work boring. How did the ITeC girls participate in the classes? Two graphic accounts from Isabel and Vanessa both reveal the boredom and sense of frustration which typified the ITeC girls' experience of training in electronics:

Isabel   "All you do is sit there fiddling around with a screw driver
                and trying to work out which wire goes where. I just think
                it's boring and I don't see why we have to do it - Anyway
                in the group I'm in we usually end up chatting."
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Vanessa's account also points to the fact that the boys in the class were relatively advanced compared to the girls on the course:

Vanessa   "Electronics is ok I guess, but it is really boring. All you
                do is put together these circuits and Ken just sits there
                not saying much. Most of the boys in the class are ahead
                of us anyway, and that kinda makes you feel stupid, cos
                when you ask a question they already know the answer and
                just laugh at you."
                                                            (White ITeC Trainee)

Samm's account of her feelings about training in electronic highlights the fact that initially the chance of doing something completely different had wetted her appetite for the course. But in the end she too found the course boring and irrelevant. Her assessment of the course was quite damming:

Samm   "I started off really interested in it, I thought yeah,
                I'll be able to fix things and who knows maybe take it up
                - now I think it's just a waste of time, I mean to say
                who'se interested in circuits and how to use a voltmeter
                or something. I always thought electronics might be kind
                of exciting, but it's dead boring and I can't understand
                why they make us do it."
                                                            (Black ITeC Trainee)

To begin with most of the ITeC girls had been curious about what electronics entailed and were willing to give it a try. However, the entrenchment of boys in the department, coupled with the lack of encouragement from Ken the male tutor, had a negative outcome on how female trainees viewed electronics. Ken's lack of leadership and inability to motivate the girls only sharpened existing divisions between the sexes. Such tensions fuelled the ITeC girls' rejection of the course, turning it into a question of interpersonal relations between the young men and women, rather than one of training per se:

Nina   "I don't think much about it [the class] ...Ken is just an
              idiot, when you ask him something, he acts like he's a
              doondus [sic] [thickhead] or something, like he can't speak!
              Just because most of the boys here like it and they get on
              with him, he lets them take liberties with us lot [the
              girls], so most of the time we just keep quiet, cos Ken
              ain't gonna do anything about it anyway."
                                                      (Black ITeC Trainee)

I asked Nina to explain the ways in which she felt the boys were "taking liberties" with the girls on the course. Her description clearly illustrates the point that electronics was a male domain, where girls were unwelcomed and looked down upon:

Nina   "Well they do things like talk about you in secret, even
              though you're sitting right in front of them! ...when you try
              and ask Ken something, they start laughing, like it's a real
              joke or something. Oh yeah, they actually hide your things,
              and then you waste time arguing with them to give it back
              and all Ken does is just sit there saying stop it like
              they're [the boys] gonna listen to him! ...I don't know, they
              just act stupid, and as for Ken I think he thinks it's
              funny."
                                                      (Black ITeC Trainee)

From the tone of the statements made by the ITeC girls, it is clear that the overall condemnation of Ken centred around his inability or unwillingness to make his classes more relevant for them. He was seen as negating their self confidence by ignoring them and making them feel that they did not have the ability, skill or aptitude to learn electronics. In contrast Ken's explanation for why the girls were not interested in his classes, centred around a belief that it was because it was "really a boy's topic", and that realistically speaking the girls would not be able to get jobs in the field.

Ken went on to explain that:

Ken   "The girls start off real keen but soon lose interest. I
                mean alot of electronics involves routine work which is
                boring, and you need to be able to concentrate ...at least
                the boys can link it to their outside interests, but the
                girls - well, there is nothing which they can relate it to,
                is there? I personally feel it would be more useful if the
                girls stuck to things that interested them, rather than be
                forced in to doing a subject like this."
                                              (The ITeC Electronics Tutor)

Ken's acceptance of the division of labour into male and female areas of work,

masked an underlying resentment that catering for the girls, whom he saw as a

disruptive element, undermined the training of boys in his classes:

Ken   "All the girls want to do is just muck around. I mean you've
                seen it for yourself. They don't pay attention and start
                playing me up by joking all the time, or I don't know ah,
                starting up conversations with the boys, which wastes time.
                And because some of them [boys and girls] don't get on, it
                makes it difficult in the class when I'm trying to teach all
                of them something. I mean the older boys don't help out
                like they're suppose to - You know how it is, I might say
                to Owen, help Sonia out, but he refuses. Then again some
                one like Rose keeps on interrupting them [the boys] in their
                work ...I have talked to the others [staff] about teaching
                the girls separately, but *some* of them don't agree."
                                              (The ITeC Electronics Tutor)

However, the ITeC girls felt that Ken's obvious bias towards male trainees was

unfair, and belittled the quality of their training experience. It was Ken

rather than the ITeC girls who was not making the effort to provide a more

conducive training environment. Rose, who was described by Ken as disruptive

makes this point:

Rose   "Yeah he could make it better ...I'm not sure how. Right now
                he [Ken] just lets us lot [her girl friends] muck around and
                he's doesn't care if we don't do any work ...He gives more
                time to the boys and I don't think that's fair, cos we would
                do it [apply themselves to the course] if he treated us
                right. [I asked Rose what she meant by that?]. You know paid
                attention to us and didn't act like he was scared or
                something. I mean don't get me wrong, he's nice, but he
                doesn't know how to talk to us [girls]."
                                              (White ITeC Trainee)

From the discussions which I had with the ITeC girls about the Electronics

course, one feature which stood out was their disappointment that the course

had not lived up to their expectations. The response of one trainee

articulated this in terms of how she felt let down by the Centre:

Samm	"When I joined the scheme, they mentioned all sorts of things we would be doing, and made it sound like we'd come out fully qualified or something. I was keen you know, especially cos I thought I'd be learning different things, which I hadn't even heard of! ...Electronics has been a real waste of time, you don't do nothing, and I feel like I've been conned or something. I'd like to do it better you know, cos I don't think I'll have a chance to do that kind of thing again; but the way Ken carries on, I just can't see the point of me taking it seriously, I mean I know I'm not learning anything and that's what I wanted to do."
	(Black ITeC Trainee)

The sentiments expressed by Samm highlight the frustration followed by a

sense of resignation that the ITeC girls had about the course.

The girl's lack of confidence was compounded by the fact that they had no

positive female role models to inspire them. For example it struck me that

one of the reasons why electronics was seen as boring was precisely because

it was deemed to be 'boys work'. There was nothing glamorous about doing

electrical repairs; despite the novelty of girls demonstrating their ability to

tackle this male preserve. As a result electronics came way down on their

list of priorities, with regards to what they wanted to get out of training.

This point was illustrated by Shirley, a White female trainee, who noted the

insurmountable difficulties which girls faced in entering this field of work.

Shirley also confessed that even if she had been successful, pressures from

female peers, would be another disadvantage, which she would not be able to

cope with:

Shirley	"I can't see how I'm gonna use it [electronics], you know? I mean I'm not interested in it, and anyway I think it's the kind of thing boys get into ...I mean *how many women electricians do you know?* Exactly, none! [I asked Shirley whether she thought girls should try to get into electronics work?] ...Yes, I mean if someone wants to get into it that's ok, but I personally think it gonna be hard because look at what's happening here, I mean they [the boys] don't accept you, so I can't see someone like me getting a job in something like that; besides I think my mates would laugh at me."
	(White ITeC Trainee)

Shirley's rationalisation of the pressures which girls faced was put more

bluntly by Cathy, whose statement reveals the unspoken rule that girls should

not cross the bounds of their ascribed 'feminine' role:

Cathy   "No it's [electronics] not like Office Practice - I think that
                 it's more for boys ...I just think it's a bit of a laugh
                 really, I mean we lot don't take it serious or nothing, cos
                 you know, it's like if I told some of my mates I wanted to
                 be a plumber they'd just take the piss wouldn't they?"
                                                          (White ITeC Trainee)

In total, even if they had carefully considered going into the electronics

field, the structure of the course was clearly designed with boys in mind.

Moreover, electronics on the ITeC course, was associated with dexterity in

manual work, in ways in which the skills involved in clerical/secretarial work

was not. For example, the emphasis on maintenance and repair was clearly

measuring the girls dexterity according to male definitions of skill. This

was presented by the course tutor as a question of aptitude, where female

trainees were considered less suited to learning this type of skill.

What job prospects could female trainees expect to achieve from

specialising in this area of work? In answering this question it is important

to gauge where electronics and electrical repair fitted into their perception

of the job market. An examination of the content of the course shows that

the level of training on offer corresponded to a limited type of individual

apprenticeship, where a higher level of qualifications is not a necessary pre-

requisite. Hence the potential kinds of jobs which trainees who took up

electronics could expect, still fell within the remit of working class male

jobs. Despite their rejection of the course I still asked the girls what kind

of jobs they felt they could do in electronics. The images which they came

up with were those based on their idea of what it was that boys did, ie.

working in a garage or small repair shop. They could not give me examples of

jobs where women worked in electronics.

Sonia's reply to this question is interesting, as it demonstrates how the

girls' lack of knowledge about what constitutes technical skills, underscored

assumptions about what type of jobs come under its remit:

Sonia   "Oh I don't know, I just think of it as working in a repair
                 shop or something like that. I mean when I first got here
                 they did talk about working as a technician but to tell you
                 the truth I'm not sure what that means."
                                                          (Black ITeC Trainee)

Kim's answer to my question clearly revealed the gender bias of jobs associated with electronics. Her understanding of the type of jobs on offer in this area, like all the ITeC girls, was limited to a working class-cultural field of knowledge, based in Kim's case on direct experience of her family's pattern of employment:

Kim   "That's my point, what use is it? I mean most of the jobs are for boys anyway, like ah – oh I don't know – like doing wiring and stuff like that. Maybe repairing phones, like my brother does at British Telecom ...I mean when we first got here they talked about getting jobs as technicians, but I don't know what that is, I mean it's just a big word for what my brother does!"

(Black ITeC Trainee)

Such images are compounded by the lack of information about what kind of job opportunities are available to women. Without such information, the girls were unable to make a realistic assessment about how far it was worth making an investment in this aspect of their training. What information exists suggests that most of these jobs are located within the manufacturing industries; where depending upon training and experience, workers are found within different skill levels of manual work. Generally the employment position of women within the various job categories in this area of work is either one of assembly type work, (producing electrical components etc) or within non-manual clerical work. Very rarely do women obtain positions within the skilled technician grades, that in all probability requires extra forms of in-house training or further education. Even within assembly work, very few opportunities exist for young women, as witnessed by the small proportion of school leavers employed in this industry. Data from the 1981 Labour Force Survey, reveal that in relation to Manufacturing in Engineering (this includes the Electrical and Electronics Industries), the number of 16 year olds working in this sector amounts to 5 per cent; in terms of sexual divisions, teenage men and women, represent, 7 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (Ashton and Maguire. 1986). Furthermore, for factory or assembly type work as well as within the technician grades, employers tend to favour older or married women

in preference to school leavers. Transformations in the organisation of production has led to an emphasis on shift work, adversely affecting school leavers who tend to look towards traditional hours of employment, ie. nine to five. Employers under these circumstances are more likely to demand what is seen as a more flexible, yet reliable supply of cheap labour.

Outside of manufacturing, opportunities for young women are limited. For example, garage work (which includes electrical engineering skills), tends to operate an apprenticeship system, geared towards young male school leavers. For the girls on the ITeC programme, the chances of gaining access to this type of work were practically non-existent. Young women face a wall of prejudice and discrimination, where, for instance garage work is exclusively identified as men's work. Without further training and qualifications in a specialist field within electronics, the only real option for the female trainees, was to use their new found knowledge as a way of boosting their employability skills in the electrical goods end of the retail sector. An employer might view this as a positive asset in their selection of staff.

However, it should be remembered that in terms of occupational choice, this sample of young women were on the whole looking towards the clerical sector. It is against this background that the girls rejected electronics as a viable option. In sum, they chose to see it as "just something I have to do", precisely because they could not relate it to their own understanding of the world of work. Electronics and perhaps more importantly electrical repair and maintenance was firmly located within male employment; and this was accepted by both trainees and staff alike. The Social and Life Skills trainer had attempted to challenge this, but to little avail, partly because such conceptions were so entrenched, and, because for the largely unqualified ITeC girls, there was no real alternative to the type of jobs described above. In complete contrast Office Practice was in reality the main focus of the girls interest in the ITeC programme, and, as we shall see was the one area which held different outcomes for Black and White female trainees.

The Experiences And Position Of Black And White Girls

On The ITeC Programme

Typing, secretarial work and clerical jobs in London represents a primary source of employment for young women. GLC estimates based on the 1981 census data reveal that for London, the highest concentration of women workers is in typing/clerical work, with 93 per cent of secretarial positions occupied by women (GLC. 1986). The high visibility of women in this field, coupled with its image as a glamorous and exciting occupation, goes some way in explaining why large numbers of young women are attracted to working in offices. Moreover given the nature of the school curriculum, which invariably offers working class girls the chance of learning typing skills, together with the relative buoyancy of the clerical jobs market, many young women opt for work in this area, precisely because it is the one area where jobs are still available. Having said this, it should be noted that office work covers a wide range of jobs that correspond to different positions within the office hierarchy and which present different occupational outcomes for young women (Gibb. 1983).

Young women in office jobs perform duties that range from typing, making tea, running errands, telephone and reception work, photocopying, filing etc. (Griffin. 1985b). In addition there exists a division between the role and function performed by secretaries and typists within the organisation of the office. Generally the work of a secretary involves a relative variety of tasks, requiring both technical competence, such as typing, shorthand and filing, and social skills, ie, performing duties primarily aimed at 'servicing' the boss, like dealing with enquiries, setting up appointments etc. A secretary has a degree of autonomy over her job, since the work often calls for decision making, judgement and initiative. In contrast the work of a typist is concerned almost entirely with the reproduction of text, either from a manuscript or an audio machine. The tasks undertaken by a typist are thus routine and often standardised, with little or no discretion open to them

(Webster. 1986). Within the occupational hierarchy of the office, secretaries are held in higher esteem than their typing pool sisters, who in fact often aspire to this 'higher' level. Hence whilst clerical work may be defined as the process of acquiring, storing, transforming, presenting and sending information, the social relationships that underpin who does what offers different working conditions for men and women, as well as within the female clerical workforce.

The advent of new technologies is transforming the nature of office work. There is some disagreement about the extent of this, with the literature being divided between those works offering a futuristic account of the impact which new technology will have on women's control over their productivity and skill levels (Morgall. 1986); and those studies, which in the main suggest that this process is neither clear cut or all embracing (Arnold et al. 1982). What is undeniable however is the fact that more women are having to come to grips with office automation. This is to some extent transforming the nature of work, and in the process creating new labour hierarchies formulated around a) operators of the new machinery and their location within the organisation; and b) administrative and clerical workers, with the latter witnessing a loss of functions to the new machinery (West. 1982).

It is against this background that the office work aspirations of the ITeC girls must be framed. They were not necessarily aware of such divisions, but rather took their lead from what Gibb (1983) describes as media representations of office/secretarial work as "a glamorous sphere of employment, rubbing shoulders with famous, important and authoritative men who are at the power-base of commerce, industry, government or leisure industries" (p.183). In addition the ITeC offered Black and White girls a chance to gain familiarity with new office technologies, primarily the word processor. The demand for skills in word processing represents another social division within female clerical employment, whereby the word processor is seen as increasing competency, giving the operator an air of new found efficiency as a result of *her* ability to acquire these skills. All the girls on the

programme felt that acquiring these skills would give them an edge over other young women who were not learning to use the word processor. However, as we shall later see, not all the girls were in fact confident about their ability to master this machine, nor were they, as a result of their assessment about their ability, looking towards the same occupational niches within clerical work.

First Few Months In Office Training - Induction And Settling Down

The ITeC Office Practice course consisted of training in basic clerical skills and office procedures. The aim was to provide trainees with an adequate understanding of how to store and retrieve information using both technical and manual methods. Trainees were also being equipped with skills in personnel techniques, such as answering the phone, and, dealing with enquiries. It was envisaged that trainees would leave the scheme endowed with touch typing skills and a general familiarity with word processing procedures which they could apply to different software packages. The facilities available in the section included a networked Mackintosh system with seven terminals, used primarily for word processing; supplemented by a collection of electric typewriters. Other office machinery on hand included access to the Centre's photocopying facilities, a paper shredder and audio equipment in the form of tape recorders and transcribers. Hazel was the only trainer in this section, whose speciality was in word processing. Instruction in basic office procedure was divided between Hazel and Penny, the Social and Life Skills (SLS) trainer, who had some previous experience in this field.

During the induction period all new trainees were introduced to the scheme's office training equipment, and were taught to familiarise themselves on the keyboard. They were also introduced to the rudiments of storing techniques, ie. filing, and were each given a space within the filing system for their own use. At this stage trainees were instructed in the fundamentals of word processing, in particular they learnt how the machine worked and the function which each component undertook. (For the benefit of the reader, a Word Processor [WP] is a machine similar to but more advanced

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than a typewriter. A machine consists of: - a microprocessing-based logic system, ie. a computer; a storage facility, usually floppy discs; a keyboard similar to a typewriter but which includes command keys for different logistic functions; a visual display unit [VDU], on which text being typed appears and a printer). Before working on the word processing software package, namely Word Star, trainees were taught some of the basic command functions. Thereafter, training was divided between building up touch typing skills, learning office procedure and how to use the various machines in the department.

None of the female trainees had used a word processor prior to joining the scheme. Most of the girls had however undertaken office practice, namely typing lessons at school; with some of them going on to sit RSA exams in the subject. Among the ITeC female trainees, all the Black girls had experience of using a typewriter, with four of them taking an exam in the subject. In comparison, only one young White woman, named Shirley, had undergone an exam in office practice, with the remaining four White girls having at one time or other as they said "mucked around on a typewriter".

Generally all the trainees during the induction period were enthusiastic about learning, or improving their keyboard skills, especially on the word processor. For example both Sonia and Joan had undertaken Office Practice at school and were very keen to enhance their skills:

Sonia "I did a bit of Office Practice in school but I didn't realise how much I had forgotten, so it's good like...but it's the word processing that interests me the most. I mean you always see people using one, but I didn't realise that it wasn't that hard, you know, something I could do."
(Black ITeC Trainee)

Joan "I did typing at school so I know how to use the keyboard, but we never did word processing or anything like that. I am really enjoying it because out of all the things I wanted to do, word processing was the main thing, so I'm glad I'm here."
(Black ITeC Trainee)

From her assessment of the level of ability amongst the new female trainees, Hazel, the Office Practice tutor quickly characterised the girls as falling into two groups. In the first instance, all the Black girls, that is Nina,

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Joan, Sonia, Samm and Kim, together with Shirley, a White trainee, were labelled by Hazel as those trainees expected to progress easily on the course; while the remaining four girls, namely Rose, Vanessa, Isabel and Cathy, were identified by Hazel as in need of 'special help'. Hazel continued to give more basic skills training to this latter group, by using the electric typewriters to build up basic typing skills. Simultaneously those girls deemed more advanced were allowed to forge ahead in acquiring word processing skills. This meant that in actuality the induction period for the majority of White ITeC female trainees was extended beyond the Centre's official time limit. Hazel justified this by stating:

Hazel   "Obviously some of the girls have greater difficulties because they have had learning problems at school, so it is important that before we begin the real business of training, they gain confidence in using a typewriter, and how to present work. Without this they would feel really intimidated about using the word processor, especially as the packages we use are not particularly easy."
                                             (ITeC Office Practice Tutor)

In order to clarify how this division was perceived by Hazel, the two groups will be referred to as either the Advanced or Beginners' Group. Were the girls aware of this difference and how did this affect their relationship with other trainees? I asked those girls seen as the Beginners' Group how they thought they would progress on the course. In spite of fears about how much they felt they would be able to achieve, the group as a whole remained fairly optimistic; and felt sure that under the guidance of Hazel, they would surpass this initial hurdle.:

Vanessa   "I am keen to learn, but I know I need to catch up with the others. Hazel is really good and she give us lot more time, but I still would like to work on the word processor more, cos by the time we start to use it the other girls will still be ahead, and, I don't think that is fair."
                                 (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Isabel   "I am finding it a bit hard cos you know I'm not good at spelling and stuff (laugh) ...Anyway Hazel's says I can start on it [the WP] soon ... [I asked Isabel how she felt about the girls that had started doing word processing?] ...I can understand it cos they use to it, so they don't need to practise like us lot..."
                                 (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

However, some girls did express an anxiety about their ability to progress swiftly through the course. Yet despite this they remained fairly enthusiastic. For example Cathy at this stage still felt hopeful that she would overcome her difficulties:

Cathy   "It's really good, I am enjoying it. I mean at school I never really had a chance to use one of them [a WP], and I always thought you had to be clever to use one of them, but it's not that hard."
                                                        (White ITeC Trainee)

For those girls in the Advanced Group, the induction course had merely been an inconvenient precursor to the main task of learning how to use the software packages for word processing. They were aware that the other group of girls were starting off at a lower level to themselves and that they therefore had an edge over them. But at this stage, ie. their first few months on the scheme, their main concern was about getting on in the class. Office Practice was also the one area on the scheme where they felt supremely confident, and held their own against the boys. Kim and Samm's account of their feelings during this time shows how Office Practice was seen by the Advanced Group as part of their natural aptitude for the subject, something they were familiar with:

Kim   "It's funny you know, because when I think about it, I was more curious about electronics because it was something that I'd never done before, but in Office Practice the time she made us practise on the keyboard got a bit boring after a while ...I don't know, I couldn't wait to get started on it really."
                                    (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Samm   "I like all the classes, but Office Practice is my favourite because it's the one thing I know a bit about so I don't feel like I'm starting from scratch."
                                    (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Differential Training - Equals Differential Outcomes In Office Practice

After the introductory period trainees were required to undertake project work on different assignments associated with utilising the range of facilities that the WP offered. For example they learnt how to use the command functions to achieve different layouts on the various paper types that the software provided for. Generally a project entailed working on a

particular function, such as arranging tabulations, which trainees eventually built up into a small portfolio. Depending on how quickly a trainee learnt to master a given assignment, they could then progress to other project work. In addition training was also directed towards building up experience in basic office duties. Trainees were instructed in how to deal with written and oral enquires; how to set up and maintain an office filing system; how to set out letters etc, as well as coached in telephone manner and general deportment appropriate for working in an office. Given the intensity of the course, tuition took place in both group and individual sessions. In this way Hazel was able to monitor the level of their achievement, and where necessary re-organise project work to suit the specific needs of an individual trainee.

Two months into the scheme most of the ITeC girls remained fairly optimistic about the course. The chance to learn new skills and working in what they saw as a *proper* training environment, ie. a place where they were getting relevant vocational skills directly linked to the labour market, gave them a sense of being part of something concrete, unlike their feelings about other parts of the ITeC programme. I asked all the girls in the Advanced Group what they enjoyed doing in Office Practice, their answers demonstrate the sense of confidence with training in an area familiar to them:

Shirley   "I've done different things so far, like learning about how
                 to set up the layout and tabs. It's interesting, because
                 the machine [WP] does it for you, so you learn a lot
                 quicker. I mean it used to take ages at school to do
                 tabulations and margins, but in word processing it's a lot
                 easier. And if you make a mistake you can correct it
                 without having to start again, I like that (laugh)."
                                 (White ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

While Joan explained that even though the course was intensive, she felt that she was actively learning something, as opposed to merely participating in the class:

Joan   "There is so much to learn, but what really gets me is the
                 way everything goes so much faster, like typing a page is
                 about half the time on the WP, and you can do so many
                 things at once. [I asked Joan what else she like about it?]
                 All of it really, I mean I just feel like I'm doing something
                 you know?"
                                 (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Both Joan and Shirley's accounts were fairly typical of those identified as members of the Advanced Group, who were in fact trainees who had achieved a relatively higher standard of education (see Appendix A). All of them showed a willingness to learn and were happy with their progress in Office Practice. In contrast the trainees in the Beginners' Group, voiced more complaints about the course. For example both Rose and Vanessa, although still keen, did express a feeling of frustration:

Rose   "It's good, I like it...but it can be a bit boring like.
        ... [I asked Rose what bits were boring?] ...Ah - well I
        think we're spending too much time just practising on the
        keyboard, cos I'd like to do more word processing, but Hazel
        reckons we need to get our typing up first."
                (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Vanessa   "I'm still enjoy it but I haven't got on with more things like
        the other girls. I know us lot needed to catch up with the
        typing side, but I really think we lot have spent enough
        time on the keyboard."
              (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

It was not that Rose and Vanessa did not appreciate that they needed more time to learn basic typing skills; rather their misgivings were partly a reaction to the subordinate position which they felt that 'lagging behind' placed them in. Their position on the course was in many ways reminiscent of their school days where they felt teachers had labelled them as 'the problem kids' or 'the no hopers' in reference to their poor academic showing. In the context of training, where the stakes, so to speak were higher (precisely because it had come to symbolise a way of raising employability credentials), 'lagging behind' was perceived by these two girls as a disadvantage which, given the alternative (ie. dead end jobs or unemployment), they felt they couldn't afford. Cathy's worries over the future demonstrate how failure in other parts of the ITeC programme had heightened the need to do well in Office Practice, as the only option left open to the ITeC girls in the Beginners' Group:

Cathy   "I'm a bit worried cos if I don't do well in Office Practice
        I'm not sure what's gonna happen. I mean I'm not that good
        at the computering, and electronics is just a waste of time,
        so office practice is it really."
             (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Cathy's anxieties were not ill-founded. She wanted to progress in the one area where she felt she had a chance to capitalise on what she was learning, ie. office work. In common with all the female trainees, she was aware that having word processing skills would almost certainly guarantee her a job; as well as allow her to enter what is seen as the more glamourous side of office work.

In the context of the training scheme, the underlying lack of confidence expressed by the Beginners' Group had an impact on their relationship with the Advanced Group. The nuance of the statements made by the girls in the Beginners' Group indicate that the former were measuring the level of their attainment, and hence their status within the scheme, against the other girls on the programme. How did this affect their career aspirations? Because membership of the Beginners' Group was entirely drawn from the White female trainee camp, and for the purposes of comparison, the career aspirations of the Beginners' and Advanced Groups are posed in relation to their racial composition. As we shall later demonstrate, how the ITeC Black girls perceived their position on the scheme partly called upon the drawing up of such a racial divide.

Career Aspirations Of White Girls In The Beginners' Group - "Getting A Job"

The four White girls making up the Beginners' Group in Office Practice had continued to receive basic training in typing well beyond the introductory period. Some five months into their training, they still "lagged behind" girls in the Advanced Group, in terms of the project work they were required to undertake on the Word Processor. Moreover, by then the attitude of these young women had perceptibly changed from one of optimism to indifference. They no longer talked to me about the possible rewards that office training or word processing offered. Indeed it could be said that they were much more concerned with other issues that arose out of being a YTS trainee, most notably the inadequacy of the training allowance. How did their subordinate position with this department effect the level of their aspirations? I asked these girls what type of jobs they were interested in and how they felt what

they were learning would be of use in getting a job. Rose, the most

vociferous trainee in this group had this to say:

Rose   "When I first come here I was all keen and that, but now it's
                 just something to do - I mean I'm still learning and stuff,
                 but I know I'm not gonna get one of these posh jobs or
                 nothing ...I 'spose I'll end up doing some kind of typing job,
                 but what I don't know."
                                    (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Vanessa was slightly more despondent about her prospects:

Vanessa   "I'm still hoping to do better but I know I'm not as good as
                 the as the others [Advanced Group] ...What kind of job do I
                 think I'll get? I don't know really, something in an office,
                 perhaps like a junior or one of these ah - clerk typists, I
                 dunno, [sic] I just can't say right now."
                                    (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Isabel remained pragmatic about her prospects. Instead of aspiring to a life

time career, Isabel focussed on what was to her the central issue, that is

earning money:

Isabel   "I dunno do I? (laugh), just as long as I get some work to
                 keep me in fags and that, cos you need money to go out
                 ...no I don't wanna do factory work, so I 'spose it'll be
                 some office job, yeah, something like that."
                                    (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Cathy, the remaining trainee in the Beginners' Group was, the only one who was

still trying to gain something out of the course. Having weighed up her

chances for improving her skills, Cathy looked towards some form of agency

work (temping) as a way of fulfilling her desire to move into the exciting

and glamorous secretarial world - Even though she was unaware of the

distinction between this type of work and the more mundane position of a

clerk typist:

Cathy   "I wanna do well here [Office Practice] cos I fancy working
                 in an office and you need to be able to type, so that's why
                 I'll stick it so that I'll be able to join one of these
                 agencies, becos that way it'al be easier to find work."
                                    (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

The way the girls in the ITeC Beginners' Group felt the scheme had judged

them, coupled with their slow progress on the course and inability to catch

up with the Advanced Group, were all contributory factors in their seeming

lack of career ambition. However to be fair to these girls it needs to be

asked whether they were in fact failing to capitalise on training, or were

demonstrating a degree of realism about their situation? In answering this
question it should be remembered that none of the girls had held what can be
described as a careerist attitude before joining the scheme. Indeed their
reasons for entering the YTS had en masse arisen from their indecision over
what exactly they wanted to do, and importantly, how best to achieve this.
Entering the YTS had reduced the pressure to decide about their employment
futures. Simultaneously the ITeC's potential to expose them to standards
previously seen as unattainable, had held out the promise of changing their
employment destinations away from menial, if not low paid low status jobs, to
to those sectors seen as the more attractive end of (young) women's
employment.

However their subsequent experience of the scheme, as witness in the Office
Practice department, led them during the course of their training year to
reject as fanciful ambitions which were not within their reach. Instead their
expectations were now being directed towards what they deemed to be the best
options for girls of their calibre. Although they remained vague about the
precise nature of these jobs, it was still within the confines of clerical
work, which in itself represents a shift in aspirations from those previously
documented. That it also represents a major departure from the other female
trainees' aspirations only serves to highlight the different motives that had
led the ITeC Black and White girls to join the scheme.

With this in mind the position of the ITeC Black girls in the Office
Practice course needs to be more closely examined. This is because a central
proposition explored here is the contention that how trainees are treated
within a given scheme determines to some extent what investment they are
prepared to make; which in turn facilitates either a rejection or acceptance
of youth training as a route into employment. Their position also highlights
the different levels of expectations that the ITeC girls held, which is
typified here as a distinction between those girls aiming at "Getting a Job",
and those trainees who express their training investment in terms of "Carving
Out a Career". The limitations imposed on trainees as a result of being

placed in non-employer based Mode B1 schemes, should not distract us from the fact that the ITeC girls could still utilise training as a means of acquiring employability credentials. In this context the young Black women on the ITeC programme were in a better position than the White ITeC girls to take advantage of their training facility. A crucial factor here is the different labour market aspirations of the Black ITeC girls and their subsequent response to the Office Practice element of the training programme.

Career Aspirations Of Black Girls In The Advanced Group - "Carving Out A Career"

I asked the Black girls in the Advanced Group what kind of jobs they were looking towards. In general their responses concentrated on office work, but unlike their White peers in the Beginners' Group, these young women aspired to higher status jobs in the clerical sector:

Sonia "It's definitely going to be in an office where I'll be doing more than just typing all day, I just couldn't stand that, *you know!...*"
(Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Joan "I wanna do office work, maybe work as a personal secretary or something like that."
(Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Nina "I'm not sure about what they call it, but I'd like to work in administration, maybe in a Bank or one of these offices in the West End ...something where I wasn't just doing typing."
(Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

The responses of Sonia, Joan and Nina suggest that they were committed to entering the labour market once they had left the scheme. Like all the girls on the ITeC programme, gaining employment was their primary consideration. But unlike the White girls in the Beginner's Group, these Black girls were not prepared to accept any kind of office work. Rather, they were stating that their training, especially in word processing, entitled them to seek work outside of routine forms of clerical work. For example, none of Black girls expressed any desire to work as a clerk typist; nor were they looking towards agency work. What these girls wanted was a permanent foothold in the labour market, one which led to a recognised career with prospects. However, not all the girls envisaged this as entailing further study. From this it would

appear that some of the Black ITeC girls were aspiring to jobs that did require further qualifications. One reason for this was their assessment of the labour market, and what they could expect in the way of jobs. Certainly from my general discussions with the ITeC girls, there was a common belief that word processing skills were in high demand; which in the case of the girls in the Advanced Group, convinced them that they were literally guaranteed a job on completing the course. Samm was the only member of the Advanced Group who expressed a desire to seek further qualifications, which she saw as part of her long term objective of working in administrative jobs:

Samm   "I think when I leave this place I'd like to get a job first
                 so that I can get some experience, and then maybe I'll try
                 and get into college to get better qualified ...after that
                 I'd like to go into management or something like that
                 (laugh), I mean it's a chance to boss somebody else around
                 (laugh) and get paid for it!"
                                      (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

The other interesting feature about Samm's statement was that she made a link between first gaining work experience and then furthering her prospects by acquiring more qualifications. Hence the kind of strategy which Samm's long term plan embodied illustrated a recognition that experience and qualifications appear to go hand in hand in the world of work. Although both the research evidence of Roberts et al (1986) and Raffe (1987) suggests that employers use qualifications in a selective way; in terms of how Samm conceptualised the labour market, the more experience an individual had, the greater flexibility and control they could exercise over the direction of their careers. In this sense becoming better qualified was in her view part of a natural progression into higher levels of the job hierarchy.

Samm's desire for further qualifications after a period in the labour market, is but one strategy amongst many that the Black ITeC girls opted for. The fact that the girls wanted to learn enough to lead them into permanent career jobs within the secretarial world, brought into sharper focus their commitment to succeeding in the course, as it became obvious to them that the scheme's initial promise of acquiring technical know-how was limited to Office Practice. In this way the Black girls on the ITeC programme had in some five

months into their training shifted away from their initial curiosity and desire for New Technology training to one that was more confined to office work. Kim's account of this shift points to her realism that if one option, ie computer programming was closed, at least Office Practice offered another viable career alternative:

Kim   "I know I said I was interested in computer programming, but
             to tell you the truth I haven't found it all that easy, so
             if things don't work out there, then I'll go into office
             work, where I can use the word processing that I've learnt
             here."
                          (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

The above discussion on the career aspirations of the Black ITeC girls in the Advanced Group, clearly reveals that this group's ambitions were decidedly higher than the majority of the White girls on the scheme. Following on from this, I want to examine in what ways the differences between the two groups affected the nature of their interaction and behaviour on the scheme.

The Attitude And Behaviour Of Black and White Girls In Office Practice

As we have seen, the treatment metered out to female trainees in the other departments resulted in all of them expressing feelings of either failure or intimidation; they came to see the specific training on offer as irrelevant to their expectations vis-a-vis the   labour market. However it is in Office Practice that the clique of five young Black women came into their own, in ways which set them apart from the White girls on the scheme. Based upon my observations, a number of features peculiar to the Black girls were noted which I believed played a significant role in determining their response to this specific course. In particular how the group came to measure their success in Office Practice was set against what they deemed to be the negative attitude and behaviour of the White girls in the Beginners' group. The Black girls were in this context attempting to establish themselves as ideal candidates for youth training, by presenting a united front. Their general acquiescence of the primary objectives of the course influenced their determination to get on, and in doing so represented yet another feature distinguishing them from the girls in the Beginners' Group.

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The competitive spirit which characterised much of the Centre's activities resulted in the formation of different factions which, in the case of the female trainees were pitted against each other. Alongside the group sessions undertaken by Hazel, I found that there was a degree of co-operation amongst the Black girls, that acted as a supplement to Hazel's input. The Black girls in the Advanced Group would discuss the various problems which they encountered, and would give each other practical advice as well as solutions in carrying out their projects. This served as just one of the ways in which girls in the Beginners' Group were effectively excluded from the Black girls' circle. In probing this issue, I asked the girls in the Advanced Group how they felt they got on together and what difference this made to their progress on the course:

Joan
"yeah we do help each other out when one of us gets stuck or something, I guess because we're mates and we all want to get on."
(Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Sonia
"...I like that, you know because it means I don't have to keep running to Hazel all the time, and I think we learn better that way because you don't feel embarrassed or nothing to ask one another something."
(Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Joan and Sonia's reasons were linked to an underlying sense of group identity that reflected a mantle of success, which membership of the Advanced Group ascribed. The fact that this was the one department where they were not separated either individually or in pairs, meant that as a group they could come together and assert the clique's authority on the training proceedings. Aiding this was the fact that during the course of the year, approximately four to five months into the scheme, trainees were allowed to specialise in their chosen field, with the training schedule altering to accommodate this. Whilst the girls in the Advanced and Beginners' Groups had been in mixed classes during the first quarter of their training programme, they now converged into joint Office Practice sessions. Hence by this period all the girls had already decided that office work was the main focus of their training objectives, in spite of the varying success which the girls in each

group could expect.

As we have seen the level of the interaction between Black and White girls was kept to a minimum. The Black girls were critical of the Beginners' Group and their relationship with the boys on the programme. They attempted to distance themselves from the other trainees, and only talked to them when absolutely necessary. One reason for the maintenance of hostility was an earlier incident between Rose and Joan, (the two respective "leaders" of the Beginners' and Advanced Groups), that resulted in a lack of communication between Black and White girls as a whole, since they were forced to take up sides in the dispute. During my interviews with the trainees I asked each of the Black girls how they felt about the girls in the Beginners' Group. They were all unanimous in their condemnation of these girls and showed a dismissing attitude towards them:

Samm   "...you know how they stay [sic. are] they muck around more
                than we do, and I think that's because they're not serious
                about the course. But we lot [the Black girls clique] want
                to get something out of it, [Office Practice] something I can
                get a good job with *you know*."
                                        (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Or again:

Nina   "I don't like them because they act foolish...they're always
                playing up to the boys and carrying on like they is well
                fresh, *you know?* [sic]. [I asked Nina to explain what she
                meant by this?] "...I mean things like if Hazel ask them
                something they give her some stupid answer, or just take it
                for joke all the time."
                                        (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Both Samm and Nina were expressing a view that the behaviour of the White girls somehow let their sex down, but that in their eyes was typical of how White girls 'carry on'(conduct themselves). Hence their opinion of the other girls was definitely framed in reference to their ethnicity, ie. they were White girls; and they used this fact to explain why it was that they acted in ways which they found either immature or disruptive. It should be noted here that the attitude of the White girls towards the Black female trainees was never expressed to me in racial terms. It was therefore not so much a case of colour but status which the White girls in the Beginner's Group used as a way of explaining to me the differences between them and the Black girls.

Given my membership of the said group this is hardly surprising; however, it was more than apparent to me that under-currents of racial tensions existed. For example, the use of office space between the two Groups was clearly demarcated. When the Black girls congregated in one part of the office, the White girls kept their distance. This was just one of the many ways in which Black and White girls avoided interacting with each other. All of this however was largely unspoken, that is the hostility between the two Groups rarely resulted in a verbal confrontation. Rather, in the class the Black girls limited their comments to one-liners, which other Black girls picked upon and shared the (silent) joke. That is not to say the White girls took all of this lying down, they did respond but this tended to be amongst themselves, rather than directly aimed at the Black girls. Generally each girl knew her place, the clique she belonged to and the boundaries between them.

In making comparisons between themselves and the White girls, another factor to emerge was that the Black female ITeC trainees implicitly believed that the seriousness with which they viewed training, especially in Office Practice, amounted to a mature approach, which they felt would enable them to achieve their aims:

Sonia   "I know that if I want to get on I'm gonna have to work
               hard, and try and keep up my standards. I just don't see
               the sense of mucking around, cos that's what I did at
               school and that didn't get me anywhere."
                              (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

The belief that maturity was the key to success was reinforced by the way in which the Black girls interacted with each other. I observed a pecking order whereby Joan and Samm dominated the group, stamping *their* conception of how *Black* girls should look *and* behave. In particular Joan's preoccupation with the latest fashions in dress and hair styles imposed a standard which the rest of the clique were obliged to follow. The fact that the Black girls always dressed 'smart' was yet another way in which they distinguished themselves from their White counterparts. In doing so not only were they conforming to their notions about the standard of dress which the glamour world of secretarial work depicts; but also that it was a sign of their

maturity that they took care over their appearance.

In contrast, the dress sense of the White girls in the Beginners' Group fell far short of this image, and I would argue contributed to their inferior status. Put bluntly if the White girls tended to dress to a pattern, ie. they wore similar fashions, the Black girls were forever displaying the latest fashions, competing with each other about who looked the best. However it was Joan who took the lead in this field:

Joan   "I like clothes and trying on different things, experimenting like. I mean most of my money goes on clothes and jewellery and going out, but that's just me (laugh). [I asked Joan whether or not she thought it was important to look good?] ...definitely, if you don't look good you don't feel right and I don't want to look like some old tramp ...[I then asked Joan whether she though it made a difference when searching for work?] ...yeah I do think it makes a difference when you're applying for jobs, cos if you don't look good they think you're poor."
                        (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Joan's attitude illustrates the interplay of gender and the construction of feminine identity and its applicability and relevance in the labour market. In this context she and the other Black girls in her group were not expressing dissimilar attitudes to other young women who turn towards this aspect of women's work. What was different however was that "looking good" was used to differentiate between the Black and White girls, with the former assuming that it reflected their commitment to finding 'good' jobs. For the ITeC Black girls the way in which the White girls behaved towards the trainers, the way in which they communicated with each other and importantly the male trainees, their style of dressing and speech mode, were all indicative of their lack of ambition towards the labour market and their seemingly inevitable location in poor unattractive jobs.

From the discussion above it is clear that how the Black ITeC girls viewed the White female trainees in general is linked to their ambitions towards the labour market and the attendant rewards which getting a 'good job' meant to them. In a previous chapter we saw how in spite of their varying success, the Black girls who eventually ended up on the ITeC programme had exhibited more of a positive attitude towards the labour market than their White

counterparts. It was this which was brought to bear on their attitude towards training.

In sum, the Black girls on the ITeC programme were placed in a position which allowed them to assume that they were going to be successful. I would argue that their location in the Advanced Group enabled them to construct an image of themselves as more mature and dedicated, compared to the rest of the male and female trainees in the Centre. In Office Practice, where all the girls had initially more chance of success, the distinction made between different levels of ability was textured by racial divisions; without speculating too much, I believe under different circumstances, this would not have held such an important place in how this particular group of young women reacted to training. If for example, relations between the Black girls and young men had been more amicable, or if the girls had been put into mixed ability groups and were treated by staff in similar ways, then the degree to which the girls could or would have developed into Black and White cliques is open to debate.

The Attitude Of Black And White Girls To Boys In Office Practice

So far the analysis presented here has focussed soley on the experiences of Black and White girls in Office Practice, covering the introductory period through to the time when trainees were allowed to specialise. However, as noted earlier one issue that contributed to where female trainees were located in the scheme, was their relationship with the ITeC boys. In Office Practice where, so to speak, young women came into their own, their attitude towards the boys best illustrates how the presence of males influenced the behaviour of the young women and the implications of this on their response to training. For example, unlike in electronics, girls were being trained in the one area where competence and management of (office technology) skills are endowed with a gender bias in their favour. They were therefore in a position to potentially have a greater degree of control over their training environment (and hence their experience). In comparison, the domination of boys in the other courses on offer at the ITeC, led to all the girls

encountering training from what was a subordinate position.

Given the potential role reversal which training in clerical skills offered for girls, what effect did this have on their commitment to training? Did it for example give them greater confidence and if so, which girls benefited from this? Keeping this question in mind I was able to observe the nature of the relationships between the sexes, up until the time trainees were allowed to specialise, when the boys *retired en masse* from Office Practice in order to concentrate on either electronics or computer applications.

The mixing of the sexes in the first quarter of their training programme was greeted differently by the two female groups in Office Practice. Amongst the Black girls in the Advanced Group, the general consensus was one of animosity, where the girls felt that the boys were merely a distraction which had to be contained. We have already alluded to the fact that it was the hostility of the boys towards the Black girls that had contributed to them forming into a clique. In the event this clique proved to be a powerful force in the class, where their image of success in office skills, gave them an edge over the boys, who tended to keep a low profile. Hence where individuals had felt inadequate, in say the Electronics department, the reverse was true in Office Practice, where they were able to monopolise their classes as a group, making the boys feel inferior. For example, the Black girls in these classes often made fun of the boys, intimidating them by sniggering or whispering amongst themselves. When using their machines they assumed an air of efficiency and competency, which was born out of their 'gendered' understanding about what working in an office entails. In joint tuition sessions they tended to take the lead in asking and answering questions; pressuring the boys and White girls into silence. In response both the boys and the White girls often adopted strategies which resulted in the session being disrupted. "Mucking around", instigating irrelevant discussions and exhibiting a bored stance, were just some of the tactics that I observed which were used to counter the domination of the Black girls in these classes. In the interviews I asked the girls in the Advanced Group how they felt

about the presence of boys in Office Practice:

Kim   "Most of them don't wanna do it anyway and I myself can't
        see the sense in them carrying on. I suppose they get to
        learn stuff about the keyboard, but you do that in computer
        studies anyway. To be honest I don't like any of them, one
        or two are alright but they all act so childish, I just
        think they're stupid."
               (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Or again:

Sonia   "Personally I think we should have separate classes, because
        most of them [the boys] are always trying to disturb you ...
        they get together and start messing around and playing
        Hazel up so that she ends up wasting time on them"
             (Black ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

The feelings expressed by Kim and Sonia was indicative of the general view

shared by all the members of the Black girls' clique, that working with boys

undermined the serious business of training which this part of the ITeC

programme meant to them. This was even shared by Shirley the only White

female member of the Advanced Group, although her attitude was tempered by

her inability to fit in with either of the two female cliques:

Shirley   "I'm not that bothered about the boys because sometimes they
        liven it up a bit ...Yeah some of the others get annoyed,
        but they shouldn't be so stuck up about it, because you
        can't really expect the boys to take an interest in typing
        can you?"
            (White ITeC Trainee in the Advanced Group)

Shirley's attitude was to some extent shared by the other White girls located

in the Beginners' Group. To them, the presence of boys in the classes often

acted as a welcome relief from training:

Isabel   "I think Hazel gets a bit upset with us lot cos we muck
        around with the boys and that... [I asked Isabel why she
        mucked around?] I don't know, we just get on and end up
        kidding about. It's just that after a while you get bored
        with typing, and word processing is a bit of a slog and I
        'spose you kinda need a break after a bit."
            (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Rose   "I don't see why the boys can't do typing if they wanna, but
        the way them lot [the Advanced Group] carry on, you'd think
        they own it or something! I mean if you can't have a laugh
        then you lose interest don't you?..."
            (White ITeC Trainee in the Beginners' Group)

Rose was more vehement about the Black girls' attitudes about the ITeC boys.

Her defence of the boys' behaviour during the lessons reveals an attempt to

form an alliance, which in practice was not always viable as we have already

seen. During my time spent hanging around with the trainees, I noticed that the White girls, with the exception of Shirley (a member of the Advanced Group), on various occasions gained entry into the boys' friendship circle. For instance, the girls would sit nearer the boys at lunch breaks; would join in some of the boys' activities like playing cards and share jokes with the boys. However, alliances briefly formed in these 'free' periods were usually difficult to sustain when girls were the object of the boys bravado inside the classes, in which the latter predominated. Thus the girls in the Beginners' Group were in a far more vulnerable position than their Black female counterparts. The degree of familiarity which the White ITeC girls had achieved with the boys meant that they were more likely to get picked upon by them. These girls were therefore forced to walk a tight rope between attempting to join in with the lads and maintain a degree of detachment which brought pressure, through the tacit disapproval of the Black girls.

Generally the responses of both groups to the presence of boys reflected their differing positions within the class. Ironically the progress of Black female trainees was aided by the hostility which they felt towards the boys. Their isolation with regards to other trainees, together with their genuine interest in word processing, motivated them to be seen to be achieving. It also enabled them to establish a collective group power, which I would suggest maintained their resolve. In comparison, with the exception of Shirley, the degree of commitment shown by the young White women towards Office Practice was to diminish during the course of their training year. Their expectations of the potential rewards of training had been dampened as it became increasingly clear that they would be unable to achieve success according to the criteria with which they had originally judged office skills training. As a result of this kind of assessment, they were much more willing to accept boys in Office Practice.

Another facet of this acceptance lies in the perspective of the Beginners' Group on what was the purpose of attending the scheme. Their attempts at establishing friendships with the boys on the programme compensated for their

lack of recognition by the Black girls and staff. It highlighted for them the social rewards of the scheme, which in practice took on an almost leisure like quality. This was despite the compulsory nature of youth training, and the tensions that dependence on the training allowance created. The young women in this group treated the scheme as a meeting place, a place where they could relax, learn a little and have a laugh at the same time. They were not in this sense ideal candidates for youth training as laid down by the MSC. Their behaviour in all the courses led me to conclude that it was such factors that kept them on the scheme; as well as their hope that the course just might pay off in the end.

Summary And Conclusion: The Experiences And Training Needs Of
the Black And White ITeC Girls

In sum from the observations and discussions I had with female trainees in the Office Practice course it became apparent that training is not merely a technical device which stands outside of the social arena in which it takes place. How Black and White girls responded to training was very much to do with the social relations in which they were enveloped. Outside of Office Practice, the alienation of girls from what were essentially male dominated courses, led them to reject as profitable the training on offer. In this context what was occurring was the reinforcement of all the girls' belief that office skills was the only area where they stood a chance of gaining employment. However, the girls did not unite in ways which might have been expected, but instead were divided by their social, educational and cultural backgrounds. A significant contributory factor here was how trainees felt they were being assessed by the trainers and other trainees. In particular the early separation of female trainees into two camps was as a direct result of the course tutor's judgement about the girls' potential. In this sense the subsequent behaviour and attitudes of girls in the Advanced and Beginners' Groups acted as a self fulfilling prophesy, whereby trainees were either encouraged or disillusioned.

Another aspect about the position of Black and White girls is the fact that

the social objectives of the Centre provided an inbuilt bias towards Black young men, which the girls found difficult to surmount. Despite their membership of this racial category, the Black female trainees were, alongside the White ITeC girls, subject to the same pattern of gender subordination which characterised the scheme. How this group attempted to circumvent this relates to the promotion of office skills as the mainstay of girls provision on the scheme. This arose because upon entry to the scheme, despite their desire to acquire competency primarily in word processing, all the female trainees had been willing to take on board new areas, such as electronics. However, the position which female trainees found themselves in on other parts of the ITeC programme, had the effect of elevating Office Practice as the main focus of their training aspirations. In other words, the ITeC girls soon discovered that they were not going to become electricians.

The nature of the girls' experiences in Office Practice also highlights the different expectations about the labour market which they held. By separating them into two camps, those girls who were deemed to have the best chance of succeeding, were instilled with a confidence, which aided their progress on the course. Thus the real possibility that jobs awaited them enhanced their commitment to the course. Moreover, their keenness to advance their word processing skills was fuelled by the assumption that theirs would be a long term commitment to the labour market. It was in view of all these factors that I came to see them as the more 'career' oriented group; especially as they aspired to occupations that would provide greater financial rewards, job security and a higher status within women's employment. In contrast those girls that 'lagged behind' and felt less confident, came to hold a more ambivalent attitude towards office training, whereby they exhibited less commitment to the course. This added to their uncertainty about what the future would hold, and as a result these young women did not talk about long term careers, but rather aspired to what they saw as "getting a job". The obvious differences between the two Groups, led me to identify the ITeC White girls as the 'non-careerists' group, as a way of indicating their response to

office training as a result of these attitudes.

A further aspect arising from Office Practice which reflects broader issues associated with the YTS. In common with the overall ethos of the scheme's training programme, female trainees were being introduced to the idea that they were either in need of special help (Beginners' Group) or else needed to assume a 'mature' attitude towards training (Advanced Group). Hence the overall approach taken by the trainers on the scheme was centred on a deficiency model, whereby young people are depicted as lacking both the *social and technical* employment pre-requisites necessary for meeting the demands of the labour market.

Within this model the solution for how young people could overcome this 'disadvantage' lies in what training was supposedly aiming to provide. In the first instance, the concept of training promoted the notion that individual effort was a primary factor in determining the extent to which a young person could build up their stock of vocational skills. In this sense, training was perceived as a question of gaining the 'right' attitude which fostered a competitive spirit, whereby trainees were pitted against each other. Another feature of this model fed upon the illusion that what the YTS was creating was a climate of opportunity, not so much in terms of *real jobs*, but rather the ability to compete for them as and *when* they arose. In the context of the girls' experience in Office Practice, it became apparent that the early separation of trainees into what were essentially ability groups, would inevitably lead to some trainees failing to acquire the 'right' attitude; whilst others took on board a new trainee identity in order to capitalise on the opportunities which the scheme supposedly offered.

Why this point is of particular significance here, rests on the fact that Office Practice was the one area in which: a) the girls felt confident precisely because it fell in line with feminine conceptions of appropriate vocational skills, ie. it is taken as given that it is women who excel in typing; and b) following on from this, that relatively speaking jobs in this field were available to them upon completion of the course. However, Hazel's

decision to separate the trainees into different groups was a division which was to have repercussions for how the girls responded to the course. Moreover, the accounts given by the Beginners' Group point to an underlying resentment that the Advanced Group appeared to be getting access to technology quicker than they were. It should be remembered that it is this acquisition of 'technical' office skills that underscored female trainees' interest in the scheme in the first place. By amplifying these differences in the very department upon which they had pinned their hopes, the scheme was indirectly fostering potential hierarchies that crystallized around notions of technical competence. However, in essence this failed to challenge the confinement of women to what is, in actuality, socially prescribed engendered areas of work.

In conclusion the impact of the structure and function of the Information Technology Centre for the young Black and White women on its programme reinforced their secondary status within the world of work. The nature of the inequalities which patterned the scheme derived from wider divisions, which fashioned the way in which the training needs of this particular group of young women was defined. The analysis presented here was not based on a straightforward comparison between Black and White female trainees. This is because the approach throughout has been to problematise the nature of gender and 'race' divisions and importantly how these interact with other factors associated in this instance, with the ethos underpinning the YTS. Clearly racism and sexism plays an important part in determining an individual's experience and interpretation of their position within the wider society. However as the evidence presented here demonstrates, 'race' by itself does not provide an overriding explanation about how young Black or White women respond to their subordinate position. On the other hand as the discussion in this thesis in general, and this chapter in particular illustrates, 'race', like gender, can be used as the prism through which differences are judged. Hence the attitude of the Black girls in the Advanced Group towards the Beginners' Group were couched in the language of 'race'.

In actuality the differences between the two Groups referred to a complex web of processes, where the relations between trainees (male and female), the nature of the scheme, in addition to the trainees' educational backgrounds, all contributed to the how Black and White girls defined their training needs and employment aspirations. Such a situation reflects the general argument of this thesis, namely, that there is a need to explore beyond the conceptualisation of training as a technical device for improving skill or employability. This is because in practice it is the social relations informing training environments, which it is contended, are the critical factors determining the quality and nature of the young women's experiences of the one year Youth Training Scheme. In Chapter Nine these issues are explored from a different stand point. Unlike the ITeC programme, the social forces at work on the CP scheme gave rise to a different set of issues, where the labelling of CP female trainees as 'problem kids' framed their experiences.

CHAPTER NINE   BLACK AND WHITE GIRLS ON THE COMMUNITY

                         PROJECT SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, issues affecting the quality of Black and White girls'

training experience in the context of the ITeC programme, referred largely to

the operation of sexual divisions that patterned the social relations amongst

trainees and between them and staff members. That this was manifested

through the operation of 'race' divisions, where Black and White ITeC girls

came to occupy different positions within the Centre was also demonstrated.

   In this chapter, the experiences of Black and White girls on the Community

Projects [CP] scheme is examined. It will be argued that unlike the ITeC

programme, the position of the CP girls was textured by a different set of

relations, which in principle refers to the labelling of trainees on this

scheme as the 'least able'. This is because in contrast to the ITeC programme

with its emphasis on technology, the CP scheme offered trainees a different

quality experience, where the underlying objectives did not relate to

improving the employability of youngsters coming into the scheme. Rather the

principle objective underpinning the operation of the CP scheme, in essence,

was to seek to delay their trainees' inevitable unemployment careers. It will

be further argued that as a result, the expectations which trainees held

about the scheme and the training regime on offer to them, were not framed in

reference to employment, but unemployment, precisely because the scheme

offered no real alternative to this.

   Prior to describing the scheme, a couple of important issues are raised in

order to contextualise the nature of my research in the scheme and how I

have reported the research findings. First of all my role in the CP scheme

needs to be addressed, as it effected both the content and quality of the

research evidence presented here. Once again, in contrast to the ITeC

programme my relations with the staff and trainees on the CP scheme exhibited

distinctive features. Despite my initial attempt to remain neutral vis-a-vis

staff and trainees, in the case of the CP scheme, because the training environment was far more relaxed than at the ITeC, my relationship with staff and trainees was qualitatively different. In terms of interviewing, whilst all my respondents appreciated the confidentiality offered, some of the issues raised during these individual sessions were extended to general conversations amongst trainees and with staff. The effect of this was that my interviews were often used by my respondents to explore ideas about a range of topics - anything from birth control to advice about job interviewing techniques. In this way I was not merely an observer to these young women, but more like an older sister, whom they could come to for friendly advice, confidentially or otherwise.

Another aspect which effected how the research is reported is that tensions between Black and White trainees (on the grounds of either 'race' or sex) were minimal, when compared to the ITeC programme. This is partly a consequence of the labelling of trainees as the 'least able'. Trainees recognised this and as a result of the content of the training on offer at the scheme, were not in competition with each other to the same degree as the ITeC girls. The lessening of racial tensions in the CP scheme contributed to the willingness of both Black and White girls to openly talk about racism and sexism; unlike the Black and White ITeC girls for whom these issues were more closely allied to their relations on the programme. Moreover, the Black and White girls on the CP scheme did not form cliques based on either racial or sexual divisions, partly because some of them were already friends and had joined the scheme at the same time, but primarily because unlike the ITeC programme, women dominated this scheme. Given the nature of the CP scheme and the social relations that it fostered, the analysis presented throughout is therefore not pre-occupied with the differences between Black and White trainees. Rather emphasis is placed on how their location and experience of training as CP trainees effected their understanding of their position in the labour market. This necessarily entails an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages that accrued to being a CP trainee. As a result of these considerations, as well

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as being in keeping with the research approach outlined in Chapter Three, the evidence presented here relates to what my respondents saw as important to them. In what follows the analysis begins with a profile of the scheme and those factors identified as crucial to its operations. Thereafter, each of the course modules is examined because, unlike the ITeC girls, trainees on the CP scheme were not excluded from them, either by means of the domination of male trainees or because any of the courses were felt to be too hard. In this sense the girls on the CP scheme had greater scope for developing their interests than the ITeC girls, who were effectively confined to Office Practice.

Profile Of The Community Project Scheme - Staff And Trainees

Uncle Sam's was situated in a two-storey building at the back of an old church hall, near a busy high street area and a popular local market. The scheme had been established as part of the old Youth Opportunities Programme and had switched to the new YTS in January 1984. The Project was funded by the MSC and sponsored by the local Community Relations Council and Church Council who let the scheme use its premises next to the church. The scheme's management committee was drawn from these funding agencies, together with members drawn from other voluntary agencies. Through the management committee the CP scheme was in contact with the social and youth services, in addition to the Careers Service. The management committee met once a month to discuss various policy issues, in addition to liaising with Carol, the scheme manager.

The CP scheme under YOP had been specifically geared towards providing training for 'under-privileged kids, drawn from the local Black and White community; this social welfare objective was kept when the CP scheme made the transition to the YTS. Hence as its pseudonym implies, Uncle Sam's was envisaged as a 'caring' institution, offering a sheltered training environment for 'problem kids'. The CP scheme provided training in Fashion and Design, Knitwear, Leather Craft, Photography and Graphics. The first three training modules were located on the first floor in one large room, which was divided

into designated areas assigned to each course. Photography and Graphics were both situated downstairs, in what were really two rooms adjacent to the church hall. One of these rooms was sectioned off in order to provide dark room facilities for the Photography course. The Project catered for up to 25 places but continually failed to achieve this quota. No more than 18 trainees participated on the scheme at any one time and the scheme, relative to its size, suffered a high drop out rate. As a result the original intention of providing a one year block training course was never reached, as trainees had to replaced as and when an opening became available. This kind of fluidity led to a variegated style of delivery, where individual trainees were all on different parts of the training schedule, with some more advanced than others.

There were 4 full-time members of staff employed by funds derived from the MSC, but not supplemented by the sponsoring agencies. Officially each trainer dealt with one of the five courses on offer at the scheme, with Carol, the scheme manager, tutoring in both Knitwear and Fashion and Design. In practice trainers located on the same floor, ie. Photography and Graphic, and Leather Craft, Knitwear and Fashion and Design, often shared the workload, either by supervising groups or individual trainees. The sex ratio of staff was almost entirely skewed towards women, with only Tom, the one male member of staff, who provided the Photography training element. The Leather Craft instructor, Kay, was of Jamaican origin, while the other three trainers were White. In terms of educational background, I discovered that with the exception of Kay, all of the staff had attended higher education and were in receipt of either a university or polytechnic degree. Carol, the scheme manager also held a teaching qualification, whilst the other two trainers Tom and Gillian, had gained degrees in the Arts. Kay, the only Black member of staff was undertaking an open-access course in Further Education, and hoping one day to register for a university degree. Precisely because the CP scheme endeavoured to foster a relaxed environment, together with the fact that I became friendly with the staff, I was able to gather some information about their backgrounds. This stands in stark contrast to the ITeC programme,

where I was unable to establish any real rapport with the majority of staff on the programme. In the case of CP scheme I discovered that prior to joining the scheme, three of the staff had worked part-time within an educational setting. This had entailed tutoring hours either in school or colleges of Further Education. All the staff had previous experience of working with ethnic minority youth, mainly of West Indian origin. All the staff were also highly politically motivated, drawing their inspiration from Left politics. This latter point is relevant because it influenced the training environment and the nature of staff-trainee relations. In my general discussions with the staff, most of them felt that their main role was to provide an environment where youngsters could develop confidence in their abilities in relation to the whole gamut of social skills which the world of work demanded. In this sense the trainers on the CP scheme were not teachers out to control students, nor were they simply trainers imparting technical skills in a clinical fashion. They were in essence social workers, attempting to both protect and prepare these 'under-privileged kids' for the future, which in all probability would involve long spells of unemployment.

Throughout the duration of the research, the sex and racial composition of trainees on the CP scheme were as follows:- There were 13 girls and 4 boys on the scheme; of these 9 girls and 3 boys were of West Indian origin; the remaining 4 girls and 1 boy were all White. At a later date the number of male trainees increased to 5 but the scheme lost 2 boys of West Indian origin who had completed their training period. Of the 13 girls who were interviewed during the last quarter of the 1984, 3 Black girls and 1 White girls were destined to leave before completion of their training year. Only 2 girls replaced the 4 that had left. In both cases these two trainees had learning disabilities and had not had any previous employment experience. They had been referred to the scheme by the local council Social Services department. Having taken these facts into consideration Carol and I decided not to include them in my research.

Most the CP girls fell into the unqualified category, having overall shown a lack of commitment to schooling. There were a few exceptions, but this was limited to 2 Black and 2 White girls, who had achieved at least 1 'O' level below grade C. Another feature of the CP scheme was that 4 of the female trainees were aged 17 at the time of entry to the scheme and had experienced a longer spell in the labour market. All these girls were Black and all fell into the unqualified category.

In reference to the relationships between Black and White male and female trainees, they were generally good. I detected little tension between the two, either on the grounds of sex or 'race'. For example even where the boys were undertaking the more 'sissy' courses, such as knitwear or dress design, they were not ridiculed by the girls nor made to feel inferior. Nor was the division, small as it was, between the few 'better' qualified and the majority of unqualified taken up as a means of mapping out hierarchies between trainees. Trainees were all aware that they were essentially in the same boat and no one group or individual had an edge over the others. Thus whilst friendship groups did form along gender and 'race' lines, these were not exclusively drawn up. The balance of power in the scheme was tipped towards the young women on the scheme, however, during my time on the scheme I never observed trainees competing for a trainer's attention, nor when interviewed did the girls raise this as an issue.

Training - Content And Delivery Of The CP Scheme's Provision

Uncle Sam's started all trainees off on an induction period lasting for up to 3 weeks. During that time trainees went to the different modules on offer at the scheme. The scheme manager was careful to ensure that trainees were made aware of their rights under the law, as well as introduced to Health and Safety regulations pertaining to the scheme. At the end of this period, individual counselling was conducted by the scheme manager, in order to assess what the needs of the trainee were vis-a-vis the scheme and the off-the-job element. Thereafter a trainee was required to participate in each of the training modules on a rotation system, lasting for 2 weeks. Trainees

were taught in groups, though given the small numbers involved, coupled with the fact that there was no uniformity in trainee starter dates, individuals usually received a fair amount of one to one tuition.

In order to fulfil MSC requirements as well as stimulate trainee interest, a series of short term project work was set for each course. This often entailed trainees making something for themselves, such as a jumper or leather belts; whilst the Photography section involved trainees going out into the community to build up a portfolio on a topic of social interest, such as housing or community issues. Trainees were taught the basic aspects of each course, and for example in Photography learnt to develop black and white film. In the Leather Craft department, alongside instruction in basic craft forms, trainees were co-opted in a bag making enterprise for non-profit organisations, primarily the Red Cross. Unfortunately because of the nature of MSC funding rules, the scheme was unable to profit from this venture, although the department did receive nominal donations from the voluntary agencies involved. The Graphics department provided rudimentary training in the field of design; trainees were instructed in how to set up and plan layouts and how to make use of the various pieces of equipment utilised by graphic designers. The course mainly entailed practical application of these in the form of small scale projects. The primary aim was to develop a trainee's abilities to a level of competence where they were familiar with both the terminology and basic technical skills involved in the elementary stages of graphical design.

The level of training offered at Uncle Sam's could therefore in no way be described as high-powered. Trainees were instructed in the rudiments of each course and depending on aptitude could progress up to a point, which the trainers admitted was still below that required for college, although there were exceptions to this. By the fourth month, trainees were allowed to specialise in their chosen area of interest, partly as a way of ensuring the continuance of their presence on the scheme. Approximately six months after an trainee's start date, they were sent on work experience placements for a

maximum of four weeks. Most of these placements were located in small establishments in the private and voluntary sectors, although the former was sought in preference to the latter. The scheme manager had to spend some time finding work placements for the trainees and complained that she was often let down at the last minute. The off-the-job element was provided by a local FE college on a one day a week basis, for a period of up to three months. Batches of not less than three trainees were sent on the college course, where they were taught basic numeracy and literacy, in addition to tuition in Social and Life Skills studies. Trainee attendance at college rapidly diminished, with most of the girls 'bunking off' classes. In general, most of the girls treated the days allocated for college as free periods. The scheme manager to some extent had to accept this situation, as it was clear that this was an inevitable outcome given the educational background of trainees entering her project. All the girls told me that they thought it was a waste of time, and because it held such little importance for them, this was not an area pursued by the research.

In order to fulfil the Information Technology 'core' skills training requirement set by the MSC, the CP trainees had to attend another training scheme, a Training Workshop [TW], where computer literacy was being offered. This scheme was responsible for planning a four week course of training, that the CP trainees undertook over a period of three months, by attending the course twice a week to begin with. My respondents were supposed to go in batches of three and on occasions I attended the sessions with some of the girls. However I soon discovered that the nature of this course was highly unsatisfactory because the course tutor was often unavailable due to sickness, which meant that the Uncle Sam's trainees were often left to their own devices. From a series of informal chats with the TW manager, I found out that staff disagreements with the MSC over policy and funding resulted in this group of workers being highly demoralised and uncommitted to their scheme. Some were already in the process of leaving, while other staff were actively seeking alternative employment, including the manager. Although the

TW scheme was supposed to cater for a number of Mode B1 community projects within and adjacent to the Borough, the TW staff in effect operated an unofficial non-cooperation policy, where trainers failed to attend classes by use of a variety of means, one of which was claiming sickness leave. As a result of this situation Uncle Sam's trainees tended to drop out of the classes, and complained to Carol about the time and money they wasted in getting to the TW scheme, which was on the other side of the Borough from the CP scheme. None of my respondents reported being satisfied with the course and a number of the girls were openly hostile towards TW staff and trainees.

In sum, although Uncle Sam's trainees were offered training as formally prescribed by the MSC, in actuality the fact of being located on a scheme for 'under-privileged kids' meant that what was on offer to them was a flexible regime of training. Because Uncle Sam's was a trainee-centred scheme, the young people in attendance had a greater degree of leeway in deciding how far they were going to pursue the various courses on offer to them. Generally, where a particular module was rejected, trainees were, after a relatively short time, unofficially allowed to drop out of that part of the scheme's provision. This was an inevitable outcome of the CP scheme's inability to offer quality skills training, that was directly related to specific areas of work. Moreover, because of the inadequate monitoring facilities, which characterised much of the one year YTS, the MSC were not in a position to impose regulations about the mode of delivery. I would argue that this was an inevitable outcome, precisely because schemes for the 'disadvantaged' were oriented towards social rather than technical training. Furthermore, as long as these types of schemes were not labelled by the MSC as 'controversial', they were allowed to follow their own agendas. From the trainees' point of view, the labels of the 'least able' and 'under-privileged' did not mean that they accepted this catergorisation. Rather it will be argued that the female trainees were far more pragmatic about their situation, their life chances and the YTS.

Photography And Graphics On The CP Scheme - Impossible Dreams?

Most of my respondents had little or no experience in these two fields and were keen to learn the basics of each course. The Photography department was run by Tom, an ex-college tutor, whose approach to training could be described as 'laid back'. Taking mixed groups of up to five trainees on a rotation system, Tom instructed them in the basic principles of photography. He insisted that right from the start trainees learnt to feel comfortable using a camera, in order not to be put off by its more technical aspects. He also encouraged them to go out into the community and take pictures, as well as arranged visits to Art or Photographic exhibitions. Working in mixed groups both sexes were treated in a similar fashion in that Tom required the same standard from all, by expecting trainees to follow up their interests. He gave them a certain amount of freedom in using the department's equipment, and trainees were often allowed to take cameras outside of scheme time, including weekends. The informality of Tom's approach, together with the trust he placed in them, were all designed to give trainees a sense of confidence, as well as kindling their interest. I asked the girls what they thought about the course and to tell me what they liked doing:

Karen
"...before I came here I never thought about it much because we didn't do anything like that in school, which is a pity because I really think its interesting ...I like it because we get to go out and use the camera in the street, you know taking pictures of people - it's a real laugh because people think you're some kind of professional, and they always want you to take their picture."
(White CP Trainee)

Gloria, a Black girl who had shown an interest in the subject prior to joining the scheme had this to say about the course:

Gloria
"Yeah, I do feel like I'm getting something out of it ...I mean it's not like being at school where they make you do things..." [I asked Gloria whether she would consider taking it up as a career?] ..." Yes and no cos I really like it, you know, specially when you get to develop the film and see what you've done; but, as for full-time? I'm not sure because I think it would be hard to get a job, you know?"
(Black CP Trainee)

Personal satisfaction and a sense of control about what they were doing was an important feature of the learning experience for some of the girls taking

the Photography classes. The above statement reflects a sense of optimism, based on the notion that Photography was something different to the normal range of jobs on offer to the girls. There is however another aspect that can be inferred from both their statements. For example as her answer implies, Gloria enjoyed the course precisely because it was not being imposed on her. In her particular case, her previous experience of work, where she had occupied a subordinate position in MacDonalds, amplified her refusal to compromise what she saw has her self worth. Thus Gloria's desire for training in Photography and what she found satisfying about it, was based in part on her desire to work at a level where she could exert some control over what she was doing. From my discussions with Karen, like Gloria, she too didn't want to compromise, and I believe it is this factor which made Photography an attractive proposition for both girls, because it gave the impression of self-determination:

Karen   "..I'm still interested in doing the jewellery business, but I really think I could take it [photography] up as well, I don't know, maybe do it with the jewellery, make more money that way - cos you can tell the customers if they buy your stuff they get their picture taken (laugh) ...Seriously though, it's the kind of thing that would interest me cos you get to be your own boss and you haven't got anyone standing over you..."

                                                (White CP Trainee)

Emily, another Black trainee, like most of the female trainees had initially been enthusiastic about the course. Emily's account of her feelings towards the course demonstrates the point that an individual's interest was fuelled by the fact that it was something new, rather than specifically related to their chances of getting a job in the field:

Emily   "I like it right because you're learning something different so it's not like studying or anything like that... [I asked Emily whether she thought about a career in the subject] ...I don't know, I hadn't really thought about it, but - ah, I think it's something you've got to want to do, you know what I mean?, - you've got to work at it, that's it, yeah, because Photography's not all that easy..."

                                                (Black CP Trainee)

From Emily's account it is clear that while Photography was associated with
being out of school, to her at least, it did not necessarily entail a career.
I reminded Emily that she had previously told me that she was keen on the
subject. Her reply is illuminating because it points to the distinction
between having an <u>idea</u> about an area of work and actually understanding what
it entails:

Emily   "...yeah, (laugh) I know I said I was, but you said ideal job
               and when I left school that's what me and Gloria thought of
               ...see we used to go to this youth club and some of the
               people there were doing it [photography], so I suppose
               that's where we got it from (laugh) ...still now that I'm
               here [on the CP scheme], I think things are a bit different,
               I mean it's a lot harder than I thought it would be..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Emily's last statement reflected her uncertainty in her ability to succeed in
the course. For the rest of the girls, Photography was treated more like a
hobby than a potential career. The reason for this refers to the lack of
prior knowledge about the content of training in Photography, which resulted
in an enthusiasm which upon contact with the subject, was to wane. This is
illustrated by the fact that the subject matter proved to be a lot harder
than first thought. This was a common complaint expressed by many of the
girls. Jackie B, a White trainee, admitted to me that she found Photography
confusing:

Jackie B   "...I thought it would be fun but its too hard, you've gotta
               remember too many things at the same time, and Tom just
               let's you get on with it, so I feel a bit left out with the
               others..."
                                                        (White CP Trainee)

Other girls were far more pragmatic about the course. Christina's account
highlights the underlying problematic facing trainees who had entered the
scheme with the ultimate hope of finding work as a result of their training.

Christina   "...I think it's alright for Tom to go on about it being a
               good career, but for us lot, let's face it I don't think so,
               do you? I mean can you see us lot getting jobs doing
               Photography, specially without qualifications (choops), no,
               nor can I ...it's more like a hobby than a proper job because
               no one employs you, you know? so how can a person think of
               earning money from it..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Christina's rejection of Photography, after an initial period where she had been keen, was perhaps more perceptive about the improbability of the course being transformed into a career. Apart from Karen and Gloria who maintained their positive outlook about Photography, most of the CP girls did not exhibit a high expectation about the course. For many CP girls, because they understood the nature of jobs in *their* 'real world', Photography was deemed by them as an unrealistic option which could not readily be transformed by the limited knowledge they were gaining from the course.

Graphics The Graphics course was run by Gillian, and offered elementary training in graphical design. Trainees were encouraged to design logo-types which could then be used as patterns for either the Leather Craft or Fashion and Design classes. Gillian developed a training format whereby trainees had to fulfil a number of criteria within a topic of their choice. In this way Gillian hoped that they would learn to work in sequence, which would discipline them into following the general principles that govern graphical design.

What did the young women think about the course? I asked the girls to name the advantages and disadvantages of training in graphics and whether or not they wished to take it up as a career:

Marie   "I never thought about it before - I suppose I just thought
               it was like doing art in school, but it's not ...well you've
               got to know what kind of paper and pencils to use and how
               to add up the number of lines, you know, you've really got
               to pay attention to what you're doing ...yeah, it is a lot
               harder than I thought it would be..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Out of all the courses on offer, Graphics was the surprise element for the girls, because on the whole their knowledge of the subject was negligible. None of them had reported undertaking Technical Drawing in school and only two girls, Gloria and Karen, had expressed any desire to work in Graphics in terms of their ideal occupations. Therefore the attitude of the majority of CP girls towards the course had initially been experimental. However, in defining the course content, for many of the girls it still represented 'Art', ie. drawing.

Merille's succinct statement on this matter illustrates this point:

Merille   "..if you like drawing and stuff then it's ok, but if you
                    don't wanna do that type of thing then I think you shouldn't
                    bother with it..."

                                                              (Black CP Trainee)

In contrast Jane's assessment of the value of training in Graphics was more

in keeping with the MSC's 'transferable skills' model of learning. Although

Jane did not expect to apply directly for jobs in Graphics, since this did not

fit in with her occupational aspirations, she nonetheless felt that she could

use what she had learnt:

Jane   "..I'm enjoying it right, but I'm more interested in doing
                    fashion work now, so I can't see me doing Graphics when I
                    leave ...mind you it does come in handy for my fashion work,
                    cos I've gotten to draw better (laugh) ...but no, thinking
                    about it does help really..."

                                                              (White CP Trainee)

The other CP girls tended to fall somewhere between Merille and Jane's

attitudes towards the course. Graphics was therefore either viewed as

totally irrelevant or vaguely useful:

Hildreth   "It's ok I guess, but I'm not that interested in it - ...you
                    know it kinda reminds me of being in school, the way you
                    have to sit down and try and draw things... [I asked
                    Hildreth whether she had done anything like it before?]
                    ...No, it's a bit like art class, like I said, cause you're
                    just doing it for the sake of it aren't you? As far as I
                    can see none of these lot are gonna go out and get jobs in
                    it, are they? It's just something we have to do while we're
                    here..."

                                                              (Black CP Trainee)

While to Jackie B, Graphics was like school but with a difference:

Jackie B   "...No I don't want to keep on doing it, becos I think I've
                    learnt all I'm gonna now ...Gillian tries to make it more
                    interesting and that, but personally I think she tries too
                    hard becos she let's us lot get away with doing nothing."

                                                              (White CP Trainee)

Jackie B's last comment reveals that in her opinion Gillian's attitude towards

the trainees, and what they did on her part of the training course, was too

'soft'. I would argue that Jackie B's assessment of Gillian was based on her

understanding of the role adopted by those caring for 'welfare kids'. In this

sense Jackie B did not expect Gillian to behave any differently. Rather

Jackie could turn this situation to her advantage because in essence it was

she, and not Gillian who decided how much she was prepared to learn.
Simultaneously, Jackie B did appreciate Gillian's approach because as her
statement suggests, Gillian was attempting to understand the girls rather
than impose her authority on them. This aspect of the relationship between
trainees and staff was more evident in the Fashion and Design module
undertaken by Carol, the scheme manager.

Most of the girls had been attracted to the project because of the training
offered in Fashion and Design. Added to this was the Leather Craft
department, which although supposedly independent, in reality often acted as
an appendage to the Fashion department. In what follows a description and
analysis of the these two remaining departments is given. Here emphasis is
placed on the degree of similarity between trainee perception of the fashion
world and their actual training experience.

Training In Fashion And Design - "It's What I Do Best"

The CP scheme offered training in Needlework, Knitwear, Dress Making and basic
Pattern Cutting. During the induction period, trainees were given a taste of
each course element, shown how to use the machines and instructed on safety
procedures with regards to the equipment. Once trainees were familiar with
the machinery they undertook project work, based on at least one of the four
course modules. Carol attempted to ensure the continuity of training skills
from one course element to another. For example, a trainee working in the
pattern cutting module could then use this as the basis of her project in
dress making. The training schedule was arranged so that either individuals
or small groups of trainees worked in the various modules at any one time.
In this way trainees could work at their own pace, with Carol supervising
groups as well as giving one to one individual training.

Several of the girls had developed an interest in Fashion and Design prior
to joining the scheme. The level of ability exhibited by the girls ranged
from a rudimentary knowledge, to a slightly better than average understanding
of sewing techniques. In the case of the girls at the latter end of the
ability range, this entailed dress design skills, where for instance they had

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been used to making some of their own clothes. For those girls with no previous background in the subject, the desire for training in this area derived from their interest in fashion. None of the girls reported having used a knitting machine before, although most had some knitting skills prior to joining the scheme. Only those girls who were experienced in dress making reported that they knew something about pattern cutting. However, regardless of an individual's ability, all the girls were 'into fashion', and frequently went shopping for clothes. I should add that shopping for clothes did not necessarily mean buying clothes since most of the girls had limited funds; but rather entailed browsing through shops, trying on clothes and above all hunting for bargains. Such activities took place during the training day, when girls would go down to the market at lunch time. There they would get ideas about the latest fashions and designs, as well as having access to a greater range of materials, which if Carol was obliging. could be bought and used as part of their project work.

Bearing all this in mind it is important to distinguish what fashion and design actually meant to the girls, in terms of their aspirations and hence their assessment of the quality of training on offer to them. To this end I began by asking them what kind of things interested them in relation to fashion. Merille and Jane were two girls who had no previous experience of dress making and were keen to learn. I asked them both what it was they wanted to gain from training in this subject:

Merille   "...it's clothes - I just like them (laugh) ...this place is good because you're learning to make your own clothes and that's good specially when you can't afford to buy ..."
                                                         (Black CP Trainee)

Jane   "...I've always been interested in clothes, that's my main reason for coming here because I wanted to learn to make my own stuff, you know, things like skirts and trousers. See, if I get good on the machine, I can get one for myself, that's what I'm thinking of doing anyway..."
                                                         (White CP Trainee)

Underlying the statements made by Merille and Jane was a popular view that learning to design and make your own clothes was important for a number of reasons. First, because of the personal satisfaction involved in producing

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something for themselves; and second because out of all the training modules on offer at the scheme, dress making entailed highly 'visible' skills. In this sense it was the closest trainees on the scheme got to occupational skills training, which they believed could directly be used in the labour market. This is further demonstrated by the response of Eileen, an 'older' Black girl who had experienced long term unemployment prior to joining the CP scheme. In discussing her liking for the subject, she revealed that while her reasons were not fully worked out, the belief that training in this area had greater employment potential, was an aspect which she had taken into consideration:

Eileen   "...well, who doesn't like clothes (laugh) ...I never got the
                   chance at school to learn and at home my mum doesn't do it,
                   so I'm a real beginner (laugh). [I asked Eileen given this
                   background, what then had fuelled her interest?] ...I don't
                   know, I suppose I couldn't think of anything else - least
                   ways it's [the scheme] better than being unemployed! ...yeah,
                   it will be good for jobs because I know lots of places
                   where they want machinists, so that's something I could do
                   afterwards, when I finished with this place..."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

For the girls who were more advanced in dress making and design, their main interest appeared to be in furthering these skills. For example Marie had been sewing and making her own clothes for some time:

Marie   "...I suppose I'm not that bad at sewing (laugh) - well I've
                   been doing it for years. See my mum's got a sewing machine
                   and she taught me from time, you know, so I do it at home
                   anyway. [I asked Marie to tell me what kind of things she
                   made] ...all kinds of clothes, dresses, skirts, tops
                   [blouses], just about anything, but I'm not that good at
                   trousers and jackets ...Carol's been showing me how to use
                   the pattern cutting for them, cos at home most of the time
                   I just cut it straight from the cloth, but with the trousers
                   it always comes out wrong (laugh)..."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

For other girls, Fashion and Design was not merely about learning dress making, but included a real desire to break into fashion design as a serious career:

Jackie   "I want to design clothes, maybe try for college again when
                   I've finished with this place ...when I first came here it
                   was mainly the pattern cutting that I was keen on, but now
                   everything is important for me to learn, like the Knitting
                   and even Leather Craft (laugh) ...I mean before I thought I
                   knew about designing, but coming here has really made me
                   see there are so many things to do with it."
                                                            (Black CP Trainee)

Because Jackie was so keen on the subject I asked her to explain what she meant by Fashion and Design:

Jackie   "It's not just learning to make clothes for yourself, like some of the others think. Fashion work, is like working for one of those companies where you design clothes for them, maybe for one of those ah, fashion houses in Paris! ..."
                                                                (Black CP Trainee)

Jackie was clearly associating fashion with the more glamorous side of the 'rag trade'. She had, as described earlier (see Chapter 7) worked in a small clothing firm as a full-time machinist, but had found this a stultifying experience. Instead Jackie clearly desired to work in the more up market end of the fashion industry, where she would, according to her, have more control over the kind of work she would do:

Jackie   "When I was in that place [her old workplace] I realised that I wasn't getting anywhere with it. I mean that kind of work is not my idea of a career, and besides I knew I wasn't learning anything new, ...they just kept you on the machine all day, doing the same thing over and over again. I just had to get out ...I wanted better experience than that, doing different things, so I left and ended up coming here [to the scheme]."
                                                                (Black CP Trainee)

To some extent, Jackie's sentiments were shared by Christina, who like Jackie was looking towards gaining full-time employment. However, Christina's approach to training in Fashion and Design was based on a slightly different set of criteria, when compared to Jackie's assessment:

Christina   "I used to sew a bit at school but when I left I didn't really pay it much mind ..Fashion work is ok though, because you can earn good money from it if you've got the right skills ...would I like to be a dress designer? *yeah* why not (laugh) ...at least I'd get to do something exciting for a change ...no factory work is definitely out, that's just like slave labour, but designing that's different isn't it? ...you can work for yourself then ..."
                                                                (Black CP Trainee)

From these brief accounts it is apparent that Fashion and Design and Knitwear had different meanings for the female CP trainees. To some girls the idea of gaining practical skills was important, while for others it was the potential for a 'career' as opposed to a job that was important. All the girls were aware of the glamour image of Fashion designing and held either vague or developed notions about the kinds of jobs open to women in this industry.

However the depiction of the fashion industry as part of the glamour world of Paris fashion houses was far removed from the reality of low status jobs in the Clothing Industry. To be fair most of the girls were aware of this distinction, but in terms of how they approached the labour market and following this, their training, differences did emerge. For example, some of the girls were more committed to making an investment in their training than others. Marie provides a good example of this. She was particularly keen on dress making and made most of her own clothes. She therefore had a vested interest in finishing her projects:

Marie
"Sometimes I have two projects on the go, but like I said to Carol I can do both at the same time ...like the other day I was going to a party and needed a new outfit, cos you know how people stay [are] if they see you wearing the same thing more than once they start to chat - anyway, I had been putting this skirt together and I told Carol I wanted to stop to make a dress suit [dress and matching jacket], she started to make a little fuss, you know the way she can when she's in a mood, but I told her I'd get it all done by the weekend - boy! did I work hard, you know I took it home and mum thought I was crazy working all night, but like I said to her, if I didn't finish it Carol might try and stop me doing my own stuff later on..."

(Black CP Trainee)

On the other hand someone like Merille was slower and at times appeared less committed to course. This was because she could not progress as fast as she thought she would have and felt that she was getting stuck too often:

Merille
"...I do get fed up, I suppose because I've got a short temper (laugh), like the other day, I cut this cloth the way Carol showed me but I made it too small can you believe that! Boy, I was just mad about it and started cursing off. Kay told me to calm down, but I was too vex [angry]". [I asked Merille what happened after that?] ..."I had to start it gain, didn't I. All the others thought it was well funny and when I calmed down I could see the joke ...yeah I do think it's a bit hard [dress making], because you've got to learn a lot and if you're not patient, like me, then after a while you do start thinking it's a waste of time..."

(Black CP Trainee)

Jane's response was far more pragmatic than Merille's. She liked the idea of being able to sew but recognised her limitations:

Jane
"...the way I see it, if I learn how to make my own clothes I'll be happy _ but it's not all that easy, so we will just have to see what happens ...really though we're lucky with having someone like Carol, because she does help you a lot ...Me and her have talked and I know I'll never be the best fashion designer in the world or anything like that..."

I asked Jane what she would like to do?:

Jane   "...not factory work that's for sure, maybe work in a
        boutique or if I get really good for myself..."

                                                        (White CP Trainee)

From this, together with Merille's response to her training, two important

points emerge. First, in relation to aspirations, both these girls were aware

that their lack of 'talent' in dress making meant that they were not going to

carve out 'successful' careers in this field. The second point raised by their

accounts is that as a result of their recognition that 'success' in this sense

was elusive, from their point of view what they were hoping to raise was

their employability status by having a slight leverage in terms of skills.

Put another way, both felt that at least they would be able to utilise the

experience of training in their search for jobs. Even though both these young

women clearly rejected the idea of factory work, they could if need be still

acquire enough skills to enter this type of work. In doing so both girls

displayed a degree of realism about their prospects and the fact that

unemployment loomed ever closer to them as the months went by. In a later

statement Jane made this telling comment:

Jane   "...let's face it, it's money isn't it?, if I had it I wouldn't
        be bothered about learning how to sew, but seeing as I
        haven't got any (laugh) I'll just have to stick it out..."

                                                        (White CP Trainee)

This last statement stands in direct contrast to some of the earlier comments

made by Jane, where she had enthused about training in Fashion and Design.

However, I believe that Jane and to a lesser extent Merille were following an

employment strategy designed, at the very least, to gain entry into the jobs

market. This is because both girls, along with the rest of the trainees, were

acutely conscious of the fact that, barring qualifications, the next best thing

was experience. Without this, they stood little or no chance of getting a job.

Having a degree of experience in dress making, via training (which was more

palatable than factory work), would enable them to compete in the bottom-end

of the jobs market, even if this did not match their idea of a career or work

that carries with it personal satisfaction. This attitude towards making an

investment in training is amply provided by the reasons given by Christina

and Eileen, two Black girls, who had both experienced longer spells in the labour market and as a result exhibited a much greater awareness of what constituted the criteria underpinning the definition of employability status. Christina's assessment of what her training needs were directed towards was as follows:

Christina   "Like I told you before, I've looked for work and I know how hard it is out there ...I decide to try training again because I figured at least I'd be learning something that might give me a better chance, least ways its better than to messengering [sic] I can tell you! This way I get a chance to learn something for myself, not like last time when I was doing that shop work work [as a YTS trainee], because you know that there are jobs out there but they want people who know what they are doing..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

While Eileen expressed her view of the situation in slightly different terms:

Eileen   "Before all I could do was catering and even then I couldn't get a job. This way, like Elaine says, I stand a better chance because I'll be able to try for one of those places". ..[I asked Eileen what kind of places?] ..."you know, ah - what do you call it, piece work! that's it, where they do things like that" ...[I asked Eileen if that is what she really wanted to do?] ..."..no, it's not what people call a good job or anything but being on the dole is worse, you haven't got any money, can't go out with your friends and just end up staying in doors all the time..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

All the young women who had stated that the area of work they were looking towards was in the Clothing Industry were certain that jobs were still available in this area. An examination of the evidence about the pattern of employment in this sector reveals that while their belief was not totally unfounded, the nature of jobs on offer was markedly skewed towards small unorganised workshops or homeworking that offered neither secure areas of work nor the kind of job satisfaction envisaged by the trainees. According to the 1981 Census the total number of workers in the Clothing Industry was 29,000, but this figure refers to registered full or part-time employees. In actuality the Industry employs a large number of self employed and unregistered labour, usually homeworkers, resulting in their exclusion from the official figures. Based on estimates derived from the Greater London Council (GLC), homeworking and unregistered employment may add as much as 40 per cent on to the total figure, especially within certain Boroughs in London,

such as Islington. Hence GLC estimates for the numbers employed in the Clothing Industry in London amounts to approximately 58,000 in 1981 (Mitter. 1986). The Clothing Industry also suffered decline in the early 1980s, for example between 1979 and 1983 registered employment of the fashionwear sector fell by 16,000. The work of Mitter (1986) argued that this decline has been off-set by the increasing transference of jobs from factory to homeworkers and to workers in sweatshops. Quoting GLC statistics, Mitter shows that over 80 per cent of employment in London's Clothing Industry, is located amongst firms employing less the 50 people; that these workers are concentrated in inner city areas where the production of fashion clothes also takes place is another feature of the clothing industry in London. Furthermore, research has shown that a significant number of home and sweatshop workers are women drawn from the ethnic minorities (Ward and Jenkins. 1984; Shah. 1975).

Girls like Marie entertained the possibility of setting up in their homes but, as Allen and Wolkowitz (1986) conclude, working 'in one's own home' conjures up a picture of work autonomy which is quite misleading. The pressures of women's domestic duties, together with the demands placed on them by suppliers or clients is not conducive to the kind of worker independence that some of the young women envisaged.

Trainers And Trainees - Leather Craft Training Or Remedial Lessons?

Up to this point the discussion has dwelt on the attitude and aspirations of trainees towards the Fashion and Design training module on offer at the CP scheme. There was however the question of training in Leather Craft, run by Kay the only Black member of staff. Kay's presence on the scheme was a crucial factor in the experiences of the CP girls, especially the Black girls. Unlike the ITeC programme, Kay provided a role model for a number of the Black girls. Her open political views and assessment of racism led to a number of discussions amongst trainees and staff alike. Moreover, Kay's determination to ensure that the all the girls got what she called "good advice", often led her into conflict with other staff whom she considered to

be "too slack" in their attitudes towards the trainees and the principle of training in general.

Kay's course module offered training in Leather Craft skills, which in actuality involved working in leather, making a variety of small products, such as bags, belts, purses and badges. Kay was also a seamstress by profession, having learnt her trade in Jamaica. She was therefore well equipped to 'cover' for Carol in the Fashion and Design course. While nearly all of the trainees got on fairly well with Kay, they nonetheless were resentful about having to undertake her module which was invariably described as 'boring' or 'prison labour'. Unfortunately, because of the lack of funds, the girls could not use the leather material from Kay's course to design outfits in the Fashion and Design section and this, together with the fact that on more than one occasion material went missing was another source of frustration endured by the trainees. Sam, a White trainee, had this to say about Leather Craft training:

Sam   "What a bore, all we do is the same thing, making these stupid bags for the Red Cross. It's not even as if we get paid for it, so we end up doing it for nothing, what kind of thing is that! ...Kay's alright though, but really, I just don't see the point of doing Leather Craft — how many belts can you make! (laugh)..."

                                                  (White CP Trainee)

Emily, like Sam held similar views, however, she chose to concentrate on the benefits of Kay's presence on the scheme, rather than the course:

Emily   "I don't mind it so much because at least you get to chat and have a laugh ...anyway Kay's not that strict and she let's you do your own thing, like if you want to make a belt or something ...no I definitely don't see Leather Craft as getting me anywhere, it's just that you can do extra things with it, but that's about it..."

                                                  (Black CP Trainee)

Karen was one of the few trainees who actually liked the course, although her reasons, were quite specific:

Karen   "...well, I like it (laugh), I know the others don't, but I think it's cool, you know?..."

I asked Karen why she felt this way?:

Karen   "...because I can design a lot of my gear, you know belts,
leather tassels for my jackets, stuff like that ...but
seriously, I think it alright, sometimes it *can* be a bit
boring, specially bag making! it reminds me of one of those
prison films, you know the ones where they just make sacks
all day ...but personally I think it will be useful for when
I do the jewellery business, I mean I can always do bags as
well as jewellery can't I?..."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee)</div>

In contrast to Karen's seeming enthusiasm, Jackie B was the most bitter critic

of the Leather Craft course and took it as almost a personal affront:

Jackie B   "It's stupid, I mean making those stupid bags, day in day
out what do they [the trainers] think we are, dumbos or
what!" [I asked Jackie B why she objected to the course?]
...·cos it makes us lot look like idiots, like we ain't good
for nothing else ...this place is supposed to be about
training, so what do they call bag making? If I wanted to
do stuff like that I'd worked in some factory - nah, it's
not on, but Carol says we've got to do it..."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee)</div>

Jackie B's criticisms of the course were not entirely unwarranted. Trainees

were not being taught skills which they could viably use in the labour market.

Moreover, of all the training modules on offer at the CP scheme, Leather

Craft, that is the content of the course, brought into sharp focus the fact

that trainees were classed as the 'least able'. .The training on offer was

viewed by most of the girls as remedial; as something which people with

learning difficulties undertook. This latter point was justified in their eyes

by the arrival of 2 White girls with learning problems to the scheme during

the course of the training year.

Jackie B's resentment was also a reflection of her rejection of the 'least

able' label. While she was the first to admit that from a schooling point of

view she had achieved little success, this did not mean that she saw herself

as a failure:

Jackie B   "...yeah, *I know* that I'm not clever like other people. So
what if I didn't get 'O' levels, that doesn't mean a person's
backwards ...like I told you, I didn't like school and that's
why I didn't stay..."

<div align="right">(White CP Trainee)</div>

Kay, the Leather Craft tutor was well aware if these underlying contradictions

which trainees felt. She was however, unable to elevate her course beyond

that described by the girls as remedial, because of the nature of what she

felt she was up against. Kay describes this as:

Kay   "Here we are working with these kids who society has let
down and put into schemes like this. So the way I see it
all we can do is try and make them feel good about
themselves, because nobody has bothered with them up to
now." [A little later in the conversation Kay stated that]
...I don't know how to make the course more interesting.
For a start I can't get any good materials or equipment, so
most of what we have is old stock anyway. And the girls
them, they're bored you know, because they recognise that
they're not doing anything that will help them for the
future. So I try now, to help them with other things - try
and get them to learn about things..."

                                                    (Leather Craft Trainer)

Kay's attitude towards the girls on the CP scheme (indeed all the trainees)

was an important factor in determining the nature of the trainees' relations

with the staff in general. As alluded to earlier, some of the girls saw the

trainers as a 'soft' touch, where they could manipulate situations to their

advantage. Kay however was not viewed in the same way. During my time on

the scheme, I noticed the respect and awe with which trainees viewed Kay.

Two factors appeared to have contributed to this. First, Kay was not averse

to challenging trainees about their attitudes on a number of issues, for

example, boys' attitudes towards girls and visa versa; racism, and what she

called 'manners', ie. behaviour and respect towards other people. Second, Kay

was frank with the trainees and didn't attempt to overtly appear like a

'social worker type'. She gave, as far as I was able to judge, honest answers

to questions and admitted for instance, that the scheme was not offering them

much. On the other hand Kay would often argue that because they, the

trainees did not have any real alternative they should try and get the most

of the training on offer.

In what follows a few examples of the attitudes of trainees towards Kay is

given:

Karen   "I like Kay, she talks to you right, you know and you can
tell her anything - mind you, you might not like what she
tells you, but you take it off her cos she doesn't bull shit
you, you know what I mean..."

                                                  (White CP Trainee)

Jackie   "...Kay is for real, not like the rest of them - don't get me wrong I like Carol and the others, the treat you ok, but Kay tells you like it is, she doesn't hide nothing from you and she treats you like you're somebody just like her, not like you're a problem for her or anything..."

                                                          (Black CP Trainee)

Christina   "...she knows what's happening for us [Black people] out there. The other trainers try and make out it will be ok, even though you can see they don't really think so, but not Kay she doesn't do that" ...[I asked Christina to explain what she meant by this?] ..."I mean we all know this place isn't offering much right, none of us lot are gonna walk into jobs because we've been here are we? But Kay tries to advise you about things, like she's always on at me to go to college to study..."

                                                          (Black CP Trainee)

There are three interesting factors at work here which together provide a better understanding of the social forces at work on the scheme. First, unlike other members of staff, Kay was seen to be working class by the trainees. Put another way, her status was not differentiated by the fact of having qualifications. This meant that like the trainees, her position was defined by experience and not qualifications. For the majority of girls at the scheme this was important precisely because they formed a pool of unqualified youth labour and had encountered failure to find employment on that basis. As noted earlier, the idea of having an employability leverage in terms of gaining practical experience from training, was an important part of trainees' assessment. Hence while what was imparted to them by the other three trainers was 'practical', Kay was in a sense living proof that an individual could gain a foothold in the jobs market (that excluded menial work), based upon practical as opposed to academic skills.

The answer given by Elaine illustrates this aspect of the trainees' stress on practical experience:

Elaine   "...trying for jobs nowadays is harder I think because they want you to have qualifications and experience, so you need both, but what if you're like me [unqualified], all you've got left is experience and how you're gonna get that when there's no work! ...a place like this can give you that, if that's what you want..."

                                                          (Black CP Trainee)

The second factor is that Kay was deemed to be more up-front than the other

trainers, in that she didn't try and hide or down play the harsh realities

waiting for them outside the CP scheme. Why this is relevant refers to the

social objectives of the scheme and how this was interpreted by trainers,

especially the scheme manager. Carol had this to say about the prospects of

the trainees at the scheme:

Carol   "Most of the kids here have been failed by the system. We
try and give them a good environment to work in and
encourage them, but it isn't easy. Most of them will end up
on the dole I'm afraid and the scheme's more of a stop-gap
for them. It's a place where they can come and hang out
and gain some experience, even though I know their chances
are slim, particularly for those that want to go into
fashion work and graphics. We both know that you need
qualifications, and sadly, these girls don't have it. One or
two of them may perhaps go on to college, but for the
majority they won't go far ...I can tell you it's really
frustrating knowing that what we do here won't make an
ounce of difference to them in the end..."

                                                        (The CP Scheme Manager)

In contrast Kay was highly critical of the underlying pessimism of Carol and

the other trainers. Kay felt quite strongly that although the approach taken

by the other trainers was sympathetic to the plight of these particular

groups of young people, the laxity which she perceived in the content and

style of training, meant that she felt they were indirectly committing a

disservice to the trainees. Kay argued that the training content should be

more directly relevant to the labour market and that greater emphasis should

be placed on post-YTS initiatives:

Kay   "I don't agree with them and the way they act towards the
trainees. They should be encouraging them more to take up
education you know, rather than let them run around like
there is no tomorrow ...it seems to me that people like them
[the other trainers] accept these kids as failures and act
like they pity them. Instead I think we need to be more
positive, you know?..."

                                           (The Leather Craft Trainer)

It is argued here that trainees picked up on this division, and although I did

not see it surface in a confrontation, it was part of an underlying tension

between staff and trainees. In this sense trainees preferred to 'cast their

lot' with Kay, despite the fact that her course was the least popular.

The third and final factor is contained within Kay's last statement, where she revealed that she genuinely believed that it was important to encourage the female trainees. This is significant because it has to be remembered that most of the trainees were labelled as 'problem kids', who had been failed by the system. The point being that the *trainees knew this*, ie were both familiar with the label and the kinds of people, such as teachers, social and youth workers, who treated them as such. They therefore understood that despite the 'caring attitude' of these significant 'others' with whom they were in contact, their situation would not improve. Hence Carol, Gillian and Tom, though well meaning, could offer the trainees no alternative solutions - the scheme was, as Carol's earlier statement makes clear, a stop-gap. Kay's attitude was seen to be different, precisely because she wanted trainees to 'use the system', primarily through education, in order to attain a more secure future. In this way she was encouraging and it is this which the trainees seized upon.

This depiction is aptly illustrated by the case of Gloria, whom as we have seen was keen on photography and graphics. Lodged within Gloria's aspirations towards these two fields, was a rejection of the current status of her 'life chances'. Her enthusiasm for these two courses derived from a desire to not, as she put it, follow everybody else. This young woman was certain that there is more to work and life than she or her friends had been exposed to. After a short spell in the labour market, doing a job which frankly bored her, she had embarked upon youth training with a sense of anticipation. Hence her desire for skills in photography and graphics was not based on knowledge about the specific types of jobs that these two fields enveloped, but rather, was more in keeping with her strategy to get out of a rut:

Gloria   "After I left MacDonald's I had to think about things, like what it is I really wanted to do ...I guess Child Care was something everybody went for, but deep down I just knew that it wasn't for me. That's why I came here really, because I could get to do photography without having to go to college..."

                                                               (Black CP Trainee)

The advantages for Gloria lay in the fact that learning on the scheme by-
passed having to go through the more formal route of college. It was only
when she had gained experience and confidence about photography and later
graphics that she seriously talked about college, not as a way of delaying
having to make a career decision, but as an important step towards
establishing herself in this area of work. From her point of view, what she
was learning on the scheme was relevant to her long term aspiration to attain
a higher level of job opportunities.

In sum, female trainees on the CP scheme were offered no more than remedial
training, in a limited number of areas, that referred not so much to the
labour market, as to the social welfare function of the scheme. It was
incongruous that a scheme such as this could offer high powered training in
the technical sense of the word, because that was never the aim of the
programme, nor indeed the YTS in general. Rather, the young women on this
scheme were treated as 'problem kids', whose needs were being defined for
them, largely on this basis. The fact that many of the young women rejected
the label bears witness to the resistance which they exhibited. Furthermore,
how some of the girls were utilising the scheme as part of an active survival
strategy, designed to off-set their poor showing in the labour market was
also evident.

Defining a Community Project Trainee

A number of points raised earlier highlight the contradictory position which a
young woman attending Uncle Sam's faced. Specifically, being a CP trainee
conferred a low status, because by definition young people entering the
scheme were automatically labelled as the 'least able', regardless of what
they themselves felt.

There were other aspects of being a YTS trainee on the CP element of youth
training provision, which also contributed to the poor status of a "CPer". In
common with the ITeC girls, the CP trainees status was intimately linked to
the question of the training allowance. Like their counterparts on the ITeC

programme the girls on the CP scheme complained about the low sum of money involved, together with the limitations which this imposed on their leisure and other outside activities.

Marie and Merille both pointed to the financial difficulties of being a YTS trainee:

Marie
"...the money's not enough, you know because it's hard to make it stretch to the end of the week, I mean by that time I'm flat broke, and end up borrowing, which I hate, cos you've got to pay back, haven't you, and by the time I do that, I'm owing again.."
(Black CP Trainee)

Similarly, Merille complained about the allowance as being to inadequate in meeting her needs:

Merille
"...I used to save before, when I had the cleaning job I used to do a 'partner'*, and put in £7 a week, but these days I can't afford to do that and that's made things tough boy!"
(Black CP Trainee)

(Note* A 'partner' is where a group of people save a weekly sum over a period of weeks, where each 'partner' collects the total amount saved by the group in a weekly rotation, thereby giving individuals access to the full amount of money pooled. All the 'partners' continue to pay in their 'hand' (that is the sum they've agreed to save weekly), until the end of the saving period, when a new 'partner' system starts up again).

Marie and Merille were facing hardships because they found themselves in a cycle of debt each week. However not all the girls were in this predicament, athough the majority of trainees complained about the level of allowance:

Karen
"...the way I see it, it's better than being on the dole, that way my parents keep off my back because the money's mine.. [I asked Karen to explain what she meant by this?] ...like I said, my folks can't complain that I'm not doing anything, because I'm coming here and the allowance is part of it, ain't it?, but if I was on the dole they'd go on about me getting a job..."
(White CP Trainee)

Karen's assessment about the function of the allowance in her life was partly shared by the other female trainees. However, there were differences depending upon an individual's circumstances. Hildreth, who joined the scheme slightly later than some of the other trainees, accepted the allowance as a

normal aspect of her training:

Hildreth   "...I haven't really thought much about it, I know it's low and
             that, but I was at school before so I wasn't getting as
             much anyway..."

                                                              (Black CP Trainee)

Hildreth's attitude was more in keeping with the view propagated by the

government that "trainees themselves need to accept that the total costs of

training must be taken into account in determining the level of their pay or

allowance" (p.6. Department of Employment. 1984). In effect, Hildreth was an

example of an 'ideal trainee'. She had not had any experience of the labour

market (child or general), and was totally dependent upon her parents.

Hildreth was just one example of a generation of young people leaving school

at a time when an expectation about full employment, was no longer an aspect

of the transition from school to work.

In contrast other female trainees were much more aware of the state of the

labour market, and the fact that young people were being forced into

accepting low pay and unemployment as part of their future careers. Jane's

response to this issue typifies the feelings of many of the other female

trainees:

Jane   "Nowadays you can't say what's gonna happen, can you? When
            you leave school you're either on the dole or on a place
            like this.."

                                                              (White CP Trainee)

However, as we have seen, most of the girls while acknowledging this new

situation, were resisting it, through a variety of means. They were for the

most part highly critical of the government's attempts to coerce young people

into accepting unemployment (even if they did not necessarily express it in

precisely these terms). This was manifest in their complaints about the

allowance:

Christina   "...they [the government] do try and treat young people like
             shit, I mean, they want us to go on the YTS, but don't want
             to pay us for what we do. That's why I'm glad I'm on a
             scheme like this because if I was in one of those places
             where you work with an employer, I'd be getting the same
             money for doing more work than I do here!..."

                                                              (Black CP Trainee)

Christina's attitude was partly based on her earlier encounter with the YTS, where she had been located on an employer-led placement. This experience, together with her longer spell in the labour market, undertaking a variety of temporary jobs, had in her eyes, raised the function of the CP scheme and the allowance. This was because the allowance more readily suited the level of opportunity on offer.

This aspect of some of the female trainees' attitude towards the training allowance in the context of the CP scheme is interesting. It represents a number of important issues associated with the YTS. First, Christina's response reveals an understanding of the status distinctions between employer-led Mode A schemes and Mode B (CP) provision. The former clearly had precedence over the latter, but in doing so highlighted the second issue confronting trainees, namely that the YTS is exploitative, especially with regards to the allowance. Following this, in Christina's statement is contained an implicit distinction between 'a training allowance' and 'a wage'. Thus whilst she, along with many of the other girls, could accept as realistic receiving an allowance for attending the CP scheme, this was unacceptable where working with an employer was concerned. The significance of this contention rests on the young women's realism about the YTS and the State's role in fostering market-oriented training programmes. From my general discussions with trainees, together with the interviews, it was clear to me at least, that they took on board the nature of the CP scheme's 'welfare function', where it was clear that as a result of being designed for the 'disadvantaged', the quality of training on offer to them was woefully inadequate *and* inappropriate.

Jackie B's views on the issue of being a CP trainee, illustrates this point:

Jackie B   "...I do think it's ok, but it's not like working is it? Carol's not gonna get us lot a job when we leave here, is she? ...I 'spose it's [the scheme] alright for what you do, but it's not proper training, just a place where people like me come to..."

                                                                    (White CP Trainee)

Jackie, the Black trainee interested in Fashion and Design, felt that the scheme was more conducive to her needs, when compared to an employer-led scheme:

Jackie   "...I left that place [her old job] because I wasn't getting any experience, so I wasn't learning much, just doing the same thing everyday ...this place gives me a chance to pick up some learning... [I asked Jackie whether she had considered another type of scheme?] No, cos if I was on these employer ones, they wouldn't be training me, and I would just be working with people like I did before, but for less money - that don't make sense to me, (choops), - so this place is better, even though you can't get a job from it."

                   (Black CP Trainee)

The juxta-positioning of the role of experience and training within the context of accepting a second rate allowance, underscored the contradiction that surrounded this group of young women's training needs. Both Jackie B and Jackie's statements bring into sharper focus the division between the State's conception of the training needs of the young and what, in this instance, the Black and White girls entering the CP scheme defined as *their* needs.

By way of conclusion, in addition to being an option selected by some of the trainees on the CP scheme, the discussion focuses on the reasons why some trainees, four in all, chose to leave the scheme before completing their training year. It will be argued that the examples presented by these four young women, each point to the divisions between the State and the needs of the CP trainee as mentioned above.

Reasons For Leaving The CP Scheme Before Completing The Training Year

Jackie B, Hildreth, Elaine And Eileen

Jackie B was the first to leave. She had long been unhappy with the scheme and felt that it was not getting her anywhere. Jackie announced to Carol that she was leaving, after 7 months on the project. The reaction of the other trainees was interesting because Jackie B's departure was taken as a loss by them. Her leaving also sharpened in the minds of the other female trainees the question of futures, as well as amplifying the fact that the CP scheme was not giving them access to jobs. I observed that trainees talked

together in hushed tones about the lack of success the scheme had in terms

of finding trainees jobs, coupled with the unnerving sense of failure which

many of them privately felt was an inevitable outcome.

I asked Jackie B what her reasons were for leaving? At first she stated

that:

Jackie B   "...I'm just fed up with it [the CP scheme], - besides I'm not
                  learning much now, just doing the same old things and I'm
                  bored, you know, I just feel it's time to leave..."

However, having got to know Jackie B, I felt that there was more to her

leaving than she was admitting. I asked her whether she was under any kind

of pressure to leave and what her future plans were:

Jackie B   "...no, I don't think so, I just wanna try something different,
                  ah - something I can get a job from, I don't know..."
                                                              (White CP Trainee)

Jackie B's answer was intriguing because I realised that she had something in

the pipeline, but obviously did not want to talk about it. I decided to try

and probe further, first by getting her to relax a little bit more by chatting

in general. After a short time I returned once again to asking her about why

she was *really* leaving:

Jackie B   "...ok, listen, I'll tell you but it's between you and me,
                  right? ...I've got a chance to go on another scheme where
                  they're doing office training, you know, typing and stuff. I
                  don't want the others to know, specially Carol, because it
                  looks like I'm betraying her, you know, saying that the
                  scheme ain't good enough and she and the others have been
                  really good to me, so I kinda feel a bit funny about it....
                  [I asked Jackie B whether any of the other trainees knew?]
                  No, I wanted to tell them, but they might think I'm acting
                  like I'm better than them or something, so I'll just leave -
                  I'll come back to visit and that, then maybe I'll tell them
                  so just keep it to yourself ok?..."
                                                              (White CP Trainee)

From the above it is apparent that Jackie B felt the CP scheme had failed her.

She wanted a job and importantly, had realised that unless she did something

about it, she would face unemployment upon leaving Uncle Sam's. Having

assessed her chances of finding work, either in relation to her training or

general position in the jobs market, Jackie B chose to re-enter the YTS in an

area of training more closely allied to the structure of job opportunities for

young women. Jackie B left not long after this conversation took place, and,

to my knowledge the other trainees and staff did not find out about her real reasons for leaving.

With regards to how Jackie B defined her training needs, this was clearly in relation to gaining skills, not for when and where jobs might be 'available', but for her immediate future. This points to the distinction between the State's conception of the jobs market, where young people must be trained in 'transferable' skills, in anticipation of the demands of employers; and the training needs of the young, where the objective is to satisfy their demand for work. As a result Jackie B's decision to leave was based her understanding of the principles which lay behind the implementation of schemes such as the Community Project, the aim of which was to lower the expectations of young people, particularly those deemed the 'least able'.

In contrast Hildreth, the late arrival on the scheme, who had stayed two months into the 6th form at school and then left eventually to end up on the CP scheme, was another trainee who left early. Hildreth's departure was approximately five months after joining the CP scheme. The uncertainty over her precise leaving date is because she did not announce her plans to leave the scheme, but gradually stopped coming on a daily basis. Hildreth, right from the start had exhibited an indifference towards her training. She had treated the scheme more like a place to 'hang out', and had not particularly shown an interest in the CP scheme's activities, outside of photography, which she told me she liked. As the months had gone by, her attendance had become more erratic and on several occasions Carol had been forced to discipline her, (it should be noted that Carol was not especially strict about applying MSC rules concerning the docking of the allowance in lieu of absence or lateness). Eventually Hildreth stopped putting in an appearance at the CP scheme and although Carol did make attempts to contact her at her home address, none of us found out what happened to her.

Hildreth's departure did not have the same kind of impact on the other female trainees as Jackie B's leaving. This was partly because of the friendships which those trainees entering the scheme in the early Autumn of

1984 had established. However, the other factor was that none of them were surprised by Hildreth's behaviour, which they had foreseen, not only as a result of her increasing absence, but because as some of them put it "that girl didn't know what she was doing", or "she just acted silly all the time". These comments reveal an important aspect of the attitude of some of the CP girls towards their training. This refers to the fact that because they had defined their training needs in relation to securing a job, the actions of Hildreth were deemed as part of her immaturity and inability to think about her future. In comparison, most of the other female trainees, who as previously stated, had experienced both employment and unemployment, were worried about their futures, because they had determined that securing a job was their primary goal. Whether or not this was cast in terms of 'getting a job' or 'mapping out a career', the majority of the Black and White female CP trainees were committed to the labour market, in ways in which Hildreth's seemingly "silly" behaviour showed that she was not. To be fair to Hildreth, whether this is how she interpreted her response to her time spent on the CP scheme remains a mystery.

The two other girls who left before finishing their training year were Elaine and Eileen, the two friends who had joined at the same time and were both 'older' trainees. Elaine was the first to go, eight months after her start date. Her reasons were quite straightforward, she found a job as a machinist in a local factory making children's clothes. Without being too personal, I remember the day she came in and announced her news, we, that is the staff, trainees and myself were needless to say delighted and happy for her. Elaine explained to me that she felt she had learnt enough to try for a job and after only one failed attempt had been successful. Her case is very important because it boosted the morale of the female trainees, who were becoming more preoccupied with questions about their future prospects.

However there are several aspects about Elaine's success which need to be explored because they highlight some of the broader issues that faced the

girls on the CP scheme. I asked Elaine how she had found her new job (her start date was a week away):

Elaine   "I just decided to try for it (laugh), I told Eileen about it and she said I should try ...when I went along to the place, after seeing the advert in the shop, the man [manager] asked me what I could do? I, you know, made it up a bit but anyway he showed me around and I told him I could use the machine, then he asked me when I wanted to start ...it was so easy, I couldn't believe it after the things that happened before when I tried looking for work..."

I then asked Elaine what her workplace was like:

Elaine   "It's small, there's only about ten people working there, all women except for the boss — but it's a job and that's what counts..."

I wanted to find out why she had felt the need to leave Uncle Sam's:

Elaine   "...money, no other reason. I like it here [Uncle Sam's] and get on with everyone, but the money, I just couldn't live off what we get here, that's why I'm leaving, see, this job pays about £45 basic and you can earn more on top of that if you do extra work. That's better than the £26 we get here, isn't it?"

<div align="right">(Black CP Trainee)</div>

Elaine's explanation about why she chose to look for work at this stage of her training, reveals three interesting factors. The first relates to the question of money and the inadequacy of the training allowance, which as discussed previously was viewed as a training issue, rather than a work-related one. Second, being a slightly 'older' girl with more experience of the jobs market, Elaine had initially entered Uncle Sam's in order to circumvent unemployent and in the process improve on her repertoire of skills to include dress making. To this end she was successful because she learnt enough to try and find employment in an area of work previously closed to her. Finally, Elaine's example illustrates the fact that 'getting a job' represented for some of the CP girls the most important reason for staying on the scheme. All the trainees knew the scheme could not gain them jobs, but as Elaine's case demonstrated, they were being armed with *some* practical skills which, potentially could aid them in their search for work. Only three girls had ambitions which fell outside of the low paid sector, where in fact most of the Black and White female trainees were in all probability destined to seek

employment.

The decision of Eileen to leave the CP scheme was taken not long after Elaine, who was in fact her best friend. Eileen's position was qualitatively distinct from that of the other female trainees on the scheme, because she had experienced long term unemployment upon leaving school in the summer of 1983. Her initial reasons for entering the programme had been closely linked to Elaine's, and likewise when she had left for work, Eileen's position on the scheme became more unstable.

Although Eileen had expressed her belief that training was more desirable than unemployment, she was to become increasingly disillusioned over her employment prospects. In her eyes this was associated with her disappointment over training and the fact that she came to recognise, that in her case, training was not in the end improving her employability status. During my general talks with Eileen I noticed that over a period of time she became less committed to the scheme, by for instance, not carrying out her project work or voicing her complaints more frequently to other trainees and staff alike. During the run up to her leaving the scheme, by which time Elaine had already left, I asked Eileen whether she had changed her mind about the usefulness of training:

Eileen   "...well I don't know, cos Elaine found a job, and I know she
                didn't know anything about sewing before she came to this
                place, so it worked out for her, but I'm not all that good
                with the machine, and I'm not interested in none of the
                other things they do here..."
                                                        (Black CP Trainee)

Eileen's sense of frustration that she was not progressing in the one area of the CP scheme's training programme that interested her, led to other criticisms of the Project. These crystallized around the whole question of training for jobs and the fact that the scheme was not offering this:

Eileen   "When I first came here I thought yeah, I'll give it a go
                because it was better than nothing, but now I'm beginning
                to think it was a waste of time, you know?... [I asked
                Eileen what was it about the scheme that made her think
                this way?] Well, look at the bag making, I mean whose
                gonna get a job doing that, then there's the other things
                they do here, you know, like graphics is well naff, it's just
                like doing drawing - oh I don't know, maybe I'm just not in
                a good mood today (laugh)..."

Later on in the conversation Eileen stated that:

> "look at the way they treat you here, I mean they're friendly
> and all that, but it's alright for them people, they don't
> know what it's like to be out of a job..."
>
> (Black CP Trainee)

Eileen was to leave the scheme not long after. Unlike Elaine, she had chosen
to enter unemployment once again. This was surprising, given the fact that
she had expressed her bitterness at being unemployed since leaving school.
However, what this points to is the different concepts of training and its
function within the context of mid-1980s.

In essence Eileen's disappointment about training was very much aligned to
the contradictory signals emanating from the government, in terms of what
training was supposed to accomplish. On the one hand, training was about
boosting employability, and providing young people with a flexible range of
skills, for the future pattern of a modern economy; where there would be a
'need' to be 'responsive' to rapidly changing production markets. While on the
other hand, the State, through the YTS, was also in the business of
transforming young people's attitude towards work, where the aim was to
relate these solely to the 'needs' of the market. Yet in the case of Eileen,
neither the 'needs' of the market, nor the new forms of industrial worker
being patented by the government, fitted in with her stated desire to find
work. The key word here is 'skill' and the different ways in which it was
applied in the context of training. To Eileen 'skill' involved learning
practical skills, directly relevant to gaining employment. To the State 'skill'
referred to training that prepared young people for work — this difference is
an important one, because it is within this dichotomy that the various
structures found within the YTS provision are located. Provision such as the
CP scheme, was positioned at the extreme end of the government's depiction of
training, where preparedness for future demands, was in actuality preparedness
for long term unemployment amongst the 'disadvantaged' and 'least able'
categories. Therefore Eileen's decision to return to unemployment, was not
simply because of Elaine's departure, but incorporated her implicit rejection

of the function of training embodied in the CP scheme. Like Jackie B she wanted more than what was on offer at the CP scheme, but unlike Jackie B, her alternative was to return to unemployment, in preference to remaining in a situation that was getting her nowhere.

In sum, the evidence presented here demonstrates the distinction between the transition from school to work and State depictions of the youth labour market. The Black and White female trainees in this study represent the bottom 40 per cent of the youth labour force, who as a result of mass unemployment face bleak employment futures. However, the main thrust of the approach adopted in this study focussed on the nature of training at the micro level, away from the rhetoric of Training as a reified technical device for imparting practical knowledge. Through the use of retrospective accounts of the girls' transition from school to the labour market it was demonstrated that this is a far more complex process than State explanations allow. Moreover, it was also shown how analyses of the nature of social relations within training environments reveals the degree to which these hold sway over the learning experience of its recipients. Although the two schemes were not directly compared, from the accounts about the forces at work within each training arena, it is clear that the pervasiveness of existing forms of gender and 'race' inequalities influenced the pattern of training on offer to these young women. This was particularly true of the ITeC programme, where broader gender inequalities relating to women's employment, were mediated through 'race' divisions as Black and White girls were forced to compete for training within Office Practice.

In contrast the CP scheme sharply brought into focus the incongruity of the YTS programme in relation to the employment and training needs of the female trainees. It was argued that in one sense this had an equalising effect, because the girls were not in direct competition for the kinds of remedial training on offer to them. Rather, the nature of training provision on the CP scheme exhibits the failure of the YTS to challenge existing forms of inequality; where young people defined as the 'least able' are not accorded

with skills training in line with jobs currently in the labour market. This lack of responsiveness to the training needs of young people, demonstrates the discrepancy between training for jobs in the future, and the immediate demand of young people for gainful employment. Above all, although pitched at slightly different levels, the evidence gathered on the two schemes illustrates the lack of real choice which young people face. This was true for all the girls on the CP scheme, and for the Black and White ITeC female trainees. The level of choice on offer to young women on this latter scheme remained limited to specific niches within women's employment, which belie the notion that new technology opens up new frontiers of opportunity. In comparison, the kind of training on the CP scheme was either unrealistic or else directed to 'dead end' jobs in the secondary employment market. In this context the rudimentary skills offered by the CP scheme were more in keeping with the acceptance that unemployment was a natural outcome for its trainees. On the other hand the programme of training offered by the ITeC was representative of the 'second chance' principle that the concept of training holds for young people. As the attitude of the girls on this scheme revealed, training in new technologies is an attractive proposition for young workers, precisely because it reflects a general consensus that this is the sector where jobs will be created. However, as the evidence of gender subordination clearly showed, new technology does not preclude the operation of sexual divisions, but may in fact reinforce them by confining young women to lower job levels within the sector.

The belief that training is based on a criteria of need as formulated by State's depiction of a future demand for a flexible workforce has been challenged by the findings of this thesis. The nature of training provision found within both schemes highlights the State's failure to tackle existing patterns of structural inequality. Hence, in spite of unemployment, the job opportunities afforded by labour market remained firmly entrenched in hierarchical system, which favours employers' demand at the expense of the training needs of the young.

CONCLUSION TO THESIS:

YOUTH TRAINING IN THE MID-1980s

STATE STRATEGIES AND POLICY OUTCOMES FOR

UNEMPLOYED YOUTH ON THE YTS

This thesis explored a number of issues pertinent in describing the training needs and aspirations of a small cohort of Black and White female trainees on particular aspects of the YTS provision in the mid-1980s. Through the use of qualitative research techniques, the girls' accounts of their transition from school to the YTS, were described. The thesis began by outlining in the Introduction the basis of the State's definition of training needs, for two specific groups, namely ethnic minority youth, with specific reference to Black Youth, and, women.

However in order to contextualise what the sample's training needs were, it was necessary to outline the main aspects of government policy on the question of youth training. To this end, Chapter One provided an analysis of the main trends in youth training policies since the 1970s, leading up to the implementation of the YTS in September 1983. It was shown that the impetus behind much of the State's response to the question of youth training, derived from the rise in unemployment amongst the young. In addition, it was demonstrated that the economic strategies pursued by governments during the 1970s, led to a plethora of initiatives, which identified particular groups of young people as in need of training. However, training, in this context did not refer to occupational skills training, traditionally associated with the apprenticeship system. Rather State training programmes in the 1970s, were based on a notion of gearing up the employability of the young through the imbibing of vocational preparation and Social and Life Skills courses. As unemployment continued to rise it became apparent that what was needed was a more extensive programme, that would cater for this growing number of the young jobless.

Contextualising Youth Training In The Mid- 1980s

The change in government in 1979 signalled a shift towards a more market oriented approach to the question of youth training. In order to understand what this entailed, attention was paid to the economic and social perspectives of the Conservative government, whose policies more than any past government, aimed to transform the whole basis of the education and training of young people in the 1980s. Much of the logic underpinning the policies of this government draw upon notions of a free market economy, where bureaucratic constraints are abolished, in order for the 'market' to satisfy its needs.

In essence this refers to a belief that market forces (ie. employers) should determine the level and quality of employment. Workers are treated as commodities, that sell their labour in the open market. The idea of controlling the form that employment takes is seen as detrimental to the ability of the economy to maximise profits, thereby creating a climate of wealth which trickles down to the whole community. This approach accepts that there are winners and losers in this, but unlike the social welfare approach adopted by the Labour Party in the 1960s, blame is attached to workers themselves, rather than the lack of social justice in the work place. Attitudes such as these have resulted in the kind of policies that reflect a bias towards employers. The State, as part of its *raison d'etre* has been actively engaged in constructing an explanation that focuses on the practices of workers and the supposedly false expectations they hold about 'rights' over employment. Consequently, much of the government's employment policies has sought to undermine and reconceptualise the attitudes of the work force, especially with reference to new recruits to the labour market (Gleeson. 1985).

Such policies were extensive, insofar as they covered a wide area of concern, that included an attack on the financial autonomy of local authorities; the privatization of public services; the 'freeing' of employers from legislative constraints; the marginalisation of trade unions within labour relations policies; and the 'pricing' of the young back into work, as

and when it arises (Finn. 1987). In this sense State intervention in reality referred to strategies designed to safe-guard the 'rights' of employers, by devaluing the labour supply. This was achieved through an attack on labour organisations and through the rise of unemployment, which produced a climate of fear over jobs. However, State policies were not just aimed at existing workers, but also applied to the future labour supply, that is young adults. Hence it is at this point that the question of youth training takes on an important role in the State's active intervention in the functioning of the labour market. In Chapter One the fundamental principles behind this were outlined as a prelude to a description of the main features of the one year YTS. Here the aim was to show in what ways the free market approach of the Conservative government were enshrined in the scheme. Another objective of this discussion was to show how the State's depiction of the young as deficient in a number of key areas, fed into the YTS, thereby adding a further layer of division, that in reality offered differential outcomes for young people entering the scheme.

Underpinning the State's rhetoric on youth training which accompanied the YTS programme, lay a particular conception of young people's position within the jobs market. It was argued that this rested on explanations which focussed on the individual, at the expense of a more critical analysis of the interplay between on-going and long term changes in the economy, and the existence of structural inequalities. Indeed it was contended that the State's analysis of the labour market failed to adequately account for the pattern of employment where the labelling of different categories of labour are utilised; to the detriment of groups of workers, such as Black people and women. Contrary to a concrete analysis of inequality, the State sought to problematise these two groups, by identifying them as 'disadvantaged' based on criteria formed outside of the functioning of the labour market; and through the implementation of remedial solutions, where emphasis was placed on providing 'special help'.

Ironically the concept of 'disadvantage' drew upon existing patterns of

inequality found in various sites, such as the educational system. However, this was not linked to structural forms of inequality, but rather to the failure of such groups to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them. In this way explanations about why, for instance, Black people and women experience differential treatment in the labour market, shifted. the terms of the debate away from inequality to one founded on a deficiency-model, that characterises these groups as being somehow 'abnormal'. The impact of discriminatory practices could under this schema take on a secondary explanatory position. Indeed, I would argue that at the heart of the State's political solutions lies a refusal to accept that discrimination in employment is a primary factor determining, for example, the location of female employees and Black workers. Instead the uptake of 'disadvantage' as the main causal explanation within political discourse, served to legitimate inequality in the labour market by maintaining that such practices constitute (paradoxically) the *normal* functioning of the 'free market'. Basically this means that employers' *rights* about who to employ and on what terms should be upheld, regardless of whether this results in discrimination. From this it can be seen that at the conceptual level discrimination takes on a new meaning where it seen as almost akin to a process of natural selection.

This last point is important because as part of this process an *ideal* has been fostered by the State which supports its attempt to re-socialise the work force, towards what Blackman (1987) describes as the new 'hybrid' industrial worker. Accordingly it is argued that those new recruits who achieve this ideal are more likely to be selected, since they have acquired the right qualities (flexibility) and attitudes which the State believes fits in with employers' requirements.

It is at this juncture that the YTS takes on a particular significance. As outlined in Chapter One, the bi-modal structure of the YTS incorporates a number of training sites that potentially offer different outcomes for trainees. It was illustrated that the scheme's design allowed the government to realise its political objectives by: a) presenting employers with a cheap

supply of unprotected labour, that was vulnerable to the vagaries of the market - ie. market forces that controlled employment destinies without recourse to negotiation with workers and their representatives; and b) contain rising youth unemployment, whilst simultaneously redefining the nature of work away from notions about the 'right' to full employment. However, it is important to distinguish which young people were being addressed by the YTS. Clearly it was not aimed at the academically successful, that is, those young people who could expect to enter Higher Education. Rather, the YTS was geared towards the general labour supply of school leavers, which in the main, represented the working classes.

Although the nature of training provision was far more complex, it can be seen that under the YTS, trainees were located within three broad based categories. First, there were those trainees who received quality training, where they were taught a skill, as well as offered extra perks, such as an increase in the training allowance. This group represented the top 10 per cent of the trainee population and were therefore more likely to gain employment at the end of their training period. The second category consisted of the bulk of trainees who were placed on employers' premises, either directly or through a private training agency. In one sense this group were more subject to uncertainties in the labour market. This is because at the end of their training period the chances of retaining their position within a firm were reduced as a result of the benefits for employers that was enshrined in the system of additionality. Finally there were those young people deemed to be the 'least able'. It is perhaps this category, more then any other which best typifies the ideological basis of the State's activities in the youth labour market. From the analysis presented in Chapter One, it is apparent that the deficiency model was primarily used in two ways. On the one hand it served as a general explanation for why young people exhibited high rates of unemployment; but more than this the model justified why particular groups within the youth category were likely to remain outside of labour market. By virtue of their social status, coupled with such factors as

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low qualifications, these young people found themselves located in Mode B schemes, that did not attempt to provide training for future employment, but rather acted as a temporary reprieve before the onslaught of unemployment. It should be remembered that part of the free market approach accepted unemployment as a necessary feature of the jobs market. I would argue that the YTS reflected this proposition, through the construction of the two-tiered system, where Mode B schemes were designed to offset the shortfall in employer-led Mode A places. Under this type of provision, trainees were taught skills which they were unlikely to be able to transfer to the jobs market. In the present study an example of this is the Photography and Graphics module offered by Uncle Sam's, which in reality usually require some kind of formal (academic) training.

It is at this point that the deficiency model is most salient. This is because in prioritising the concept of 'disadvantage' the State can disguise its belief that unemployment is a necessary prerequisite for economic prosperity. Put another way because the training on offer in Mode B provision in no way approximates to the labour market, the activities of young people within these schemes necessarily prepares them for unemployment. By focussing on those characteristics deemed to be out of step with today's market realism, the whole gamut of disadvantages which had identified Black and White working class youth as holding a subordinate position, has been transposed and utilised as a justification for why they now require 'special help/treatment'.

Summary Of Thesis

In order to counter the political fall out accruing to rising youth unemployment, as well as facilitate the introduction of the YTS, the State has drawn upon demand centred analyses of the youth labour market. In doing so the State searched for causes in reference to the characteristics of the young themselves, and the pattern of their labour market activity. Chapter Two addressed this issue by describing, first the nature of youth unemployment in the early 1980s, followed by the changes that have occurred

in the youth labour market. This entailed a description of the pattern of recruitment and selection of young people to the labour market, and those features which warranted characterising their position as one referenced to a youth labour market. Given the changes that have arisen as a result of unemployment and the restructuring of the economy away from the country's industrial manufacturing base, the question of the transition from school to work was also addressed. It was argued that young people encounter a differential experience of the labour market, which lends itself to the notion of a fractional transitional pattern, where 'race', gender, class and other factors impinge on this. Another pertinent issue raised was the role of State intervention in the youth labour market, where the establishment of the one year YTS created yet another layer of segmentation, based on the labour market status of a young person.

This then formed the backdrop to the research presented in this thesis. In order to locate the main approach adopted by the project, as well as introduce the reader to the two case study schemes, an outline of the research process was undertaken in Chapter Three. Here, the biographical background of the researcher was given a central role, in line with the argument that, who the researcher is, determines the nature of the research and reporting of the evidence. Precisely because a qualitative field research approach was adopted, the aim of allowing the researched, ie Black and White girls, to define those issues important to them, was built into the research design. Consequently, throughout the thesis those aspects which went towards an understanding of what constituted their training needs formed the basis of the analysis of their location on the two schemes. Underscoring this approach was the desire to give my respondents space in which to explore and document the nature of *their* transition from school to the YTS. Once again, although the evidence was retrospective in nature, this was done as a way of getting my respondents to explore those factors that had propelled them into selecting the YTS as a viable post-school option.

Chapter Four begins this discussion, by concentrating on the past schooling experience of the Black and White female trainees. Here a number of key factors were noted as being relevant to why for instance these young women decided to leave school. At the same time their attitude towards schooling was examined, in order to determine the importance which they attached to the role of education in fashioning their response to the labour market. The nature of the girls' experiences was also examined in relation to the type of subjects undertaken at school and the degree to which these influenced their occupational choices. It was noted that the girls in the sample group had not studied non-traditional subjects, associated with male areas of learning. Reference to the role of significant others, ie. teachers, friends and the Careers Service, was also cited as factors influencing their schooling careers. Most of the young women in the sample fell into the unqualified category, and, on the whole had not exhibited a commitment to schooling. It is this, rather than a rejection of the importance of qualifications, which symbolised their refusal to remain in school. Another feature of this was that as a result of their past schooling experiences, it would be fair to say that the majority of Black and White girls in the sample, left school with only vague notions about what occupational categories they would like to attain. From this I would argue that for these young women what was important was the implicit desire for independence, regardless of an individual's qualification status. That the young women reported that their poor educational showing had played a significant role in their desire to leave school, does not lessen this point.

Chapter Five explored the issue of the young women's understanding of the labour market, as part of a process of learning formulated whilst still at school. To this end, Chapter Five examined the nature of young Black and White women's previous participation in the child/juvenile labour market. The analysis revealed a pattern of employment, where these young women were exposed to both the rigours and pitfalls of working life. It was at this stage that they first gained experience of those forces which would have a

determinate influence on their future positions as young Black and White
female workers. Accounts of exposure to racist and sexist practices were
also documented, in addition to the impact which the young women stated this
had on their attitude towards working life. The effects of participating in
the child/juvenile labour market, together with the impact of education,
provided the background against which the question of making the decision to
leave school was assessed. Chapter Five, therefore ends by taking up this
issue, as a backdrop for the discussion of the post-school activities of the
sample group in Chapters Six and Seven respectively.

Chapter Six focussed on the job search activities of the young women, and
those factors which influenced this. All of the sample group were provided
with a job search check list (see Appendix C), where they were asked to
indicate the degree to which particular methods were utilised in their search.
Based upon the collation of this information, a number of issues were
explored with regard to the knowledge of the labour market which the young
women called upon in their search for work. Particular attention was paid to
the Careers Service, as the main agency involved in school leavers' job search.
Chapter Seven concentrated on the nature of the outcomes for the sample
group, in terms of whether they found work or not, together with the
experiences that this fostered.

It is at this point that a distinction between the sample group based on
age was made, in order to highlight the issue of employment experience as a
possible factor determining attitudes towards work and training.
Although the sample of young women falling into the 17 year old age category
was small, the hypothesis that the length of time spent in the labour market
effected attitudes to these two areas, was felt to be worthy of investigation.
This in conjunction with evidence drawn throughout the data chapters, revealed
that the effect of age on the sample referred only to the varying degrees of
realism with which the Black and White trainees viewed their past and present
situation. Moreover, in terms of being a 'YTS trainee', age differences were
not found to be a predominant factor, precisely because of the overriding

effect of the nature of the schemes themselves. Rather, the issue at hand was based on the question of motivation, that is, why the Black and White trainees had opted for the YTS. For those young Black and White women aged 16 who had experienced employment, on the whole it was the desire to improve on the range of career choices open to them; for the older Black girls, the desire for training was as a result of their labour market position.

One issue identified as helping to determine their choices about the YTS related to their previous commitment to education (as opposed to schooling), and the underlying desire to achieve. This was found to be especially important for the Black girls on the ITeC programme, who were in this sense classed as the more career oriented respondents out of all the Black and White girls in the sample.

Chapter Eight addressed this theme along with other factors in the context of the ITeC trainees' position and experience within the training environment of the programme. Here of primary interest was how the trainees came to define their training needs, first, as a result of their past experiences, and second, in relation to the social forces that structured the content and delivery of training on the programme. It was found that the most salient factor was the issue of gender relations, both in terms of the female trainees virtual exclusion from certain aspects of the programme, and in relation to their desire for training in Office Practice skills. The discussion also showed how gender subordination and resistance were mediated through 'race' divisions, where Black and White trainees came to define their positions in relation to each other. A central theme explored here was that the separation of Black and White girls into two distinct groups. This was shown to be influenced by a) the broader structure of gender relations on the scheme and b) the girls individual educational backgrounds, which collectively amounted to a division based on qualification and/or educational commitment. How all of this effected the training needs and aspirations of Black and White girls on the programme, was shown to relate to the impact which this had on their assessment of what they could realistically expect to gain from

training, with reference to the jobs market.

In Chapter Nine the question of training needs and aspirations was analysed from a different stand point, because the CP scheme exhibited a qualitatively distinct set of issues, with regards to the content of its provision, and the process by which CP trainees were identified as 'problem kids'. In this Chapter greater emphasis was placed on the differences between the State's definition of training needs and that of the young women on the CP scheme. Like their ITeC counterparts, CP scheme trainees were using the concept of training to refer to a process of learning, where in this instance, the notion of skill was associated with directly acquiring a level of competency for immediate application to the jobs market. In this way Black and White girls located on the CP scheme were assessing their employability according to their own understanding of the demands of the labour market. Essentially the key elements of this assessment incorporated the belief that having practical experience, albeit gained outside of formal labour market structures, would enhance their competitiveness in their post YTS job search. As a result, the CP trainees were prepared to accept the notion of being a YTS trainee (specifically a CP trainee), as witness by the distinction made between obtaining a trainee allowance and a wage. In this sense, like their ITeC counterparts, the CP girls were defining their training needs as based on their long term goal of finding employment.

This stands in stark contrast to the unemployment doctrine advocated by the State. Both the ITeC and CP female trainees were attempting to circumvent what they saw as their lack of employability. In this sense trainees *did* accept that they were deficient, but clearly this was in relation to skills, and not those accruing to their particular characteristics. At no time did I come across a belief that their (Mode B) trainee status precluded an entitlement to jobs.

Conclusion

The advent of the YTS in 1983 marked a new pattern of State intervention into the working of the labour market. State policies at this time were

clearly geared towards finding solutions to the rise in unemployment. As a
result the proposals put forward by the State were at one level quite
bewildering, in that they represented a fusion of different objectives.
Essentially these refer to a need to be seen to be responding to the issue of
unemployment, and simultaneously a desire to transform the relationship
between workers and employers. As time progressed, such objectives became
more sharply defined. For example in a 1985 White Paper entitled Employment
- A Challenge To The Nation the government outlined its employment policy.
This document provided an opportunity for the State to justify its role, which
was described as 'inescapably limited'. However, it did set out its plans to
meet the challenge of changing production requirements on three fronts.
Firstly by encouraging a culture of 'free enterprise', with an attack on
inflation. Secondly, through stimulating the 'failed job market', by "removing
obstacles which hamper employers taking on workers ...and by helping to
modernise training so that job seekers can acquire the right skills"; and
thirdly direction action against unemployment. Although the government
viewed these three objectives as 'interlocking', they do not in fact amount to
an employment policy per se, but rather can be described as 'fire fighting'
initiatives, formulated around a policy of *unemployment*. Unlike the 1970s
emphasis on job creation, the logic underscoring government policy in the
1980s rest upon a belief that the State's task was to provide a watershed
period in which enterprise would flourish and hence create 'real jobs'.
In turn 'real jobs' were based in new technology industries, as opposed to
Britain's existing industrial base. This inevitably accepted the decline in
Britain's industrial base, with the attendant rise in unemployment which this
would create. The State could then present itself as in the business of
helping to insure the development of this future jobs market by introducing a
series of measures on a number of fronts. Briefly, these include legislation
designed to improve incentives for investment, such as reforming the
corporate tax structure, reducing employers' National Insurance contributions
and by deregulating bureaucratic controls on 'pay, prices, dividends, credits

and foreign exchange'. With regards to the jobs market the government sought to 'ease wage rigidities', by for example achieving more realistic levels of pay for young people as fostered by the Young Workers Scheme and the YTS allowance. An assault on trade union power was instigated in order to promote a 'better balance of power in industry'. Within the education sector greater emphasis on the participation of industry within the functioning of schools and Colleges of Further Education was promoted. For example the TVEI was expanded, while the framework for a new national vocational examination system was being prepared. Within this scenario the role of the YTS was defined as one in which it:

> "...helps young people to acquire the practical skills they need for finding jobs, to form the attitudes that will make them useful and employable, and to demonstrate their capabilities to employers"
>
> (Department of Employment. 1985. p. 15)

The key ideological referent within this statement is the notion that young people have to be *helped* into making employment decisions. In this context help, took on a particular meaning, where career guidance is seen a secondary consideration, in preference to moulding the 'right' attitudes for future employment, or more importantly unemployment. It is precisely this long term view of the new worker which led the State to extend the YTS into a two year programme, aimed at all under 18 year olds in 1986. Under the new proposals, young people would gain a form of vocational qualification, which exemplified their ability to respond to the demands of employers for certain types of 'flexible skills' and competitive wage levels (Raffe. 1987; Finn. 1987). In sum, it can be seen that the one year YTS clearly does not stand outside of the pattern of social relations found in the labour market. It has failed to challenge the pattern of inequality in the labour market, but rather has been merely grafted on to existing structures of employment. Hence, the YTS does represent a transition for the young, but this is aimed at unemployment and not training for jobs.

In Chapter Three an outline of the research approach was given together with a description of how I gained access in the field. Chapter Three highlighted the difficulties encountered in the field, as well as explored some of the ethical and political concerns which it was felt influenced the research design. In describing how the research was conducted and why particular qualitative methods were employed two fundamental issues were identified namely, the role of the researcher (including the importance of biographical history); and the need to tackle the research from a client-centred approach. It is with this in mind that the present discussion explores the interface between the ethical and political dilemmas which this research project faced, especially in relation to Black girls. A number of themes are taken up as a way of clarifying both the underlying reasons for the way in which the research approached the question of 'race', and, why it was felt necessary to do so.

Hence the main purpose of this discussion is not to play upon the 'problems' posed in studying Black girls per se, but rather to explore the underlying problematic of conducting research within a field of knowledge which has been concerned with macro-accounts of the position of Black people. This has occurred at the expense of what Essed (1991) describes as micro-interactional perspectives on racism. Indeed, it can be argued that with regards to 'race' the inherent macro-sociological bias found in many studies in this area are in fact steeped in hegemonic notions about culture, class and gender (Essed. 1991). As a result, social scientists in their analysis of discrimination and its effects have tended to be over-specific, by utilising concepts and methodologies which focus on this aspect of Black peoples' lives. Subsequently the experiences and concerns of Black people have at one level been racialised', whilst simultaneously removed from the analysis. This has entailed two inter-related aspects that refer to the nature of sociological

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inquiry and the construction of knowledge structured in a language of dominance which has defined what constitutes 'the problem' with regards to 'race'.

Briefly, sociological inquiry has tended to accept the legitimacy of an 'objective' social reality that can be subject to scrutiny through the use of 'scientific' means of observing, collecting and evaluating data. Sociological inquiry therefore seeks to validate data, by utilising methods designed to eliminate subjectivity and therefore arrive at 'the truth' (Stanley and Wise. 1983). Under this positivist schema subjectivity is seen as devaluing the validity of data collection (and hence knowledge) because it fails to live up to the *ideals* enshrined in methodological practice. Thus it can be generally observed that the sociological mode of production consists in *depersonalising* 'events' by reconstituting them as 'facts', which are deemed to be truthful representations of an 'objective' social reality.

Although the above is simplistic in its characterisation the implications for the research process are clear. As argued in Chapter Three a central feature of social researching is that it ultimately adheres to a research ideology that accepts as valid particular modes of practice within the production of knowledge. Added to this it can also be observed that such practices have usually involved a top-down approach, in that research questions have often been external to the main concerns and interests of the groups under investigation. Indeed Essed (1991) has further noted the intellectual bias against the *ordinary* and the underrating of the insights of "laypersons".

All of the above adds to the store of knowledge that sociology professes to give rise to. Yet the theoretical and conceptual frameworks through which this knowledge is reproduced are themselves products of culturally defined world views. Looked at in this way it can be seen that these perspectives *are* in themselves (culturally) subjective. However part of the ideological basis upon which the academic tradition is founded (which includes a process of reification as witness in a research ideology defining what constitutes

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acceptable knowledge), involves the transformation of subjectivity into formal definitional precepts that are deemed to be objective and free of personal opinion and bias. Thus what is not called into question is the objective status of knowledge, through a critique which, for example, examines the *processural* nature of its construction and hence its reflection of wider ideological forces that serve to maintain and legitimate the status quo (Harvey. 1990).

Contained within the above critique are two important observations which have particular relevance for studies conducted on 'race' and gender subordination. Firstly, that such considerations should lead to a questioning about the nature of knowledge itself, rather than merely providing an assessment of current thinking. Secondly, the need to include within our conceptual frameworks a critical understanding of what are the implications of our research objectives. In doing so sociologists would admit to the dynamic and fragmented nature of knowledge(s), together with an acknowledgement that analyses of oppressive structures is in itself a political act with political consequences. In line with this I would contend that in the context of 'race' and gender divisions the above approach brings into sharper focus a reticence on the part of researchers to provide a reflexive analysis of how dominant repressive divisions impinge on their production of knowledge (Ball. 1991; Eichler. 1991).

Placed in the context of the 1970s and early 1980s most of the activities of social scientists in the field of 'race' relations at this time involved a top-down approach, where armed with a set of criteria about what constitutes racial oppression, social researchers (mainly White middle class males) then proceeded to go into the field to investigate. Consequently, criticisms levelled at studies in 'race' relations charged that the research activities and academic theorising of sociologists and anthropologists contributed to the racialisation of Black people. Such political analyses or comments crystallized around the need to challenge an underlying dominant consensus about what constituted 'the problem'. For example in a review of the

literature Lawrence (1982) and Parmar (1982) both argued that the prevailing eurocentric tendencies within such studies led to a) the relegation of Black peoples' *own* analysis of their situation in favour of academic prescriptions of what constituted racial oppression; and b) what Hall (1980) describes as a loss of historical memory, where political, social and ideological systems of repression allow constructions of reality (knowledge) that fit in with dominant cultural norms, to the detriment of those groups falling outside of its parameters. This inevitably led to criticisms by writers such as Parekh (1986), about the underlying objectives and policy outcomes of these type of studies.

It is precisely at this juncture that my research needs to be located. Having been sensitised to the nature of *everyday racism*[2] as experienced by myself, coupled with being a member of a local Black community, I found myself increasingly disturbed by what I saw as the racialisation of Black people, which did not adequately take into account our *understanding* of racism or how this fits in with other aspects of our lives. Indeed, it was the lack of recognition that there are other aspects to our lives in Britain which led me to question the basis upon which research in this area was being predicated. Specifically it was recognised that new patterns of cultural and economic relations were emerging within Black communities that were potentially transforming the nature of 'race' relations. This stood in contrast to traditional form of research on Black people which placed emphasis on the relative 'newness' of these communities. Studies on the younger generation remained embedded in this type of approach, with an attendant blindness about the implications of these emerging cultural patterns. Later discussions about 'race' relations research have more clearly articulated this point. For example, Troyna and Carrington (1989) argue that research in the late 1970s and early 1980s favoured the use of conceptual frameworks which attempted to contextualise the 'problem' of Black Youth, through emphasis on their relative new comer status. The authors go on to note that this led to the development of labels which "caricatured these communities by centralising empirically

questionable concepts as 'identity crisis', 'negative self-image', 'intergenerational conflict', 'unrealistic and high aspirations' and 'culture conflict'." p. 210.

As a member of this newly evolving Black British formation I felt that it was not so much a case of generational differences, but rather new forms of cultural relations, that were fusing with dominant British cultural norms in the light of economic and social changes. This did not lessen the charge of the continuation of racial subordination, but rather acknowledged that such changes may well be presenting new priorities for young Black people. It was this interest which led me to criticise the then current thinking on the 'race' relations problematic. Simply stated, the language of the literature, led to a rejection of what I considered to be an erroneous and damaging deficiency model of Black and ethnic cultural communities. Furthermore, underscored by a top-down approach, there appeared to be a general academic and political consensus which implicitly reconceptualised Black peoples' aspirations in terms of their racial origin.

I wanted to conduct research which prioritised the relationship between structural divisions and individuals' understanding of their situation. In this way it was felt that some of what Essed (1991) describes as the micro-interactional relations through which dominant divisions are manifested and translated, would provide a more accurate depiction of how 'race' through gender is experienced; as well as demonstrate the level at which these were pitched. To this end I would maintain that the underlying principle objective was to illustrate how engendered class and 'race' inequalities helped to determine how Black and White girls' viewed their experience of the transition. More than this the research recognised the importance of not applying conceptual labels which did not given proper weight to the notion that their attitudes and aspirations were framed outside of racial origin.

As a consequence of the above considerations two main features of my research can be identified. Firstly, that collecting evidence of racism and racist practices within the YTS was not prioritised within the research

design; and secondly following on from this that particular aspects of their lives as Black *girls* were omitted from the study. Put another way, it was felt that given the pervasiveness of racist ideology in the construction of knowledge about Black people, as a Black researcher engaged in what I would describe as 'conscious' research, politically informed decisions influenced my approach. This will become clearer but for the moment an example of this is that unlike other studies on girls and the transition from school to work, Sharpe (1976) and Griffin (1985b), I did not touch upon the issue of engendered familial relations as a pivotal factor effecting employment aspirations.

Making 'conscious' decisions also affected the nature of the research strategies employed throughout the project. It was recognised that there was a need to de-construct the role of 'the researcher', both in terms of relations in the field, and in the reporting of the research findings. The question of de-constructing the role of the researcher in the field involves challenging the reified position which they hold vis-a-vis the research environ and the relations that informs it. In turn this raises more traditional methodological issues about how far the researcher should be frank about the purposes of the research and the degree to which respondents should be able to influence this (Burgess. 1989). In answering these questions in the context of the present study I want to address a number of pertinent issues.

The question of power relations within the research setting has been most vociferously addressed by feminist researchers, where various claims have been forwarded about the strengths and pitfalls of women conducting research on women (Finch. 1984; Scott. 1984). The pioneering work of Oakley (1981b) forcefully demonstrated the importance of refuting the male paradigm in for example, the conducting of interviews with women. The sanitised 'perfect interview' proffered by this paradigm consigns the research relationship to one based on a dispassionate directional interaction where the interviewer controls 'events' by socialising the interviewee into the role of information

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provider. As an alternative Oakley (1981b) argues that interviews using less structured formats, such as semi-structured in-depth methods provide a more compatible method located somewhere between direct and non-directive techniques. In my research a semi-structured in-depth method was utilised because it more readily fitted in with the research aims, that is, the freedom of my respondents to provide an account of their transition from school to the YTS. This was supplemented by tape recording the interviews, which are of benefit to ethnographic studies that give credence to the views of respondents. Using a tape recorder also meant that I was free to concentrate on the discussions at hand and explore different themes as and when they arose.

Hence it can be seen that use of a questionnaire was inappropriate because the research was exploratory and needed to provide a space for respondents to develop their analyses of events. As Graham (1984) contends this kind of open ended approach stimulates the recounting of experiences which predetermined questions would impede. In this way it was envisaged that the interviews would assume a non-hierarchical balance between the needs of the researcher and the researched. Nevertheless, this does not as Scott (1985) contends refute the charge that in the case of women interviewing women there remains a power imbalance, because of the exploitive nature of the research relationship between them. This was noted by Riddell (1989) who also observed that factors such as age and class do pose differential power relationships that the fact of a shared gender can not necessarily override. In the case where shared experience includes a racial dimension, I would argue that such dilemmas become even more significant. Racism has tended to be treated as an equalising experience amongst Black people, but as the general thrust of the argument developed here illustrates this fails to take into account how Black people understand the differences between them. This last point is important for the present discussion because I was aware of this dilemma in interviewing young women who were simultaneously my contemporaries and research subjects.

One of the ways in which I tried to reconcile some of these difficulties was by making explicit to my respondents that I wanted to document their account of why they had joined the YTS after leaving school. This seems straightforward, insofar as I gained their cooperation on the understanding that this was my primary interest. Right from the start it was made clear that information on their private lives, ie. life outside of the scheme was not my concern, nor would I be asking them questions on it. Consequently I made a point of not knowing the girls' surnames or where they lived. However, from an ethical point of view it was also apparent in the course of the research that personal/private information was being divulged to me as a result of my becoming friends with the girls I interviewed. This information related to their circumstances outside of the YTS and the impact this had on their daily participation in their respective training schemes. In spite of the fact that such information did make some contribution to my understanding of the forces at work in shaping the girls' perceptions of training, I took a 'conscious' decision not to include this as part of the research findings. The logic behind this relates to the undertaking I had given that their discussions with me were confidential, including those times when I was not directly interviewing individuals. I therefore felt a moral commitment not to break the trust which they obviously placed in me.

However, there still remains other problems associated with the nature of 'power' relations in the field. This takes on two dimensions which in **my** field of social reality were often entwined in ways which becomes difficult to separate. Essentially these refer to my role as a _Black_ _female_ researcher investigating a group of young Black and White women with whom I strongly identified. As stated in Chapter Three, the issue of when a 'native' conducts research on other 'natives' within a familiar setting (in this case a particular social locale in London) presented me with problems about over-identification, prejudice and assumption. Once again I found myself looking for solutions that fitted in .with my political and research perspectives. For example in reference to my racial origin I adopted a

strategy of neutrality, in that perhaps naively, I attempted to underplay the fact of being a Black woman in favour of my shared class and gender experience, as revealed by such things as my use of language, dress style etc. In one sense this involved me hiding my 'other' identity, that is as a academic, by trying to create an image that had more in common with my respondents than was otherwise strictly the case. Alternatively, my relations with trainers took a different slant, insofar as I did not down play my academic background. If honest I would say that I relied on a form of tacit social intimidation because I knew that they felt threatened by the presence of what they saw as a 'articulate' and potentially critical Black woman, who shared a similar position of authority, ie. I was not a 16 year old Black trainee. This admission points to the nature of the research relations which can confront a researcher in the field. It is about finding a balance between accepted modes of behaviour within the various social settings encountered in the field. It also highlights the underlying ethical issues pertaining to the role of the researcher and the fact that as a Black researcher I could not divorce myself from the wider dominant divisions which clearly identified me as belonging to a racially subordinate grouping.

An example of this is found in the conflict I faced about how much information to divulge to my respondents about 'race' matters. It would have been relatively simple to assume the role of 'race' expert, but I chose not to reveal my theoretical and political perspectives in order not to influence their assessments on these type of questions. I did not therefore include a direct question about racial discrimination in employment and/or training, but allowed my respondent to raise and explore these issues as part of their accounts. In this way their evidence about such matters were always placed in the context of *their* understanding of employment or training relations. Overall I would argue that whilst there are obvious ethical questions involved in utilising such strategies, the implementation of a client-centred approach which sought to prioritise my respondents' perspectives, did go some way in reducing my personal biases.

Another area of concern which held important ethical considerations centres on the degree to which my research should have probed into aspects of the samples' lives, which could have provided material for a more broader discussion of gender relations. For example from this point of view their position within the family or relationships with boys could have given significant insights about how they came to make engendered occupational decisions. Once again politically informed decisions about the nature of the research agenda came into play. For instance, given the type of criticisms outlined above about the role of 'race' relations research, I was reluctant to delve into those areas which I deemed to be sensitive to interpretations that fed into existing dominant racist and sexist ideological constructions. Following the view propounded by Sawyer (1973) that social relations located within Black communities are labelled as deviant, I felt ill-equipped to tackle familial patterns which in effect had already been subject to processes of racialisation. This was largely because the kind of issues taken up were those which had become couched in a language of dominance, where terms ranging from female headed households to 'disaffected youth' were conceptual euphemisms for so called deviant behaviour patterns (Carby. 1982a).

This raises yet another significant ethical question which rests on how much information should be reported and what forms of censorship this entails. At one level this is perhaps the most problematic issue that I faced in my research. This is because such questions directly confronted my political consciousness and the need to present material which was acceptable to the academic community. In one sense it would have been easy to forfeit such considerations by reconstructing this as a purely (non-political) methodological issue. Here questions about insuring confidentiality, together with adhering to a principle as relate to the notion of a research integrity allow a justification for exploring sensitive topics - that is, part of a research ideology where the need to know outweighs the political repercussions of our research actions. But as stated earlier my research was 'conscious' in its precepts. I was aware that my access to analyses

pertaining to the nature of oppressive ideological constructions about the 'Black experience' unwittingly propelled me into the role of gatekeeper. Hence I was forced into making decisions about the research which effectively broadened the remit of a client-centred approach. This of necessity includes a sense of accountability which I felt towards my respondents, regardless of whether or not they were aware of my concerns. For instance how far should the research have gone in challenging their position on the scheme? Should I have attempted to intervene in the functioning of both schemes in terms of pushing for greater careers counselling or training relevant to the jobs market? Alternatively, should I have taken up the lead established by Kay, the Black female CP trainer, with regards to voicing my opinion to the CP girls about the inherent negative bias of the training on offer to them - ie, one which in my opinion led to no where. Moreover, how far could I justify not offering an opinion about the nature of sex inequalities in the ITeC programme; or to what extent should I have revealed my understanding of the nature of 'race' divisions between Black and White girls located in the ITeC.

With this in mind I would describe my position as one which straddled two main issues namely, the influence of the researcher on the research setting; and the fact of biographical backgrounds acting as a social cue through which the relations in the field are mediated. For instance when addressing Black girls I was aware that my status as a 'successful Black woman' indicated a superior position vis-a-vis the schemes and trainees. Precisely because I was the one who initiated, defined and controlled the research process I continued to maintain a degree of power about the direction of the research. This was an inevitable outcome because the whole basis of the research had been initiated by my needs rather than those emanating from my eventual respondents. Moreover, the research was not about changing the nature of training, insofar as it was not policy oriented. Consequently, in spite of 'good intentions' my research continued to subscribe to an academic tradition, where the researcher investigates and then withdraws. In retrospect, I do not think that the ethical issues which this entails were resolved by me, partly

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because at this time there appeared to be no framework or discourse to which I could have appealed. Fortunately since this time there has been some movement to recognise the importance of making research of relevance to those investigated (Ben-Tovin et al. 1986). For example, within the field of educational research, social scientists have began to take on board the notion that their research should challenge rather than just document inequalities (Ball. 1991).

In conclusion, I would argue that the approach adopted in this study does not readily fit into any one particular perspective. That it was ethnographic in its style is not in question, but unlike other more conventional studies adopting ethnographic techniques, the research design was implicitly critical in ways which challenged existing modes of thought about how best to conceptualise the experiences of Black and White girls in a given institutional setting. This research project at one level focussed on micro-interactional processes as a way of discovering how 'race' and gender cues are enacted and experienced within the everyday ordinary field of relations that Black and White girls participate in. Simultaneously, a consideration of macro-processes was also undertaken, primarily through the use of secondary sources derived from the work of other social scientists across a broad range of subjects. Because the accounts presented in the thesis were personal the first names of my respondents were used as opposed to pseudonyms, as a way of keeping me in touch with the fact that the girls were real people that were not objectified by me in this study.

Notes   1. The term racialised refers to a process of racialisation defined as a political and ideological process by which particular groups are identified by direct or indirect reference to their real or imagined phenotypical characteristics in ways which suggest that they can only be understood as a supposedly biological entity.

2. The conceptual framework incorporating the term *everyday racism* has been developed my Essed (1991) in her study of this issue in relation to Black women's ordinary lives. In principle the concept refers to a process in which 'socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings' that make practices comprehensible, familiar and repetitive; these are actualised and reinforced through a process of routinisation in everyday situations. Thus it is the everyday, ordinary taken for granted encounters which forms the basis for much of what passes as racism.

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List Of Respondents By Scheme- Name, Age, Ethnic Origin, Qualification Status

And Post-16 Employment Status Prior To Joining The One Year YTS

The Information Technology Centre (ITeC)

Black Respondents - Aged 16

Joan   -   (left school summer term 1984, Qualified, Employed)

Nina   -   (left school summer term 1984, Qualified   Unemployed)

Sonia   -   (left school summer term 1984, Qualified, Employed)

Black Respondents - Aged 17

Kim   -   (stayed on at school, left summer term 1984, Qualified,)

Samm   -   (left school summer 1983, mixed pattern of economic activity -

                Unemployed at time of joining the scheme, Qualified)

White Respondents - Aged 16

Cathy   -   (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Isabel-   (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Rose   -   (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Employed)

Shirley-   (left school in the summer term 1984, Qualified, Employed)

Vanessa-   (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Total Number of Respondents : 10: 5 Black: 5 White

Total Number Who Experienced

Employment After Leaving School: 2 Black Aged 16, 1 Black Aged 17 = 3 Black.

                                    2 White Aged 16, Not applicable. = 2 White.

                                    Total= 5 Black And White Trainees.

Total Number of Black And White Qualified:-

Girls: Qualification Status: 3 Black Aged 16, 2 Black Aged 17 = 5 Black.

                                    1 White Aged 16, Not applicable. = 1 White

                                    Total = 6 Black and White Female Trainees.

                                    Unqualified:-

                                    4 White Aged 16

                                    Total = 4 White Female Trainees.

List Of Respondents By Scheme- Name, Age, Ethnic Origin, Qualification Status And Post-16 Employment Status Prior To Joining The One Year YTS Community Project Scheme (CP)

Black Respondents - Aged 16.

Gloria   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Qualified, Employed)

Emily   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Merille   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Employed)

Jackie   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Qualified, Employed)

Hildreth - (left school two months into the 6th form, 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Black Respondents - Aged 17.

Elaine   - (left school at 16, in summer term 1983, Unqualified, mixed pattern of economic activity. Unemployed when entering the scheme, Autumn 1984)

Christina- (left school at 16,in summer term 1983, Unqualified, mixed pattern of economic activity. Uemployed when entering the scheme, Autumn, 1984)

Marie   - (left school at 16, in summer term, 1983, Unqualified, mixed pattern of economic activity, unemployed when entering the scheme, Autumn, 1984)

Eileen   - (left school at 16, summer term 1983, Unqualified, Unemployed)

White Respondents - Aged 16.

Karen   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Qualified, Unemployed)

Sam   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Qualified, Unemployed)

Jane   - (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Jackie B - (left school in the summer term 1984, Unqualified, Unemployed)

Total Number of Respondents : 13: 9 Black: 4 White.

Total Number Who Experienced

Employment After Leaving School 3 Black Aged 16. 3 Black Aged 17 = 6 Black

0 White Trainees: Total 6 Black Trainees

<u>Total Number of Black And White</u> <u>Qualified:-</u>

<u>Girls: Qualification Status</u>:   2 Black Aged 16, 2 White Aged 16. <u>Total</u> 4

Black and White Trainees

<u>Unqualified</u> 3 Black Aged 16, 2 White Aged

16. 4 Black Aged 17.

Interview Schedule For Black And White Female Trainees

General Background Information -

Scheme

Size and Structure of Scheme

Number of Trainees

Racial and Sexual Composition

of Staff and Trainees.

Client Group

Objectives

Criteria for Recruitment.

and Selection of Trainees.

Method of Recruitment.

Training Programme:-

Structure and Mode of

Delivery.

Staff- Attitudes

Relations between Staff.

Attitude towards Trainees.

Staff and Trainee Relations.

General Background Information -

Trainees

Name. Age. Ethnic Origin. Month

of leaving School.

Type of School Attended.

Subjects Studied at School from the

Fourth Year.

Qualifications.

Method of Recruitment to YTS.

Informal Interview Schedule And Qualitative Questions

Subjects Covered:-   Note: [] refers to prompts to be used by interviewer.

() refers to direct questions asked

a) Schooling Experience:

Relations with Teachers, Evaluation of Qualifications;

Attitudes Towards Schooling;

Reasons for Leaving School; Post School

Options: [College, Training, Employment]

Main Infuences - Significant Others:- Parents, Teachers, Friends.

Qualitative Research Questions: Past Schooling Experience

i)   What kind of subjects did you study at school?

     why did you choose those particular school subject?

     Did you have a job in mind?

ii) How do you feel about your exam performance?

     Would you have liked to be better qualified?

iii) Looking back, what do you think your school offered you?

     (Role of teachers, friends?)

iv) Did you feel at a disadvantage in school?

     (Racially, Sexually, Other?)

v)   What were your main reasons for leaving school at 16?

     (If you stayed on in the 6th form, what did you hope to

      achieve?)

vi) Do you think qualifications are important?

     (In what way?)

vii) Did you think about going to College?

     [If yes, what happened to alter your plan?]

viii) How would you describe your experiences at school?

     (would you do anything different?)

Qualitative Research Questions: Contact With The Careers Service

i)   Did you have Careers advice whilst at school?

ii) What do you think about the Careers advice you received in school?

iii) How important do you think the Careers Service

     is in helping young people decide about their future?

     (How did they help you?)

Qualitative Research Questions: Reasons For Leaving School

i)   What did you do when you left school?

ii) Did you contact the Careers Service after leaving school?

     (What were your reasons? What advice did you receive?)

     (What did you think about it?)

iii)   How did you search for work?

        (where did you search? Who helped you?

        What was it like?)

iv)   Did you find employment?

        (If yes, what kind of job was it? Is this what

        you wanted? How long did you stay? Reasons

        for leaving?)

v)   Do you think it is hard for a young person to get

        a job these days? (What type of things make it hard?)

        ('race' and sex factors?)

vi)   If you did not find work what did you do?

        [alternatives?]

Qualitative Research Questions: Joining The YTS

i)   Why did you join the YTS?

ii)   Did you know about the YTS before joining?

        (general information? Knowledge of schemes in the Borough?

        Reputation of the YTS? Attitudes towards the scheme?)

iii)   How did you get on to this scheme?

        (who recommended the scheme?)

iv)   What did you think you would get out of joining the YTS?

v)   What kind of training were you looking for?

        (subject/occupational areas of interest?)

Qualitative Research Questions: Trainees In The YTS

i)   What courses do you like? (Why? What is wrong with the

        ones disliked?)

ii)   What do you think about your scheme?

iii)   What do you think about the staff?

        ('race' and sex factors? Evaluation of staff

        performance? Assessment of staff attitudes towards

        trainees)

iv)   How do you think your training will help you?

        (expectations? Commitment?)

v)   How do you feel about being a trainee here?

        (differences between being a trainee and worker?)

vi)   Have you changed your mind about what kind of jobs

        you want as a result of being on this scheme?

        (level of job expectations? knowledge of labour market

        for areas training in?)

Qualitative Research Questions: Employment (Attitudes and Experience)

i)   When you were at school did you have a job?

        (How did you find this/these job(s)? What kind of work did you do?.

        What was it like working there? What kind of work experience

        do you think you gained from it? Did you consider doing it

        full-time? Would you consider it now? What do you think are the

        benefits and disadvantages of working when you are at school?)

ii)   What do you think about your work experience after leaving school?

        (Attitude of employers? Experience of racism and sexism? Money?

        Learning about relations at work? Learning disciplines of working

        life?)

iii)   What kind of qualities do you think an employer looks for?

        (gender and 'race cues? role of experience and qualifications?

        attitude towards being a young worker?)

iv)   Do you think employers discriminate against people?

        (Why do you think they discriminate? Any personal experience of

        this?)

v)   What kind of jobs do you think are available these days?

        (Do you think your age makes a difference?) [gender and 'race'

        factors?]

Qualitative Research Questions: Aspirations

i)   What would you consider to be a good job?

ii)   What kinds of jobs do you think you will look for when

        you finish your training? (Job interest? Reasons for choice?)

iii)   Do you think you will be able to get the kind of work you want?

iv)   Are there any jobs you would not consider doing?

v)   Since coming on the course do you think it has changed your

        attitudes about work and what you want out of a job?

Qualitative Research Questions: Unemployment Experience

i)   Have you been unemployed, and if so, for how long?

ii)   What was it like being unemployed?

iii)   Did you continue to search for work? (What happened?)

iv)   Why do you think you failed to get a job?

v)   What are the disadvantages of being unemployed?

        (money? leisure? family? friends? the dole?)

vi)   Do you think you will be unemployed when you finish your training?

Qualitative Research Questions: Futures Plans

i)   Generally what are your plans·for the future?

ii)   What would you like to achieve in your working life?

iii)   What difficulties do you think you will face?

Key to Quotations: -   Indicates a pause in the conversation.

                           ... Indicates material edited out.

                           [ ] Interviewer questions.

                           ( ) Nuances or other tones of expression,

                                eg. laughter or sound of derision

Job Search Check List

What Methods Have You Used In Seeking Employment?

Please Circle

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Answering Job Advertisements in Newspapers or Magazines	1	2	3
Listening for Jobs Advertised on the National/London Radio	1	2	3
Enquiring at a Job Centre	1	2	3
Enquiring at a Private Job Agency	1	2	3
Writing to an Employer	1	2	3
Asking Family and/or Friends	1	2	3
Enquiring at a Careers Office	1	2	3
Looking for Vacancies outside a Place of Employment	1	2	3
Looking at Job Advertisements in Local Shops	1	2	3

Other Methods. Please can you state
What these were and How often you used them.

_____

_____