

AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME AND THE SCHOOL: TESTING THE
'DECLINE' THESIS.

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Michael G. Wyness

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Abstract

Concern is expressed by a wide range of scholarly and political opinion over the decline of parental authority. The activities of welfarist and therapeutic agencies are argued to have undermined parents' abilities to circumscribe their children's social and moral well being.

I set out this argument through what I call the decline thesis by drawing on the school as a representative welfarist institution. The school is chosen for two other reasons. First, it has more legitimacy than other influential state backed agencies because it has an important educational function. Second, arguments over the loss of parental authority converge with arguments over the loss of an education authority in the classrooms. The decline thesis generates an idealised model of a division of responsibility between parent and teacher which has now broken down. Implicit in this argument is the notion that teachers no longer have an authority in class because their professional concerns are more sociological than educational. One important manifestation of this is the power teachers now have to both take away and redefine the responsibilities that parents have.

Drawing on data from interviews with parents and teachers, I assessed the extent to which parents' and teachers' experiences and perceptions match the concerns expressed through the decline thesis. There was little sense in which parents reflected these concerns. Although there was some question mark over the disciplinary function of the school, parents tended to confidently assert their ability to set a moral and social agenda within the home. Teachers on the other hand, although rejecting the traditionalist assumptions made about control in class, reflected the view that some parents had abdicated their responsibilities for bringing up their children.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis addresses a debate over the extent to which parents exercise an authority over their children. The terms of the debate are dictated by a public/private dichotomy. The skills that parents have to circumscribe their children's well being are counterposed with the power of various external agencies to intrude upon family life and undermine these parental skills. I set out this debate in terms of what I call a 'decline thesis'. Given that the school is seen as an external 'socialising' institution, I focus on the role that the teacher plays in the undermining of parental authority. The main body of the text takes the form of a case study drawing on data from interviews with a sample of parents and teachers and assesses the claims made through the decline thesis.

The decline thesis is drawn mainly from scholarly sources, but it also converges with a contemporary political discourse dominated by the theme of moral decline. Leading members of the Conservative Government have tended to address the rise in crime as a result of the decline in parental authority. Rhodes Boyson, the then minister for Northern Ireland, talked about a "nightmare society" which spawned a "generation of muggers, football hooligans and drug takers" which was "as great a threat as nuclear warfare". (Daily Express 2.8.85: 5).

The 1981 Brixton and Toxteth riots were blamed on the decline in standards; a 400% rise in the divorce rate since 1960, the rise in the numbers of working mothers and the rise in the numbers of single parents were all taken as indicators of decline. It was argued that traditional family life had to be reasserted based on maternal love and paternal authority.

Blame is sometimes imputed to the individual parent, but the tendency is to associate the decline with the rise of certain social phenomena external to the 'average family'. To take an example, the welfare state was brought into the limelight when Victoria Gillick tried to stop G.P.s from prescribing the pill to girls under the age of consent without the permission of the parents. Gillick, backed by several pressure groups, condemned this power as an attack on parental authority because doctors were able to contradict the rights of parents to define the sexuality of their children.

I construct the decline thesis from the work of five social theorists of disparate ideological orientations who drew on these public issues in more analytical terms. I could have chosen others. Ferdinand Mount's critique of welfarism rested on an opposition between a 'revolutionary' family unit - a perfect example of what Morgan called 'methodological familism' - and the totalitarian state. I do not draw on his work because it consists largely of the debunking of other social historians (Mount: 1983). Roger Scruton, on the other hand is much closer to Weber's traditional version of authority (Scruton 1980). Scruton lamented the replacement of authority along with the values of allegiance, and nationhood with the values of nineteenth century liberalism. His work is not reviewed here because he provides little analytical sense of how parents could ever restore the seventeenth century patrimonial family unit that he favours.

A good starting point, is the debate that took place in the 50's and 60's in the United States which reflected different senses of the term decline. The development of this debate followed the general trends in sociology in this period in that the dominance of structural functionalism made it much more difficult to impute a prescriptive sense to the idea of social change. 'Decline' did not figure in Talcott Parsons' vocabulary. For Parsons social change was about a

historically specific family configuration being replaced by more appropriate family forms. David Riesman on the other hand, identified change in terms of loss. Parental authority was a central aspect of his theory on how children developed inner resources which formed the basis of an individualistic value structure. Riesman saw the decline of parental authority as one of the causes of the decline in the American social character.

Riesman's position was taken up by Christopher Lasch in his critique of prevailing social scientific trends. With the advent of the the women's movement in the 1970's, Lasch's thesis was interpreted as a polemic against feminism in addressing the decline of parenting in terms of the decline of patriarchy (1). Yet his work had a much more serious resonance in its concern over the powerlessness of parents in the face of a wide range of institutional external resources. Powerlessness was a theme that ran through Harris's theory on parent/child relations. His work focused on a tension between the beliefs that parents have about their responsibilities and sets of opposing ideas on child rearing that are external to parents.

Finally, I draw on a different body of literature from a French source, which although describing a similar process of change as that put forward by the decline thesis, is much closer to Parsons in emphasising the adaptive qualities of the modern family. Following the historical work of Phillipe Aries, Jacques Donzelot and Elisabeth Badinter looked at the construction of modern day parenting by focusing on the ascendancy of maternal responsibility. Badinter offers a critique of maternal responsibility in identifying the power of a patriarchal ideology to conflate biology with culture, and how in turn this creates anxieties for mothers who are expected to live up to images presented of them of good mothering. Donzelot takes a more

neutral stance in identifying the same process as Badinter by eschewing a feminist or Marxist line.

In focusing on the external world I examine the role of the teacher. Critics of welfarism tend to identify the more visible external agencies as instrumental in the deskilling of parents. Social workers and health visitors are examples of agencies created through changes in the post war social structure that have a strong physical presence within the private sphere. In turning to the state schooling system critics of welfare have a much more difficult task in calling for the abolition of the welfare state. First, the school would appear to be a physically less intrusive agency than social work. In order to define the school as an intrusive agency connections need to be made between what goes in within the school and the degree to which parents are no longer able to exercise an authority over their children. Any critique then has to concentrate on how a prevailing ethos within state schools is complicit in the process of deskilling parents. Secondly, although there was a great struggle over the introduction of compulsory education in the mid to late nineteenth century, proponents of the decline thesis cannot claim that the school has no other function than to replace parents (2). As I go on to show arguments about the role of parents need to be set against the legitimate *educational* responsibilities of teachers. If the decline thesis is to have any force we need to ask whether the teacher as an "agent of the state" has replaced the parent as the primary figure in authority. This task is much more difficult than simply identifying one state agency with the supplanting of parenthood. For the school is supposed to have responsibilities over children distinct from those responsibilities that parents have. The decline thesis needs to identify how the particular form that education takes now overlaps, undermines and generally eclipses any skills and powers that parents

feel that they ought to have.

By drawing on an educationalist critique over an alleged decline in standards in schools, as well as what the decline theorists have to say about the school, I extrapolate a model of an idealised division of responsibility between parent and teacher. The decline thesis asserts that teachers have an authority over children in school but parents are the primary authority figures in the life of the child (Here after known as parental primacy). We need to ask what type of relationship teachers are supposed to have with their pupils that would satisfy the condition of parental primacy. The extrapolated model then not only works the teaching role into a model of parenting, it draws on the forms that an educational authority ought to take in class.

The Terms of the Debate

Before proceeding to an outline of the thesis I set out in detail the terms of the debate. I define authority as a sub-set of power along the same lines as Weber and Wolfe (3). Weber defined power as

the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will, despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests (Weber 1968: 53).

Authority is the means by which an exercise of power moves from being an abstract ability to being part of a set of sustainable social actions. That is, authority here is defined as a purely relational concept which hinges on the notion of legitimacy.

With respect to parent/child relationship this means that a mother is able to get her daughter to do something that may not be in her own

immediate self interest because her status guarantees her a right to expect her daughter to obey her commands (4). Furthermore, her daughter believes that her mother has a right to exact obedience over her. Parental authority then is one important example of a wider set of authority relations.

We can take this analysis a stage further in establishing the social nature of the relationship. The fact that the mother has a particular status implies that the role she plays reflects ideas about social difference, ideas which can only be located outside the parent child relationship. The mother's status is guaranteed because other adults which the daughter might come into contact with do not have the same degree of access to her which her mother has. They may be able to exercise the same power over her but they may not be able to do this legitimately. By introducing the notion of status and the concept of legitimacy we are drawing on an existing social structure which imposes limits on who has the right to exercise a power over the daughter. The social structure not only imposes limits on who has access but also determines the limits of the actions the mother can exert upon her daughter. It follows if the social structure defines what adult 'others' cannot do, it must at the same define what mothers can do. I will define these limits in terms of sets of *responsibilities* that parents have towards their children. Thus defining parental responsibilities is the means by which the limits of parental authority can be identified.

The Weberian notion of authority is useful because of its emphasis on the inter subjective level of parent/child relations. Yet Weber's conceptual schema is limited in important respects. Weber assumed that people in all situations will obey a superordinate who has authority over them. It thus cannot tell us anything about situations where obedience is not forthcoming. Weber posed the

question why people obey which overrides questions about whether people obey in certain social settings. Weber thus rules out any discussions about how people can be made to obey. For Weber appeared to exclude the notion of force and coercion in emphasising the verbal aspects of social relations. He also importantly rules out any discussion on parental sanctions.

Despite current controversy over corporal punishment in the home, parents are still largely seen as having some right to smack their children. Historically speaking, until very recently, force has always been included within the parameters of what parents are allowed to do to their children (5). Weber restricts the use of force in his delineation of authority to the state which has the "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force". This would of course exclude force being used within private institutions such as the family (Weber 1948: 78). Weber therefore does not provide us with a guide as to how we are to understand situations where violence is exerted within the home which appear to be legitimated through the social structure. If we return to our example we can assume that the daughter will obey the commands of her mother because of her status. Yet it does not follow from this that disobeying an order is a rejection of her authority. Weber's emphasis was on the probability that the commands of a superordinate would be more or less ceded to by a subordinate, that the former has a right to expect obedience. We cannot then take every incidence of disobedience as an attack on the mother's rights over her child. In this context, force and coercion can be integrated into Weber's concept of authority. Force can be included if it is taken as an aspect of the rights the mother has over her daughter (6). The daughter then not only thinks her mother has a right to expect obedience, but that in instances where she appears to disobey, thinks

her mother has a right to ensure she obeys on future occasions by physically punishing her. Legitimacy then works both ways in allowing the mother a degree of leeway in disciplining her daughter which other adults do not have. But mothers are also limited in the extent to which force and coercion may be used. Responsibilities in these terms can be seen as sets of rules which limit the degree to which a mother can exert violence over her daughter.

These limitations were more positively defined by Bell and Newby in their analysis of authority relations within the family (Bell and Newby 1976). In analysing the subordination of wives to their husband, Bell and Newby drew on the 'deferential dialectic'. The concept can also be applied to parenting. The parent/child relationship can be seen as a dialectic in which parents need to offer something in return for their children's obedience. Jamieson in discussing Bell and Newby's work identified the dialectic as a balance between the responsibilities that parents have towards maintaining a hierarchical distance between themselves and their children through more negative forms of discipline, and the more positive exercise of "sympathy and commitment" which brings parents and children more empathetically closer (Jamieson 1984: 162). Parents thus need to be able to 'identify' with their children through the strong positive emotional attachments they have with them.

One final point needs to be made about how the balance between identification and difference changes throughout the parent/child life cycle. This thesis draws on data from parents of adolescent children. Adolescence signifies a change in the process of differentiation as set out by Bell and Newby. It also potentially signals the end of this process. When using the concept of parental authority we need to recognise that it has a limited time span which has implications for the status of parenthood.

It is clear then that in order to understand the concept parental authority, we need to concentrate on the degree to which parents, children and the significant other, in this case the teacher, believe that parents have a right to exercise a power over their children. Implicit in this conceptualisation is the notion of parental responsibility. Parents' beliefs to a certain extent are circumscribed by the limits on their power in that sets of values act as guides within which parents may discharge their responsibilities. They also define obligations that parents have towards their children. This thesis is concerned with two of these sets of beliefs. The views that parents have of their authority and the forms that this authority take within the home will be examined. Reference will also be made to the role the school plays in the process of socialisation. The school plays a dual role. It acts as an external moral and social frame of reference for parents in the assessments they make of themselves. It also acts as an important locus of authority and responsibility in its own right. Thus the opinions and beliefs of teachers will be drawn on in representing a world outside of the domestic unit which children inhabit in some institutional form.

In Chapter One I delineate the decline thesis which includes a discussion of the role of the school. This is followed by an outline of the research process which includes a discussion of the sample and my general methodological approach. The exploration of the beliefs of both parents and teachers is a way of establishing how they understand their respective roles in their own terms and with reference to each other. With this aim in mind I adopted a more 'qualitative' approach through a series of semi-structured interviews with both parents and teachers. Data from these interviews forms the basis of chapters Three to Seven. The final chapter draws the research together by re-

examining the relationship between the responsibilities parents have, the role the school plays and the exercise of authority.

Notes

1. See Barrett and McIntosh's critique of Lasch (1982).
2. For a review of this struggle see David 1980 and Jamieson 1983.
3. Connolly although not prepared to see authority as a sub set of power, sees authority in terms of the ability of one person to be able to override objections to coercion because of the position that person occupies (Connolly 1983: 109; Weber 1968: 53, 231; Wolfe 1953: 582-585).
4. The choice of mother is arbitrary.
5. Contemporary interest in child abuse has generated a great deal of interest over the history of violence against children. Pfohl argued that up until at least the late nineteenth century parental responsibility gave parents more or less unlimited powers over their children which frequently led to severe beatings. Parents had unlimited power over their children because children had little or no statuses as social beings (Pfohl 1977). Shorter on the other hand argued that there were important countervailing pressures which restricted this power. During the late eighteenth and nineteenth century the 'charivari' was an important communal restraint on domestic violence (Shorter 1975: 71-72).
6. We, of course, cannot exclude the threat of violence by the superordinate.
7. The kinds of interventions that social workers make are one among a number of contemporary problems faced within that profession. 'Pin down', an extreme variation on grounding, was lambasted recently through the media.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DECLINE THESIS

1. Introduction

The family has been a major intellectual focal point since the 1950s as American sociologists attempt to come to terms with changes in the American social structure. Christopher Lasch and the Bergers argued that the type of values which pervaded public life through the polity and the economy converged on the bedrock repository of petit bourgeois values, the private family. They argued that there was a move towards a more instrumentally rational form of behaviour, what the Bergers term "hyper-rationalisation", social relationships being characterised by the "engineering mentality with its notions of componentiality, options and technique" (Bergers 1983: 132). The influence of a protestant ethic was argued to have underpinned the moral outlook of the petit bourgeoisie, simultaneously encouraging liberation from the old "moral economy" and the creation of an economic morality within the family (Bergers 1983: 110-112). Freedom in the market place was set against what Lasch termed "pre-capitalist modes of thought and feeling" such as the concepts of authority, deference, - moral constraints imposed within the family (Lasch 1977: 36). The Bergers saw this in terms of a balance between public rationality and private affectivity which was upset in the twentieth century. Individual freedom and social responsibility turned against each other and became mutually antagonistic. According to the Bergers the tensions were between:

Rigid stability against mindless innovation, crass egotism against self-abandonment to a community, adventurism without moral restraints (taking *all* risks) against fearful passivity legitimated by an absolute morality (willing to take *no* risks at all), and so on. (Bergers 1983: 130) (Their emphases)

In terms of parent/child relations, these tensions manifested themselves first of all, as a decline in parental control, and then parental authority (Bergers 1983: 106). Deference was replaced with negotiation and quite often conflict as adolescents contested attempts by parents to impose their will, in situations where parents were no longer able to draw on material or psychological resources for legitimating their authority. Cultural critics thus tended to converge on the tensions that middle class American parents faced in generating role models of the 'rugged individual' to a new generation whose frame of reference was shifting outside of the domestic unit. In Part One I examine this decline by outlining the work of the five principle theorists. Two of the issues within family sociology that I am concerned with are two areas that are only cursorily dealt with by the authors: the variation in parental styles and the ways in which parents adapt to their children's developing independence. These are dealt with in the following section. The third section links the decline thesis more directly to the role of the school by drawing on what the decline theorists say about the interventionist role of the teacher. This is supplemented with a more 'educationalist' critique of welfarism provided through the Black Papers (1). I extrapolate from both sets of sources a model of schooling that links up with the alleged breakdown of the parent/child relationship. The final section introduces a case study. Sex education, a primary parental responsibility is argued to have been lost to the school. Again I draw on different sources in outlining the arguments against the systematic teaching of sex education in school.

2. Parent/Child Relations

2.1. The Loss of Inner Directedness

In the early post war period David Riesman offered a critique based on his analysis of the changing middle class American character structure. Riesman looked at the decline in terms of the transition from "inner" to "other directedness". This inner direction was implanted early in the life of a child by its parents through the exercise of disciplined, ascetic norms which directed the child towards "generalised but nonetheless inescapable goals", what Riesman called the 'psychological gyroscope' (Riesman 1950: 15). Parents were providing the psychological basis upon which their children would act morally in situations where a parental frame of reference on how to behave was no longer appropriate or available. Morality was not simply a question of following carefully prescribed modes of behaviour. Morality was more the process of the internalisation of a general ethos, a set of socio-moral guide lines. The decline, in Riesman's terms, took place because adult authority figures, particularly parents, were no longer able to provide these guidelines. As a result rather than knowing how to behave in novel situations the child was imbued with 'other directedness', children were behaving with reference to others outside of the family unit, particularly the peer group (Riesman 1950: 22). Other direction was a situation where those outside of the domestic unit had a more formative influence than parents (2).

According to Riesman, children's peers had much less of an influence on the character formation of inner-directed children. Riesman argued that inner-directed children were more choosy about their friends. Status, class and race differences were important determining factors in ensuring that the type of social circles

parents inhabited would circumscribe the type of social contacts a child cultivated (Riesman 1950: 66-70). Other-directed children, were more inclined to associate with children of their own age. The social contacts a child made here were more horizontally defined by the age-grading system found in the school which overlapped onto the street. Children were beginning to more readily identify with others at similar emotional and physical stages of maturation. Although the peer group was singled out for attention by Riesman, it was the idea that children were now subject to externally located social and moral reference points which potentially conflicted with the authority of parents.

Parsons criticised Riesman for 'reifying' the peer group as the only effective agency of socialisation and argued that its social significance was in its necessary replacement of parents as emotional support in the 'secondary' phase (Parsons 1964: 219). Parents were important figures during the early primary period, which approximated closely to Riesman's concept of inner directedness. Early attachments to parents were characterised by the exclusive dependence on physical and emotional support by young children. This would lead to the children becoming independent and moving away from the influence of their parents. The attachment to the peer group according to Parsons was an important indication of this development. Parsons saw the development of new social phenomenon, such as the peer group in a more positive light. Given that Parsons's aim was to rescue the modern nuclear family from its critics, it might be instructive to briefly contextualise his argument about the role of external agencies of support such as the peer group and the school in terms of his bigger project of identifying the functional significance of the modern family.

Talcott Parsons outlined the structurally isolated nuclear family as an adaptation of an earlier more traditional type (Parsons and Bales 1956). He identified the same historical processes as proponents of the decline thesis, but argued that the type of family which predominated in the United States in the 1950s had been strengthened. Parents had been deprived of more formal political and educative powers within the family, yet were given the task of maintaining family solidity within a context where pressures fell disproportionately on the individual to evaluate the behaviour of others in universal terms. These were characteristics which couldn't be explained simply as a reflection of familial influences.

The complexity in Parsons' work lay in the introduction of a temporal dimension which redefined Riesman's inner-directedness as part of the process of socialisation. Whereas Riesman characterised an historical period as being inner-directed, for Parsons inner directedness characterised a period within the life of the child. His argument revolved around maintaining a particular form of parental authority similar to the "petit bourgeois" type which functioned within the crucial stage of "primary socialisation". Parsons' explicated this by drawing on Freud (3). The early phase of child rearing was defined as a socially necessary locus of privacy. That is, the most important phase of a child's development is circumscribed by the unmediated relationship between parent and child. The intensity of early parent/child bonding for Parsons must exclude external psychological and social influences if the child is to be prepared for the various roles it will have to take on in later life.

Parsons then introduced a second stage of child rearing, secondary socialisation (4). Like Riesman, Parsons was arguing that the rationale behind the early 'closeness' was the building up of levels of emotional stability that are internalised early enough by

the child. Parents thus exercised an important, but temporary, authority over their children at an age where children would internalise this authority in terms of overt circumscriptions of behaviour. The general move away from parental authority characterised by Riesman was interpreted more positively by Parsons as an indication of parental success in the primary phase. The role of other significant forms of social and moral support, the peer group and the school, acted as testing grounds for children as they tried to come to terms with situations where they have to draw on their own inner resources. Children thus gradually moved away from the family as they adapted to novel situations which their parents could not and must not dictate. Whereas, Riesman concentrated on the debilitating effects of others on the parent/child relationship, Parsons stressed the importance of others in defining the nature of the relationship. Parsons argued that in the crucial early years of infancy parents acted as the child's social world carefully watching and identifying every move that the child makes.

Authority in one sense then no longer exists. Parsons appears to have invoked the disappearance of the Weberian notion of traditional authority which identified the father as the authority figure within the family. Authority here is associated with a patriarchal system where fathers had a legal political and economic dominance over other members of the family. According to Parsons this has now been replaced by a system of 'complementary roles' whereby the mother plays the 'expressive' role in organising the emotional interior of the family.

But in another sense parents had authority in a restricted temporal sense where mothers play the dominant role in instilling 'psychological gyroscope'. The conditional nature of authority was crucial here in that the peer group and the school acted as testing

grounds in two ways. On the one hand, these public arenas may be the means by which children are able to come to terms with their own independence. On the other hand, they may also be arenas where the expressive function of the mother is opened up for public examination. Because of the crucial nature of the primary phase, and because it is expected that mothers will exercise all their skills and powers in instilling the psychological gyroscope, the outside world is able to measure the extent to which parents have been able to successfully instill the right degree of resources in the child.

According to Parsons mothers have authority because they have a responsibility to produce children who would display the right social characteristics. Authority in these terms would appear to be a supremely personalised temporal passage. Parsons was trying to document the replacement of formal powers over children with more informal culturally given sets of responsibilities. This decline in formal powers was generally associated with the decline of the power of the father. A public discourse on child-rearing centred on more underlying emotional investments which Parsons argued can be best performed by mothers. Parsons, as we might expect, took a more optimistic line in arguing that the professionalisation of motherhood was the investment of the process of child-rearing with a rationality (Parsons and Bales 1956: 26). Parsons seemed to be arguing that mothers were no longer helpless victims of biology and nature. For the very notion of socialisation meant that mothers were involved in a more technical and sophisticated process of decision making at every minutely defined level of childrearing. Mothers were able to rationally assimilate the information they picked up from the outside about how their own children behaved. Mothering was thus no longer conflated with nature.

2.2. The Union of 'Love and Discipline'

Lasch devoted a whole chapter in his book to attacking Parsons's attempted resurrection of the nuclear family. Parsons according to Lasch was not only wrong in his interpretation of the condition of the modern family, he was complicit in the process which was undermining the authority that parents had.

In Parsons, the social pathologists found their most eminent apologist - one who restated the principles of the "new religion" in the guise of social theory, at a suitably exalted level of abstraction (Lasch 1977: 110).

Lasch argued that Parsons provided the intellectual justification for a whole series of 'helping' agencies that undermined parenting skills and powers.

Lasch took Riesman's side in the debate with Parsons. Lasch attacked Parsons' theory of the peer group because of its lack of empirical foundations and its underestimation of what Lasch called the "revolt of youth" (Lasch 1977: 129). More fundamentally, Lasch took issue with Parsons over the conjunction of authority and responsibility. First, the means by which parents were encouraged to take responsibility for the well being of their children had simultaneously deprived parents of their powers. Thus the process of defining how parents ought to behave towards their children was the means by which parents were deprived of the inner resources that parents had which according to Lasch were necessary in the successful socialisation of their children.

Lasch was not very careful in his definition of the kind of family relations that existed prior to the intervention. At times he appeared to invoke the traditional directed type offered by Riesman, rather than the inner-directed model, in his critique of Parsons.

It is inaccurate to speak of a variety of functions, some of which decline while others take on added importance. The only function of the family that matters (for Parsons) is socialisation; and when protection, work and instruction in work have all been removed from the home, the child no longer identifies with his parents or internalizes their authority in the same way as before, if indeed he internalises their authority at all (Lasch 1977: 130).

But the general theoretical tenor of the book places Lasch firmly within the individualism of Riesman. In the inner-directed model parents no longer necessarily passed on concrete intellectual and material resources to their children. They no longer have the power to dictate how their children will behave outside of the domestic unit. He argued that through attempts at exacting the right level of obedience to the parent as the primary legitimate repository of values, and in terms of the psychological power the parent has over the child in the early stages of its development, a parent can ensure that its children are given the best moral and psychological means for competing in a free market society. Lasch was arguing that the parent, and in this instance emphasis is placed on the role of the father, was the authority figure despite being deprived of his "traditional" power base. The parent/child relationship is characterised by the ability of the parent to circumscribe the consciousness of the child in terms of the child's inner-directed nature which was located within the private realm of the family. This particular set of relationships was rational to the extent that it was functional to the wider society - the most efficient means by which a developing capitalist economy was furnished with individualistic character types. In describing the historical context within which this type of family was found Lasch argued that:

the new style of domestic life created psychological conditions favourable to the emergence of a new type of inner-directed self-reliant personality- the family's deepest contribution to the needs of a market society based on competition, individualism, postponement of gratification, rational foresight and the accumulation of worldly goods (Lasch 1977: 4).

Lasch argued that this model of the family has been steadily undermined as various therapeutic and welfarist institutions gained ascendancy. A public discourse on child rearing developed which created political and economic demands for certain types of social supports to the family. Lasch singles out the role of social workers who were actively supplanting the maternal role within the home, and the creation of the category of 'juvenile delinquent' which further extended the role of the state in loco parentis by blaming parents for their children's misdemeanours (Lasch 1977: 14-16). But Lasch's critique is not just about how the state had taken away previously parental responsibilities. Although Lasch also argued that external agencies actively encouraged parents to take responsibility for their children's well-being. In outlining his thesis on the 'proletarianisation of parenthood' Lasch identified the forces which took away the powers that parents had. Yet Lasch identified not only the powerlessness parents felt but a more generalised anxiety. This point can be best exemplified with reference to his discussion of the influence of Dr. Spock. In The Culture of Narcissism Lasch applauded Spock's reversal of his earlier advocacy of 'permissiveness' to encouraging parents to be 'authoritarian' and to take responsibility for their children's well being (Lasch 1979: 280-284). Yet he criticised this position in Haven in a Heartless World. Lasch argued that Dr. Spock tells parents now that their authority is sacrosanct whilst simultaneously undermining their capacity to exercise this authority by "reminding them of the incalculable consequences of their actions" (Lasch 1977: 172). Lasch expanded on this point in The Culture of Narcissism. Implicit in the demands on parents to recapture their authority is the model of the 'perfect parent' (Lasch 1979: 291-292). The latter is the a-social anthropological "mother of

more patterned societies" whose consummate relationship with nature modern parents can never hope to emulate. The irony for Lasch is that any biologically based or naturally given notion of authority cannot by definition be culturally prescribed (5).

For Lasch then, the central problem for parents was that they were deprived of their 'natural' powers by professionals and then encouraged by the same people to take responsibility for their children's present and future well being. This wasn't simply the replacement of the maternal instinct with "therapeutic" solutions. Where parents, are deprived of their responsibilities Lasch identified two scenarios: at best parents act directly on behalf of state sponsored agencies of control where they have little decision making powers, at worst, parents are totally deprived of any role in the rearing of their children. The problem for Lasch was more complex in that the therapeutic solution incorporates the notion that parents are central actors in the process of socialisation.

Having first declared parents incompetent to raise their offspring without professional help, social pathologists "gave back" the knowledge they had appropriated - gave it back in a mystifying fashion that rendered parents more helpless than ever, more abject in their dependence on expert opinion (Lasch 1977: 18).

Thus for Lasch it is too easy to just blame external agencies for supplanting parents' responsibilities. Lasch's concern was over the process of redefining these responsibilities. What results is parental anxiety in the form of a tension between the natural and the rational. Parents become implicated in a process of rationalisation which fundamentally alters the "natural" bonds which are argued to inhere in the parent\child relationship.

Be that as it may, Lasch's concern over the form that parental advice takes does not obscure inconsistencies in the content of this advice. For parents appear to be encouraged to behave according to two

inconsistent forms of advice. Sometimes Lasch was criticising child rearing literature for encouraging parents to assert their 'natural powers' (the later version of Spock). On other occasions this same literature was being criticised for the 'permissive' messages being relayed to parents. Parents on these occasions are being encouraged not to impose their own tastes on their children (Lasch 1977: 173). Now this may simply be another way of interpreting the power that external agencies have over parents in that inconsistent advice to parents only exacerbates their powerlessness and anxiety. But it may more simply be an inconsistency on Lasch's part in generalising about the the messages that are being transmitted to parents.

2.3. From Paternal Authority to Maternal Responsibility

Lasch, although making no explicit claims on nature, invoked a conflict between authority as if it was exercised as an autonomous natural region, and an externally contrived set of responsibilities which parents are unable now to discharge. The consequences for parents range from complete abdication in the face of a powerful institutional system of child rearing, to a prevailing maternalism which cannot compensate for the loss of the father figure.

Lasch, like Parsons, identified changes in the parent/child relationship in terms of the replacement of a paternal authority with a maternal responsibility. But whereas, for Parsons, external sources strengthen the alleged biological advantages that the mother has over the father in child rearing matters, for Lasch maternal responsibility is synonymous with inadequate socialisation. Lasch associates maternal responsibility with the over dominance of the maternal role. Unlike Parsons who saw paternal absence in terms of the separation of the home and the work place, Lasch saw this in terms of paternal weakness, a more concrete reluctance of the father to impose his will

on his children's behaviour. Weakness then is taken here as the father's inability to act *within* the home (Lasch 1977: 156). Lasch identified this as "momism". Momism approximated to a 'schizophrenic' condition in being a 'pathological' domestic arrangement, but according to Lasch was rapidly becoming a norm in American society.

A problem with Lasch's argument is that he never makes it clear what fathers would do if they had power. Lasch does not tell us *how* fathers are supposed to discipline their children. There is little or no suggestion that parents ought to discipline their children by sanctioning them. In his critique of Parsons Lasch came very close to invoking Parsons structurally isolated nuclear model in offering a model of how parents ought to behave. He quoted approvingly from a book called Marriage and Family Living in arguing that in traditional terms the father was the "head of the household" and the mother was "entrusted with the care of the house and of the children" (Lasch 1977: 108). Now it maybe that being head of the household simply meant in Parsonian terms that the father ensured the survival of the small group by providing the economic basis to the family. We do not know whether the existence of the father in his generational remoteness was a sufficient reminder that there were limits to what the child could do. In short, beyond some mystical union of "love and discipline", Lasch does not tell us what fathers would do if they had their powers restored (Lasch 1977: 123).

Lasch's psychoanalytic interpretation of paternal absence takes us no nearer to the role that fathers ought to play, given that they have lost their formal educative and political powers. He argued that family life has been destroyed because fathers no longer assert their authority early enough in the life of the child. This loss of authority was expressed in Freudian terms. For Lasch the absence of

the father deprived the child of a figure through which the child was able to internalise a super ego - the psychic means by which children "accept" the authority of the father. Interesting though this is in providing a psycho-dynamic framework to the problem, it still does not provide us with a model of how fathers ought to behave towards their children that would underwrite the well being of the the child as a competent social actor.

Finally, Lasch argued that within this spectrum of pathological conditions, parents are powerless, isolated and disorientated. Yet Lasch nowhere offered any evidence. Lasch deduced a parental anxiety from the inconsistency between his idealised model of parenting and the contemporary moral malaise. Lasch made an important theoretical point about responsibilities imposed on parents that they cannot now fulfil but he doesn't tell us how parents experience this anxiety or whether parents are able to set up coping mechanisms in the face of systematic external intrusions.

2.4. The Problem of Child-Centredness

In turning now to a more contemporary version of the decline thesis, Christopher Harris has partially addressed some of the problems with Lasch's theory by focusing on the emotional dynamic between parents and children. But whereas Lasch asked why parents are no longer able to exercise authority, Harris was concerned with why parents were unable to act successfully on the belief that they had an absolute responsibility for their children's well being. Harris defined the problem for parents. Parents see themselves as having an absolute responsibility in turning out their children as socially competent actors, but are deprived of the means by which this might be achieved. Harris, instead of assuming that parents have a natural or traditional reservoir of skills, assumed that parents *believe* they have rights

over their children. One interesting point to make about Harris's argument is the absence in his most recent book of any discussion on authority. In his 1969 book Harris outlined parental authority in terms of a tension between the power parents have to determine their children's behaviour and the responsibilities they have which reflect given contemporary views on parenting (Harris 1969: 179-184). He argued that in the past there was little parent/child conflict as parental power was supplemented by duties that children had towards their parents. Harris went on to argue that the more pluralised a society becomes the more the child learns to differentiate between different types of authority figures. Harris referred to Wolfe's concept of 'autonomic' authority; individuals exercise authority over a limited range of tasks (Wolfe, 1959). The tendency towards pluralisation and thus autonomic authority had fragmented the authority that parents previously had. Their 'educational' authority had been taken over by the school. Parents now had to deal with the teacher as an alternative legitimate source of educational support for their children.

Harris was arguing that where the child is subject to external influences there is a greater propensity to associate authority in more rational terms. In Weberian terms parents orient their behaviour in terms of a set of impersonal orders. Children respond to the quality of order rather than the quality of individual exercising this authority (Weber, 1968 pp.217-223). Children thus learn that where the commands refer to educational matters, it is the teacher rather than the parent that has authority.

In his more recent text, Harris implicitly acknowledged the point made by Lasch that authority has now been redefined as a set of given responsibilities. Authority was perceived by parents in terms of their responsibilities towards their children. The problem for Harris was

that although the school played an important role in socialising their children, parents perceive themselves as taking full responsibility for the way their children turn out. For Harris parents were reflecting what he termed:

a domain assumption of child rearing ideology which both survives the swings of fashion and affects the attitudes and behaviour of those whose approach is unaffected by those fashions (Harris 1983: 240).

Weberian theory might identify misbehaviour in school in terms of problems teachers have in exercising an educational authority, Harris argued that parents interpret this in terms of how they have failed as parents, an interpretation that reflects a general value now held about parenting.

Harris goes on to argue that there is a huge premium placed on parents getting it right; being able to circumscribe their children's behaviour. Harris argued that this puts parents on the defensive in trying to limit the situations where children can misbehave outside the domestic purview. This becomes increasingly more difficult for two reasons. First, children spend proportionately less time within the domestic purview. The child's day is divided up between the family, the school and the peer group. It becomes impossible to restrict children's movements where they are expected to spend proportionately more time away from their parents at school and with friends. A second factor compounds the problem. Parents can never be sure that their children will not behave badly outside of the home. They are likely to feel less secure where children are subject to external influences which encourage them to break down the traditional generational differences in status by acting as confidantes rather than authority figures (Harris 1983: 239). Harris here converges on Lasch's argument in that the concept of control assumes that parents are forced to

adopt a more hierarchal role in keeping their children within their purview. This goes against what he terms the dominant child rearing ideology where authority is downplayed in favour of closeness and equality. Harris seemed to be saying that where parents might expect their children to unconditionally obey them, the teacher might be more likely to coopt their support in class. In this context parent/child relations may become more conflictual with children unable to reconcile the demands of their parents with the demands of teachers.

Harris goes on to identify an important consequence. Not only are parents more likely to think their children will behave badly outside the home, but children subject to conflicting norms are more likely to behave badly. What is taken as acceptable behaviour in one setting might be disapproved of in another. Harris goes on to argue that this problem is more serious for some parents than others. The problem is more apparent within the child centred family. Within this model of the family, occupational and domestic work are defined by both parents in instrumental terms - they are left with very few intrinsic satisfactions beyond the socialisation of their children. Harris presents us with a picture of the privatised worker whose main social frame of reference is the home rather than the factory or the office. Parents thus invest most of their emotional and material resources in their children. Their identities are bound up with their parenting role. They are thus more likely to interpret their children's bad behaviour in terms of their own self images as parents. This situation can be aptly summarised by the parents who try to restrain their child by shouting 'don't you let me down!' Whether bad behaviour is a result of inadequate parenting, inadequate teaching or a combination of both, parents interpret their children's 'public' behaviour in terms of their own inadequate identity as a parents.

For Harris this not only affects particular types of families, it tends to affect particular members within the family. Mothers are more susceptible than fathers. Like Lasch and Parsons, Harris argued that, due to a lack of paternal involvement, women have been left the child rearing responsibilities. But whereas Lasch drew this into a more general theoretical framework which focused on the degree to which this was dysfunctional to a particular type of society, Harris drew out the implications this has for women in terms of their increased anxieties over their felt lack of abilities.

His (the husbands's) absence from the household absolves him from much of the tasks of parental control, and his involvement with his children is confined to gratifying them rather than frustrating them (the children), this may increase his wife's sense of anxiety about her own capacities, as he achieves 'fun' where she fails (Harris 1983: 243).

Whereas Parsons and Lasch appeared to be debating about the social and psychological suitability of woman to take primary parenting responsibilities, Harris was arguing that women are more alienated than men because they are expected to do a 'double shift'. Women are left with the domestic responsibilities as well as being forced out to work to supplement the family income.

Harris implicitly reflected the more romantic vision of the past set up by Jeremy Seabrook in his critique of the morally destructive impact of consumerism. Working class parents were no longer able to socialise their children now. They were merely:

adults who instead of being able to furnish their children with meaning and purpose, demand that their children provide these things for them (Seabrook 1982: 13).

Children thus become more central figures in their lives as parents define their selves through their children. If this is taken along with the ethic of parental responsibility, children can do untold damage to the self-defined moral worthiness of parents. For Harris the

net effect of these various conflicting perceptions and values is the uncontrollable power that children have over their parents and the increased frustration and anxiety of mothers because of their inability to control their children.

2.5. The French Connection

The decline thesis sets up an antagonism between beliefs people have about the family as a private autonomous region where parents are able to circumscribe their children's moral and social well being, and the ideas and institutions that inhabit the public world that are defined as unnatural because they seek to subvert the authority that parents have. For Harris this autonomous region was conceptualised as a set of ideas about what parents had rights over. Lasch, went further in trying to root these values in biological and psychological terms (6).

Another way of looking at the opposition between the public and the private is to argue that the concepts of privacy and nature are constructed from outside as a means of sustaining a set of beliefs within the family that parents have an 'internal' responsibility for the well being of their offspring. This was the position taken by two French writers Jacques Donzelot and Elisabeth Badinter. Their proposition was that there is no necessary tension between the public and the private because the modern family form was constructed wholly from outside. The concerns and interventions that took place in the nineteenth century were gradually replaced by non interventionist forms which worked through family members in such a way that the shape of the modern twentieth century family was sustained from within. Jacques Donzelot and Elisabeth Badinter identified the same move from paternal authority to maternal responsibility identified by both Parsons and Lasch. Like Parsons they took the more optimistic line that the replacement of the traditional family with a late twentieth

century model cannot automatically be interpreted negatively in terms of family decline.

The construction of maternal responsibility was the core issue in the works of Badinter and Donzelot. Both converged on Lasch's thesis in the delineation of an external rational frame of reference which set mothers up as the moral and social 'panopticon' in place of the absent father (7). Unlike Lasch who used psychoanalysis to criticise the development of a network of helping agencies, Badinter and Donzelot identified psychoanalysis as the source of an intellectual framework within which mothers were targeted as the responsible parent. Badinter identified the discovery of the unconscious as the most important historical feature of a new approach which placed the emphasis on what mothers ought to do in the early years of childhood (Badinter 1980: 260). Donzelot made similar claims in arguing that psychoanalysis formed the intellectual basis upon which the welfare and judicial systems approached social problems. Solutions tended to be framed in terms of how mothers could take more responsibility for the moral and social well being of their children.

Both Badinter and Donzelot made it very clear that maternal responsibility gradually replaced the ancien regime model of the family where the father acted as the powerful figure between the state and the other members of the family (8). Yet there are differences in explanations given. Badinter argued that the formal political and economic dominance of the patriarch was replaced by a more ideological approach which determined the role that mothers ought to play in bringing up their children. Thus rather than seeing the disappearance of the ancien regime model of the family as an indication of the decline of patriarchy, Badinter saw patriarchy taking more cultural forms. Donzelot on the other hand argued that the modern family is the

creation of a whole series of diverse, sometimes contradictory social forces. The central focus is that the particular form of relationship between parent and child was *underwritten* by the various political, moral economic and medical concerns which developed through the nineteenth century. Thus, unlike Lasch, Donzelot argued that external agencies, principally the state, were strengthening the modern family by delegating responsibility to parents. Parental authority then was more closely circumscribed by external agencies.

According to Donzelot the convergence of eugenic and utilitarian discourses resulted in an alliance between the medical profession and middle class mothers. This was no conspiracy thesis for the alliance was a convergence of very disparate forms. First, there were the utilitarian concerns of the state - the need to minimise the economic costs of dealing with delinquency. Second, there was a more generalised concern over biological matters, articulated in terms of a middle class fear of the breeding habits of the poor and the need to educate them on matters of hygiene and sexual morality, particularly procreation. Third, there was the development of more child-centered attitudes within the middle classes. Finally, there were the professional aspirations of psychiatrists - their need to gain a foothold in the "micro" forms of social life. New modes of psychiatric treatment emphasised an approach that would be effective *within* the family (1979: 126-128). This helped to assuage the fears of the middle classes by focusing the social and medical problems of the poor inwards where they had the potential of helping themselves under the constant surveillance of the state. This was taken to be a more cost effective measure. Middle class women could point also to the type of child rearing practices of working class women in terms of how juvenile delinquency might be prevented. The family and especially the role of women within the family became a focal point for all these

concerns. For the working classes the processes of socialisation, administration of "juvenile" justice and the alleviation of middle class fears could best be focused within the family with the working class mother being granted a *conditional* authority over the behaviour and future orientation of the child. The child in these terms was granted a protected liberation.

In the last part of the book Donzelot went on to identify three developments which led to the working class family adopting bourgeois norms. First, there was the development of a more coherent and universal form of welfare which, along with the advent of Keynesian economics and economic growth, helped to underwrite some form of economic security. Finally, the development of psycho-analysis underpinned the development the advertising media. Images were conjured up of the private self-sufficient nuclear family. Without the clumsy and costly forms of intervention parents were being encouraged to adopt middle class habits.

Donzelot's work does reflect many of the points made by Badinter but introduces a degree of complexity and contingency in trying to account for the rise of maternal responsibility. As with Lasch the problem with both these interpretations is that there is little sustained explanation or delineation of the idea of paternal "absence". Badinter's analysis is at the level of ideas. Badinter points to the more conventional notion of the physical absence of the father from the domestic unit as work was gradually separated from home life in the nineteenth century. But she tells us little about the role that fathers were consigned to. For Donzelot the father was often seen as the object of the state's activities in that mothers and children were used as media through which the father could be disciplined (Donzelot 1979: 84). Apart from occasional references to

alcoholism and venereal disease, Donzelot does not tell us why women were coopted as agents of the state instead of their male counterparts (Donzelot 1979: 183). Furthermore, Donzelot tells us little or nothing about fathers who were not subject to this intervention.

Although the work of Badinter and Donzelot diverges from the other theories in not assuming a locus of private domesticity, I would argue that there is a strong convergence in the idea that parents have some sense of their autonomy whether this be idealised or socially constructed. These theories also have two other things in common: they lack an inadequate framework within which different family types might be generated. More specifically, they have little to say about the impact of social class on parenting styles. They also reflect a general trend within family sociology remarked upon by Graham Allan, that very little work has been done on the parenting of adolescent children (Allan 1985: 42). It is to these lacunae that I turn to in the following paragraphs.

3. The Decline Thesis: Omissions

3.1. Family Types and Social Class?

A general problem of the decline thesis is the lack of variation in family types when discussing the 'problem of the family'. Riesman explicitly and Parsons implicitly, discussed the American middle class social character. Whilst Lasch and the Bergers eulogised the middle class form in that parents are no longer able to produce the bourgeois individual. The only variation produced by Lasch was the black matriarchal family which according to Lasch suffered from the same problems as the middle class form in its over dominant maternalism.

Harris and Donzelot's theories were more promising in that they incorporated the family as a locus of relative autonomy. Donzelot's

analysis of nineteenth century family life included two models of the family located along a spectrum of freedom. At one end of the spectrum parent/child relations approximate closely to the inner-directed model through a form of "protected liberation". At the other end freedom was defined more negatively in terms of restrictions placed on what a working child could do. The working class child couldn't be trusted and was subject to constant surveillance by the state:

in shepherding the child back to spaces where he could be more closely watched: the school or the family (Donzelot 1979: 47).

Yet the argument falls back on the 'trickle down' theory where social change is reduced to the *embourgeoisement* of family life; the twentieth century being presented as the dominance of a bourgeois privatised family form (9).

Harris argued that by looking at the emotional interior of the family we cannot deduce the precise form that family relations will take from the particular form of the mode of production. This is evident from an earlier paper where he distinguished between two family types, the 'disintegrated' and 'child centred' families (Harris 1977). Harris followed Lasch's notion that the individual's public identities had been proletarianised. They both followed the Marxist line that the skills of the work force had been expropriated by a capitalist class through the introduction of scientific management techniques. Deprived of their skills workers were forced to seek a meaningful social identity through the family. This led to what Harris termed an 'implosion' within the domestic unit. We have seen in the previous section that this led to a form of child centredness. But in an earlier paper Harris suggested that implosion could lead to a quite different model of domestic relations. Rather than investing all their emotional resources within the family, individuals opted out of

meaningful family interactions and adopted a more negative consumerist approach to the home. Parents rather than investing all of their energies in their children as a means of compensating for their 'external' alienation, were treating the home more as:

a unit of consumption, a base to which members return to eat and sleep and watch TV (Harris 1977: 399).

Family life rather than complementing the instrumentalism of the public sphere was duplicating on a smaller scale the disintegration that had taken place in the public sphere of work. Now this model of family relations acted as an interesting theoretical counterpart to child centredness. It also converged with Donzelot's interventionist model of family life which counterposed the rejected' child with the over 'protected' child (1979: 193-194). Unfortunately this typology is absent from Harris's later work on the family. Harris leaves us with only one dominant type of family generated by a later form of the capitalist social structure.

Furthermore, Harris's emphasis on proletarianisation brings us back to the same problem as Lasch. Harris obscured any analysis of those sectors of the population not subject to this process, those members of the work force less affected by the consequences of proletarianisation. If we extrapolate from Harris's more general class analysis, those less affected members, let's call them the middle class, may have quite different experiences of family life. The more intrinsic satisfactions associated with the professions, might restrict the degree to which family members rely on their child rearing roles as the sole means of defining their social 'selves'. Harris is arguing that parental responsibility is absolute in that it is independent of the relationships that members of families have with the wider socio-economic structure. Yet the extent to which this creates high anxiety levels within families as a result of their

children misbehaviour will vary according to the extent to which parents define their social identities through their children's activities. Thus the child-centred parent's experiences outside of the parenting relationship are less meaningful in terms of that parent's whole identity than say middle class professionals whose identities are more likely to revolve around their working experiences.

I would argue here that we cannot assume that all parents will identify the self in terms of their parenting roles. Middle class parents may be able to discharge their responsibilities successfully by drawing on the advice given by outside agencies. With little anxiety over their roles as parents, 'external' ideas about closeness and technical competence may be perfectly consistent with their own beliefs about child-rearing. If we continue our extrapolation of Harris, middle class parents might interpret their children's 'bad' behaviour in front of their peers or the school teacher more positively as the expression of childhood or adolescent autonomy rather than reflecting the moral and emotional resources invested by them in their children. Now I do not wish at this stage to propose that the middle class family exists as a qualitatively distinct family form. This is something I examine empirically later. I merely wish to point out that as Zaretsky argued, any marxist theories of the family need to distinguish the character of family life along social class lines (Zaretsky 1982: 190). This is something that both Lasch and Harris fail to do.

3.2. The Disciplining of Adolescents?

A second omission in the decline thesis is any analysis of how parents are supposed to discipline their adolescent children. Although the decline thesis placed great emphasis on how inner directedness forms

the basis of the child's independence, very little time is spent discussing what this means for both parent and child. Very little is said about how parents and their children negotiate this change in status within the family.

Harris discussed how parents might resolve the problem of gaining some hold over children. Drawing on Barker's study of relations between parents and older children, (children in their early twenties), Harris argued that parents can live through their children by "spoiling" them, thus exacting some form of obligation (Barker, 1972). The older children thus exchange a form of psychological dependence for primarily material advantages. To take two examples: parents charged their children unrealistically low board; parents also placed minimum expectations on their children helping with the housework. Parents resort to the only advantages they have left over their children by buying a sense of respect which gives them the feeling that they as parents still have something to offer their children.

Now this is an interesting speculation on how the problem for parents might be resolved but there is a problem. Harris drew on empirical research on parent/child relations at opposite ends of the child rearing life cycle. The Newsons' longitudinal study of parents with young children was used to substantiate his theory of child centredness (Newsons 1963, 1968 and 1976). Harris used data from these three studies as evidence of conflict within the emotional interior of the family. Harris then drew on data from a quite different study of parents with children at the other end of the life cycle. The difficulties that parents experienced in the early years through the dependency that parents had of their children might be resolved through their children's material dependency in later years. The problem is that we cannot resolve conflicts in one social setting by

drawing on material from studies which do not correspond in any way to the original social setting. There can be very little in common between children who have just started school and "children" in their early twenties who are about to leave home. If Harris is going to speculate on how parents are able to deal with problems which, according to the Newsoms can only be seen as problems for parents with young children, he needs to also look at an intermediate period in the child's life cycle, adolescence, where children presumably experience most trouble with their dependent status vis-a-vis their parents.

Lasch made more direct references to adolescence. He argued that children and parents lack the security of a rite of passage which marks the end of childhood (Lasch 1977: 75). Adolescents then need to resolve the tension between parental dependence and adult independence themselves. Lasch directed his criticism against the peer group. The tendency according to Lasch is for adolescents to avoid the conflict through membership of the peer group. The problem with this analysis is that Lasch was ambiguous about the form that this conflict should take. On the one hand, the child has to "define himself in dialectical combat with society". On the other hand, the adolescent is supposed to have an "affective identification" with the older generation (Lasch 1977: 74-75). Furthermore, Lasch takes us no nearer to an analysis of how parent/adolescent relations ought to be conducted.

In trying to identify a reason for the difficulties the decline thesis has in conceptualising adolescence it may be instructive to highlight the ambiguity implicit in the theory put forward by the theorists of decline on how parent/child relations ought to be conducted. I would argue that by addressing the concept of adolescent more directly, the decline thesis might be seen to be putting forward two incompatible theories of parent/child relations. The proponents of

the decline thesis were concerned with how social order was maintained through the transmission of modes of conduct from one generation to the next. Discipline was the means of ensuring the successful introduction of the child into the social world through the child's acceptance of given modes of conduct. Inner direction implied that children internalise early on an imposed set of commands from within the family as a necessary means of ensuring that children are able to adapt to social exigencies which take place later on in life. Two points can be made here. First, in these terms discipline implies a temporal commitment on the part of the parent. Any definition of parental discipline needs to recognise that it changes as the child gets older. Adolescents in these terms would presumably need less 'imposed' discipline having gone through a relatively successful period of primary socialisation accepting prevailing values as a measure of their independence. It would then follow that discipline is first imposed in the home in order that it later manifests itself as self-discipline. This would appear to conform to the idea of the psychological gyroscope. If parental authority can be seen as a set of rights that parents have over children to instill discipline it is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

The decline thesis does not give us any real sense that parents are prepared to adapt to their children's move towards independence. Little is said about how parents need to renegotiate their authority over their children as their direct impositional forms of authority clash with the adolescent's developing sense of self.

If we look at how parent/child relations are analysed from the point of view of parents, the emphasis is on holding on to status. By focusing on the status of the parent rather than how parents address the difficulties their adolescent children face, we get the impression that concepts like discipline and authority become immutable aspects

of the parental role. They become simply the central means by which parents are able to express their generational and to some extent sexual differences between themselves and their children. This model of parenting comes much closer to the more traditional view of authority which can be found in the work of Weber (1968), Scruton (1980) and Tribe (1978). Authority here is a central feature of a social order organically based on "filial ties...respect and honour" (Scruton 1980: 32). The family is organised in strictly hierarchical terms according to the "sanctity of age old rules" (Weber 1968: 231) which stress the importance of age and primogeniture. Now from this perspective we can begin to make sense of the loss that parents experience as their children begin to question the power that their parents have over them. But this parental loss would appear to be a logical consequence of the prescriptions put forward by the the theorists of decline, rather than the starting point of an explanation as to why parents feel they have lost their authority. The omission of any sustained theory of adolescence means that the decline thesis is taken as saying that children must at some ill defined stage assert their independence against the authority of their parents which is taken as an indication of parental success, whilst simultaneously encouraging parents to assert their authority over their children as a way of defining themselves as social beings.

This issue is more directly addressed by the Rapoport's (Rapoports 1977: 269-306). The position that the Rapoport's take on the role that parents ought to play with their adolescent children is indicated in the title of the chapter on adolescence. 'Parenting *With* Adolescent Children' suggests that parents have lost their impositional authority over their children and that parent/child relations becomes more of a partnership. The Rapoport's make an interesting distinction between

'parenting' and 'attention'. The former comes close to the inner-directed approach which takes place in early childhood. The latter is what parenting is supposed to be replaced with as the child reaches adolescence. 'Attention' in this sense comes close to the notion of supervision. Parents draw away from the ties of dependence they have with their children by monitoring their development towards independence. The Rapoport's argued that supervision takes several forms (Rapoports 1977: 293-301).

- setting limits in relation to how parents expect 'grown up' children to behave.
- restricting the times their children are allowed to spend outside of the home and who they are allowed to play with.
- determining when and if children can earn money outside of the home and what they can spend it on.

The Rapoport's argued that parental supervision is a difficult process. Adolescents can interpret any forms of parental input as interference. This can lead to confrontation as adolescents assert their independence in response to their previous dependent states. As parents are so instrumental in their children's pasts, their anger is directed mainly at their parents (10).

4. Teaching Authority in Decline

The decline thesis suggested that the education system was imbued with anti intellectual ideas that undermined the division between 'education' and 'socialisation' (Lasch 1979: 239). The intellectual content of the curriculum had been diluted by the demands of what Lasch called "life adjustments". Pupils learnt about practical experiential things that Lasch argued were normally passed on by parents. Lasch also identified attempts made by the school to replace

parental authority. Quoting statements made by "leading educationalists" from the early part of the century:

Social political and industrial changes have forced upon the school responsibilities formerly laid upon the home. Once the school had mainly to teach the elements of knowledge, now it is charged with the physical, mental and social training of the child as well (Lasch 1979: 268).

The Bergers made the same point when they argued that the teacher hasn't replaced the parent and that the weaknesses of both the family and the school in providing moral guidance had led to teenage rebellion and juvenile delinquency, the products of the so-called permissive society (Bergers 1983: 195-196). The Bergers in eulogising their nineteenth century bourgeois model of the family made several references in explicitly functionalist terms to the role of the state. The family has now "lost" its primary functions to the education system. Whereas before the school only reaffirmed the values that were transmitted within the family unit, it was now attempting to set itself up as the only moral frame of reference which would render the authority that parents had less effective (Bergers 1983: 190). Part of the Bergers project then was to engage with the:

protest of many parents, in various countries, against the moral arrogations of the state and especially of the state-supported school system (Berger 1983: 191).

Riesman more systematically focused on classroom behaviour in outlining the role that the teacher ought to have. He argued that teachers have always had authority over children. It is the form that authority takes in the transition from inner to other direction that is significant. Thus a minimum degree of authority is required in dealing with the immediate and practical control exigencies which confront teachers of all philosophical persuasion (11). But more than this, the teacher is said:

to be hiding her authority, like her compeer, the other directed parent, under the cloak of reasoning and manipulation (Riesman 1950: 63).

The teacher still sets the agenda for the class but the agenda is determined by quite different criteria. In the historical period of inner-direction the teacher had a formal pedagogic relationship with the pupil which was scrupulously separate from the more affective ties the children had with their parents.

Seating...is arranged formally..The walls are decorated with the ruins of Pompeii and the bust of Caesar. For all but the few exceptional children who can transcend the dead forms of their classical education and make the dead forms come alive, these etchings and statues signify the irrelevance of the school to the emotional problems of the child. The teacher herself has neither the understanding of nor the time for these emotional problems, and the child's relation to other children enters her purview only in disciplinary cases (Riesman, 1950, p.58).

The implication here is that the emotional needs of the child can more appropriately be dealt with within the home. This division of labour between the school and the home separates out the affective from the instrumental; the moral from the intellectual. It thus reduces any confusion that might result in the mind of the child from the potentially competitive nature of the relationship between the school and the home if the former attempts to provide a more socio-moral frame of reference.

Riesman argued this distinction broke down in the period of other-direction. He cited the changing physical environment of the classroom which now engenders greater informality in pupil/pupil and pupil/teacher relations. Riesman argued that the spatial organisation of the classroom changes as pupils no longer sit in individualised spaces. They are more likely to be placed with other groups of children who rather than displaying similar intellectual capacities, are grouped together according to how well they get on with each

other; "human relations" enters the classroom. As Riesman stated "where to sit becomes problematical - a clue to one's location on the friendship chart" (Riesman 1950: 61). The human relations analogy is further extended as the teacher is more concerned with the "management" of the classroom than any unilateral exercise of penal disciplinary forms. Lines of communication cross through the teacher as attempts are made to engender cooperative rather than competitive relations between pupils. Teachers are then focal points for expressions of "public opinion" (Riesman 1950: 62). Ultimately the intellectual skills which were previously installed in individual pupils are displaced through this managerial approach. Thus the teacher plays much less of a pedagogic role now; a role that would appear to complement the bourgeois models of the family invoked through the decline thesis.

The decline thesis suggested that progressive teaching practices needed to be seen within the context of an education system which is now imbued with liberal ideas about 'socialising' the child. The new teaching ethic extends the teacher's pedagogic responsibilities into the realms of psychology and social work. Teachers are more concerned with associating educational failure with inadequate parenting. Teachers no longer play the role of pedagogue because their responsibilities extend into the home in the search for solutions to educational failure as a *social rather than educational* problem. Thus the decline thesis implicitly invokes two ideal types of teachers: those that conform to strictly pedagogic criteria and those we might say are imbued by out-of-school norms.

Recently this view has been propounded in Britain through the *Black Papers*. The general thrust of the Black Papers was to highlight the decline in educational "standards" in schools. Although the emphasis was on teaching content, questions were asked about

"progressive" teaching methods. The responsibilities of the teacher were set out early on.

It is his duty (the teacher's) to pass his skills and wisdom to children, and to ensure that they are trained in civilised manners and ways of thought. If he abdicates these responsibilities, he is guilty of the most serious neglect. This training must include helping children to evaluate the teacher's own opinions critically...But the duty of the parents and teachers is to *direct*, not to remain passive and uncommitted to high standards of behaviour and learning (the author's emph.) (Cox and Dyson: 1971: 21).

They then go on to say that these responsibilities have been abdicated.

The results of permissive education can be seen all around us, in the growth of anarchy. For if adults withdraw and allow children to find their own 'true' personality, the result is a vacuum into which all the worst features of the pop and drug world enter (ibid).

The concern then is that children are 'allowed to do what they want' within a context of 'a Welfare State where it appears to them that everything in school is free' (Cox and Dyson 1971: 98-99). Although the reference to the welfare state is linked to a lack of morality that welfare somehow embodies, the authors also made a link between welfare and the out of school activities of teachers. Rhodes Boyson in an article argued:

children expect schools be for schooling -they do not expect them to be a cross between a holiday camp, a play pen and a student walk-in (Boyson 1973: 92).

This was an oblique reference to an alleged dominance of child centred teaching methods (12). Implicitly, Boyson is arguing that teachers have abdicated their teaching authority in favour of a more surrogate 'mothering' role.

Yet although there is an implicit critique of the welfarist role of the teacher here, The Black Papers refer to rules' and 'standards'. This would seem to imply that teachers had an important moral function

to play. The authority of the teacher is seen as "a controlling power upon (the) will and appetites" (Boyson 1975: 138). Authority here then is exercised as a power relationship between teacher and child which is analogous to the kinds of relationships children have with other adult figures. Children then learn the values of respect and obedience through recognising the authority that the teacher has over them. Thus although teachers do not appear to have a disciplinary role in the same way that parents 'socialise' their children, the way they teach in class has an important social function. Teachers must concentrate on a curriculum that emphasises the intellectual advancement of the *individual* child. But they must do it in such a way that the values of deference and respect are transmitted as well.

5. Sex Education and the Decline of Authority

The Rapoport's in their review of the parenting of adolescents remarked that one of the major areas that parents have trouble supervising is their children's sexuality (Rapoport's 1977: 199). This is reflected in the public as well as academic concern over the ability of parents to circumscribe their children's sexual orientations. Two developments are significant here: the sex education curriculum within schools and the identification of the late sixties and early seventies as a period of permissiveness in social and sexual manners. The thesis will not be concerned in any detail with the latter. What can be said is that sex education tends to be conflated with permissiveness in that it is a part of a much more public discourse on sexuality. Sex education in schools is usually seen as an indication of the liberalising of sexual mores. Talk about sex here is associated with the unfolding of what was previously repressed (Weeks 1981: 249-272; Foucault: 1976). Thus discussion about the sexual act within the classroom was taken as

a transgression of moral taboos: discussions about sexual matters were argued to be legitimate only within the home.

But concern wasn't just expressed about what could appropriately be discussed in public; there was a concern that sex education would encourage immorality.

It would be possible to teach students the facts...about anatomy and physiology of the human organs, about contraception and abortion and so forth. But, as we have seen, sex educators do not want to impart *information* - they want to exert *influence* (Szasz 1980:43) (his emphasis).

Szasz was arguing that within a context of 'sexual liberation' the school couldn't be trusted to discuss the factual aspects of sex in neutral terms. Szasz was concerned with the implicit message of sex educators that the sexual act could be pleasurable in its own terms. Sex education did not aim to reaffirm a moral code about sexual behaviour. It was argued to foster ideas about sexual liberation.

The Longford report took a similar line in documenting the emergence of a public discourse on sex. A chapter was devoted to the forms this discourse took in schools. The report stated that there was no necessary link between pornography and sex education but that:

the wrong sort of sex education can hardly fail to increase, the right sort to diminish, the appetite for pornography in childhood or later (Longford 1972: 344).

Various school authorities and teenagers themselves were quoted in an attempt to emphasise public disapproval over the kinds of information being transmitted by the school. Publications such as the "corrupt" Little Red School Book and the more scientific film by Dr Martin Cole, Growing Up were produced as evidence of the kinds of media being used by educational authorities. Here the concern was over the content of sex education classes which were argued to either intentionally or unintentionally encourage adolescents to become sexually active (13).

Thus, by merely presenting the facts on sex, educators were accused of corrupting school children. In these terms sex education in all forms needed to be proscribed.

Yet there is an important ambiguity here. Longford accepted the need for a restricted form of sex education. Longford in fact goes on to place firm restrictions on which facts are acceptable for public consumption. 'Straight biological information, about the functioning of the human body' and 'advice on the dangers of irresponsible sexual behaviour' are acceptable: 'describing techniques of sexual congress' and treating all sexual variations - from heterosexual intercourse, through masturbation to homosexual practices' are not. (Longford 1972: 350) We get a quite different story here. If sex is taught in an acceptable fashion, that is, if sex is couched in terms of 'chastity' and 'fidelity', sex education becomes not only acceptable but mandatory.

The one consistent position adopted in the debates over sex education is the importance attributed to the parental role. In essence, sex education in school is a problem because parents are accused of abdicating their responsibilities for sex education. Here what is argued to be at the root of the problem is the general decline in the authority that parents have. The report does make reference to the problems that parents face in introducing sexual morality to their children. Parents are quite often too embarrassed or lacking in technical know how to discharge their natural responsibilities. But the emphasis is on sex education being a 'natural' parental responsibility (14).

Parents were assumed to be able to solve the dual problem of public decency and sexual morality. Not only would sex be discussed within the appropriate sphere it was assumed that parents would set the right moral guidelines within which their children would develop

their sexuality in socially acceptable ways.

Like Lasch's critique of the state for its appropriation of parental moral functions, the report by implication is arguing for the return of these functions through giving parents back some powers of veto over what is taught in school.

Sex education is primarily an affair for parents and must be emphasised by legislation which will ensure that no local authority will have the right to arrange programmes of sex education without the full consultation with parents, and any parent who objects to a sex education programme shall have the statutory right to withdraw his or her children from such a programme (Longford 1972: 356-357).

6. Conclusion: A Set of Propositions

By way of concluding the chapter, I have produced several propositions derived from the decline thesis. These are examined in Chapters Three to Seven.

1. Parents have little influence over their children's behaviour because they no longer assert themselves as primary disciplinary figures. They no longer exercise an authority over their adolescent children.

A consequence of this is that parents are now generally more insecure about their role in bringing up their children as socially and morally competent actors. This manifests itself in two ways:

2. Parents no longer have any confidence in their ability to intervene in situations where their children have transgressed the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour. Parents experience anxiety because they cannot be certain that their children will not behave badly and let them down in public.

These are examined in Chapter Five from the perspective of the individual parent and Chapter Four from the perspective of the teacher.

3. Paternal authority has been replaced by a weaker form of maternal responsibility. Fathers no longer play any disciplinary role within the home.

An important feature of this decline is that mothers have replaced fathers as the guarantors of their children's moral and social well being. This is addressed briefly in Chapter Five.

Teachers as agents of welfare have more power to set a moral and social agenda within which parents' responsibilities are defined. Parents thus become more dependent on external criteria. The parent/teacher 'bring them up /educate them' couplet has now become obsolete as teachers have now encroached upon parental territory.

4. Teachers have taken over many of the responsibilities parents previously had.

5. Teachers are now in a strong position to define what parents ought to be doing.

Chapters Four and Six deal with teaching and parental perceptions respectively.

6. Teachers thus act as agents of the welfare state rather than professionals who have an educational investment in children. They have what we might term an out-of-school approach to teaching. As teachers no longer devote their time to pedagogic pursuits, they have lost their ability to set an agenda in class. An educational agenda is bound up with a set of rules that govern the behaviour of pupils. As teachers no longer set an educational agenda in class they have thus lost the capacity to control the class.

Chapter Three addresses this through the teachers' accounts of their classroom behaviour. Chapter Six looks at parental opinion on school discipline.

7. The school has supplanted parental responsibilities for the sex education of their children. This has had a deleterious impact the extent to which parents are able to introduce a moral code to their children and further undermined parental authority.

The final extended chapter deals with both teaching and parental views on this matter. But the elements of the first six propositions can be found here. Sex education thus stands as an important indicator of the extent to which parents have lost their authority to the school.

7. Notes

1. These were a series of political tracts which criticised the then current comprehensive education policy of the Labour government. (Cox, and Dyson 1971). For a critique see C.C.C.S. 1981: 199-214.
2. Bronfenbrenner in his classic study of childhood takes an almost identical line with respect to the destructive influence of the peer group. He was also concerned about the role that television played in dominating the process of character formation (Bronfenbrenner 1970: xiv).
3. There is not sufficient space here to delineate his analysis of Freud here. But in Chapter Two Parsons outlines the psychological development of the child in relation to others within the family in terms of a series of stages running from 'oral' to 'latency' (Parsons and Bales 1956).
4. See Durkheim on discipline for an earlier version of this (Durkheim 1961: 17-19).
5. This is a point made in my review of Anderson (1988). It is often difficult to differentiate texts which are critical of child rearing manuals from the child rearing manuals they are criticising. The former often present themselves in just as advisory a manner in discouraging parents from following external advice (Wyness 1990).
6. There is an interesting critique of the conflation of biology with morality offered by Collier et al in Thorne and Yalom 1982.
7. This image is drawn from Foucault's work on the changing nature of institutional power (Foucault 1975: 195-228).
8. An interesting call to reinstall this figure was made by Roger Scruton (Scruton 1980).
9. See Lynn Jamieson, 1982, for an extended critique of this.
10. Noller and Callan argue that it is the most stressful period of the parent/child life cycle. (Noller and Callan 1991: 2)
11. This is made clear by Docking in his analysis of discipline within school (Docking 1980: 12-39).



12. For a more rounded view of principles behind child centred see Entwistle 1970.

13. Bury's evidence suggested the opposite (Bury 1984: 54-56). For a livelier version of this point see Lee 1983: 65-79).

14. Interestingly, the notion of the natural has quite opposite connotations when discussing sex education. Whereas sex education is argued to be best performed by those with a natural authority over the child, the natural is also that which the moral world seeks to constrain, the "sexual instinct" (Donzelot 1979: 185-186).

CHAPTER TWO

THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction

Martyn Hammersley cited Weber in arguing that methodological considerations are only important when the researcher is having difficulty in achieving his research aims (Hammersley 1990: ix). The researcher needs to set down the tools he uses succinctly and clearly as a way of telling the reader how he reached his conclusions. With an empirical PhD there is neither the time nor the space to involve oneself in a methodological debate which can quite often hinder any attempts at 'doing' the research. Whilst I take this point of view seriously in relation to my own work I do accept the necessity of justifying what I am doing and why I am doing it. Thus this chapter will discuss the way that this thesis has developed from inception to final draft. In the first section I provide a biography of the research process from early interest to sampling procedure. This is followed by a description of the sample. Section Three deals with the research tool employed, the interview. The final section looks at how the data was utilised.

2. The Research Process

2.1 The Initial Research Interest

I first became interested in family issues as an undergraduate whilst taking a course on 'primary relations'. On applying for the E.S.R.C. scholarship as a post graduate I submitted a proposal which looked at

the role of the family within contemporary political culture. The Thatcher government was just about to move into its third term of office. I was interested in looking at how the 'new right' used the family in promoting its policies. Whilst the language of free market liberalism was being used, many proponents within the new right invoked the family rather than the individual in setting up an antagonism between 'freedom' and 'collectivism'. The plan at this stage was to critically assess this antagonism by interviewing parents for their views on the role of state agencies.

I was also interested in debates about freedom of expression which were being articulated through the media. At this time attempts were being made to draw up a rigorous list of criteria which could be used in censoring the media. The Churchill Bill generated one interesting issue in setting up an antagonism between those who argued that the censoring of children's viewing should be left to parents and those who asserted the role of the state to intervene. Again then, the role of the state had been set up in opposition to the interests of parents. Finally, I was interested in the issue of sex education which had been hotly contested through the passage of the 1988 Education Bill and the later introduction of the Local Government Bill Clause 28.

I decided that I wanted to interview parents that fitted certain broad criteria. First, I wanted parental couples rather than single parents (See the section on single parents later in this chapter). Second, I wanted parents from both middle and working classes (see Chapter One for a discussion on class). Third, parents had to have at least one child of a sufficient age (thirteen to fifteen years old) to have had some sex education from either parents or the school. Finally, I wanted parents with both boys and girls. I had neither the time nor the money to draw on a large enough random sample which would

generate sufficient numbers of the parents that satisfied these criteria. I therefore had to adopt what the Rapoport calls strategic sampling (Rapoport 1976: 26). This meant that the sample would have to be drawn through an organisation that would put me in touch with a sufficient number of parents who satisfied these minimum conditions.

With this in mind I wrote to the regional education authority requesting permission to approach a group of parents. I hoped to get names from the second or third year school register (S2 and S3) where children would be aged around fourteen or fifteen. I was eventually granted an interview with a guidance adviser at central office who gave me the names and addresses of five schools. I was then to contact the head teachers of each school and negotiate access to the parents.

I had negotiated with the guidance adviser, that in return for access to the relevant parents I would go to five of the schools that she was interested in. I will cover these in due course. I had initially wanted to get the sample from one school or one form class only. I had thought that a sample of between twenty and twenty five parenting couples would be obtained by drawing on at most two class registers from the second or third year. This way I hoped to obtain a relatively homogeneous group of parents from within the same catchment area who reflected at most a social class difference. My concession to the regional authority was that by approaching five schools with different cultural characteristics, which included schools in predominantly working class and middle class areas, a community school and a catholic school, my study would possibly pick up any cultural differences within the region (see the following tables for differences in school characteristics). This compromise meant that I would only manage at most six couples from each school. If I was to divide the sample up by social class this would mean at most three

couples from each social class from each school. Given the different social characteristics of the schools I would end up with too many categories of parents and too few numbers within each category. This proved to be much less of a problem because the categories said more about the types of schools than the characteristics of the parents. The differences between working parents from Stenhouse Academy and working class parents from Waterston High I anticipated would not be any greater than the differences between middle class parents from Logan High, a predominantly working class area and middle class parents from Waterston High. I anticipated that there would be some differences along class and religious dimensions. As it turned out the latter factor was significant in some instances irrespective of differences between the schools. Both catholic and baptist parents from different schools tended to take stronger stances on sex education (If anything, protestant parents with strong religious convictions had more to say about these things than catholic parents).

After meetings with head teachers from the designated schools, the thesis changed direction. I was particularly interested in what head teachers had to say about teachers, and the perceptions they had of parents. It struck me that I ought to include some of these conversations in the thesis. I decided to ask the head teachers for access to a group of teachers who had more direct and constant contact with parents outside of the domestic unit. It made good sense to ask a similar set of questions to figures commonly seen as having an authority over children. It made even more sense given the extent to which the school can be seen as being part of a welfare system which is alleged to have undermined the authority that parents have.

2.2 Locating the Schools and the Teachers

I decided to look at guidance teachers from the general teaching population because they occupied a mediate position between the school and the home. As well as their more conventional teaching responsibilities they play an important pastoral role as guidance teachers (1). As guidance teachers we might expect them to have little affinity with the more traditional pedagogic approach. A lot of their time is spent with parents, attendance officers, psychologists, community workers and members of childrens' panels. Guidance teachers have built up a formidable array of non-pedagogic information on the pupils. On the other hand their 'teaching' credentials are preconditions of their promotion to the guidance post. Of the twenty teachers interviewed, only one was new to the profession and he had come in as a mature student. They were all able and experienced classroom teachers (2). As well as having a guidance role their own subject teaching was something they were still very much involved in (See Tables 1-5). Only three teachers commented on how their guidance responsibilities had significantly diminished their classroom teaching timetable and one of these had management duties as an assistant head. Furthermore, guidance has not as yet been professionalised. Head teachers do not employ teachers solely for guidance and teacher training colleges do not train students as guidance teachers. Guidance teachers have to prove themselves as pedagogues and disciplinarians within conventional teaching classroom situations.

Head teachers in consultation with the head of guidance, who was usually an assistant head, chose the teachers that I would interview. But in the smaller schools the teaching sample selected themselves. I wanted to interview four guidance teachers from each school. In the cases of Logan High and Boreston I therefore had to interview all the guidance staff. In the other three schools I was given access to staff

made available by the school head. For some heads ill health and pressure of work were given as reasons as to why I was given particular guidance teachers. At Waterston where there were ten guidance staff the head thought that I should interview those more involved in sex education, particularly those who were teaching S3 and S4 pupils. I was also given guidance teachers who were involved in the advising of pupils in S2 about what combination of subjects to take. These particular teachers as well as having normal responsibilities for 'problem' children, were able to talk about a different category of problem parents, over ambitious parents who tended to dominate at the meetings where subject choices were discussed (3).

I soon realised that the guidance staff were the busiest teachers in the school. As well as their own subject teaching responsibilities, they were involved in social, health and sex education, advising pupils on their subject choices, attending to pupils' personal problems and they also had an important disciplinary and advocacy role to play in cases of serious or persistent breaches of the school's rules (4).

In terms of finding time and space to be able to sit down and reflect on their professional roles they would probably have been the most difficult teachers to interview. Time was always at a premium and I was in no position to dictate when the interview would take place and for how long it would last. Fortunately, most of the teachers were most accommodating. This sometimes meant having to do three interviews in one morning. On several occasions I had to make two journeys to complete one interview. Yet these problems were far outweighed by the fact that most of the teachers were intrigued that I wanted to ask them about their opinions and perceptions. Most of the teachers were very assertive in making these opinions known! (5).

Below I list the relevant information about the teachers and their schools.

1. Boreston Community School was a small school with 443 pupils with a guidance staff of four. It was situated in the south of the city in a large catchment area. The social class composition was mixed but slightly skewed towards the working class. Seventeen per cent of the school population was of Asian descent. It had strong links with the local community. It was a busy night class centre, was the meeting place for a variety of community groups and had introduced some adults into conventional classes.

| NAME | AGE | SUBJECT | EXPERIENCE |
|-------------|-----|---------------|-------------|
| JIM CRAIG * | 39 | TECHNICAL | 10 (5) |
| SUSAN BRUCE | 34 | ENGLISH | 11 (3 mths) |
| JOAN LESLIE | 42 | ENGLISH/HIST. | 20 (16) |
| ALICE TAY * | 39 | BIOLOGY | 14 (9) |

* Teachers married with children.

Figures in brackets relate to guidance experience and are in years.

2. Stenhouse Academy has 400 pupils with a guidance staff of six. It is situated approximately twenty five miles east from the city centre in a small town that has been marked by severe industrial and demographic decline over the past fifteen years. Consequently it has a high proportion of working class pupils at the poorer end of the socio-economic scale. As a centre of Orange Lodge activities it is an area known for its religious sectarianism.

| NAME | AGE | SUBJECT | EXPERIENCE |
|----------------|-----|----------------|------------|
| JEAN BRYCE * | 63 | REMEDIAL/ENGL. | 18 (8) |
| NORAH BOWLES * | 31 | BIOLOGY | 5 (1) |
| RUTH SMITH | 41 | HOME ECONS. | 19 (16) |
| IAN HART * | 49 | CHEMISTRY | 3 (3 mths) |

3. Waterston High is the largest school with 1141 pupils and a guidance staff of ten. It is situated on the outskirts of the eastern city boundary in a residential area with a predominantly middle class population. Yet it does take in an area of high rise council flats on its northern border. It is the one school with a high academic reputation.

| NAME | AGE | SUBJECT | EXPERIENCE |
|---------------|-----|-----------|------------|
| IAN HOWE * | 44 | TECHNICAL | 16 (15) |
| BILL SMART * | 33 | PHYS. ED. | 10 (6) |
| VIVIEN WILLIS | 45 | MATHS | 24 (18) |
| LIZ SIM * | 63 | ENGLISH | 13 (8) |

4. St. Mary's has 612 pupils and a guidance staff of six. The school is situated in the middle of a wide catchment area that stretches across the northern and western boundaries of the city. Having a denominational status, it's population is made up of mainly Roman catholic children. Over the past few years more non catholics have joined as a consequence of its reputation as a good school in both academic and disciplinary terms.

| NAME | AGE | SUBJECT | EXPERIENCE |
|--------------|-----|-----------------|------------|
| BILL SHORT * | 56 | REL. EDUC/A.H.T | 28 (17) |
| IAN JONES | 40 | MATHS | 10 (1) |
| IAN DURY | 52 | MOD. LANGS. | 23 (17) |
| MARY JAMES * | 43 | REMEDIAL | 16 (12) |

5. Logan High- has approximately 460 pupils and a guidance staff of four. It is situated in the west of the city with a predominantly working class population. Over the last ten years has gradually been run down from its capacity of 1000 pupils to the present figure. The school has been under threat of closure for several years. This according to the teachers interviewed has led to low morale among the staff.

| NAME | AGE | SUBJECT | EXPERIENCE |
|----------------|-----|------------|------------|
| DOROTHY SMALL | 52 | ENGLISH | 28 (18) |
| GEORGE BARRY * | 56 | TECHNICAL | 26 (17) |
| ANNE SMART | 37 | HISTORY | 15 (8) |
| STEWART ROSS | 40 | PHYS. EDUC | 18 (9) |

As with the parental sample I must stress the confidential nature of the teaching sample. I have thus changed the names of all respondents and schools. I have also significantly altered the geographical setting of the schools whilst maintaining an accurate, although admittedly impressionistic, description of the social characteristics of the areas in which the schools are situated.

2.3 The Parenting Sample

Once I had successfully sought permission from the head teacher to contact the parents, I still had the problem of knowing how I would get hold of them. Initially I had a standardised approach to the problem of parental access. I had written a letter of introduction which mentioned that I wanted to interview them and my connection with the school. I also included a synopsis of the project (6). In a formal sense I was correct to mention the school in the letter as I had actually got their names and addresses through the school role. But this had to be weighed up against possible bias in the kinds of parents who would respond to my requests. During the interviews with the teachers one of the interesting comments I got was the inability of the school to get hold of parents with problem children (7). The assumption I made at this stage was that if I wanted a cross section of parental views on the school I would want to canvass the opinions of 'problem' parents. If these parents were loathe to step foot in the school they were highly unlikely to want to talk to an 'outsider' whose research activities had been established by the school. As I will demonstrate in the thesis my aim is not specifically to look at problem parents in terms of their relationship with the school as part of a "welfare network", but to look more at the perceptions they have of themselves as parents in relation to the school taken as the other significant moral and social reference point for their children

(Johnson et al 1980). If I wasn't able to interview deprived parents, this wouldn't detract from how other parents defined problems that they had.

I also decided that I would interview the parents separately. I took this decision for two reasons. First, I couldn't see anything to be gained from observing the interactions between parents within the interview situation. The researcher does not study family interactions by observing the behaviour between spouses in the interview situation. There is no sense then in which the researcher can get a more accurate portrayal of family life by interviewing parents together than by interviewing them separately (8). Secondly, interviewing parents together would inhibit either parent from answering questions more fully and freely, especially where the questions were around the topics of power, authority and sexuality within the home (9).

In addressing the role the schools played in the access I was granted to parents, three factors were significant; the ethos of the school which reflected the way school management did things and shaped the kinds of general contacts that the school had with parents; the extent to which the school wanted to take an active interest in the project and the extent to which I would be able to get permission from all categories of parents (10). There was some variation in the way head teachers dealt with my requests. Boreston had particularly strong links with the parents through a weekly parents surgery that the headteacher had. This head teacher had no problem getting me parents. They had been contacted personally by the head and sent a copy of my letter of introduction and project synopsis. At the time I was never sure about whether the head had contacted parents who would be more likely to give the school a good press. My fears were allayed after I had conducted the interviews. Of the four couples from

Boreston only one parent was active in the school politics and he made several pointed criticisms of the school.

At Logan High the head teacher became personally interested and sent out several letters to parents with no success. This was tried several more times before the head phoned me and apologised for not being able to provide me with any parents. At Stenhouse, St. Mary's and Hilltown after an initial meeting with the head, I was passed on to an assistant head teacher. In these three schools the letters were sent out to parents who fitted the criteria with varying degrees of success. Stenhouse provided me with six couples, four took part, one wasn't interested and another was inaccessible. By this stage I had interviewed eight sets of parents and had exhausted three of the schools. In order to reach my target of twenty couples I would take six couples from each of the remaining schools. After canvassing a whole school year at Hilltown and a considerable proportion of parents from the appropriate year at St. Mary's, I reached my target. Below I list the parents and their main characteristics.

Middle Class

1. Christine Terry, 54, part-time shop assistant; (1)*
George Terry,
55, civil servant.
Religion: atheist
Married: 29 years
Children: Tim, 14; Stephen and Richard, 12.

2. Alice Rodgers, 36, housewife (1)
Frank Rodgers, 39, social worker, chairman of school council
Religion: Baptist
Married: 16 years
Children: Ronald, 15; Jeff, 12; John, 11; Ruth, 8.

3. Jean Wilson, 47, hotel proprietor (1)
George Wilson, 47, hotel proprietor
Religion: Protestant
Married: 25 years
Children: Lynn 17, Philip, 15, Donald 13.
4. Agnes Slaney, 41, housewife (2)
Brian Slaney, 42, company director of construction business
Religion: Protestant
Married: 19 years
Children: June 17, Alan 14.
5. Anne McTear, 42, Staff Nurse, N.H.S. (part-time) (2)
Tom McTear, 44, Police Constable
Religion: Protestant
Married: 19 years
Children: Paula 15, Gordon 13, William 18.
6. Jan Short, 41, housewife (3)
Jim Short, 44, sub fire officer and self-employed builder
Religion: Protestant
Married: 20 years
Children: Angela 15, Elizabeth 12.
7. Evelyn Dobbie, 36, primary school auxiliary (part-time) (4)
John Dobbie, 39, Garage owner
Religion: Catholic
Married: 15 years
Children: Michael 14, Alison 11, Anne 7.
8. Rita Barnes, 44, care assistant in a nursing home (full-time) (4)
Will Barnes, 44, Area manager of sales company
Religion: Catholic
Married: 19 years
Children: William 15.
9. Iris Alison, 42, hairdresser, self employed, full-time p.t.a. at
primary school (4)
Bob Alison, 46, Garage/ welding business
Religion: Catholic
Married: 17 years
Children: Peter 15, Colin 11, Ian 8.
10. Mary Bone, 37, housewife (3)
Ronald Bone, 42, Computer manager,
Religion: Protestant
Married: 15 years
Children: Kathleen 14, Susan 11.

11. Alice Davies, 43, housewife (3)
Ian Davies, 43, Computer adviser for N.H.S
Religion: Baptist
Married: 17 years
Children: Alison 14, Anthony 11, Billy 8.

12. Elizabeth Johnston ,42, university researcher, (part-time), (**)
Arthur Johnston, 46, public relations officer with the N.H.S.
Religion : Jewish
Married : 15 years
Children John 14, Bruce 3.

Working Class

13. Jane White, 39, home help, (part-time) (1)
John White, 41, plumber
Religion: Protestant
How long married: 17 years
Children: Jim 14, Philip 12, Carol 7.

14. Betty Deary, 41, home help, (part-time) (2)
Dave Deary, 51, sheet metal worker.
Religion: Protestant
Married: 16 years
Children: Billy 15, Jean 13.

15. Isabel Hart, 39, cleaner (part-time) (2)
Tom Hart, 40, slater
Religion: Protestant
Married: 19 years
Children: Thomas 15, Doreen 18.

16. Rena Mckay, 53, housewife, ex. p.t.a. (4)
Bill Mckay, 57, coach builder
Religion: Catholic
Married: 28 years
Children: Gillian 14 (Michael 26, Jane 25, Grant 24).

17. Jean Robbie, 42, nursing auxiliary - N.H.S., (full-time) (4)
Ian Robbie, 44, hospital porter N.H.S.
Religion: Catholic
Married: 15 years
Children: Donald 15, Alexander 17.

18. June Wilkins, 38, school cleaner, (part time) (4)
Bill Wilkins, 41, baker.
Religion: mother - Catholic; father - protestant
How Long Married: 14 years (husband's second marriage)
Children: Robert 14, Gavin 7.

19. Ruby Bolton, 42, housewife (3)
Bill Bolton, 44, clerk in an engineering business
Religion: Protestant
Married: 16 years
Children: Mary 14, Andrew 13.

20. Kathleen Adams, 40, clerk - N.H.S. (part-time) (3)
George Adams, 44, clerk with British Telecom
Religion: Scottish Episcopalian
Married: 16 years
Children: Sally 14, Jim 10.

21. Angela Stone, 42, V.D.U. operator, N.H.S. (full-time) (3)
Richard Stone, 43, shift supervisor for British Coal
Religion: Protestant
Married: 17 years
Children: Paul 14, Rhona 8.

22. Alice Roper, 35, housewife (**)
David Roper, 36, shop assistant.
Religion: Protestant
Married: 17 years
Children: Janice 13, Edward 8.

* denotes which school their children went to according to how the schools are numbered on the lists of schools and teachers pp. 59-60.)

** denotes a pilot couple

The mean age of mothers and fathers was 41.6 and 44.1 years respectively. The modal age of mothers and fathers was 41 and 44 years respectively. The mean and modal lengths of marriages were 18.2 years and 17 years respectively.

Social Class was used as a means of dividing up the sample and was drawn from the Registrar General's classification. There were twelve (55%) middle class couples and ten (45%) working class couples. The social class of the couple was derived from the occupational title of the spouse with the highest classification. In most cases the occupational titles of the sample fitted neatly into the middle class or working class categories. There were three anomalous cases: two clerks and one full-time nurse (The latter also happened to be the

only case where the wife had a higher classification than the husband). On balance I decided to place them in the working class category on the grounds that they all stayed in council housing. Fathers were in full-time employment with the exception of Bill McKay who had just been laid off due to ill-health. Five (23%) mothers were in full-time employment; ten (45%) were in part-time employment and seven (32%) were unemployed.

Initially, I wanted a reasonable mix of parents of boys and girls within the fourteen to fifteen age range. As I have already stated, the target age was chosen more as a means of generating discussion on issues which parents would have had some knowledge of - secondary schools, sex education and curricula choice. At this stage there was a sex imbalance with fourteen couples with boys (64%) and only seven with girls (32%) within the target age range (11). But as the analysis proceeded the concept of adolescence became important. Not only had I interviewed parents of fourteen and fifteen year old children, I had interviewed parents of *adolescent* children. If we broadened the age band to include parents with adolescent children between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, the sex ratio of boys to girls moves from 14:7 to 14:12. Five parents with boys between the ages of fourteen and fifteen had girls within the broader adolescent age band.

The religious affiliations were determined by the schools that the children were sent to. Three couples from the non-denominational schools (two Baptists and one Scottish Episcopalian) were members of a particular denomination of protestantism. One couple with children from the catholic school were 'mixed', a catholic mother and protestant father' and one pilot couple were jewish and sent their children to the non-denominational school. One couple claimed to be

atheist*.

Church of Scotland: 11 couples (50%)

Baptist: 2 couples (9%)

Episcopalian: 1 couple (4.5%)

Roman Catholic: 6 couples (27%)

Jewish: 1 couple (4.5%)

N = 21*

2.4 Single Parent Caveat

Throughout the thesis I occasionally refer to what I term the single parent caveat. Teachers when discussing how discipline and sex education were handled within the home would often refer to the large numbers of single parents that they had come across in school when qualifying general statements made about who did what within the home. The single parent caveat is an important limitation on any general statements made about the kinds of relations found within the home. Recent figures show that one in eight families with dependent children are one parent families (Haskey 1984). It therefore becomes very difficult to generalise about family life per se from a study that focuses on families with more than one parent.

I had thought at one stage to include a relevant proportion of single parents in the sample. But their eventual omission was dictated by pragmatic concerns. A proportionate number of single parents from a parenting sample of twenty two families would give me at most three single parents. Given the limits on resources, I decided that I wouldn't have enough parents in the single-parent cell to be able to do a viable comparison with the majority category of two parent families. I thus decided to concentrate on a small sample of parenting couples (12).

3. Interview Conduct

3.1 The Interview as the Research Tool

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the need to identify the perceptions that parents and teachers had of the roles they played, the interview seemed to be the best means of generating the empirical data. In this section I consider the role of the researcher within the interview setting.

The contingent nature of the interview makes it highly unlikely that either actor is able to predict how the other ought to behave in what is normally seen as a novel situation. Yet interviewers have to present themselves in such a way as to fulfill their primary aim, which in my case was to elicit information that accurately reflected the activities and the views of parents and teachers on a range of subjects chosen by myself. The interview situation in general presented me with two problems in fulfilling this aim : the ambiguous status of the interviewer - a problem which is acutely felt by exploratory work done on the family; and the inadequate means of validating what respondents say.

3.2 The Ambiguous Status of the Interviewer

Elizabeth Bott identified the problem of how interviewers conduct themselves in terms of the ambiguous status of the researcher in the domestic setting. In the early stages the aim of her research was to get inside the world of the couples that she was studying by imposing as few demands on the respondents as possible. Bott's interviewers had set out to get to know the respondents by casually dropping in on them on odd occasions and allowing them to come up with any topics they

deemed suitable for discussion. The unstructured nature of these meetings according to Bott led to the interviewers confusing three different roles; that of research worker, therapist and confidante. This in turn led to disorientation on the part of the respondent (Bott 1957: 19-20). This was something that I took account of at the outset of the interviews.

I unambiguously presented myself as a social scientist to the parents. Bott's earlier mishaps led to the tightening up of the research process by equipping her interviewers with more structured interview schedules. In my situation I had carried out four pilot interviews as a way of testing out the relevance of the questions being asked. This resulted in some questions and areas being dropped from the subsequent interviews (13). I thus went into the interview situation with some experience of the subjects I needed to cover and a more fixed idea of the appropriateness of the questions in relation to the areas I wanted to analyse. I established early on that I wanted to study certain aspects of the lives of parents and teachers and that my interest was primarily academic. Thus I emphasised the documentary nature of my research by soliciting their help in answering my questions.

There were very few instances where I was mistaken for a therapist. As Bott argued, the therapist is in conflict with the academic researcher because the respondents might react to the former in terms of the need for reassurance or help rather than simply articulate possible parental anxieties which are documented by the latter (Bott 1957: 20).

A further consideration here is that my study focuses on the "therapeutic role" of a third party. There was always the possibility that I may have been perceived by the respondents in these terms. There is a danger then that attempts at probing sensitive areas of

family life, especially in circumstances where parents articulate certain anxieties, may lead to a situation where the research as documentary is obscured.

Fortunately this only happened once. One mother had spoken about the changes in her fifteen year old daughter. As the interview had covered the areas of discipline and sex education it was becoming apparent that this mother was having difficulty coming to terms with her daughter's developing independence and sexual maturity. Once the interview was finished and I had switched off the tape recorder I was asked for my 'professional' opinion on how she should tackle her daughter on the subject of a boyfriend. Because the interview had formally finished we were able to sit and discuss this for a few moments. I was desperately trying to sound helpful without giving the impression that I was an expert on the subject!

An important counterveiling pressure on the therapeutic role was the private nature of the domestic unit. Parents were less likely to ask a stranger, particularly, a stranger with little legitimacy beyond trying to engage parents in a research project, questions of a personal or private nature. Parents may have been quite happy to answer my questions and respond to my probings. They were probably much less likely to ask for help from somebody they had only just met and were never likely to see again.

Finally, I was never taken by any of my respondents as a confidante. This role tends to develop in longitudinal studies where the researcher is in close contact with her respondents over a long period of time. It can also be found in participant observation, the role quite often being a pre requisite of the research situation. Given the lack of time and resources this was never going to be a serious problem with my research. Rationing myself to one meeting to

arrange the interview and one meeting for the interview itself, there was never the time to develop a close relationship.

3.3 The Problem of Teachers as Parents

If we turn briefly to the teaching interviewers any ambiguity lay more with the teachers themselves. The teachers were of course aware of the interviews being done with the parents. Fifty five per cent of the teachers had children. There was thus the problem of asking these teachers about how they thought parents dealt with questions of morality and indiscipline within the home when it was probable that some of these teachers had or were going through the same experiences. Furthermore, where the questions were equally applicable to both parents and teachers, they would occasionally preface their answers by saying 'are you asking me as a parent or a teacher?' Where it is relevant in the thesis I have made this ambiguity explicit. But I made it clear at the outset to both head teachers and their staff being interviewed that I was interested solely in their roles as teachers and questions whenever possible were unambiguously phrased in these terms. We might also add that the settings within which the teaching interviews took place were an important means of distinguishing the teaching role from possible parental roles that teachers had. The teachers were interviewed at their place of work, usually an office that was free. The environment within which teachers were interviewed tended to reinforce the idea that teachers were being asked to comment on their professional lives.

3.4 Validity

A problem that most interviewers suffer from is the extent to which they are able to validate the responses of their respondents (Denzin 1978: 124). Where the encounter is between two strangers and where

there is a likelihood that they would remain strangers after the interview there is little that the interviewer can draw on in checking the veracity of what the respondent says. Yet if the interview is taken in the Goffmanesque sense as an encounter then the interviewer is being allowed into the respondents social world as defined by the respondent (Rapoport 1976: 30). This approach assumes that the respondents can make reasonable connections between their actions and their social environment. Thus respondents explanations of their conduct covers their motivations and how his conduct is evaluated in terms of a common stock of knowledge (Giddens 1976: 115). As the researcher has access to this common stock of knowledge, the researcher is able to assess the extent to which the accounts given by the respondent are reasonable. As the account is part of an encounter between both the researcher and the respondent this reasonableness can be assessed by the overall sense that the researcher gets from the accounts given by the respondent. In practice this meant that I was able to ask the 'same' question again later on in the interview in getting a clearer picture of a particular aspect of the social world of both parents and teachers which the original question addressed. The semi structured nature of the interview then allows the interviewer to corroborate what the respondent says as the story unfolds much in the same way that we are able to check the internal consistency of any story.

3.5 The Theory/ Data Link and the Problem of Counting Qualitative Data

My study acts as a test case for the decline thesis. The decline thesis makes general claims about the status and condition of parenthood. Parents are no longer able to underwrite their children's well being. It also makes a general claim about the role that the

school plays in this process. I have resisted the temptation to generalise from my sample of parents and teachers to the wider population. But the general nature of the claims being made through the decline thesis makes it possible to argue that my samples were not sufficiently a-typical to be disqualified as an appropriate test. I have discussed the importance of using guidance teachers. The parents satisfied certain criteria; number of parents, age of children, children of mixed sexes, and social class. They were mainly Scottish parents living in or nearby a medium sized city. Their children all went to the local state secondary schools. In a search for something exceptional about these parents that disqualifies them, we might point to the particular nature of the Scottish education system - its distinctiveness from the British system - what is called the 'egalitarian myth' (14). But a delineation of this distinctiveness would tell us nothing about discipline and sex education which would help explain any perceptions that parents and teachers might have. My study is Scottish in only a practical sense - I happen to live in Scotland and the grant I was given came via a Scottish University.

A further potential problem involves the use of numbers in what is conventionally seen as 'qualitative' data. The data generated in my study reflected the exploratory nature of some of the questions in that it could not be standardised for the purposes of enumeration. Given that I was interested in the perceptions that parents and teachers had of their experiences as authority figures, the data tended to take on a form that was not readily amenable to quantification. But in some instances counting was possible. With questions on for example, the frequency of corporal punishment, I may not have achieved a scientific precision, but I was able to get a sense in which parents were able to establish whether it was a common

practice, whether it was a last resort or whether it was never administered. The fact that I didn't do any significance testing didn't preclude me from using the tables to get a sense of scale and frequency from these responses (Silverman 1985: 138-155).

A final problem with the parenting interviews was getting parents with children of non adolescent ages to focus exclusively on their adolescent children. Questions were directed towards how they dealt with their adolescent children. In most cases they were answered with reference to these children. In some cases parents made a point of comparing how they dealt with their adolescent children in relation to their other children. Where the questions were more generally about parenting practice and the role of the school, parents often referred to children and parents in general. Sometimes they were articulating problems that all parents had, sometimes they referred to their own experiences. In most instances the context of the quotation used indicates the extent to which parents are referring to adolescents or children in general. Where this is not the case, I have tried to make this more explicit.

4. Notes

1. Pastoral Care has been institutionalised in Scotland since 1971 and in England since the mid 60's. See Best and Decker in Ribbins 1985.
2. Denscombe's interviews with head teachers revealed that most guidance teachers were promoted because they 'kept good discipline'. Denscombe 1985: ch.6.
3. See Chapter Four for an exposition of this categories.
4. See Chapter Four.
5. See Appendix Two for a copy of the interview schedule.
6. See Appendix One.

7. Explored more fully in the section 'absent parents' in Chapter Four.
8. Observing family life is a perennial methodological problem in family study. It is generally recognised that observational techniques are inappropriate in studying family life given the private nature of interactions within the family (Allan 1979: 19).
9. This was one of the restrictions on interviewing spouses together touched on by Graham Allan (Allan 1980: 206)
10. Johnson's study of parents and schools relied heavily on what was termed a 'flexible' research relationship with the educational authorities. Unlike Johnson's approach I think this needs to be stressed in more problematic terms. I appreciate the difficulties that all researchers have in trying to maintain control over the sampling process, particularly in contexts where hierarchical relations as the object of the study assume hierarchical proportions between the researcher and the researched. But this needs to be stated more explicitly in how it might compromise the quality of data (Johnson 1983: 132-134).
11. One pilot couple had slightly younger children, the eldest being thirteen years old.
12. For further reading see Hardey in Allan and Crowe 1989; O'Brien in Lewis and O'Brien 1987; Popay et al 1983.
13. I did not substantially add to the list of issues being covered after the pilot interviews had been undertaken. I therefore saw no reason for excluding my pilot parents from the sample. See the sample list in this chapter.
14. See McPherson 1983.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCIPLINE AND TEACHING PRACTICE

1. Introduction

The decline thesis focuses on the lack of control that teachers have in class in terms of a loss of educational authority in school. Proponents tend to explain this in terms of the development of the welfare state and the dominance of child-centred teaching philosophies (1). The school is now argued to have been drawn into a non-pedagogic network of welfare agencies. Teachers act primarily as agents of the welfare state rather than professionals who have an educational investment in children. The school now links up with social workers and psychologists in accounting for behavioural and educational problems in class. This affects the internal structure of the school which begins to take on the form of a welfare agency in its own right. In the following chapter I assess the work of guidance teacher, the teaching role that approximates closest to the alleged welfarist tendencies within school.

This chapter is concerned with the claim made by the decline thesis that the educational structure not only creates a welfare network within school, but undermines the individual teacher's capacity to exercise an educational authority in class. As teachers focus on educational failure and indiscipline in class in terms of the social and emotional backgrounds of the pupils, they become less concerned with asserting their authority in class. The organisation of classwork changes in response to the new educational values. Group work is argued to encourage cooperative rather than individualistic efforts from pupils. Within this context teachers find it difficult

to take the kind of immediate action in class argued to be necessary in establishing and maintaining control. First, the positional difference between teacher and pupil alters as the teacher works through the group instead of demanding the undivided attention of the whole class. Second, group work encourages pupils to behave in ways that suggests the teacher has a more managerial than moral role to play. Discussion works through the teacher rather than from the teacher. Control then in class is associated with the particular approach of the teacher. In this Chapter I discuss the approaches adopted by teachers in keeping classroom control and assess the extent to which the decline thesis has any grounds for arguing that teachers have lost control.

Guidance teachers were interviewed because they were the teachers least likely to exhibit the attitudes and behaviours of the traditional pedagogue. Although in Chapter Two I discussed the pedagogic credentials of guidance teachers in moving into promoted posts in guidance, guidance teachers also need to have considerable therapeutic and communicative skills. These are characteristics much closer to the declines thesis's model of the teacher who rejects a hierarchical relationship with the pupils. We might hypothesise that if these teachers do not approximate in teaching approach to the out-of-school teaching model suggested through the decline thesis, we would hardly expect to find it in teachers who have no out-of-school responsibilities.

Denscombe in his analysis of classroom control argues that the only limits on the teacher's behaviour in class are legal ones (Denscombe 1985: 92-93). I will contextualise teaching behaviour in terms of two other potential restrictions. First, I outline the role the school ethos plays in influencing the kinds of approaches teachers adopt. The school ethos is also significant because it normally

incorporates ideas about relations the school has with parents. It is an important means by which the school presents itself to the parents. Thus by examining the school ethos we have an opportunity to assess the role a particular school plays in relation to parents and how this affects the approach of the individual teacher. Secondly, I look at the school's disciplinary structure which gives teachers an important set of guidelines on how to deal with discipline in class. These involve rules which refer the individual teacher to teaching staff outside that particular teachers's classroom.

In the second half of the chapter I argue that within the parameters set by the school ethos and the disciplinary framework, teachers have a relative autonomy within the classroom. Teaching behaviour cannot be simply deduced from these contextual factors. I outline the different ways in which the teacher determines the classroom agenda. This will then be used to assess the claims made by the decline thesis that teachers have lost control.

I touch on one other way of assessing teaching approaches to classroom control. The debates over the abolition of corporal punishment in schools are usually framed in terms of an opposition between an enlightened liberal approach and a more traditional view. Critics of an existing teaching approach are notably silent on the kinds of sanctions that teachers ought to draw on. The discussion on corporal punishment will be used to assess the extent to which there exist differences in classroom approach. This is then used to evaluate the existence of a dominant classroom approach which is accountable for the alleged decline in class room control.

2. The School Ethos

From the five schools involved in this study there were some differences in ethos (2). In four of the schools a majority of teachers asserted that their schools were either 'hard' on discipline or adopted a more liberal line (3). Teachers here articulated their ideas on teaching and discipline through the assertion of a school ethos. Five of the eight teachers at St. Mary's and Waterston spontaneously mentioned "standards of behaviour", "top down discipline" and "firmness" - characteristics of the decline thesis - when responding to the question on the school ethos. At Boreston and Stenhouse the emphasis was on a more cooperative model of teacher/pupil relations which was closer to the model of education criticised through the decline thesis. Four of the eight teachers spontaneously mentioned "pupil centredness", not being "authoritarian" and "negotiating" with the pupils as ways of describing the school ethos.

Teachers from St. Mary's defined the school ethos as a product of a christian element and its strong disciplinary standards. But there was some tension expressed by the teachers from St. Mary's between these ideas and the views of the head teacher. This was expressed by Mary James whose three children had all attended the school.

I'm a firm believer in discipline and there are other staff who are, but there's a feeling that we don't all agree with what comes from the top. I feel that, not from our deputy who's very strong on discipline, but the head's a bit lax here. You know, very much for the kids and falls over backwards to accommodate the kids at times which I feel is not good.

At Waterston there was less of an emphasis placed on the unique approach of the school by the teachers. Vivien Willis explained this in terms of the size of the school (twice as large as the other schools).

In a big school it's difficult to have a cohesive ethos because of the fragmentation by each year head having their own little area of responsibility. Each in their own way is strict and let's the kids know what is expected of them. In fact as a cohesive unit it doesn't always come across as one voice. That's to do with size and the fragmentation of the building. There isn't a central area where the school can meet.

Yet the teachers here came close to expressing an ethos when discussing the general expectations that parents had of the school. For Liz Sim, Waterston was "an area where parents have very high expectations." To some degree these expectations were expressed in terms of how they thought parents wanted their children disciplined. But there was a strong sense that the school was attempting to live up to the educational standards expected by both parents and the pupils. Liz Sim went on to explain this.

The school is not poor in the things that really matter because the kids are interested in their work, they take a pride in their work and it is of a high quality. It's a school where there is very little deprivation in terms of money. People are basically well off. There are children away from school just now skiing - its a well known hobby here, so is golf. The sorts of things that indicate that they have money.... The children pay a great deal of attention to where they book their holidays, their parents type of car, designer brands things like this.

Stenhouse was similar to Waterston in that the staff tended to express the school ethos in terms of parental expectations. But here the ethos was asserted in *contradistinction* to the way parents expected the school to behave. Parental expectations here were linked more to how teachers ought to discipline their children. The headteacher who had just arrived from another tough school within the region. He had an almost evangelical approach to changing attitudes in and out of school. During our first discussion the head took out a

belt from his drawer and stated "I sometimes produce this piece of leather in class and refer to it as an antique!". The belt symbolised for him the negative repressive image of the school which he had actively been trying to change as a teacher and headmaster. The belt also symbolised the predominant disciplinary approaches of the parents from within the catchment area when he claimed that many children took an "awful beating from their parents". Corporal punishment was seen by the parents as the only answer to the problems of indiscipline in and out of school (4). According to the head, his views on discipline were very much at odds with those of the parents. He argued that:

disciplinary problems can be minimised by treating the pupil as a motivated individual with his own particular social goals. Teaching has to directed towards the individual's own ability.

The pupils were to be encouraged to work through syllabuses that reflected a multi-level approach. Thus the blackboard oriented approaches were dropped in favour of what Denscombe called a 'classwork management approach' (Denscombe 1985: 121-135). The head's argument here was that children were less likely to misbehave if they were kept interested in a syllabus that reflected their own independent needs. Teaching behaviour here was seen in terms of Green and Sharps' managerial approach with teachers moving between different groups of children who were involved in tasks which were more suited to their levels of ability (Green and Sharp 1976). Like the school that Sharp and Green studied, Stenhouse had a reputation for taking in 'difficult' pupils (5). A child centred approach in class was seen as more appropriate where children were less likely to accept more conventional teaching situations. According to the head this teaching

approach would further the educational ends of the school which were about making education more relevant to a mixed ability school. Discipline for the head then was not seen as an end product to be associated with its successful exercise by one powerful individual, but an immanent part of the teaching process.

There was some confirmation of the school's approach from his staff. Ruth Smith, who had been at the school nineteen years was asked about the school ethos:

R.S. : We've never actually sat down and discussed what it ought to be. But I suppose it's not really terribly authoritarian. It's mainly child centred as far as some people are concerned because any other approach won't work because of the types of kids we're working with.

M.W.: I got the impression from the head that this probably wasn't the approach expected from the parents.

R.S.: Possibly not. But you've got to get through the day; you've got to survive.

M.W.: Are you told by the parents to belt them?

R.S.: Yes they often say that. We'll say that we can't. They'll say, 'I don't care just do it'. That's how they deal with it. They tend to beat them about the head. I don't think that's particularly helpful. I'd say 70-80% of staff are child centred. You can be firm at the same time. The kids don't run amok but we take into account the difficulties the kids have and try to deal with individual kids with problems in an individual way in as much as we can when dealing with groups of kids.

M.W.: What role does discipline play?

R.S. : It's important. But at the end of the day the child comes first.

M.W.: You see discipline as more positive than negative?

R.S.: Yes, I think so. One or two older members of staff are hard liners. It's very difficult to have one set of rules for wee Jimmy because he's got problems and another set for the rest of the class. I suppose the kids are very understanding.

If we turn to one of her colleagues, Ian Hart, the same views were expressed over the role of the teacher in class. But like Jim Craig at Boreston, he didn't feel the school lived up to its reputation.

I.H.: I would say that they (the teachers) all sound to me as if they are teacher centred. Whereas I see myself as being pupil centred.

M.W.: How do you see discipline in this context?

I.H.: I'm already aware that inconsistencies can puzzle the kids. If they come in from one class where they've had an authoritarian teacher and they come into my class...They don't get to do what they want but I am there to help them. I don't know if they adjust to the change and then going in the opposite direction to another class maybe causes them problems. But I have to say that I'm going to stick with my methods because I'm getting results and no one can dispute that. The kids are absorbing the knowledge. They are learning in a way in which they are retaining. They're enjoying it and they're learning. One or two of the teachers aren't very happy. I've only been here a short time and I think I'm the first person who's gone for this pupil centred approach. They may feel it's undermining the way they are working.

Finally, teachers from Boreston tended to emphasise the same approach as Stenhouse but there was much less of an emphasis on what parents expected. Joan Leslie with twenty years experience from Boreston gave a detailed account of the aims of the school in terms of its extra-curricular activities.

The school should be a caring community. Guidance is obviously central to making it so. There is the hidden curriculum and extra-curricular part of the school is very important for that. For example, giving all s1 kids residential experience together outside of the school. But there is pressure against that from within the curriculum; the parts of the curriculum particularly new areas that have been imposed from outside. There is conflict between the declared ethos and pressures from outside. The commitment to anti-racism - multi culturalism. An essential point to

the school is to represent society as multi-cultural and value other races and beliefs - education against racism - that has a high profile. It's for me a very vibrant part of the school because it isn't something that comes from management. It comes more from the staff who are consistently and persistently trying to develop anti-racist education. There is also a gender working group promoting awareness of gender issues. There is also an input from the traditionalists and sometimes there is conflict. The school has been under pressure to close because of falling rolls. It is under pressures to produce exam results. There is a healthy reaction to that in that it has a community school ethos. It's open to adults and has facilities for small kids, the playgroup. The school is treating the kids as responsible beings which has been aided by having adults around some in classes....One of the good ways of getting contact with parents is having adults in school. They get a flavour of the school, what a modern school is like. They know everybody, that's a good thing.

Here we can identify a fairly complex set of conflicts between the school ethos and outside pressure exerted on the curriculum and between progressive and traditional elements within the school. According to Joan Leslie, the formal status of the school as a community school made it much more open to parents. This made it much easier for the school to set itself up as an important source of support to be drawn on by parents.

Although there tended to be a mix between a liberal head and a traditional deputy the emphasis was more on the liberal elements at Boreston. This was expressed by Susan Bruce. who had described her previous school as "authoritarian".

The pupil is someone to be encouraged..own feelings, beliefs, opinions. We should tap into that rather than imposing something else on top. Things like behaviour and progress are things that should be open to negotiation rather than a dictatorial approach. That's the nub of Boreston.

One member of the guidance team, Jim Craig was much less certain about the school's caring and liberal approach. Jim Craig was a relative newcomer to the school having spent ten years working in a community school with a radical orientation on the outskirts of town. Although his own approach was very child-centred, he was still to be

convinced that this was the general approach of the school.

It projects itself as a caring environment but I have to say I haven't really noticed it. As individuals, the staff will say they're caring etc. Their day to day approach to the youngsters..they are not very warm, not hostile, but not very warm.

For some teachers talking about the school ethos was a way of identifying differences in teaching approaches within and between schools. For other teachers the ethos was used as a way of differentiating their school's disciplinary approach with the approach adopted by parents within their catchment area. Yet discussions about the school ethos did generate differences between schools with a traditional and progressive form of disciplining children. This tended to reflect some of the characteristics of the dichotomy set up through the decline thesis between the old and the new ways of teaching. At this level then there would appear to be some correspondence between views expressed about the general approach of the school and the decline thesis.

3. The Welfare/Disciplinary System

Although the school ethos has an impact on the way teachers behave in class, teachers have a degree of autonomy in setting a teaching agenda in class. This is based on two factors. First, teachers expressed the ways in which they were able to choose when to draw on the institutional framework of the school, the school's welfare/disciplinary network. Second, and more fundamentally, the responsibilities placed on teachers to keep order within the classroom tended to put them in a unique position in finding solutions to the perennial problem of keeping the class interested and well-behaved. When asked about how they were able to achieve these aims, they drew on criteria that didn't always neatly dovetail with the prevailing

school ethos or system of formal school rules. Despite the well-defined location of the individual teacher within the teaching system, teachers when interviewed tended to assert a degree of autonomy. Liz Sim from Waterston High summed this up by saying:

Teaching is a very private thing. You're in your own classroom and although your head of department will put his head in or should put his head in, you're virtually unsupervised.

Before going on to address both these issues I need to outline the welfare/disciplinary network. In Johnson et al the welfare network was defined in terms of the links that the school had with outside agencies, particularly the social services (Johnson et al 1980). Although I asked teachers about the kinds of links they had with child psychologists and social workers, by welfare I mean the kinds of supports that teachers draw on from within the school which, although having a formal educational function, have the same form as the kinds of welfare agencies located outside the school. I am thinking principally of the guidance system which functions alongside a system of sanctions that link the school "management" to the "front line" teacher (6).

Each of the schools studied has the same rules as regards discipline (7). Discipline is located at the interface of a hierarchy which separates school management from front line teachers and a guidance structure which acts as both an early warning system and post hoc source of information. On the one hand, there is a management hierarchy which is referred to in terms of the increasing level of seriousness of the offence committed by the pupil. At a certain point discipline becomes a purely formal process which involves management taking decisions on the educational future of the pupil. On the other hand, there are lesser sanctions which front line teachers administer. First, there are those sanctions that teachers deploy

daily in keeping the class under control. These include the use of body language, the raising of the voice, and the moving of pupils to other parts of the class. Whereas these sanctions did not involve an 'external' referent, in certain situations a teacher might be forced to invoke more formal sanctions. These are formal in the sense that they are usually recorded and involve a third party, either a member of the management team, the guidance teacher or the parent. They are listed below:

Detention: keeping children within school outside of normal school hours. These have to be recorded and the parents informed.

Punishment exercises: either lines or essays on topics chosen by the teacher. These have to be signed by at least one parent.

Behaviour forms: children are given forms which have to be signed by the teacher after every class with a brief remark on behaviour. They also have to be signed by at least one parent. They are then reviewed after a designated period of time.

Units: these are variously known as 'sinbins' or 'coolers' but act as spaces where teachers can send children when the teaching relationship between the pupil or teacher, or in some cases the pupil/pupil relationship, has broken down. An important point to stress here is that the class teacher is still held responsible for the pupil. The unit acts as a spatial extension to the individual teacher's classroom responsibilities (8).

At the top of the hierarchy of sanctions there are temporary suspensions and permanent exclusions. Decisions on the former are taken by the head, and in the latter case, by the regional director. But decisions were not normally made until after consultation with the relevant subject and guidance teachers.

Supplementing and to a certain extent underpinning this system of sanctions is a guidance structure which is made up of promoted teachers whose teaching time is split between their pastoral responsibilities and their subject timetable (9). They are responsible to a junior member of the management team, usually an assistant head. Guidance teachers will receive referrals from heads of departments and

principal teachers. These will have originally come from front line teachers. These referrals are formal pieces of information on a pupil who is giving some cause for concern. For example, if pupils are persistently not doing their homework and have exhausted the level of sanctions that subject teachers are able to invoke on their own, they will be referred upwards to their principal teacher and outwards towards guidance. Information flows upwards from the subject teacher as sanctions increase in severity and information flows sideways as the guidance system is alerted to potentially serious disciplinary problems.

Teachers were very conscious of the extent to which they referred pupils to those outside their immediate teaching locus (10). A few teachers were quite happy to ensure that the school management was aware of the steps they were taking as regards to certain pupils. Ross Stewart saw this as an important way of safeguarding his position from potential negative reactions to his teaching.

Some teachers run their own personalised detentions. I tend not to. I like the management of the school to be aware of what's going on within the school. Lots of teachers have their own modes of discipline. Quite often it never comes out in the wash...Although I don't over indulge in it, when there's something specific, I'll put it down on paper. I want the management to know what I'm doing. Most of the time most of the teachers will deal with things themselves.

Susan Bruce, on the other hand, referred to the effect that using management or guidance might have on a teachers perceived professional competence.

I'd use the unit for dealing with really troublesome kids. It's not seen as a big deal here. It's not an admission of defeat on the part of the teacher. In another school you would have been interrogated as to why this pupil was out of your class.

Teachers were conscious about drawing on external support in dealing with classroom indiscipline because it reflected badly on their ability to teach, not simply how they were judged by other

teachers, but how they were seen by the pupils. When asked whether he tended to hand out punishment exercises in class Ian Hart replied:

I did fall in to that trap when I started teaching. It's a sign of failure to do that. That in itself opens up new avenues and new possibilities for the teacher to demonstrate his incompetence....it's public in front of the class when a kid's given a P.E. If that kid refuses to do that P.E. that does far more damage to that teacher's credibility than if they had not given the P.E. and just shrugged his shoulders.

4. Discipline and Classroom Practice

As a result of attempts made to theorise education at an interactionist level, an extensive literature on teaching practice was produced in the 70's and 80's (Delamont 1976, Hargreaves 1979, Woods 1980, Pollard 1982, Denscombe 1985, Hammersley 1983). Much of this literature was concerned with how teachers were able to control a large and often unpredictable group of pupils. This literature assumed that the teaching situation was largely contingent. It was difficult to deduce actual teaching approaches from more general conceptualisations of the social structure because teaching control was seen as a more dynamic process between a single teaching 'authority' and a group of assorted pupils with varying personalities and aptitudes. Interactionists stressed that the only way to understand the teaching process was to observe the ways in which teachers and pupils interacted. In this section I draw on Denscombe's observational study of the classroom in drawing out different teaching approaches. I draw on Denscombe's typology of different teaching styles because he stresses the importance of these approaches as *different techniques of control* (Denscombe 1985: 143-146). As I argue, despite some of the rationales offered by the teachers of a form of democracy within class, all teachers were in the business of setting

the classroom agenda. All teachers were thus in the business of asserting a control over affairs within class.

Denscombe identified three strategies of control adopted by teachers in class; domination, cooptation and classwork management. Domination came closest to the model idealised through the decline thesis with an emphasis on status, respect and deference; in Denscombes words "a public display of the hierarchical relationship which obtains between teacher and pupil' (1985: 99). The other two approaches, on the other hand, approximated to the teaching approach that according to the decline thesis characterised the decline of educational authority. The status of the teacher is underplayed in an attempt to win over the confidence of the pupils. Cooptation places more emphasis on pupil participation in the organisation of the classroom agenda, and the use of reason in trying to restrict misbehaviour in class. Classwork management places a greater emphasis on the teacher using such factors as classroom space, the curriculum and the variable quality in educational attainment levels of the pupils in 'managing' classroom behaviour.

Very few of my teaching respondents fitted the categories exactly and there was considerable overlap between domination and classwork management and between classwork management and cooptation. The former overlap has more to do with the changes in curriculum and more general changes in teaching. But there is still a sense in which the differences are great enough between dominant and classwork management approaches to warrant separate categories. The overlap is too great between the cooptation and classwork management approaches with my sample. I have thus brought both categories together under the title of 'cooptation as classwork management'.

4.1 Dominance

A majority of teachers, thirteen, seemed to approximate to the kind of teaching approach advocated by the decline thesis. They saw the external imposition of forms of behaviour as an integral part of their teaching responsibilities. Teachers in this group saw discipline as being exercised from the 'top down'. Sometimes this meant the head setting an example. More often than not it was left to teachers to impose their authority within the classroom situation. Yet although there were similarities with the decline thesis in terms of an emphasis on a public display of dominance in class, there were significant differences in how teachers asserted this dominance. It became apparent that in discussions with these teachers that, although they were articulating their approaches in terms of how they were able to impose their status on classroom proceedings, this tended to take several different forms. I have thus broken down this group into three sub types which reflect the different verbal approaches teachers used in asserting their authority in class.

Six teachers argued that they had to constantly assert an authority through their superior verbal skills. These teachers relied more on a *confrontational* approach. These are teachers who see verbal confrontation as part and parcel of their disciplinary roles. Bill Smart from Waterston saw the raising of the voice as an important visible expression of his authority. In these terms the psychological and intellectual powers of the teacher are manifest in an attempt to maintain the upper hand in a situation where the teacher is heavily outnumbered by the pupils. Bill Short from St. Mary's would often give his pupils a "quick blast of the voice" when his back was turned or when he had to leave the room and returned to find that his pupils had moved seats. For one of his colleagues, Ian Dury, there was almost an expression of sheer enjoyment in verbal confrontation. He:

invariably ended up in an eyeball to eyeball confrontation...kids like confrontation, adults don't. Most adults will back off from confrontation, I won't. I'll have a confrontation any day of the week. I'm certainly not going to be dictated to by small kids.

A second group of four teachers adopted a more *psychological* approach in consciously trying to refrain from "bawling out" their pupils. This was taken as the major motivating force in maintaining control. Whereas in the previous example the teacher saw the successful control of the classroom in terms of how he would verbally square up to a badly behaved pupil, teachers who favoured this alternative approach saw this as a sign of failure. There was thus a concerted effort made in avoiding confrontation. Ross Stewart argued that the worst thing to do is to have a confrontation with badly behaved children because adults will always come off worst in these situations.

I feel a lot of kids like the conflict situation and if they can see that the teacher has had to raise his voice then, although they're getting a row, its still one up for them because they've managed to niggle the teacher.

Here we can see the classroom as a battle of wits. Not being drawn into confrontation which the pupil thrives on might lead to more effective control. The emphasis is placed more on the teachers asserting an authority through the displaying of greater psychological skills. This is brought out in Stewart's approach to disruption in class where he will:

try to maintain a normal level of conversation. Quite often the more serious it is the quieter I'll speak and the closer I'll bring the kid to me.

According to Ross Stewart the type of pupils here who engage in this kind of exercise are the type of pupils who have nothing to lose in

taking the confrontation 'all the way' (11).

Finally, a variant on the both the confrontational and psychological approaches was the *economic* use of the raised voice. Three teachers were able to avoid confrontation by only occasionally resorting to the raised voice. This was more of a considered economic act in that as Vivien Willis stated: "if you were always shouting... it would lose its effectiveness". Its effectiveness was measured in terms of the immediacy of response from the pupils. Vivien Willis from Waterston described one of the few occasions she raised her voice:

There's always noise (in class) but to me the noise level was unacceptable. I said that we'd have to keep the noise level down or those responsible would be punished. A few minutes later somebody started arguing with someone else over a pencil sharpener and I gave that boy a punishment. At the end he came out and said, 'miss, I've never had a punishment in class. Nobody has had a punishment in maths. Do you think I'm really bad?' He was really worried. The effect on the others was amazing.

Teachers here raise their voices sparingly when there was a need to restore order. They tended to adopt a firmer approach at the beginning of the session in an attempt at establishing ground rules for behaviour in class. Vivien Willis started out with a new class by being:

particularly firm. strict but fair I would hope. You can always slacken off later. Mostly my classes develop into being fairly relaxed. You set out guidelines fairly clearly and people know what's expected of them.

These teachers would tend to associate the confrontationalist approach with a never ending and inefficient use of a teachers limited resources, where a teacher has never been able to slacken-off.

There is a strong overlap between the psychological and economic approaches in that through experience, teachers dealing with large classes of restless pupils, couldn't hope to compete by using verbal force alone. Confrontation reflected badly on teachers and prevented

them from being able to teach effectively. Most of these teachers were in the business of preventing situations ever getting out of hand. Thus there was a big emphasis on the introduction of a code of conduct, if you like, a classroom ethos, in the first few weeks of term. This wasn't necessarily related to externally defined sets of standards - the teachers weren't simply in the business of 'socialisation' - more the acknowledgement of the difficulties encountered teaching without any practicable guidelines (Docking 1980: 12-39).

4.2 Coopting the Pupils and Classwork Management

Denscombe drew on two other strategies which although not obviously related to the control of classroom behaviour, nevertheless, were instrumental in classroom management. Teachers who favoured *cooptation* underplayed their formal authority in favour of a what Donzelot termed a 'relational' approach with the pupils (Donzelot 1979: 211). Jim Craig from Boreston and Ian Hart from Stenhouse were two examples of teachers who tended to emphasise the cooptive aspects in their work. Their strategies relied more on trying to form relationships with the pupils on a much more equal footing. On several occasions Jim Craig tried to underplay his formal authority. He asserted:

I don't operate as if I'm god, you know I'm up front and you guys have to jump through my hoops.

Earlier in the chapter, Ian Hart asserted his own approach in contradistinction to what he thought was the teaching norm in school. Here he asserts a more cooptive approach in opposition to what the pupils were used to.

Older kids I try to relate to more as adults and equals. The young kids are still looking for a domination type of situation, a benevolent dictator. They're quite disappointed if they don't get it.

Neither teacher was able to avoid a degree of boundary setting. In fact there was no sense in which any of the teachers in the study were expressing the more radical views associated with schools like Summerhill (Neill 1962). Almost all teachers saw themselves taking full responsibility for setting the agenda in class over what was acceptable behaviour. Jim Craig, mentioned a degree of collective responsibility within the classroom.

I tend to place the onus on shared responsibility between myself and the youngster. We're equal partners. What I will be doing will be picking up people for lateness. I tend to throw that back on to the class. The class will be in agreement that being late to the extreme is unacceptable, is disruptive to the whole class. Not just something that bugs me, it bugs everybody.

Yet it was left to Jim Craig to define what was to count as an issue which would affirm the collective ethos.

Two of the teachers who rejected a dominant role in class favoured a more *managerial* approach which incorporated a cooptive element. These teachers underplayed their formal authority and controlled the class through managing the parts of the curriculum that the teacher was able to set in class. Joan Leslie and Susan Bruce from Boreston incorporated aspects of classroom management into their approach. Joan Leslie structured the pupils' behaviour in class because she normally had a degree of autonomy over the content of classwork. She then used the lesson as a way of involving the children in activities in class thereby minimising the possibility of pupil disruption.

My long term approach is to have a relationship with pupils so that I minimise the formal and semi-formal sanctions unless the pupil is very disturbed. Once I know the pupil I don't tend to have to use sanctions. However with this particular group I'm doing a syllabus that I feel is not very exciting and interesting I don't have very much control over it...tend to have to be a bit heavier than normal.. involves not allowing kids to sit together.. I prefer to get them to work in groups.

In situations where she had less control over the curriculum some degree of 'dominance' was necessary.

Susan Bruce used a form of group management in organising the classwork which involved a high degree of noise, traditionally a sign that a teacher had lost control of the class (Denscombe 1980: 230-256). It was also presumably one of the criteria that marked off the two models of teaching generated by the decline theorists. I asked her about how she organised her class.

I wouldn't say they (the pupils) saw me as a stern disciplinarian. On the other hand, there's not much mucking about. However someone who likes to impose authority in the classroom probably sees my room as rather noisy. So, on the whole, they respond pretty well because of the friendly atmosphere.

Noise was for her a sign that the class was behaving properly in that her pupils were more involved in classroom activities. I went on to ask her more specifically about the kinds of informal sanctions she used.

I always work with the children in groups so I would be asking is it threatening the work of the others in the group. That's my first criterion. If it is I would split the group up and the badly behaved child might be taken out.

There were some connections between the schools' public images and actual teaching practice. Teachers from the two schools that emphasised a tough approach on discipline, expressed the need to assert their positional differences vis-a-vis the pupils. Whereas, teachers who favoured a more cooptive managerial approach found it

easier to breakdown the positional differences between themselves and the pupils when they had the backing of school management and where the school had a certain reputation. It was noticeable that of the five cooptive teachers, three were from the community school with a professed liberal approach.

4.3 The Loss of Corporal Punishment

In summary, teachers were heavily involved in setting an agenda in class. Some teachers were more explicitly heavy handed in this approach, others were managerial in that they relied less on their own formal position as authority figures in class. If we turn to one final issue, corporal punishment, we might hypothesise that the difference between these two teaching approaches is best exemplified through teaching opinion on one of most controversial of educational issues in recent years, the abolition of the belt (12). As can be seen from Table One, the abolition of the belt in the mid 80's was explained by the teachers in terms of the impact it had on classroom control (13).

Table One : *Teaching Views on Corporal Punishment* (N = 20)

Those in favour of its return 7 (35%)

Bill Short - "cure 75% of unruly behaviour in the classroom"

Ian Dury - "sometimes need to be cruel to be kind"

Mary James - "an important means of establishing discipline"

Jean Bryce - "An important weapon in establishing authority in the first couple of weeks of a new class."

Vivien Willis - "useful in certain situations, for example, bullying"

Ross Stewart - "performance of school would greatly improve with its reintroduction...other sanctions not as effective"

George Barry - "more effective sanction than anything they have now"

Those opposed to its return 13 (65%)

A. Those unequivocally opposed 8 (40%)

Ruth Smith - "obviated bureaucracy...wasn't effective.. didn't like giving the belt"

Ian Hart - "doesn't want results through fear and oppression"

Ian Howe - "indication of failure on the part of the teacher"

Bill Smart - "vicious..hypocritical... too often abused"

Jim Craig - totally opposed, personally and professionally.

Susan Bruce - "hated it on principle and any practical benefits"

Joan Leslie - "hangover from calvinism"

Anne Smart - "opposed to whole idea of legitimate violence"

B. Opposed, but recognised a degree of effectiveness (5) (25%)

Ian Jones - I'm opposed.. a recent convert to the cause...if used sparingly was effective but I don't think it's right to inflict pain on kids"

Norah Bowles - " I want something as effective as the belt but not the belt itself....opposed to physical violence as any mother would be"

Liz Sim - "never liked using it but it had some deterrent value"

Alice Tay - "in principle not necessarily against...only a few kids might benefit.. quite often abused"

Dorothy Small - "ambivalent.... quite an effective deterrent but I don't think it's reintroduction would make society a more disciplined place.... bit hypocritical belting somebody for fighting"

From Table One there is some relationship between the views on the belt and teaching approaches which reflect this. Three out of six teachers who favoured a more confrontational approach were unequivocal in advocating the return of the belt. And all seven advocating its return were within the 'dominant' category of teachers.

The ambivalence expressed by teachers in the 'opposed but effective category' was over the tension between its utility as a deterrent and a last resort, and the personal and philosophical concerns over physical child abuse. This may reflect some concern over the inadequacy of teaching sanctions left after the disappearance of corporal punishment. Table One offers some evidence in that in the 'opposed but effective' grouping several teachers were interested in seeing the belt replaced by something which was just as effective.

Thus although, in general, a majority of thirteen teachers were opposed to the return of the belt in school, the opinions of those who were in favour of its return and those who had reservations over its use tended to converge on the issue of the general utility of classroom sanctions that would bolster the teachers authority. A majority of twelve teachers appear to be reflecting the view that the existing system of sanctions within school was inadequate to meet the daily requirements of classroom teaching. Most of these teachers took a 'dominant' approach to classroom teaching.

5. Conclusion

The decline thesis identifies the change in teaching behaviour as an important indicator of the decline in teaching authority. Riesman outlined the sovereign position of the teacher in relation to the rest of the class. The teacher stands rooted at the centre of the class acting as the visible oracle and source of legitimate forms of communication in class. The teacher dominates by initiating everything, and everything is connected to the intellectual advancement of the pupil. In this situation teachers are in the best position to assert themselves in checking pupils who get out of hand. A majority of teachers converged on the broader abstract features of the model suggested through the decline thesis in that they played a dominant role in setting an agenda in class. These teachers tended to see discipline as the *public* imposition of a set of behavioural guidelines by the teacher, a corollary of the model suggested by the decline thesis.

At one level then we can say that a majority of teachers conformed to some of the criteria laid down through the decline thesis in the delineation of the proper teaching approach. At a less abstract

level they have less in common. The decline thesis is unable to specify how teachers are able to dominate in class. The decline thesis doesn't appear to take account of the actual experience of teaching. The abstract nature of this 'dominant' category put forward through the decline thesis cannot encompass opposing dominant teaching styles. I have shown that within this category of domination, teachers adopted a variety of verbal techniques in gaining the upperhand in class, teaching styles that according to the teachers set them apart from other teachers who would come under the general category of dominance.

Although a majority of teachers would appear to conform to the sovereign pedagogic role, several teachers adopted teaching approaches which would be interpreted by the decline theorists as a loss of control. Classroom disorder in these terms is seen as a consequence of teachers moving away from the sovereign position. Teachers present themselves in Riesman's guise of the 'compere' who provides merely the broad parameters within which pupils work at their own pace within the group. Classroom disorder here is associated with more progressive teaching ideas which stress activities that stretch between pupils rather than between teacher and pupil. Disorder here is usually exemplified by pupils who *appear* to have taken control of the teaching agenda because of their noisy boisterous *collective* activities. The appearance of disorder according to these teachers masks a more hidden managerial form of control. Sometimes this took the form of coopting pupils, at other times it approximated to Foucault's idea of the panopticon where the controlling mechanisms are part of what Denscombe called classroom management techniques (Foucault 1975: 195-228). Teachers who did not profess to dominate argued that their authority as teachers manifested itself in a more managerial form which relied on them creating the right pedagogic context without playing the role of the pedagogue.

The majority of teachers opposed the return of corporal punishment. But this masked more deep rooted dissatisfactions with existing sanctions available to teachers. Teachers within the dominant category had some reservations about bringing back the belt, but still saw it as a more effective deterrent than what was available to teachers now. On the other hand, the belt was anathema to teachers who eschewed the dominant approach. Teachers here tended to take a more philosophical line on the use of legitimate violence. But there was also a sense in which the existence of the belt in class undermined any attempts that teachers had of controlling the class through more managerial forms. The belt tended to affirm a public dominant role that these teachers preferred to keep hidden.

It would be wrong to infer from this that teachers rely solely on their own personal resources in controlling the class. In this chapter I outlined the impact of the school ethos and the disciplinary/guidance network. Sharp and Green in their analysis of educational control argued against the 'reification' of the the school ethos as a set of principles upon which the school was organised (Sharp and Green 1976: 47). As I have shown, teachers from the same school did not always express the same views about what their school stood for. Nevertheless, most of the teachers were able to express a collective sense of their school's position on discipline. With reference to classroom teaching practice, it was easier for teachers to practice their own professed teaching approaches if they were congruent with the ethos of the school. Finally, disussion on the extent to which teachers drew on guidance and management through the disciplinary/welfare network identifies the influence of a professional teaching ethos. All teachers at some stage or another had to draw on sanctions which involved other members of staff. There was

differing opinion on how this would be interpreted by "management". In schools where discipline tended to be defined in less 'dominant' terms there was more scope for drawing on external resources which broke down pupil/teacher conflict. There was less likelihood that this would be received critically by other staff. But these perceptions had to be tempered by the teacher's own personal sense of classroom control through which all teachers expressed a degree of autonomy.

The reader might be forgiven for thinking that teachers are hardly likely to admit to disorder in their classrooms given the importance they placed on keeping order in class as an aspect of their professionalism. Yet this would assume that any misbehaviour in class is a direct result of something that the teacher has or hasn't done. In Chapter One I outlined the importance of an agenda that asserts the role played by parents in shaping their children's behaviour outside of the home. We need not then assume that teachers are bound not to admit to problems they face in class when they are perfectly capable of pointing to children as products of someone else's work. Disciplinary problems that teachers have can often be identified in terms of the quality of parenting. It is to these perceptions that I turn to in the following chapter.

6. Notes

1. Entwistle introduces the discourse around Entwistle as a confused and sometimes contradictory set of teaching and moral principles (Entwistle 1970: 11). I take it here to mean that children are not treated as individuals with differing degrees of intellectual and cognitive abilities. Their intellectual development is a constituent part of their social and personal development. Teachers thus need to develop a more holistic approach to the child. This implies that the teacher is playing more than a pedagogic role.

2. In two cases the formal characteristics of the school had an important bearing on the ethos. Teachers from St. Mary's claimed that the school had a catholic ethos because it had a legally defined denominational status. Whereas at Boreston there was a more pluralist ethos because its status as a community school meant it had to provide educational resources for adults and various local pressure groups.

3. See Reynolds and Sullivans' study of eight schools which compares 'coercive' and 'incorporative' strategies as ways of characterising control in schools. (Reynolds and Sullivan: 1979)
4. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five.
5. Some teachers commented on how the parents charter of 1981 had led to many parents within the area sending their children to schools with better reputations. This didn't radically effect Stenhouse's intake because the school often took in pupils who had been excluded from other schools.
6. The teachers made a distinction between "management" - assistant head upwards - who spent less time teaching; and "front-line" teachers located at the bottom of the teaching hierarchy who spent most of their working day in class.
7. The one difference was at St.Mary's where the church played a more prominent formal role in school through the school chaplain.
8. For an extended discussion of the functions of units see Tattum in Ribbins 1985: 43-46.
9. See Chapter Two for more detail.
10. A point made by Denscombe in his delineation of the more informal processes of control within schools (Denscombe 1984). See also Tattum in Ribbins (1985: 51).
11. c.f. Willis's 'lads' who at the level of the school had transcended the exchange of deference for the teacher's knowledge. (Willis 1977: 52-88).
12. The schools involved in the study had all in varying degrees followed an informal policy of banning corporal punishment before it was made illegal in 1987. See Wolpe's summary of the recent debates over corporal punishment in schools. (Wolpe 1988: 273f).
13. Teaching opinion here reflected the 'polarised' views in SCRE study. See Cummings et al 1981.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TEACHING PERSPECTIVE: HOME, SCHOOL AND DISCIPLINE

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I investigated claims made through the decline thesis that teachers no longer exercise an 'educational' authority in class. In this chapter I analyse one of the reasons put forward for this alleged lack of authority; that teachers are now more concerned with the social and emotional backgrounds of children than their cognitive and intellectual abilities. Teaching responsibilities have now overlapped with those of parents. This has made it more difficult for parents to exercise an authority over their children. This is because teachers as agents of welfare have more power to set a moral and social agenda within which parents' responsibilities are defined. Parents thus become more dependent on external criteria. This agenda not only allows teachers to define what parents ought to be doing, but gives the school a right to take away what are normally seen as parental responsibilities.

This chapter assesses the more general claim that teachers have a more direct input into the way parents behave through their ability to dictate the way parents bring up their children. I outline the assumptions that teachers make about the role of the family and the extent to which they perceive themselves as playing the role of 'surrogate parents'. Although the teaching sample have considerable 'front-line' experience in their respective subjects, I am concerned here with their guidance responsibilities. Again, I stress the out-of-school teaching role of guidance teachers in that they are more likely

to express ideas about their role as surrogate parents. They are thus the group of teachers most likely to conform to the ideal teaching type complicit in the decline of parental authority. Given also that guidance teachers have most contact with parents, they have more to say about parents than other teachers. This enables me to look more closely at the kinds of parents that come into contact with the school.

The first section deals with general statements the teachers made about the teaching role in relation to parenting. Section Two looks at the perceptions the teachers have of the disciplinary role of parents. Discipline is the area that links both parents and teacher in that both are expected to be able to set a moral and social agenda within their respective spheres of influence. Because guidance has an intermediate role to play between home and school, it is important to assess the extent to which guidance teachers feel that these spheres of influence overlap. Sections Three and Four are concerned with the assumptions the teachers make about the family life of children they are most involved with. This involves assumptions about social class and the division of responsibility for discipline within the home. The final two sections will draw on the teachers' experience of the guidance network by looking at the quality of relations they have with what we might term problem parents. I first of all assess the difficulties teachers have with parents who have problems disciplining their children. Although teachers tend to refer to problem parents in terms of more conventional notions of social deprivation, I argue that the guidance system in school generates an alternative model of problem parents which derives from the experience teachers have of parents who implicitly question their educational expertise.

2. Teacher's Assumptions of Parents

2.1 General Assumptions

The teachers when asked about their relationship with parents stressed the importance of working together in the interests of the child. For many teachers this meant that parents and teachers had to complement each other.

Idealistically there should be a complementary relationship. What they're hearing at school should be backed up with what they are hearing in the home about the socialisation process (SUSAN BRUCE).

At this abstract level various general aims and ideas are incorporated. The best interests of the child sometimes meant ensuring clear lines of communication between parent and teacher in situations where the child is able to exploit the spatial difference between the home and the school.

I think that any cooperation between parents and teachers is bound to be beneficial. We've got the same aims to do what is best for the kids. Sometimes children imagine that parents and teachers can't communicate. They also try and play off teachers with parents. They'll pretend that their mother doesn't understand what I've said. When you talk to the parent you often find that it's a ploy (VIVIEN WILLIS).

In the previous chapter I suggested that teachers had different approaches to the task of setting an agenda in class. At the more abstract level of serving the best interests of the child there was a general consensus among teachers that this would be best served by improving the lines of communication between parent and teacher. Parents and teachers were both seen as agents of socialisation here in that the socialisation of the child can only be successful if there is a level of consistency between what parents and teachers do. "Socialisation" then also incorporates the notion that there is a certain equality of responsibility between parents and teachers. Alice Tay stated:

I wouldn't set myself up against the parent. Although you do come up against parents who hassle you, you have to divorce yourself from it. I don't set myself up as an expert. I don't set myself up as someone who is more informed than the parent or more qualified in dealing with their kids.

At such a high level of generality, working together implied that parents and teachers each have a legitimate power over children. But in specifying the sources of these powers, that is, defining the areas of responsibility that teachers and parents have, there is the introduction of important differences. Whereas the teacher has certain moral and social as well as educational responsibilities, the parent's responsibilities are bounded by biology, nature and early affectivity. When asked to compare the rights of parents with the rights of teachers, Dorothy Small stated that:

our rights are.. the old phrase in loco parentis of course, but however much in loco parentis you think you are, you are still dealing with a group of pupils who are, I hesitate to use the word, strangers, whom you've got to objectively say, 'why are these pupils here?' These pupils are here because I want to teach them history, I want to teach them how to be good citizens; I want to teach them how to get on socially with each other.... Hopefully you like all your pupils, although it's not always possible and you don't let them see that you don't like them if you're a good teacher. But they are as it were, separate from you. Whereas a parent who has brought a child into the world is bringing that child up in that family unit; has a much closer tie and has a much nearer contact... is not looking at the child so objectively... is legally responsible for the child until the age of sixteen or eighteen.

Dorothy Small in making the distinction points to a dilemma which confronts teachers, particularly guidance teachers in sustaining the distinction in practice. Teachers find it difficult to sustain a completely universalistic approach because the theory about treating the pupil as an objective entity, presupposes that those in subordinate positions are rational. The parent/teacher relationship cannot be characterised this way. It needs to be seen in terms of the authority relationship between master and pupil where the teacher

brings the pupil to a state of rationality. To a lesser or greater extent teaching is imbued with this idea. The process of teaching then involves more affective, pre-rational relations between master and pupil which is in some tension with the idea of the pupil as 'stranger'. Dorothy Small pointed to the difficulty in sustaining the idea of professional distance between teacher and pupil within the classroom because children were not yet adults with 'public' personalities.

This situation is also compounded by the roles that the parents are expected to play. For the the notion of professional distance is not just a consequence of how teachers ought to behave in relation to their professional charges, it also assumes a prior factor, the parent/child relationship. Ross Stewart on being asked to define the responsibilities of the teacher identified the difficulties of maintaining the teaching/parenting distinction in practice.

The teacher deals with industry and the future. Specific areas they're asking for children to be trained in specific skills. The teacher comes in and does a professional role. Everyone has to work. Full-time education is a vital necessity. That's our role in life and it allows the parents to be fully involved in their lines of work because they need to earn a living to maintain standards. So the role of the teacher is important but I think the role of many teachers is extended. Some teachers are the only contacts the children have. Some teachers are the only representation of discipline that kids have.

This is the conventional notion of the teacher as instrumental provider of skills which historically replaced the educative functions of the parent. But Ross Stewart very clearly identifies the expansion of this educative role to include the moral work which ought to have been already undertaken by parents. According to some teachers parents are not doing enough parenting because the teacher is forced to take on more of the parental role. This point was reinforced by Anne Smart, a colleague of Ross Stewart's.

One of my feelings is that parents don't do enough with their kids and tend to say to us I don't know what to do with them. They look to us to help them out. Parents don't play as big a role as they should do in bringing their children up and looking after their interests at school. We do extra because of the lacking of many families. In many ways parents perhaps expect too much of us. They seem very helpless. They see the school not only in it's role of educating the kids but hopefully they look to us to help them sort it out because they cannot sort of come to any solution to the child's problem. They tend to come up to the school and ask for our help. Very often we have put parents in touch with social workers and other agencies. I think we're very valuable in that sense. I don't think that many parents would know what to do if they couldn't come up to us.

2.2 Disciplinary Trouble Shooting

I introduced the guidance system in schools in the previous chapter in relation to the disciplinary functions of the classroom teacher. Where children were causing teachers some concern guidance teachers were usually informed and asked to play a role. For some guidance teachers this was a perennial source of difficulty and confusion. From the teaching point of view discipline was an aspect of their teaching approach they were acutely aware of. We have already seen that classroom control was an important precondition of teaching. All teachers were expected to be disciplinarians in this respect. But the guidance teacher's perception was that where a subject teacher wasn't able to handle the classroom situation and, where a child's behaviour warranted inclusion within the formal disciplinary system, the school would look to guidance for the answers. Guidance teachers within the school were being seen as disciplinary trouble shooters. According to Bill Smart this put them in a negative light in relation to the pupils.

Generally, my role is a go between supporting the pupil. I don't see myself as the disciplinarian - that's the A.H.T.'s (assistant head) job. Discipline is a dodgy area I always felt. I see myself as responsible for discipline in my house (as a house master) and as a teacher in general. In terms of suspending or excluding kids I see myself as making a case for the child. Sometimes it's a hopeless task. I'll be there with the A.H.T. and the parents and the child saying that he has this or that problem and that perhaps to exclude would be a bad thing... at the end of the day I see myself as the provider of information for these pupils.

Bill Smart saw himself more as an advocate of the child in circumstances where the child needed support in presenting a case against possible suspension or exclusion.

This problem was more acutely felt in relation to parents. The behaviour which draws the guidance teachers' attention in classroom situations are defined by teachers as problems which have their origins within the home. This was clearly stated by Ian Jones.

I know this is a cliché but it's not the kids. Nine times out of ten it's the parents who are unsettled and not disciplining their kids properly. There are no bad kids, maybe one or two, but you can imagine if da's in the pub every night or mum's on her own with four or five kids or she's maybe out working at night, the whole thing unsettles kids. A good stable family background with good support from mum and dad and you rarely get problem kids. They may not be bright and intelligent but you won't get the trouble. If you dig into the background the ten to a dozen kids who are a problem in the school its all family. There's always something in the family.

Guidance teachers tended to see problem pupils in terms of their family backgrounds. Guidance teachers were part of a communication network between the home and the school which was set up to deal with problem children whose problems could only be effectively dealt with through the family. Yet there was some ambivalence expressed over the action that the individual teacher takes to remedy this situation. For the majority of teachers saw discipline outside of the educational context as an immutable parental responsibility. Like proponents of

the decline thesis, they had a strong sense of their educational responsibilities and went to great lengths to underplay their role as primary disciplinarians.

I don't tend to point out to parents what they should do. I might ask if their children are very tired in school. I'll mention that and ask what time he goes to his bed. I may make some noises about them coming in earlier. But I don't often say to parents, 'look he should only have one pound for pocket money'. I don't see it as my role to tell parents the error of their ways (NORAH BOWLES).

Teachers who were parents themselves seemed to be more acutely aware of the pitfalls of setting themselves up as disciplinary oracles.

I'm the last person to tell parents how to discipline their kids. With certain parents in discussing their kids you can point out how things are done in school and enquire as to how things are done at home. As a teacher and a parent myself you've got to be careful about how you approach things. I'm very wary about pointing the finger and accusing them of this or that. I'm interested to get parents and kids to talk about their experiences at home. If handled properly parents will respond. They'd be the first to tell you to mind your own business if you asked about their sanctioning (BILL SMART).

Thus although teachers tended to define children who were a problem in school as products of inadequate parenting, they were wary about attempting to solve the problem through getting involved in 'family matters'. The problem was compounded by parents who solicited help from the guidance staff. Several teachers claimed that some parents saw the guidance teacher in a more positive light as an ultimate sanctuary in situations where parents had lost control of their children. As was referred to earlier in the section, in some instances teachers are seen as the only disciplinary source. Teachers were well aware that this situation would ultimately force parents into a more dependent relationship with the school which could easily breed parental resentment towards the school. With the guidance teacher as the mediate link between the home and the school guidance teachers

were more acutely aware of how parents might see the school than other teachers. Although guidance teachers wanted to foster relations with parents who were having difficulties, they didn't want parents to become dependent on them.

We're a line of communication between the rest of the school and parents...an aid to them in helping them to bring up their children. Helping their children go through education happily... I like parents to think that they can use my first name...to get away from the idea of me as somebody in authority or an extension of the school management and disciplinary structure. It's important that they don't see us as checking up on them or their kids. We're there as a resource (JOAN LESLIE).

In linking this perception of parents to the discussion of teaching styles in the previous chapter, the problem of intervention was dealt with differently from school to school. The kind of catchment areas teachers taught within was an important factor. Teachers from the catholic school tended to be more at ease than teachers from the non-denominational schools. The paternalism of the catholic school strongly manifested itself through its more openly advisory link with the parents. When asked whether parents ever solicited advice on discipline, Ian Dury replied:

All the time. There was a funny situation three years ago with a family in Bilton. They had a little boy, a right little bastard. I'd taken him home one day, father had heart trouble and wasn't able to exert himself. I was sitting on a stool and I said to the father "I'd put him across your backside and wallop him." He said, "well you do it Ian" and the boy was beside me. I said, "do you mean like this?" (goes through the motions of spanking the boy). He said "yes, but harder and I give you permission to do that. If you like I'll put it in writing". I said, "I don't know if that will be necessary but I promise to do it". I had no intention of doing it. When I was leaving he gave me the stool I was sitting on and said, "take it with you, it's the right height". He wasn't joking.

Given that in Chapter Three the ethos of the catholic school came close to the decline thesis's position on being 'firm' on discipline this 'welfarist' approach to parents is interesting. There was a much

stronger tradition of home visits within the school. There were more extensive links with parents through the church, the latter represented in the school by the school chaplain. Now, given the decline thesis's opposition of the family with external institutions, the 'welfarist' role of the catholic school would seem to contradict this model. We need to ask here whether there is some qualitative difference between the role of the church and the role of the state in 'intruding' within family life (1). Although the catholic school would appear to have an anomalous status in relation to the decline thesis, at the level of the individual teacher there was some congruence with the decline thesis in that like teachers from the other schools, they saw parents as the 'primary agents of discipline'. There was no sense in which catholic teachers wanted to take on this parental responsibility.

In the previous chapter we discussed the inappropriateness of a more pedagogic approach to teaching at Stenhouse. Teachers acknowledged that many pupils came from deprived backgrounds where they had missed out on crucial levels of parental support. This tended to be reflected in the discussions over the kinds of relationships that they had with parents from the school. Ian Hart expressed the concern that at his school parents too easily assumed that the school or the social work department would take responsibility for child rearing.

Stenhouse is a poor area. The rector read out some document that said we were the most deprived area in the region outside the city. We have a lot of one parent families, separated families. In this area a lot could be done for us to try and make the parents more aware about what goes on within the school. They don't know what I do as a guidance teacher. We should let the parents know who we are and what we do and also what their responsibilities are...They do tend to shunt responsibility to the appropriate department and just leave it there and then criticise the system if there's a failure.

Teachers in these situations may to all intents and purposes be acting as surrogate parents. Yet teachers at Stenhouse were not advocating that they ought to take over from parents. The teachers here were very conscious of what they ought to do in situations where problem pupils were products of problem parents. Ian Hart made it very clear that there was a need for the guidance teacher to advise parents more specifically where their responsibilities lay as child rearers.

Finally, there is an interesting contrast between the views of teachers from Stenhouse and the teachers from the the community school in Boreston. Both had professed some form of child centredness. Yet Rather than see the extension of the teaching role as a negative compensatory factor, teachers at Boreston tended to express more positive reasons for acting in loco parentis. Within the same abstract framework of "the interests of the child", guidance teachers from Boreston tended to see their guidance role as an important mediate link between the home, the school and the outside world; a private forum where children might air personal problems. Susan Bruce from Boreston was one example. Ideally:

The subject teacher is very different from the teacher outside of classroom and the guidance teacher. I think it's important that teachers do feel that they are I suppose in loco parentis. They need to take on more than just their subject and get involved in outdoor educational visits...get to know the kids. For a guidance teacher that's paramount. What is crucial as a guidance teacher is to get the kids to talk to you; to tell me their problems at home and at school. I've had one or two situations where I've had to broach the problem at home with the parent and persuade the child that they can talk to their parents about it. They come to me as an outsider before they want to go to their parents, either because they think it'll upset them or they're scared of the parents.

Thus the guidance teacher, rather than simply compensating for parental deficiencies, was creating a private space for adolescent problem solving which would facilitate much closer links between parent and child. Although teachers from Boreston and Stenhouse had

similar child centred approaches in class, their guidance roles were dictated by external criteria. Whereas at Stenhouse teachers spent more time compensating for earlier parental inadequacies, at Boreston the kinds of pupils they had, the emphasis on opening the school out to the community, and the more mixed catchment area, allowed guidance teachers to spend more time as guidance teachers of pupils rather than parents (2). We might add that the role of the guidance teacher was much more confidently asserted at Boreston than at Stenhouse because the guidance role was less bound up with the parental role. We might also add that where teachers were able to define their professional role in relation to the pupils rather than the parents, teachers had a much stronger sense of guidance having an educational function.

2.3 Social Class

We have established that the teachers tended to interpret disciplinary problems within school as a product of the child's home circumstances. We now turn to the ideas that teachers have about the types of families they have most involvement with. We need to know more about how the teachers understand these problems. One way of doing this is to assess the relative importance of social class as a criteria of evaluation when teachers identify problem behaviour in class. For a not implausible point to be made is that guidance teachers were predominantly involved with children from economically and socially deprived families; parents who had neither the material or intellectual support to offer their children. Table One provides a rough guide to the significance of social class as an explanatory framework from the impressions that teachers gave in response to the question on class.

Table One : *Do you think social class is important in assessing misbehaviour and indiscipline?* (N = 20)

| | No. of Teachers |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| A strong social class connection | 9 (45%) |
| No strong social class connection | 11 (55%) |

There was a lack of consensus over the impact of the family's socio-economic status on the behaviour of the child in class. The issue was complicated by the two working definitions the teachers had of the problems they most commonly confronted as front line and guidance teachers; educational and behavioural. Norah Bowles from the poorest school commented on this.

The less able children tend to come from a poorer background because they haven't had the support, or the parents aren't interested in school, or they don't get support for homework or support enforcing the school's discipline. Many of the badly behaved come from middle class backgrounds. I think there's a distinction there. The less able kids educationally probably come from poorer backgrounds but badly behaved kids in this school, it's across the board.

Teachers can draw on examples of highly motivated middle class pupils with behavioural problems. Alice Tay who had just moved from a school in an affluent city suburb to the more culturally mixed inner-city community school saw little connection between social class and problem pupils. She was asked about what type of children caused problems in class:

Sometimes it's the brightest kids from the best backgrounds. It's an attitude problem that you wouldn't find in other kids. They can be very superior sort of "I don't have to listen to this"...Middle class kids are very confident in their perceptions in how things should be. Often they'll openly criticise teachers. You do get this kind of arrogance which you don't get in a school like this.

This point was also expressed by one of her school colleagues, Susan Bruce. She was asked whether class was an important factor:

I don't think so. It's quite widely spread in this school across different ethnic backgrounds and social backgrounds. One of the most difficult boys is in S4, his father is a labour councillor. Although I suppose I do deal with him slightly differently because I see him as a leader. If I can persuade him that an activity is worthwhile he tends to carry a lot of other boys with him.

Susan Bruce here introduced the idea that even if there is little apparent causal connection between misbehaviour and social class, teachers might be expected to respond to a child's misbehaviour in terms of their social class. This can be interpreted as sets of expectations teachers had of how children from particular backgrounds ought to behave. This point was also brought out by Ross Stewart who tended to see social class as a significant factor. He was also able to point to middle class 'exceptions' who were able to avoid being labelled as a problem.

I'm generalising here, but our worst children tend to come from the Silverton area. It's recognised as the poorest district. We seem to get more remedial children from there. Having said that we have one or two pupils in the school. One in particular who comes from a good home who is probably one of the nastiest pieces of work you can imagine. The annoying thing is that that pupil is educated and knows exactly what he's up to.

What can be said here is that the models, ideas and preconceptions that guidance teachers had of these problems tended to be defined in terms of particular types of social relations within the family. This was clearly expressed by Ian Jones when asked about

whether he saw problem pupils in terms of their social class backgrounds.

It's never in my mind, it's never a consideration. Maybe if I reflected on it by looking at individual pupils but at the time it's irrelevant. It's not social class it's what's happening at home. A rich kid can have just as many hassles if parents are divorced as a poor kid.

Within these considerations guidance teachers undoubtedly came across clearly defined products of socio-economic deprivations. The four guidance teachers from Stenhouse, the school in the poorest area, tended to think there was a link between the poverty in the area and the high numbers of problem pupils in school. Yet this needs to be set against the idea of there being family types.

I would say rather than coming from certain backgrounds in the social sense I would say that they came from certain types of parents. You tend to find a pupil who is a barrack room lawyer shouting the odds instead of doing what is required of him. Demanding his rights in the sense "its no' fair". I would say that the parents are either like that or they're possibly parents who have several children who have not got full control over the situation, where there is a lot of competition at home to be heard. More that kind of thing than social background. I can think of pupils from this kind of parent (the barrack room lawyer) in all kinds of groups, and I can think of the more disruptive kids from families where they've got to compete for attention. Again that can come from varying social classes. Although I would say that of the second group the parents would tend to be of a non-professional background (DOROTHY SMALL).

2.4 Routine Discipline and the Division of Responsibility in the Home

If we restrict the analysis to the more routine classroom sanctions teachers can respond to misbehaviour and disobedience by handing out punishment exercises (P.E.). These are given to pupils to be done at home. They are then signed by either one or both parents and handed back to the teacher the following morning.

Table Two: *Which parent signs the punishment exercise form?*
(N = 20)

| | No. of Teachers |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Usually mothers | 13 (65%) |
| Usually fathers | - |
| Couldn't say/ Doesn't administer them | 7 (35%) |

Table Two gives us some indication that the teachers thought that mothers tended to be more involved with the more routine disciplinary problems that their children had at school. Teachers were asked who signed the punishment exercise form. Some saw this simply as an indication of the greater involvement of mothers in the day-to-day management of external affairs. Vivien Willis made this point.

There are a lot of kids from single parent backgrounds but mother is the one that tends to be around the home at tea time when the kids get home and are doing their homework.

Others were more explicit in seeing this as evidence that mothers were more involved in general disciplinary matters. Anne Smart appeared to deduce a maternal responsibility for discipline per se from her dealings with mothers:

It's one parent who seems to be in charge of sanctions at home. The other parent is involved..it's "oh, that's the wifes job". We try and encourage both parents working together. Ideally it would be great if both parents come up but in reality it's just usually the mother; when we are in contact with the home ninety per cent of the time its the mother...who plays the role of the carer of the child who comes up to the school discusses the discipline and attendance and does something about it.

In turning now to teaching opinion on who ought to be involved in maintaining contact with the school on discipline, Anne Smart was representative of several teachers in advocating joint parental responsibility. Other teachers were more explicit in why they thought that one parent's support of the school's action was inadequate. When asked which parent signed the punishment exercise form, she replied:

mothers, but I usually ask for both signatures so that both parents are aware. Sometimes the kids can play one off against the other. They'll get the one that they can get round their little finger to sign it.

Implicit in this response is the idea that one parent has a weaker disciplinary approach than the other. Children are able to exploit this in getting a formal parental acknowledgement of the school's actions. Ross Stewart candidly expressed the same point in terms of the characters' of mothers he had been dealing with. P. E. s tended to be accompanied by:

excuse me notes from mothers. Our kids tend to go for big sisters and grannies as well. All the soft options.

According to the teachers, mothers on their own are not best equipped to impose sanctions. The implication here is that mothers don't have the authority to ensure that discipline in school is backed up within the home. The need for a joint parental approach was emphasised by Dorothy Small. When asked which parent signed the P.E. she replied:

I would say probably the mother because they think that mum would be less likely to be strong about being upset. Sometimes we might insist on the father signing.

Interestingly, what is being said here is that mothers, the parent perceived to be least equipped psychologically and socially to deal with discipline on their own, appear to have responsibility for discipline. Although the evidence is very scant, the teachers would appear to reflect some of the concerns expressed through the decline thesis that a maternal responsibility for discipline within the home was an insufficient means of ensuring social control.

3. Problem Parents

3.1 Absent Parents

As was outlined in Chapter Two, a lot of time is spent by guidance teachers with parents whose children are picked up through the guidance/disciplinary network. Although parents can be alerted to these problems very early on at general parents meetings, parents tend to become more involved when the child's problems reach a certain degree of seriousness; when several of that child's teachers raise the issue with the guidance teacher. An early warning mechanism is built into the guidance/discipline system whereby subject teachers are encouraged to contact guidance when a child starts to exhibit certain problematic 'symptoms'. The problem can be gently raised at routine annual parents meetings where behaviour can be more discreetly incorporated into general discussions about school performance. From the teachers' point of view these meetings are held every year for all parents, organised by school year. These are formal meetings that teachers expect parents to come to, to discuss their children's progress. These meetings can also be important fora for the discussion of discipline. In practice discipline merges into other areas of equal importance. But teachers will sometimes need to focus on the behaviour of a particular child when asked about that child's

progress by the parent.

Parents want to know two things: does my child behave in class and how well is he doing in the subject. Most of them ask if their child get homework, and claim that they never see the child doing enough homework. The main worry seems to be over their child's behaviour (ANNE SMART).

The problem for teachers here is that this process ought to involve all parents in routine low level interactions with teachers. In practice, teachers only generally get to see parents whose children are not causing any great concern. Within these routine contexts teachers never get to see the parents of problem children. Ian Hart was asked what type of parents came to parents' evenings.

If we could divide kids up into well behaved, normal and badly behaved, it's parents with kids for the first two categories. These parents are not going to receive any flack. The very bad ones stay away. These are the ones who have to be invited in individually. Some parents have been criticised so often by police and social workers they never come to school.

Joan Leslie, from Boreston, made a similar distinction when outlining the problems that some parents faced.

The ambitious parents come concerned for their kids futures. The group who it is very difficult to see, the ones whose kids are having problems - for reasons that might be related to the home situation; financial pressure, marital problems, problems with housing; people who have often had bad experiences themselves and see school as quite an oppressive place.

The teachers were arguing that problem children were a product of some form of parental deprivation. These were seen as obstacles for certain parents preventing them from taking up the more routine lines of communication with the school. Teachers were then forced to draw on the guidance\discipline network within the school in order to contact these parents. These contacts took the form of either informal phone calls by the guidance teacher or more formal letters. The schools were

very conscious of heightening relations with parents by requesting their attendance in school. Teachers were aware that parents tended to see these requests as implicit criticisms of their disciplinary skills. Teachers often adopted less conventional tactics in trying to avoid the necessity of individual 'consultations'. Boreston had set up a parents' meeting specifically for absent parents with unfortunate unintended consequences.

You very rarely see the parents you want to see. We had a parents meeting where teachers were told to invite parents they wanted to see. That was actually quite interesting. A couple of parents came who were very defensive - "what do you want to see us for" - I think they abandoned it, because they thought it had generated so much resentment from the parents because they know of parents who hadn't been called in "they're not being called in, but I am" (ALICE TAY).

Quite often a phone call or a reply to a letter was sufficient. In some circumstances more drastic measures were adopted in trying to track down parents who apparently didn't want anything to do with the school. Parents were either summonsed to the school or home visits were sometimes done in an effort to get hold of parents who were unable or unwilling to come into school. Both types of visits were treated with some caution by the teachers. Home visits on the face of it posed few difficulties for teachers other than the time that they consumed. In circumstances where a parent was unable to get to the school and where the teacher was involved in giving work to pupils with long-term illnesses, the teacher would normally negotiate a mutually convenient time with the parent. This was reflected in Table Three which shows that a majority of teachers had a favourable attitude towards home visits. Where home visits were part of the school's policy there was generally a favourable response. At Logan High two teachers tended to be less positive claiming that the home

visit was too intrusive. They also claimed that it wasn't part of the school's policy.

Table Three: *The Attitude of Guidance Teachers to Home Visits, by Teaching Style.* (N = 18)

| | Positive | Negative | Total |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Dominant | 7 (62) | 5 (38) | 12 |
| Cooptive and Classwork Manag. | 6 (100) | - | 6 |
| Total | 14 | 5 | 18 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of teachers within each category of teaching style.

** Two teachers gave no opinion on home visits.

Given that guidance teachers spent most of their time with children from problem backgrounds, these figures were hardly surprising. The home visit could be seen as an important means of building up stronger links with the parents as a way of getting a more accurate picture of the problems the child faces within the home. Yet there was here the same tension between wanting to get an accurate picture of the problem pupil's home life and the experience of being with parents. Although teachers thought home visits were a good idea, in practice teachers often found the experience uncomfortable. Table Three shows that a higher proportion of teachers who adopted a more relational approach in class discussed in the previous chapter, were keener to do home visits. Yet even these teachers had difficulties on the few occasions they had visited parents at their homes. Ruth Smith recounted the difficulties maintaining her role as a teacher on occasions when the visit was instigated by the parent.

Not many of us do home visits. On a couple of occasions a parent has asked if I would go to the house and I've done that. On another occasion when I was trying to speak to another parent whose kid was involved with the youth strategy group and she was finding it difficult to get here so it was just as easy for me to go there. That was very interesting because you don't feel nearly so confident... its a totally different situation. You're so used to marching along, "come in Mrs so-and-so". You're in her territory. It's very, very different.

There is a sense here that the teacher was invading the private territory of the parent. Because the visit did not create any heightened sense of occasion, and because there was little sense that the teacher was questioning the disciplinary or moral responsibilities of the parent, it is the teacher who feels uneasy and disoriented. To use the language of Goffman, there are few familiar props to hold onto; little or no evidence of an educational setting. Where the visit was a result of parents refusing to respond to letters from the school or more generally, where the parent is unsure about what the teacher is doing in the home, there is more likelihood that parents as well will feel uneasy and interpret the visit as a slight on their parenting skills. Jim Craig, another cooptive teacher, was one of the few teachers to adopt home visits as an integral part of his teaching remit by setting aside one night a week to visit parents. He adopted a crusading approach to his job in his advocacy of stronger parent/teacher links.

I'm setting up projects, contacting families that will be involved, work experience, social skills type things. I'm talking through the difficulties that exist at school and how I saw things developing within the school. If they continued attending, the kinds of alternatives that I could offer...see if I can get an agreement with them to stay at school or take up the offered alternative.

Sometimes even his skills as educational mediator were severely tested. On one occasion he had visited a parent whose son was causing problems in class. He commented on how he was received by the parents.

(They were) initially a bit defensive. A recent one was a woman who was quite insistent that she wasn't going to listen to me until she'd had a cup of coffee. I was doing the job of the guy from the pools coming to offer them a million pounds. She wasn't interested in that. She thought I was going to give her a hard time. There was a lot of resistance. It took a while to realise that I was being quite nice and offering her something.

From the teachers' perspective the lack of familiarity with the individual parent or parenting couple's environment acts as an important check on the professionalism of the teacher. But the boundaries of their educational roles are tested in more familiar circumstances, when parent/teacher meetings take place in school. The invasion of parental territory is just as sensitively picked up by teachers when the subject of discipline is brought up. There is some variation in the degree of teaching self-consciousness which again relates to the kinds of approaches that are made by parents and teachers. Where parents actively solicit advice from teachers on how to discipline their children the meeting can be sustained without a great deal of hostility and suspicion from the parent. There is also a sense in which the teacher is more at ease here as parents unburden their problems. Norah Bowles who had earlier argued that teachers shouldn't be put in the position of advising parents about how to discipline their children, only felt comfortable in this advisory role where the parent was openly asking for guidance. But even this was tempered by the fact that as a young teacher she couldn't really be expected to know how to solve a parent's problems.

They'll often say, what do you think? There are quite a lot of money problems. How much should he give him? I'll say, "he doesn't need two pounds a day. He'll get a good school meal for sixty pence." More often they'll say, "I cannae do a thing with him. I've tried everything. I don't know what I'm going to do next." Most of the time I can't think of things for her to do.

These meetings are normally much easier for both parties where there is a lot of communication between the home and the school; where parents and teachers strike up 'working relationships'. This was approach was adopted by two 'cooptive' teachers.

I use the phone a lot. I have constant communication with parents that have asked me to keep an eye on their child. Parents often phone me. I have lots of communication with parents (ANNE SMART).

I'll discuss discipline when it's on the agenda. It's a very delicate issue...need to establish a relationship before I'm prepared to point out these things (JOAN LESLIE).

Given that the majority of teachers tended to identify behavioural and educational problems in familial terms, and given that within the school they are expected to act on the information they have on the child, the discussions with parents tend to reach critical points where the subject of parental sanctions becomes unavoidable. Where they know the parent and where they are asked for advice, the meeting can be dealt with relatively harmoniously. But most of the teachers are at their most uncomfortable when they are put in a position of having to offer unsolicited advice to parents on how to bring up their children. This potentially sets up a conflictual relationship between the parent and the teacher. One approach adopted by a few of the teachers was to confront the parent with the problem. Ian Howe would involve the child in the discussions as a way of convincing the parent that *this* child is *their* responsibility.

M.W.: Do you ever discuss their disciplinary role?

I.H.: Yes. I have the pupil present as well. Sometimes the parents want to talk about a problem in the home and they ask wee Johnny to leave. Maybe that's why there's a problem at home because the boy isn't involved in trying to find a solution. I often have to confront parents.

M.W.: How do they react?

I.H.: It's mixed. Some go on the defensive. Some will acknowledge what I'm saying and quite often parents agree.

Ross Stewart used different 'shock' tactics in trying to convince the parents of what he saw was the self evidently inadequate role of particular parents. The transcript is worth reproducing in full.

R.S.: Different members of staff have different methods. What I tend to do is I have a report. I tend to take out all the adverse comments made by all the teachers concerned and list them. I'll sit there and say "unruly, disgusting, inattentive etc". I'll read out a list of twenty or so of these adjectives and I'll say to the parents, do you know who this describes? These are comments made by colleagues about your thirteen year old son or daughter. I'm describing your daughter to you as a group of professional people. They'll say, "oh, I didnae ken it was that bad. He's no' like that at haim, he's a nice wee laddy."

M.W.: Is there ever any hostility?

R.S.: Occasionally I'll get hostility and sometimes I'll converse with my head teacher first before approaching them. But I've never had parents who have remained hostile all the way through the meeting. I don't think I've ever had a parent leave here in a hostile mood.

M.W.: Do you discuss parents' disciplinary roles?

R.S.: We ask them quite often directly, what sanctions do you use at home? Sometimes they use very few sanctions. We'll suggest that they stop the pocket money or suggest they are in by say half past eight. At the same time you discover a family breakdown by talking to the parents. You ask them, well what about mealtime. "Oh we never eat together. When the father comes home he wants to sit down with his beans and chips and watch the television. He's no' interested. Wee Johnny, he'll no eat with us. He's always out playing". So you have this breakdown where at no time do they ever deliberately draw the family together to form relationships.

He recounted another meeting.

We had one case (we can talk about this more freely because she left school a few years ago), a really well developed girl who was causing a lot of trouble within the school. We called the parents in. The parents reaction was, "she's an awfy nuisance at home and we give her money to go out". I asked them, "do you never wonder about the rising statistics on attacks on young girls?" This girl at the age of fifteen was all dolled up and could be mistaken for seventeen or eighteen. The parents answer to this indiscipline at home was to give her a fiver and send her out for the night because that gave them peace and quiet.

We have seen that guidance teachers expressed some ambivalence over their roles as surrogate parents. At one level the 'best interests of the child' is invoked as a professional and moral ethic which conflates the emotional needs of the child. At the more sociological level this ethic contains a critique of parents because a child's interests haven't been best served up to the point of the child being identified as a problem through the guidance system in school.

3.2 Over Ambitious Parents

Guidance, as most of the teachers continually pointed out, was often misconstrued as discipline in its negative guise. One of the 'positive' guidance responsibilities was to help pupils select the subjects they would take for the duration of their school careers. The subject choice process (s.c.p.) is particularly relevant to this study in that the target age of the respondents' children was fourteen or fifteen, which was the age at which they would be choosing their subjects. It was thus of particular relevance for the parents as well as the teachers. The s.c.p. is of interest because there are parallels with the process of defining classroom indiscipline in terms of problem parents. More directly, although the s.c.p. doesn't follow a symmetrical pattern with the disciplinary process, in certain respects the teachers define certain parents, intimately involved with the school through the s.c.p. as problem parents. These are over ambitious parents.

In turning to the differences between the absent parent and the over ambitious parent, firstly, whereas the former is a result of a lack of communication with the school, the latter is a result of the opposite, communication which is over and above what the teachers see as legitimate involvement. The parents' meetings where the subjects

are discussed are seen by the school as an important indication of the degree of parental support for their children's educational well-being. As with all meetings parents are actively encouraged to take part. Yet the subject choice meetings unlike the meetings that teachers have with absent parents, are fundamentally about the educational well-being of the child. Guidance teachers acts as mediators between the parent and the relevant subject teachers (as well as having expertise in their own fields). Guidance teachers also give parents an overall picture of what the child would be best advised to do in relation to what the child is capable of, and what the child wants to do. Thus the choices that are made are informed by the child's performance in school rather than any behavioural pattern exhibited within the home. No matter how motivated teachers are in out-of-school terms they have much less control of the interactional settings where teachers engage with 'absent' parents. Where the meetings take place at designated times within school, and where the discussion centres around the educational well-being of the child the teacher has the upper-hand.

A second and related difference is the absence of other social agencies. Moving up the disciplinary system with absent parents eventually led to the involvement of the attendance officer, the social worker and sometimes the police. Although the problem child is brought to the attention of the teacher as a problem pupil, the further up the disciplinary hierarchy the child goes, the more likely the problem will be dealt with in non-educational terms. Thus the more problematic the child becomes the less appropriate the teaching role becomes in solving the problem.

Problems arise when parents question the criteria laid down by the school. Parents sometimes disagree with the school's advice on

what subjects their child should take. When asked what criteria she used when discussing the subject choice with parents, Vivien Willis replied:

The wishes of the child...career interests of the child.. their apparent strengths and weaknesses. I think that parents tend to be overambitious for their kid. We have had some very unhappy experiences where children have been put into classes to which they were patently not suited. They were taken there more or less screaming. There have been disasters.

Within these terms the best interests of the child can only be really assessed by the teachers. Over ambitious parents then are those who are perceived to be interfering with the educational process. This isn't expressed directly by the teachers in terms of a rejection of their advice, but in how parents are going against what is best for their child in pursuit of their *own* ambitions as parents. Teachers picking up these signals have a difficult task in trying to persuade parents that it is the child that is the focus of attention.

Some parents try to force their ambitions on their children. This happens quite a lot. It's really a case of trying to convince them that if you look at their grades and the comments...You have to try and persuade them that they're not suitable for certain subjects and would perform better in something they're good at or like (MARY JAMES).

To a certain extent the introduction of the standard grading system for some teachers meant that this was less of a problem. Standard grading widened the scope for educational attainment in that it allowed children to achieve at a lower level of attainment that previously hadn't existed (3).

All the time parental expectation doesn't match up with the reality most of the time. Pushy parents wanting their kids to do certain things and their kids aren't up to it. It's changing a bit with the introduction of standard grades. The standard grade offers kids the choice of working at an appropriate level. It was a big problem in the past. Parents wanted their kids to do 'o' grades and it wasnae on (JIM CRAIG).

In the end the school does require the parent's signature on the

subject choice form. For Bill Short, the assistant head at St. Mary's, it is the parent who decides.

The school has always adopted the policy that ultimately the parent should decide. We'll only recommend a course of action. We can say that there's no chance that this kid will get these subjects, but it's ultimately up to the parents. We're sometimes able to persuade them of the best course of action.

Teachers have various ways of coping with a situation where their *professional* advice is superceded by 'parental ambition'. The meetings can be stretched out over a period of weeks as teachers try and persuade parents that their children won't cope. But the advantage the teacher has over the parent - the knowledge the teacher has of the child's performance - is usually quite effective in bringing parents around.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a tension between the professional objectives that guidance teachers had of working in the best interests of the child and the ideas that they expressed about the primary responsibility of parents to set a moral and social agenda within the home. The previous chapter outlined the potential for discipline problems in class to become problems explained in non- educational terms. An expanding guidance network gave teachers a much clearer picture of the kinds of problems that some parents faced in being able to control and discipline their children.

Teachers were thus in a much stronger position to identify problems that pupils had in terms of their home backgrounds. Guidance teachers were in a position to make several observations about parents which they argued strengthened their ability to underwrite the pupil's social and educational well being. First, mothers were more involved than their spouses with the sanctions their children received at

school. This meant that pupils were always able to exploit potential inconsistencies in the way both spouses dealt with discipline and lessen the negative consequences of formal sanctions handed out by teachers. Pupils would tend to go to the parent who was a "soft touch" in getting them to sign any homework that was given in school as a punishment. Teachers were also able to generalise from this that parental inconsistencies in relation to school discipline meant parental inconsistencies in relation to discipline per se, which for some teachers was a cause of indiscipline in school. Indirectly then, teachers appeared to see a maternal weakness as a cause of problem pupils. Secondly, guidance was more interested in dealing with family types rather than bearers of socio-economic categories. This may have been part of a professional reaction to 'classism', but perceptions here tended to swing from identifying middle class 'problem' children who were better equipped in insulating themselves from the guidance system to a more general interest in family type rather than social class (Toomey 1989).

Yet, on the other hand, teachers suggested that there were problems involved in acting on this knowledge. For most guidance teachers tended to associate a lot of this activity as an intrusion upon parental territory. This was most acutely felt where discussions with 'absent' parents revolved around them having to point out to parents their shortcomings as disciplinarians. Teachers were also constantly confronted by parents who wanted them to take more of their primary responsibilities for disciplining their children. The previous chapter suggested that teachers can be categorised according to two criteria; the kinds of schools that the teachers belonged to and the different techniques used in controlling classroom behaviour. The former was important in determining the ease with which teachers were

able to handle these perceived forms of intervention. Where there was a tradition within the local community of close links between the school and the parent, teachers found it much easier to set up contracts with parents who were having difficulties with their children. In these situations guidance teachers found it much easier to define their responsibilities as complementary social supports to parents rather than surrogate parents. Where there were few ties with the local community and where the local community had a high level of social deprivation, teachers were more inclined to see themselves in more negative terms as picking up the pieces from parents who had apparently abdicated their responsibilities.

Although the decline thesis sets up a division of responsibility between parents and teacher the emphasis is very much on how parents are loosing out to teachers. Teachers also expressed this division between themselves and parents but there was a much greater stress on the educational sphere of influence that they had. Teachers were able to recount situations where their professional competence was questioned by what I call over ambitious parents.

Teachers not only defined problem parents in terms of social and moral neglect, but in terms of how they were intruding upon the teaching sphere of influence. The boundary between parental and teaching responsibilities was defined by teachers in terms of what parents ought to be doing in relation to discipline. But it was also reaffirmed by observations teachers made about parents who appeared to question the professional competence of teachers. Whereas problems associated with absent parents were not so easily resolved, and parent/teacher meetings here were fraught with anxiety, where parents tried to dictate the educational agenda, teachers had the upper hand.

By constructing two different types of problem parents from accounts guidance teachers gave of the parents they came into contact

with there is a sense in which we could associate the 'absent' and 'over ambitious' parent with Harris's 'disintegrated' and 'childcentred' models discussed in Chapter One. At one level child centred parents might be said to over invest in their children as a way of compensating for their own inadequate lives outside of the family. The teachers' talk then of 'pushy' parents who 'think they know what is best for their children at school' could be interpreted as parents using their children as a way of presenting themselves to the world as successful parents. Their children's exam results thus act as indicators of their own achievements as parents rather than any merits the child might have. Although some teachers did seem to be expressing this point, the image they presented of the type of parent who was over ambitious, was very different from the working class image conveyed implicitly through Harris's analysis. Teachers tended to identify overambitious parents from much more comfortable backgrounds. These parents expected their children to do well because they themselves had achieved at school. It may be that a psychological analysis would produce a model of the parent living vicariously through the child from the evidence produced through both my research and Harris's, but sociologically speaking, these parents may come from diametrically opposing cultural backgrounds.

If we turn to the absent parent, there is a sense again in which guidance teachers are working with the products of parental neglect. Harris in an early paper came close to Lasch's argument that the family suffers the same alienating effects as experienced within the public sphere. As well as no longer having strong public identities, parents are no longer able to draw on any socially creative forces in bringing their children up. The resultant abdication of parental responsibility then necessitates agencies like guidance taking over in

loco parentis. Now guidance teachers undoubtedly accounted for much of their time in these terms. In this sense the absent parent comes pretty close to Harris's parent from the disintegrated family. But guidance teachers implicitly differentiated between parents who were never in contact with the school because they had abdicated their responsibility, and parents who were having problems disciplining and controlling their children. Whereas the former could be seen in terms of a lack of interest in their children, the latter may be much closer to the child centred model as parents who over invest in their children in the efforts they make in trying to have some influence over their children. The fact that they are unsuccessful and the fact that their children are causing problems in school may be a sufficient reason for not contacting the school. Thus although guidance teachers came close to the concerns that the decline thesis had over the intrusion of the school into the parental realm, the types of families that this argument implicitly generates, do not neatly dovetail with the perceptions that guidance teachers have of parental decline.

5. Notes

1. Only Ferdinand Mount of those critical of external intrusions within the family is consistent here. Mount put forward the argument that the church is as much an institutional constraint on the family as the state (Mount 1983).
2. See Chapter Two for a brief breakdown of the catchment areas.
3. An important educational debate in the early eighties was over the relevance of the examination system which was argued to exclude a significant number of pupils from gaining any form of tangible benefit from the school thus producing widespread disillusionment among fourteen and fifteen year olds. Some recent attempts have been made to introduce different levels of attainment through the introduction of standard grading. See Meikle's article, 1980.

CHAPTER FIVE

'KEEPING TABS' : DISCIPLINE, HOME AND THE UNCIVIL SOCIETY

1. Introduction

In Chapter One I identified a problem with a normative model of parent/adolescent relations. At one level the kinds of relations children have with their parents structure their moral and social landscape such that they are able to adapt to novel situations in later life in an appropriately ethical manner. If children learn a moral framework in the early 'primary' period, they will develop outwards away from the need for parental control. The adolescent is then morally and socially prepared for the rigours of a competitive civic life. We might call this the individualist approach. But there is another strand of thought running through the decline thesis, a more traditional view, which emphasises the status parents have in relation to the child. The authority parents have in terms of the role parents play, is affirmed through their ability to intervene when their children step out of line in order to maintain a moral code within the home. Now these are distinctive emphasises that are difficult to reconcile within one theory of child rearing. The former sets up authority as a precondition of the child's adulthood - a means to an end. The latter sees authority as a summation of a parents sense of self - authority as an end in itself. The problem is more evident when considering how or whether parents sanction their adolescent children. The traditional view implies that parents are more likely to impose their views on their children in a period where their parental status is under threat. Whereas, an individualist might interpret this as a failure on the part of the parent. Any parental hold over their children in these terms would be taken either as an attempt to

compensate for earlier deficiencies - physical control instead of psychological influence - or as Harris seems to indicate, a means of compensating for their own failed attempts as social achievers by living vicariously through their children. Parents then are argued to have either an unhealthy or 'irrational' need to perpetuate their children's dependence on them. Parents are thus left feeling both powerless and anxious to do anything that will have the right effect on their children's present and future behaviour. This chapter addresses this problem in two ways. First, in what way if any, do parents take account of their children's developing independence. Both individualist and traditional strands assert parental authority over young children. The extent to which parents still exercise an authority in adolescence needs to be assessed from the point of view of the individual parent. Second, the decline thesis asserts that parents are no longer able to exercise an authority over their children. This has left parents feeling both powerless and anxious to do anything that will have the right effect on their children's present and future behaviour. Although the decline thesis does not specify at which point of the parent/child life cycle this problem is most acute, it is commonly felt that adolescence is the period where parent/child relations are most subject to change and thus the period where parents are more likely to have difficulty adjusting. We need also to assess the extent to which parents of adolescent children exhibit this powerlessness and anxiety. Part One deals with these issues by assessing the extent to which parents feel able to sanction their adolescent children. Part Two examines these issues in terms of the extent to which parents are able to have some influence over their children's developing public personas. It also draws on parents perceptions of their children's public behaviour in relation to the

allegedly more influential role of the school.

Chapter One identified a further problem with the decline thesis: the omission of any sustained analysis of the kinds of parents that are experiencing powerlessness and anxiety. This chapter where appropriate draws on differences in parental perception along social class lines.

In the final section I look at discipline as a parental responsibility that is divided up between both mothers and fathers. The decline thesis makes the connection between the decline in authority in the home and the father's loss of social and moral functions as the head of the household. The family no longer relies on the inner resources of the father in establishing a moral code within the home. The plethora of external socialising influences converge on the mother as the disciplinary focus. Paternal authority has thus been supplanted by a maternal responsibility which is reliant on the support of outside agencies. I examine this argument by looking at the parental dynamic between mothers and fathers in relation to discipline. I show that the beliefs that parents have about how they discipline their children makes it less easy to associate discipline with either paternal authority or maternal responsibility. In either case it complicates at the very least the general claim that parents have been deskilled.

2. Parental Sanctions

2.1. Verbal Approaches

Parents had worked out over the years through trial and error which sanctions were most effective. A small minority of parents who were having problems with their teenage children were still going through this process. George Terry was an example.

M.W.: What do you do for sanctions?

G.T.: We keep asking him, keep plugging away. We don't make an issue of it. We don't really forget it either.

M.W.: Do they listen to you?

G.T.: They get very upset if we're annoyed. But they tend not to do anything about it.

M.W.: What would you do then?

G.T.: Shout at them I suppose.

M.W.: Do you send them to their rooms?

G.T.: I do that as well

M.W. Effective?

G.T.: Not really. It doesn't stop them doing it.

M.W.: Smacked them?

G.T.: Yes, for bullying. If they were being completely thoughtless after you've asked them not to do it.

This difficulty was discussed by his wife more specifically in relation to the problems they were having with their eldest son. She was asked a more general question about situations when she had to discipline her sons.

The eldest one, he has now taken to questioning your values as it were. We're sitting down to a meal in peace. He'll say, 'why should you do this. Why shouldn't you get up in the middle of the meal and do something else?' It's a difficult one. If you've got values it's difficult to justify them - they're so deep rooted and taken for granted. Why shouldn't you take your meal into the front room - all his friends do it, sort of idea. This is quite a conflict at the moment (CHRISTINE TERRY).

Most parents had reached the stage where they were able to specify which approaches they favoured in taking action when their adolescent children stepped out of line. Most of these parents exuded an assuredness in outlining the forms that these sanctions took. Six parents claimed that their children knew how far they were able to go

and the raising of the voice was sufficient to bring them back into line (five middle class: one working class). But there was very little sense in which children would openly negotiate the kinds of acceptable forms of behaviour within the home. If we look at two middle class examples of more verbal approaches to misbehaviour, we can see that although parents might step back from adopting the imperative 'thou shalt not' form, they were, nevertheless, very conscious of how their authority as disciplinarians had to be firmly asserted.

M.W.: What are the situations when you discipline them?

B.A.: He's cheeky the same as any other lad. He has a bad habit of not waiting 'till you've finished talking and launching in. Probably talking back although it's probably less that and more trying to explain why he's done something wrong! Every kid does things that niggle their parents. As long as you try to bring them round to thinking that, that is not the way to do things, not enforcing them... (BOB ALISON)

M.W.: Do you try and reason with them?

B.A.: Oh no, I don't reason with him. I mean if he's said something he shouldn't have said then he's told and then he's told why. It's not something we'd sit down and discuss. I don't believe in children telling their parents or other adults what they should be doing. I'm not into them saying you do this or talkin' in any way disrespectful.

Brian Slany was asked the same questions:

They need to understand the reason for it. (the sanction) We've always brought them up to have a choice. If you want to do it your way you've got to be aware of the consequences. If you want to do it my way well fair enough. If they're misbehaving unless its a major thing, then there's no choice. Invariably they're told the privileges they've got will stop. That's been sufficient. I've always believed that discipline is needed from a very early age. They've always respected me for discipline. They do occasionally step over the line but they are always aware that they are stepping over the line, so they never go too far. A word from myself and they step back.

Brian Slany emphasised the choice his children had in accepting the rules which he claimed were instilled very early on.

I encourage them to be their own selves. So sometimes they do step over the line, Sometimes I'll have to talk to them about it, but I have no fears. They have their own personalities and I've developed that with them.

Bob Alison on the other hand was more concerned with the generational notions of respect and deference. Children could be made to understand why their parents had sanctioned them.

2.2. Sanctions as Punishments

Parents found it very difficult to answer questions about the efficacy of the more material sanctions used. As we saw with George Terry, he had used various sanctions as a way of finding the best way of dealing with his children's misbehaviour. Some parents tended to see the preference they had for a particular sanction in terms of the degree to which it worked. Yet rather than being seen as ways in which misbehaviour can be diminished, they were seen primarily as punishments. Sometimes they were linked to the notion of the sanction as a deterrent. Sometimes they were seen simply as punishments for transgressing what parents believed were the appropriate rules of conduct. One of the main effects of sanctions was that they were meant to hurt. Although their eldest son, Philip, was proving to be a bit of a handful, the Wilsons were able to handle him by "grounding" him, that is, by depriving him of his free time outside of the house.

We have problems. He (Philip) hates to be kept in. He likes to get out all the time. Obviously if I say he has to stay in, that's that. That's what discipline is all about (GEORGE WILSON).

This was reinforced by his wife.

You get to know your kids...the most punishing thing for Philip is to be kept in...he tends to push it a wee bit further and he knows he's to come in at 10.30...He came in on Saturday night. It was 11.15 when he came in. Without discussing it George said 'you are in all day tomorrow.' That is punishing to Philip (JEAN WILSON).

Punishment according to some parents also had a more positive rationale. Jean Wilson continued.

At the same time I don't think it's a bad thing because when he's sitting in his room the next day bored it makes him realise that he cannae jist please himself. I feel that at fifteen they're still too young to be allowed to do whatever they like without some control.

Another sanction, the withdrawal of pocket money, was experienced by Janice White's and Isobel Hart's children as a deprivation. Janice White was asked about their reaction to losing their pocket money. She replied:

They weren't amused. They were hard up that week. They just didnae get it. They had tae do without.

A similar response came from Isabel Hart:

The best way to deprive him (her son) is tae stop his pocket money and pit him in his room.

Parents also emphasised the ineffective nature of certain sanctions in terms of how they didn't work as punishments. Although grounding was a popular sanction, parents that favoured other forms tended to argue that keeping a child at home was ineffective where a child preferred to stay at home rather than play outside with friends. When June Wilkins was asked whether she ever grounded her eldest son, she replied:

He's no' a laddie for going out. I think I'd be penalising him if I sent him out! He's a computer freak so I take that away sometimes.

Although a few parents had trouble finding the right methods of control, the majority of parents were able to confidently reaffirm the

boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Several of these parents favoured more general verbal approaches. But a majority adopted more material sanctions by either restricting their leisure time or by depriving their children of the material goods that they took for granted.

2.3. The Use of Force

One of the problems that parents face was how to adapt as their children moved into adolescence. Given that most parents still wanted to circumscribe their children's views of the world in one form or another, we need to ask whether parents acknowledge the changes in their children as they move through adolescence by dealing any differently with behaviour that didn't conform to their expectations. This is particularly relevant when considering the appropriateness of force as a sanction (1). Although the majority of parents no longer regularly used force within the home, fourteen parents claimed to occasionally raise their hands against their adolescent children when they got out of hand. If we allow for the greater numbers of middle class parents there is no significant difference along social lines in the numbers who use force. (nine middle class and five working class). Physical punishment tended to be administered as a spontaneous reaction to a particular incident that annoyed a parent. But one or two parents still used force as part of a repertoire of sanctions. When asked what she did when both her adolescent children were badly behaved, Betty Deary, a part-time home help, replied

Do you want me tae tell ye? that slipper, there and then up the stairs and to their beds. They get a good wallop.

In Tom Mctear's case it followed a series of threats.

Although I tend to shout a lot at them I always threaten as well. I very seldom carry it through. I'm not against kids getting their backsides skelped when they need it. That's what's wrong with them nowadays. If they keep talking back to me there is going to be some instant justice right there and then.

Yet this view needs to be tempered by the lack of specificity over the particular children who were still being smacked. Tom Mctear, a policeman, later on in the interview signalled a change in relationship with his eldest son.

With the best will in the world there comes a time when you can no longer tell them what to do. You've got to move from telling them to advising them. I've had this already with my oldest. I cannae now brow beat and tell him what to do. I can only say I don't think it would be wise to do this or that.

The Mctears had three children. Alistair, the oldest, was eighteen and had just left home to join the R.A.F. The other children, still at home and at school, were younger. Although Tom Mctear was not signalling a change in his relationship with his adolescent child - His fifteen year old daughter was one of the younger children - there was a sense in which both father and eldest son had just come through a difficult adolescent period. Tom Mctear now seemed to accept that rather than impose his will through using force, he was now *advising* his son on the best way of doing things.

The Wilsons both agreed that smacking was only appropriate for small children. Nevertheless the problems their eldest was causing occasionally pushed them into situations where they raised their hands. It is worth reproducing Jean Wilson's lengthy account of how she attempted to deal with Philip's behaviour because it identifies force as a reaction rather than part of any pre arranged approach to discipline.

I've not sort of said I'm going to smack his behind but I have because they do drive you... I've lashed out at Philip. I've punched him before and I can see the day coming when George (her husband) and Philip will have a go at each other. Because Philip just in his manner.. George will say something and Philip will make some smart remark. George will jump up. The two of them are standing there. I often think that if Philip was to go to lift his hand I could see a.. you know.. as for saying, "I'm going to give him a doing", that's never happened. There's been the spontaneous slap or punch. Sometimes they're so cheeky. The other morning I went into Philip's room... of course the way the boys do their hair now. They have to have moose and gell. I'm running a hotel and I've got to be kind of tidy when they go down there in the morning. I wash my hair and I keep my moose under the sink. I can't find it. I go all the way through the hotel in my dressing gown to Philip's room to get my moose. I start shouting at him and he turns to me instead of saying, sorry mum, he say, have you got a brain? I sort of picked up the moose and threw it at him. It's over in a second.

What is interesting here is that parents were not really disciplining their adolescent children by hitting them. There was no sense here in which force was used as a means of training their children for adulthood. Rita Barnes like Jean Wilson would react by 'clouting' her son when she felt he was getting on her nerves.

I clout him from time to time for being cheeky.. It's not really cheek. He tries to see how far he can go. He's quite funny actually. But sometimes I can't be bothered with him being funny.

Interestingly, Rita Barnes's husband recounted an incident he had with their son where he used force. The relationship here was almost 'adult' in character in that both father and son apologised for their conduct.

We were just back from holiday and we fell out one night. It wasn't a smack - it was a slap. It was something that really got to me. It has to be something that I would tend to see as very serious before that would happen. Probably the last time I smacked him before, that was two years ago a particularly bad thing which I blew up at and I lashed out at. I probably shouldn't have. As it turned out I apologised in the morning as he apologised to me as well (WILL BARNES).

'Training' tended to take place much earlier and was associated with smacking. Parents argued that very small children were only able to discriminate between right and wrong through smacking. Thirty five parents (85%) mentioned that they smacked their children when they were much younger. Very few parents ruled out corporal punishment on principle, but a majority of parents now felt it was inappropriate to lift their hand as a means of disciplining their adolescent children. This view was best exemplified by Alice Davies when asked .

When they were small, yes. When they were at the stage when they just didn't understand. If you tried to explain I mean if somebody is hurting somebody else, pulling the cats tail. If they're at an age where they can't understand what the cat's going through and you can't explain that it's hurting the cat, and its not a very good thing to do, you've got to do something.

Elisabeth Johnston, saw an 'associative' benefit in smacking a very young child.

I've smacked them both on very particular occasions and that was when they went out... when they both ran out onto the road without looking and it was dangerous...and I did it instantly so that it should feel traumatic. I have also smacked him when he ran away from me at Tescos and I looked for him and was very upset. I rationalised the smacking in terms of it's like going out onto the road. You really could have got picked up and taken away and this was a life threatening situation and you must never do this again.

Most parents argued that smacking was an inappropriate sanction for their adolescent children. The majority of parents who still occasionally raised their hands saw this as a spontaneous response to incidents which had annoyed them. Parents tended to explain these as isolated incidents where their children had taken them way beyond their tolerance thresholds. But there is a more interesting possible explanation. Force reflects the general ambivalence that parents feel about sanctioning their teenage children. On the one hand parents react to their children because they feel they ought to know better at

their age. On the other hand, parents feel that their children haven't quite reached adulthood. Force then acts as a timely reminder that parents still have the upper hand.

3. Supervision and the Uncivil Society

3.1. Parental Concern About the Outside World

Until now we have dealt with mainly internal methods of exercising authority. Yet the problem posed by the decline theorists that parents have little authority within the home cannot simply be addressed through an analysis of what parents do to remedy bad behaviour within the home. For the decline theorists argue that what is done within the home has an important impact on how the public behaviour of children is interpreted by some parents as a means by which the world outside the domestic unit is able to judge the degree to which they are defined as 'good' parents.

The notion of the home as a haven of private domesticity is a prevalent image through the decline thesis. Although the emphasis is how the public has intruded upon the private there is a darker side to the notion of the private sphere which has been recently highlighted through research done on domestic violence (2). Harris by linking the public to the private sphere is able to offer an interesting counter to the power that parents potentially have in secreting the damage done to their children. The fact that parents have to deal with the outside world *through* their children means that parents find themselves on the defensive on being able to exercise this power. This power needs to be legitimated by their children with reference to the

outside world. As a way of addressing this issue parents were asked about how they felt about their children when they were outside the home. As Tables One and Two show, around half of the parents worried about what their children did outside of the domestic purview. This is divided up into two areas; concern expressed about behaviour in school and behaviour with friends outside. It is also clear from Table Two that these concerns were expressed by both middle and working class parents.

Table One: *Parental Worry About the School*, by Social Class
(Do you worry about how your children behave at school? (N = 44))

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|-------|---------|---------|----------|
| YES: | 13 (54) | 9 (45) | 22 (50%) |
| NO: | 11 (46) | 11 (55) | 22 (50%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 22 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Two: *Parental Worry About the Outside World*, by Social Class
 (Do You worry about how your children behave outside?). (N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|--------|---------|---------|----------|
| YES: | 14 (58) | 9 (45) | 23 (52%) |
| NO: | 10 (42) | 11 (55) | 21 (48%) |
| TOTAL: | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Both groups of parents expressed the same reasons for their concerns in relation to the question on the outside world - parents were concerned here about the physical and moral security of their children. In relation to concern over the school there was some class difference. Middle class parents tended to express concern about how their children's behaviour and the behaviour of others might inhibit their children's chances of educational success. Whereas for working class parents, the concern was that their children were behaving properly. This can be demonstrated if we compare two responses from parents to the question: Do you ever worry about how your children behave in school? Rita Barnes, a care assistant in a nursing home, links her sons behaviour in class to his results.

Oh yes, I do worry about it, but I've never had the occasion to think he is misbehaving. I would have heard from the school. His french teacher says there's a lot of nonsense in the class. I've asked if William is one of them and she says he can be sometimes. But because of the results he's been getting I'd tend to think that he is concentrating and behaving in the class.

For George Deary, a sheet metal worker, the behaviour of his children was what was important rather than any educational ends that it might facilitate.

Oh aye. We try tae thrash that home to them aw' the time, that they've tae behave well. Their total behaviour in everything. I mean we cannae make them saints but..on saying that I'm probably only one in about hundred parents. The wife and I are only one in a hundred families that'll do that.

Parental concern was more or less equally felt with respect to both the school and the outside world. Yet unlike the outside world, the school was perceived differently in that parents had the potential to know indirectly through the teachers about the behaviour of their children. Unlike the parents in Harris's study, several parents were able to assuage their doubts about their children's behaviour by checking with teachers at parent's meetings. Evelyn Dobbie, a middle class mother, expressed her worries.

I think about it. I often wonder. I can often imagine him at school, fooling about. That worries me sometimes because he could be distracting other people, he never stops talking. We've asked about it when we've been down at the parents evenings but no great hassle, no' any great problem as he's getting older he's calming down and settling down. We've tried to get over to him how important this year is to him and get him to knuckle down. He doesn't seem to have any problems. We have asked at the school.

Again there is a greater emphasis on linking behaviour to educational performance. But here also, little anxiety was expressed about referring to the teachers. The situation does potentially lead to the scenario put forward by Harris that children have the power to betray their parents through letting them down in front of the teacher. But the school is interpreted here by Evelyn Dobbie in much less conflictual terms. The school is used more as a resource to be draw on.

George Wilson on the other hand linked his children's public behaviour to their parenting role. He was asked why he worried about his children's behaviour at school. He replied, "because the school

would think it was lack of discipline in the home." George Wilson had given up a well paid job with the bank to go into business with his wife. They had moved to another part of the city a year previously and were now running a small hotel. Initially they hadn't moved Philip to a school within the new catchment area because they didn't want to disrupt his schooling and they were aware of the difficulties teenagers sometimes had breaking old ties and making new friends. Philip was eventually moved when he got into trouble with some other pupils.

He was in a fight...we got a phone call from the school saying Philip was in trouble at the school. Philip and some wee laddie had fought in a park near the school. They were going to be suspended and we had to go to the school the next day. Both laddies apologised and said it wouldn't happen again. So we decided after that we'd get Philip transferred to Boreston (GEORGE WILSON).

The move to Boreston enabled the Wilsons to 'keep tabs' on Philip because Boreston was much closer and he was able to come home at lunch. Moving school didn't solve all their problems. As his mother put it:

Philip was being late quite a lot, even at Boreston - he was dawdling. They have a good system there. They phone you up in case he's not coming back and report it to you. We got really angry that the school should have to phone us up. He hadn't been telling us that he'd been continually late. We werenae aware of it because we had been sending him out in plenty time (JEAN WILSON).

This point was reiterated by her husband. Their contacts with the school had increased at an unwelcome, but as George Wilson goes on to state, necessary speed.

The teachers know that we're on their side. I've said that to the guidance teacher. We've said to her anything they do, no matter how small it is, phone us. We'd rather have stupid phone calls than nothing at all. We want to know what's going on.

The Wilsons were relieved that the school was able to keep tabs on Philip, but given the trouble he was causing the school, there was still a worry that people might think they had caused the problem. The Wilsons were very conscious of how others evaluated their roles as parents. But their anxieties motivated them to draw closer to the school in an effort to solve the problem of their son's misbehaviour. Clearly some parents did express a concern about what the school thought of them as competent parents. This did to some degree offer evidence for Harris's thesis that parents worried about how the world outside perceived them. Yet parents were also worried about what the outside world *did* to their children.

Parental anxiety was marked when discussing the world outside of the home and the school. This was a general area marked out by the streets and parks; areas which some parents asserted were *their* territories when they were young. George Wilson stated that he'd "love to see all the kids roaming the streets until midnight but you can't". These areas were problematic now because they didn't have the moral and physical security of the school. If some doubts were expressed about the safeness of the schools, parents were in no doubt about the dangers that lurked for their children on the streets. Almost all parents referred to these dangers. An interesting point was made by some parents who gave an assessment of their children's characters when discussing their children's peers and their external activities. There was an implicit notion that some children are quite 'easily led'. The Harts, a working class couple, were conscious of their son, Thomas, getting involved with the wrong company. His father was asked whether he ever disapproved of Thomas's friends.

I'll tell him that's him finished running around with him. It's no' very often like, but we've seen trouble with some kids and we've stopped him before he's followed suit (TOM HART).

His wife also worried about Thomas's choice of friends. She cited an example:

There was an instance this morning. I got a phone call asking for Edward. I mean who knows that his middle name is Edward. It wis a wee lassie. Anyway I said Thomas was at school and I asked who was calling. She said "Veronica". I said I'll give you two seconds to get off this line. The phone went again, "Is David there?" So I just slammed the phone back doon. Thomas says "I cannae think mum who that could have been." If I thought he was getting up to anything like that, that wid really annoy me. If he was in a crowd using swear words or anything like that I'd get really angry.

There is an issue here of whether the child can be trusted. Quite often parent's anxieties centred on their feelings that their children were immature, they were naive, not yet worldly enough to make the 'right' choices. Rita Barnes "worried all the time" about her son. "His chums are like him, too trusting." This point was reiterated by Jim Short who claimed that his eldest daughter had to learn when to accept people at face value.

I've chastised her a couple of times. I've told her you've got to be a wee bit two faced and know when to turn it on. I go on about how you should be in public crossing your 't's and how it can be different from how you are in private.

Jim Short thus believed his daughter had to learn how to manipulate the external world. There is almost a Goffmanesque critique of children here in having a naivety so out of place in a context where guile, diplomacy and a lack of trust are the moral hallmarks of the outside world. Yet the self here is limited by the concerns of parents. For children apparently only need to "turn it on" outside of the home. The self here is a much more permissive version than

Goffman's yet is more constrained by the demands of parents. What we have here then is tangible concern being expressed by parents in moral terms over the physical well-being of their children. A final extended example reinforces the overlapping of concerns over moral and physical integrity. Kathleen Bone at fourteen wanted to spend more time outside the home with some new friends she had made. But her parents felt she had started mixing with the wrong company. Her mother, Mary Bone, expressed her concern.

We had a problem that's why she changed school...with the friends she made. She was there at William Street school for three years. she had come from a small class of girls at primary...The way they split them up into classes Kathleen was on her own. it was a shame she was the youngest. They (the school) didn't think too hard about putting her in. They just threw her in with other kids she didn't know. She had to make her own friends and she's quite a shy girl. Obviously, she got over that. She got on in first and second year. She got friendly with children from Castleton (working class area on the outskirts). They wanted to go about just wandering the streets and we wouldn't let her. She was always taken to wherever she wanted to go and then taken back. They then asked her to go and play with them in the flats. We put our foot down and said no. From there it became worse. At first the teachers didn't notice it. These girls were really being nasty to her at the school. It got to the point where other teachers noticed it. I was up at the school three or four times. The guidance teacher didn't pick it up. She was very unhappy sometimes hysterical and there were some nasty phone calls. So I said right, I'm taking her away from the school.

Several points can be made here. First, whereas in the case of the Wilsons the school was actively involved in keeping an eye on their oldest son, Mary Bone was being very critical of the guidance teacher for not picking up the bullying in school and not being aware of her daughter's anxiety. Secondly, there was a strong emphasis placed on the parental purview; the children being chaperoned to and from their friends' houses. The concern being expressed here was the unsuitability of the street which took the form of the delapidated blocks of flats that the other girls played in. This point was reinforced by the father.

In my opinion they're at an age where there is nowhere for them to go. They're too young to be hanging around street corners. Where does a fourteen year old go? (RONALD BONE).

Thirdly, implicit in Mary Bones statement was the notion that her child was at some disadvantage vis-a-vis the rest of the girls. Kathleen was the youngest, she was separated from her primary school friends and forced to make new friends. Kathleen was also in her mother words not yet capable of looking after herself outside the home.

We wouldn't let her play in those lifts. We said no, and she didn't want to. She thought that was wrong as well...She's a shy girl and wasn't able to fight back. She didn't like to be nasty to anyone. We were all upset about it.

One final point was made about the distance from their home of the new school. As the school was not within the Bones' catchment area. There was an added difficulty of ensuring she got home from school safely.

3.2. Schooling and Supervision

There is here then a uncertainty expressed about how their children are likely to behave when they confront those unknown to parents outside of the home and the school. Parents will protect their children by ensuring that they are shielded from any possible physical danger outside of the home and the school. At the same time, parents do have some notion that the school has to take some responsibility. First, the school is expected to take their children for a designated period of time. Parents thus expected their children home from school at certain times. Parents were quick to complain to the school if their children were being kept behind without their knowledge (3).

Secondly, in discussing the sanctions that were available to teachers Jean Wilson felt that the school had a responsibility to keep troublesome children within school.

I'd like to say right away that I don't approve of this suspension. Not that mine have ever been suspended, but they often talk about it. The teachers often threaten them with suspension. I've told mine if you were suspended I would take you along there every morning at nine. I would say to the head, here's my child for his education. They might tell me to take him away again, but I would be along there again the next morning. I don't agree with that at all. What are you teaching a kid by suspending him? They think, great. Some of the worst wee hooligans down in the west end were roaming the streets. They'd been suspended, maybe for fighting or something like that. They got a weeks suspension. That's all wrong. You're better to have them where you can see them and see what they're up to.

Thirdly, for some parents the important spatial distinction made between the school and the streets is blurred. Despite the legitimacy that the school is accorded by parents, the playground is seen as an area of potential danger. Bullying in school was a problem that parents were very aware of. Eight of the parents who worried about how their children were at school were concerned primarily about bullying (four working class: four middle class). Betty Deary, a working class mother, was one in particular.

I've had a wee bit of bother. I hav'nae been to the school about it, with Jean. She's been getting bullied quite a bit. The last day was only a fortnight ago and one or two of the girls had pushed her down the stairs and stood on her fingers. I said to her 'I'm going into the rector on Monday'...She's an easy going girl, she's very helpful but she doesnae like gettin' picked on. They're there tae learn, no' tae be bullied about.

The Terrys expressed this concern when discussing the thorny issue of lunch time supervision. But here concern is more about the moral danger their children might find themselves in if left unsupervised by the school.

They (the children) can leave at lunchtime. When I was at school you weren't allowed out at lunchtime. It's not so much the danger. It's more the dinner money. They're given money walking around the town being more interesting than school. There is some sort of lack here bearing in mind that you've got to send your child to school and they're (the teachers) in the positions of being parents while the child is at school. It's a hangup at the moment where teachers don't think certain things are their domain. Whereas if you're going to have a child in the school, you're responsible for that child until they come home. Not just for the periods when you think you are responsible for them.

3.3. 'Keeping Tabs'

According to Harris, there would appear to be an inverse relationship between the extent to which parents act overtly to control their children, and their success in managing to discipline their children. Harris thus believes that a form of cultural inertia sets in. There is a strange reversal in the power dynamic within the home as parents become more and more dependent on their children in trying to impose an authority over them. Now there may be a tendency for a few parents to be more dependent on external confirmation of their parenting practices, especially in relation to the school. Although this created some anxiety for these parents over their socialising abilities, concern was also expressed over the moral and physical fitness of their children to negotiate an uncivil society. In this next section I suggest several ways that both middle class and working class parents are able to contain their children within their purview that reflect the concerns they have over both their moral and physical integrity.

In general it was parents who perceived themselves as having to take the major responsibility here by adopting strategies for trying to confine their children within the parental orbit. There were several ways of "monitoring" or "keeping tabs" on their children. Several parents mentioned that they knew who their children's friends

were; one or two knew the parents of these children. Ian Robbie was actively involved with what his sons did in their spare time.

I know who Alexander goes about with. It's all to do with the rugby. I assist in coaching at the rugby club.

The Dobbie's concern was assuaged by knowing the kinds of friends that their son had because they had similar interests and dispositions.

I often wonder what he's like. Is he any different from what he's like in the house? But there again his pals have got the same interests. Compared to some of them round here he's very quiet. He likes his pipe band model railway and he's quite happy with his bike. He never goes about in a gang (EVELYN DOBBIE).

John Dobbie stressed a second way of keeping tabs on his son's activities by keeping his son occupied. He was asked whether he worried over what his son did outside the house.

I think about it but he's not a lad for the crowds. He tends to go with one or two pals. He doesnae hang about with a gang. He wouldnae be allowed - I'd put my foot down. We keep Michael's time pretty well occupied - he doesn't know it but if he had too much free time he would then go out looking.

According to John White his eldest son was at the dangerous age of being more receptive to the wrong type of external influences. Like the previous respondents, he was quite happy that his son was kept occupied by the Boys Brigade which although it took him away from home, was seen as an acceptable outside past time. There was also a sense in which this was acceptable because his son's classmates were members.

We'll tell them there are a certain couple of laddies I don't fancy. There's one in particular and I told him, 'keep away fae him because I says, aw' you'll get fae that laddie is trouble at school, trouble from the police.' which the laddie has been in trouble with the police after we'd told Jim to stay away... the younger one is no' at that stage yet... Jim is at the age now where it's awfy easy to get caught it in a thing like that. If you run with pack you've got to do what the pack says. Ye' know what I mean. He's lucky he's got the B.B.s. (the Boys Brigade) The more sensible type of laddie goes to the B.B.s. A lot of his mates go from Boreston.

The problems that the Wilsons were having were partially alleviated by 'bribing' their son to stay at home.

He's usually at his best when he's skint. During the holidays he likes to lie in his bed until twelve and then get up and go out with his mates, disappear and come back at ten at night. We decided last night that Philip was going to sweep out the back. He was moaning about doing it but he came back with a smile on his face. He'd found a pound on the ground while doing it. He doesn't realise who put the pound there! (GEORGE WILSON).

Parents would also refer to a vast array of what Greenfield called "electronic babysitters" (Greenfield 1987: 144). Several parents mentioned their children having televisions, stereos and computers in their rooms. Children's leisure time seemed to be much more easily accommodated within the home. Nevertheless, parents were conscious of ties that their children made outside of the home and that it became much more difficult to keep them occupied as they got older. This wasn't a problem for a minority of parents whose children had little desire to go out and play on the streets. But where children liked the company of their friends outside of the home, parents quite often encouraged their children to bring their friends into the house. This is not simply a combination of knowing their friends and keeping them occupied. Parents often didn't know all of their children's friends. Almost all of the parents at one time or another had disapproved of a particular friend. But as Jean Wilson stated, they were very seldom turned them away.

We try to encourage them to bring their friends into the house so that we can approve or disapprove of them. They are more or less allowed to bring anyone in.

This seemed an acceptable price to pay for keeping tabs on their children and discouraging them from engaging in activities they had

little knowledge of. Parents were more likely to tolerate children they might not wholeheartedly approve of if their activities were confined within the home. The street if you like, was brought into the home where parents were able to keep an eye on who their children were associating with.

I argued earlier that parents tended to link their favoured sanction with the ability to punish their children. But there is also an interesting connection between the forms of sanctions that parents adopt and the desire to keep an eye on their children. As we can see from Table Three grounding was the most popular sanction with nineteen parents favouring this form of punishment. Allowing for the greater number of middle class parents, it was also a more common sanction among middle class parents.

Table Three: *Type of Material Sanctions Used by Parents, by Social Class (N = 32)*

| | M/Class | W/Class | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Grounded | 13 | 6 | 19 |
| Restricted to Bedroom | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Withdrawal of TV/Computer | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Withdrawal of Pocket Money | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Withdrawal of Food | - | 1 | 1 |

* This list didn't include sanctions such as force, threats and other more personal forms such as the raising of the voice.

** The table sets out the number of parents who mentioned a particular sanction. The overall total of responses does not match the total number of parents, because eleven parents mentioned more than one sanction.

Pocket money, on the other hand, was not something that figured heavily in parents' calculations as to how they would sanction their children. Seventeen couples regularly gave their children either pocket money or an allowance (4). Yet only five parents stopped their children's pocket money as a sanction, four of these were working class.

The previous section pointed to the utility of stopping pocket money as a sanction. Parents were more concerned to express reasons why they didn't stop their children's pocket money. Parents argued that by depriving children of their pocket money they would be depriving themselves of a central axis of parental supervision. Parental supervision was linked to sanctions in three ways. First, parents tended to use the money they gave their children as a way of supervising what their children did with their pocket money. John Dobbie's son worked for him in his garage and was paid an allowance. He was asked whether his son could spend his allowance on what he wanted. He replied:

He does control it. We keep an eye on what he's doing if we think he's doing it wrong we try and explain it to him. It's very difficult to explain savings to a youngster, but he's doing all right. If he blew it that was it. There was no more after it. At the end of the week if he spends all his money he doesnae get school dinners. It's up to him. We did this quite early on as soon as he left primary school.

Parents may be less likely to stop their children's pocket money where it was linked to the development of their children's budgeting skills. A second possible explanation rested on more general concerns that a few parents had about the possibilities of their children seeking unregulated leisure outside of the home if deprived of their pocket money. Christine Terry, who worked part-time, was asked about what she did when her three sons misbehaved.

Well Stephen in particular would get very upset if you did that to him. Tim would just go to his room and slam the door and you'd know you'd achieved nothing at all. Stopping pocket money...it would upset him. But I'm worried that if you cut off their pocket money they might try and acquire it some other way. I feel it's a rather debatable method to use.

There is here then an unease about what her children would get up to if they were deprived of their pocket money. Unlike the situation where the Dobbies were able to closely monitor what their children did with their money, the Terrys were concerned that this lack of supervision would not only hinder attempts at making their children more economically responsible, it would reduce their ability to supervise their children's behaviour outside of the home. Finally, a preference for grounding their children may reflect the concerns that some parents had about their children's moral and physical security outside of the home. Where parents were concerned with how their children behaved outside the home *any* misbehaviour may be dealt with more comfortably by parents by confining their children. Supervision then rests on the kinds of controls that parents have over their children's activities as a way of underwriting their children's future social orientations.

4. Mothers, Fathers and the Sanctioning Process

The extent to which fathers were involved in the disciplinary process within the home was dictated partly by the way time spent with their children was distributed between both parents. Mothers tended to spend more time with their children than their husbands did because they were around the home more than their husbands. Nearly all the fathers worked full-time with five of them working intermittently away from home. The majority of mothers on the other hand, either worked part-

time or didn't work at all. But we need to be careful when deducing a maternal responsibility from the proposition that mothers are around the home more than fathers. This thesis deals with parents of children at secondary school who spent proportionately less time with their parents than they did when they were younger. Thus although mothers were home more than fathers, their adolescent children were out of the house for much longer. Some corroboration of this comes from the responses that parents gave to the question about whether they saw their children less as they got older. Twenty six parents claimed that they saw less of their children now. The gender division is significant with seventeen mothers and nine fathers saying yes. Because mothers were around the house more, they tended to notice that their children were spending less time at home as they got older. Fathers who had less input when the children were younger did not necessarily notice the same difference. From this we might say that the decrease in time spent by mothers with their children brings them more into line with the amount of time spent by fathers with children. For many couples the times when their adolescent children were at home would tend to coincide more with the times that the father was home. Both parents were around for a greater proportion of the time that their children spent out of school. Although mothers tended to be around at crucial times of the day when children came home from school, Appendix Four shows that both mothers and fathers tended to be around at other strategic times of the day.

Nevertheless, according to the parents, mothers still tended to be more involved in sanctioning their children than their husbands. Yet as we can see from Table One it doesn't follow that mothers were more involved in both the decisions over what was deemed sanctionable behaviour and the actual imposition of sanctions. It doesn't follow that fathers had little significant involvement.

Table Four: *Parental Sanctioning as a Domestic Activity* by Social Class (N = 22)

| | M/Class | W/Class | TOTAL |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Paternal Input | 6 (50) | 4 (40) | 10 (45%) |
| Maternal Respons. | - | 2 (20) | 2 (9%) |
| Situational | 5 (42) | 4 (40) | 9 (41%) |
| Joint | 1 (8) | - | 1 (5%) |
| Total | 12 | 10 | 22 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of couples within each social class category.

Paternal Input: Where mothers had more dealings than fathers but the subsequent action taken by the father had a determining impact on the sanctioning process.

Maternal Responsibility: Where mothers had the majority of dealings with the children and took all major decisions.

Situational: Where the parent that is around at the time of the incident resolves the situation without the aid of a spouse.

Joint: where parents both stated that they were equally involved in all aspects of the sanctioning process.

Half of the parents fell into the 'paternal input' category (5). This category is deliberately broad in that it encapsulates a spectrum of parental activity from the occasional referral from mother to father to the situation where the father took all the major decisions on sanctions independently of the extent to which he was present when the incident occurred. What separates these parents who claimed that they fell into this category from 'situational' parents is the habitual nature of the referral. Almost all parents at one time or another discussed together a particularly serious incident which

involved their children. Parents in the 'paternal input' category made it clear that from time to time one spouse had an important determining role to play within the sanctioning process. This was usually the father (6). Parents in this category presented a much more complex version of a division of responsibility within the home. Mothers were around more. They were more likely to be in a position to react first to their children's misbehaviour. The parental input category thus included some mothers who claimed that although they were able to take some action, they often invoked the 'absent father' as a means of emphasising the severity of the situation. Furthermore, it was also a clear indication that action was going to be taken. Several parents were able to identify one parent who took all major decisions on discipline. The Slanys and the Shorts exemplified the 'wait till your father gets home' sentiment. Brian Slany was asked about the sanctioning process.

As a rule I discipline the kids. I make the decision when and the method. We'll discuss the need. I'll carry it out. They've always respected me for discipline. They do occasionally step over the line but they are always aware that they are stepping over the line so they never go too far. A word from myself and they step back. That's sufficient.

To some extent this was corroborated by his wife who claimed that her husband took control over how their children would be sanctioned. But further on in the interview she talked about how she would keep her children in if they misbehaved. Thus although Brian Slany dictated the moral and social agenda within which sanctioning took place, his wife was involved in administering the sanctions. One interesting point was that Brian Slany was a company director who tended to work very long hours and thus potentially spent very little time with his children. Yet when he was asked whether he saw less of his children as they got older he replied

I don't. I work long hours. To compensate for that I don't have too many interests outside the home. I'm here and they know I'm here.

Thus although he bore all the hallmarks of the 'absent breadwinner' he also played the role of the conscientious patriarch who took control of the family proceedings.

Another interesting example of this parental relationship was offered by the Shorts. Whereas with the Slanys there didn't appear to be any parental conflict over the father's role, the Short's were finding it difficult now to come to terms with the mother's 'ascendancy'. Jim Short set the agenda within the home.

The major decisions are made by myself. In all aspects from finance right down. But I would say in the last couple of years my wife has become...because of women's lib and all that sort of carry on, I think she wants to take a wee bit more responsibility. But I think it's a wee bit late now to take it.

His wife expressed this tension in terms of the greater empathy she had with her teenage daughters and her husband's lack of understanding of the situations which he thought warranted the children being disciplined.

M.W.: Who decides when it is necessary to discipline the children?

J.S.: That's a difficult one because the kids are quite difficult at the moment. Tends to be what happens you'll tell them off if they ask me things I'll say you'll have to wait and see what your dad says first rather than me just saying yes...but depends on what it is.

M.W.: How are the children disciplined?

J.S.: At the moment it tends to be. I'll say one thing and he'll say another. I tend to think that men say the wrong thing. I'll say now hold on a minute and think about what you're saying.

Other parents identified 'paternal input' in terms of the extent to which fathers intervened and took the major decisions in the sanctioning process. The McTeares worked on the basis that the wife had

responsibility which had to be periodically assessed by the husband.

As a general rule my wife has most dealings with the kids. That's obvious because she has most contact with them. At the end of the day I suppose I have the final say. Generally I'll intervene if there's been something that's greatly displeased me or something she cannae cope with. If they're frequently told by the wife I might have to come in and sort it out.

This was corroborated by his wife:

If there's an important decision my husband lays down the law. I suppose I'm easier to get through because its the mother. But it's usually a family thing...My husband will say you're grounded or whatever...If my husband isn't here - he works funny shifts - I'll be at the helm.

In the Hart's case there was a general agreement that Isabel Hart took responsibility for disciplining the children. Like the McTears the 'absence' of the father was defined in terms of the role of overseer. Tom Hart would leave his wife in charge. Yet there were occasions when he would intervene.

It's no' something we really discuss unless they really get out of hand. We share it to a certain extent but most of the rows involve their mum. I might step in if it gets out of hand and that's it finished wie.

Again there is parental agreement.

Tom usually gies me a clear hand but if I cannae control them I'll pass it over to Tom. (ISABEL HART)

When asked how the children were disciplined she offered an example.

My husband says I'm too soft. I gie in tae them. Whereas if he says they're going to do a thing, he makes sure that they do it and that's it. He's stronger that way than me. We had an instance wie' Doreen at the school. She was gaun away for the weekend. She'd been right cheeky, she really wis. I said tae Tom I wash ma hands on her. I've tried everything wie her. I don't know what else to do. He says well she's no' going on the trip. He says, 'a've pit ma fit doon... It's no' just her carry on, but also her treatment and attitude tae you'

In many respects the 'situational' category would appear to contradict the parental input categories. Situational sanctioning was described by parents, particularly mothers, as a way of asserting their disciplinary powers in relation to their spouses. It was also a sentiment that middle class mothers tended to express more than working class mothers. If we turn to Christine Terry, when asked about discipline she replied that she dealt with it:

as it arose. We wouldn't really sit down and discuss it. It would be done just as it cropped up unless something vital.

When asked about decisions that were made by both parents over discipline there was recourse here to the 'wait 'till your father gets home' sentiment. She was asked whether a lot of deliberation took place between herself and her husband.

Not really..it's a gut reaction. I would certainly never say to them, if you don't do what I tell you I'll tell your father.

This sentiment was also expressed by Alice Davies, for although her husband might be better at disciplining the children, the fact that she had more contact with the children meant that she had an independent status as a parent.

M.W.: Who takes decisions on discipline?

A.D.: We both do...whoever's nearest. If dad was in the vicinity I might leave it to him I don't think we've ever sat down and thought out how...It's kind of a reaction to a situation.

M.W.: What if something happened earlier in the day?

A.D.: Well it's over...If something had happened during the day when I was there and I mentioned it to Ian, I wouldn't expect Ian to react in that way because the thing was finished. The immediate punishment is the only one that counts. Afterwards it is pointless.

By drawing on the paternal input category I am not claiming that fathers in this study had more involvement in the sanctioning process than their spouses. The data here reflects the assumptions made by the teachers - that discipline as a routine activity was undertaken mainly by mothers. But I would suggest that both the absence of the father and the activities of fathers within the home had an important impact on how mothers dealt with situations where their children were getting out of hand. In order for mothers to be able to discharge their responsibilities they needed to either invoke the absent father or rely on the father to intervene and take control from time to time. What parents appear to be saying here is that a mother's responsibility appears to rely to some degree on the father's authority.

Parents did tend to reflect the claims made through the decline thesis that mothers tended to have the major responsibility for day to day discipline within the home. Yet this state of affairs within the home is interpreted through the decline thesis as an excessive form of maternalism which handicaps the moral development of the child. This point was not articulated by the parents for two reasons. Almost half of the parents tended to react to situations as they arose. Although this would tend to mean that in a majority of cases mothers would take unilateral action it also means that where fathers are around they would take equivalent action. Given that fathers are around more during a child's adolescence these fathers would not appear to conform to the absent father model invoked through the decline thesis. This point is reinforced if we turn to the other major category of parent. Fifty per cent of the couples they tended to see this 'maternalism' as being circumscribed by a more general collective approach to child rearing. This ranged from fathers laying the ground rules for their children's behaviour, to fathers strengthening the *parental* norms of

behaviour within the home by providing a more forceful presence where mothers were perceived to be having difficulties in controlling the children.

5. Conclusion

In discussions parents had about how they dealt with misbehaviour within the home, parents tended to define their adolescents as 'children' dependent on their adult guidance. Parents did not express the view that any attempt by parents to influence, control or more generally, discipline their 'older' children was an example of the old adage 'too little, too late'. Most parents accepted that their adolescent children had not reached the point where they required little or no direct discipline. With the exception of a few parents, a general level of confidence was expressed by parents in being able to intervene and take action against their children when they felt they had stepped out of line. Yet there was some recognition of adolescence as a mediate stage between childhood and independence in the kinds of material sanctions favoured by parents. A majority of parents saw force as an inappropriate disciplinary mechanism to be used against their adolescent children. Where parents still occasionally drew on force this was more of a spontaneous reaction to situations which had annoyed them.

In relation to their children's public behaviour, the data suggests that both middle and working class parents desire a secure material hold over their adolescent children. By drawing on the concerns that parents expressed in relation to the outside world as an uncivil society, we cannot simply see parents' behaviour in terms of psychological inadequacy or irrationality. Rather than wanting to live vicariously through their children, certain parents discharge their responsibilities through a form of supervision in managing their

children's physical and moral integrity. This does not necessarily conform to the traditionalist notion of the maintenance of status. Parents were able to avoid the visible assertion of their authority vis-a-vis their adolescent children. Both working class and middle class parents appear to be saying here that their adolescent children's behaviour can be more easily *managed* within the home through a form of regulated permissiveness. Children are allowed to behave as immature adults within the confines of the private sphere of the home. Supervision allows parents a degree of authority over their children in the protection that parents offer children from their own naivety. This also gives parents some opportunity to steer their children in what they consider to be appropriate directions.

In the last section I discussed how the decline thesis put a lot of emphasis on the absence of the father in accounting for the responsibility that mothers have. The absent father in the decline thesis meant, that father's have lost their ability to assert themselves within the home. Fathers no longer had any disciplinary powers over their children. Their authority has been replaced with a weaker power, maternal responsibility. I suggest in this chapter that this is not the case for a majority of parents. Discipline was dictated largely by circumstance. The parents claimed that mothers were around more when children needed to be sanctioned. It did not follow that mothers had responsibility for sanctions. The sanctioning process within the home was a more complicated and protracted process which usually involved both parents. Parents in the interviews tended to present discipline as an activity which involved both parents. First, there was a variety of inputs from fathers that ranged from taking all important decisions on discipline to intervening in situations that mothers weren't able to handle on their own. Second,

the absence of the father was taken by some parents as a rationale for more unilateral sanctioning. For others it was a means of strengthening the bargaining power of women in situations where they were confronted with difficult teenage behaviour. The invocation of the absent father was often used as a way of taking the pressure off mothers.

This chapter has dealt more substantively with the proposition that parents have lost the ability to discipline their children. But in discussions over their children's public lives, parents tended to contradict the view that the school was undermining the authority that parents had. Although some concern was expressed over the ability of the school to protect their children from the influences of an uncivil society, parents in some instances tended to see the school as a useful support in the supervision of their adolescent children's behaviour. The following chapter looks at the role of the school as a moral influence on their children in more detail.

6. Notes

1. Physical punishment within the home has been a particularly controversial issue since the 1970s. The current debates over whether corporal punishment ought to be outlawed in Britain reflect deep concerns over physical child abuse. A lot of the academic concern goes back to early debates over the degree to which corporal punishment could be conceptualised at one end of a spectrum of domestic violence as 'normal' violence. See Strauss, Gelles and Steinmetz 1980, Goode 1971 and for a useful review of the literature, Parton 1985.
2. See Dobash and Dobash 1979 and above reference.
3. This is discussed in more detail in the following chapter in relation to parental perceptions of school sanctions.
4. See Appendix Four.
5. Only one parenting couple was inconsistent in the claims they made about who was involved in the sanctioning process.
6. In the 'maternal input' category parents occasionally described situations where fathers referred an incident of misbehaviour to their wives.

CHAPTER SIX

'BRINGING THEM UP': THE PARENTAL NORM OF PRIMACY

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter parents saw the school as an important means of supervising the moral and physical integrity of their children. In this chapter I address more concretely the perceptions that parents have about what this means in terms of how teachers behave towards their children in class. Chapter Four addressed the decline thesis by assessing the extent to which teachers drew social boundaries between themselves and parents. This chapter examines a complementary set of responses from parents. I assess the extent to which parents perceive teachers as a threat to their authority. This is done, firstly, by analysing the roles that parents think they have in relation to the school. In effect, if parents have a clear enough sense of a division of responsibility between the socialising and educational remits of parents and teachers respectively, we need to place in doubt the decline thesis's notion that parents have become disoriented with their roles as parents because of incursions from the educational sphere. These views can be strengthened if we consider the extent to which parents have actually considered that their primary role as socialisers have been comprimised by the school. I refer here to parents' views on actual and potential situations where teachers offered parents advice on disciplining their children within the home.

I then analyse responses made to questions about current public concerns over 'parent power'. If the decline thesis is concerned about how the boundary between parents and teachers can be sustained, questions need to be asked about incursions into the teaching realm by parents. Current concerns do tend to overemphasise the alleged

imbalance within the parent/teacher division of responsibility in terms of incursions from the teaching side.

In the second part I look at the extrapolated version of the decline thesis. There are two issues here. First, teachers' have more prominent out of school activities. Second, they no longer exercise a teaching authority in class. In the decline thesis both of these points are causally related. Teachers are imbued with a liberal welfare ethos. Their out of school activities grew out of ideas about treating the pupil as a product of particular social circumstances. The awareness that teachers have of the pupil as a social and emotional entity softens the pedagogic nature of their responsibilities. Teachers thus find it more difficult to push the pupil through the curriculum as pupils are no longer merely seen as intellectual entities. I assess this argument here through discussions I had with parents on the nature of the teacher/pupil relationship.

2. Parental Perspectives on the Teaching Role

2.1. General Assumptions

Many of the parents implicitly drew on Riesman's notion of the psychological gyroscope in summing up the difference between the role of the school and the role of the family. What comes through generally from the interviews is that parents come first, in the obvious biological sense, but they are also seen as primary in guiding their children out into a world outside of the family. We can say here then that parents have *primacy* in the sense that they are the figures that have most influence over the cultural development of children. The setting of the moral and cultural homing device (a not accidental metaphor) is symbolised by the notion that parents 'bring up' their

children. Parents tend to dominate in the early formative years of the child *before* the school plays a part. Nowadays this temporal division between school and home has been muddied by the tendency of parents to send their children to either nursery or play group. This is borne out by the parenting sample. Only one couple interviewed hadn't sent their children to nursery. In theory then, 'schooling' - the first formal contacts their children had with the outside world - started as early as the age of three for some parents. Nevertheless, we cannot simply see this as the school encroaching upon the time that parents previously had with their children at home. Parents articulated important differences between school and nursery in that there was no compulsion to send children to nurseries. Whereas in relation to sending their children to school parents had no choice, in relation to nurseries, parents still felt there was a sense in which meaningful decisions were being made (1). More importantly, there was also a sense for the parents that compared to the school, the nursery was seen as a way of gently introducing the child to the outside world, rather than having any intrinsic educational purpose.

Table One: *Why Parent's Sent Their Children to Nursery/ Playgroup*
(N = 25)

| Reasons Given by Parents | Nos of Parents |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| A Parental Norm | 10 (40) |
| The Need to Mix With Other Children | 11 (44) |
| Necessity (Both Spouses Working) | 2 (8) |
| Giving Mother More Time | 1 (4) |
| Getting Mother Out of the House | 1 (4) |
| Total | 25 |

* Percentages in brackets.

Table One shows that of those parents who gave a reason for sending their children to nursery, a majority saw it as either an accepted part of bringing up their children or as a means by which their children were able to mix with children of their own age before they went to school. There was little sense then that parents expected their children to be 'educated' at nursery. The nursery had more to do with *parents* introducing their children to the social world, a responsibility that was part of the more general parenting idea of 'bringing up' their children. What parents appear to be saying here is that the school has lost a *social* function of being the institutional locus through which children are introduced to their peers. As I go on to argue, this would appear to strengthen the idea that the school was primarily the means by which children are 'educated'.

'Bringing them up' is not an easy phrase to neatly encapsulate for it seems to cover everything from the amorphous emotional investments that parents make to the more rigorous exercise of discipline through the setting of standards. Discipline though is something that the school has a hand in according to one parent, Richard Stone.

The school has to discipline them. They've got them for the day. It's up to them but if somethin' happened and he came home, I'd go up to the school to find out what had happened.

Tom Hart offered a subtle difference to the disciplining that went on within the classroom.

It's up to the parents to a certain extent to discipline their kids because if we don't discipline them the teachers are not going to be able to control them. If parents cannae control them what chance has the teacher got?

Implicitly here, disciplining in its significant phase takes place before the child goes to school. Parental primacy then took the form of the homing device. If it is installed early on the school has no

problem *controlling* them. Control here is subordinate, not just in a temporal sense, but in the sense that in theory, the teacher's job as a disciplinarian is more straight forward compared to the task of the parent. For the teacher is responding to what has gone before (and as we have seen from the previous chapter, teachers tended to respond in a problematic sense when parents hadn't disciplined their children). If parents have done their jobs properly, control then is merely the adjustment of the child's viewing to an educational setting, a necessary precursor to the more exacting business of teaching. Thus parents don't minimise the responsibilities that teachers have, but these responsibilities are defined in more restricted educational terms. The importance and significance here is not in the teacher's role as 'socialiser' but in a much more direct and productive way as provider of qualifications and skills. John White was asked what role he thought the school played:

An important role because as long as we bring them up they're going to make..the school is there to make that kid a better kid, a better person, like. Cos if they can teach them sumthin', in other words, if the teachers are good at their jobs and can teach them something, and the kids normal, you know got a wee bit savvy, he'll pick it up. They must be playin' an important role at this stage. If he's gettin' bad teachers now in later life he'll no' be much good at anything, job wise especially in this day and age.

Yet some parents offered a different emphasis. Jan Short argued that the family and classroom settings are not equivalent. Teachers are dealing with different problems in class because they are dealing with groups of children. Thus the school in terms of discipline is not simply capitalising on the good work of the ideal parent. Once a child enters the school room behaviour is guided by quite different criteria. There is no necessary direct reproduction of the child's misbehaviour at home in class. The way that children respond to their parents maybe qualitatively distinct from their behaviour in school. This point was expressed by Jan Short.

Sometimes parents look at things in a different way from the teachers. Parents have the one child, whereas, teachers have all these others to deal with.

It might follow from this then that the responsibility a teacher has for disciplining the child cannot be referred back to the inadequate socialising of the parent. That is, if the child behaves badly in school it is because of factors which the parent has little control over, given that the classroom is a different setting. Interestingly, this point isn't pursued by Jan Short because she continues in the vein of the other respondents who saw a direct relationship between parental inadequacy and problems in school, in particular, the difficulties the school encounters when parents try and pass on the blame for their own inadequacies as parents.

Quite often the parents think they know more than the teachers about the school and they can blame the teachers for their problems...You do have to know what your child is up to, even although they're at school all day within reason. To me kids play a lot more truancy nowadays because the parents don't know about it or don't want to know about it. They tend to blame the school; it's their fault. Once their child is out the front door it's the school's responsibility. Then where does it start or stop. I would say you can't take your child to school for ever - they get older and want to go themselves... there are parents who go out to work who don't have a clue what their child does. It must be worrying, so they've got to blame someone and I think that's more or less what they're doing. It's very hard to say it's my fault for being the way she is. But it's got to come from the home. If your kid is swearing and cursing they're hearing it from somewhere. They hear it at school but if they are in the habit of hearing it, i.e. in the home, then it's just like a second word to them.

It is here that idea of parental responsibility for discipline is most strongly expressed. Parents may be making a perfectly rational claim in blaming the school, given that in spatial terms they cannot

necessarily deduce parental responsibility from a child's misbehaviour outside of the home. Yet ultimately responsibility here is not about the apparent rationality of a situation. Responsibility here is a question of making judgements over who came first and who has primacy.

2.2. Teachers' Advice

In Chapter Four I outlined the difficulties teachers had when they were in a position of having to question the very basis of a parent's responsibilities. Parental primacy was being called into question as teachers were forced into offering advice on how to discipline their children. Teachers made it clear that the primacy the parent ought to have in bringing up their children was part of an idealised parent/teacher relationship where the parent's role as disciplinarian was separate from the educational responsibilities of the teacher. What the teachers were identifying was a very private realm of parenting activity which teachers had little desire to intrude upon. What was made abundantly clear in the interviews with parents was that the sensitivity felt by the teachers when confronted with the possibility of advising parents on discipline was equally felt by parents. Parents were asked whether they had ever been offered advice from a teacher on how to bring up their children. There was almost a unanimous consensus from the parents that the teacher had no right to offer advice on how to discipline their children. Of the small minority that had had some experience of this, there was no class difference. Bill Wilkins, a baker:

M.W.: Have the teachers ever tried to advise you?

B.W.: I think one or two of them. The maths teacher tried to tell us how to deal with him. (his eldest son) I just looked at him like, and said I'll bring up ma weans ma way.

Many more parents expressed resentment that any teacher would dare to offer advice. The Slaneys were unequivocal in their rejection of any attempt by teachers to influence the way they brought up their children. Agnes Slaney responded by drawing on the parent\teacher division of responsibility.

M.W.: Do the teachers ever advise you on discipline?

A.S.: No. I don't know if I'd take too kindly to that. I wouldn't dream of telling the teacher how to educate them so I wouldn't like them to tell me how to bring them up.

Discipline according to her husband, a company director, was something that took place within the home because parents had to install the 'moral gyroscope' before children started school.

M.W.: Do teachers ever offer you advice?

B.S.: No. I wouldn't take any either. I have strong views on that. I've always been strong in that respect. I believe at an early age they should know what's right and what's wrong.

2.3. Parent Power or Parental Intrusion?

The role of the parent can be analysed with reference to the current debate about attempts at making state education more accountable to its 'consumers', the parents. The debate goes back to the publication of the Black Papers in the late 1960s (Cox and Dyson 1969 and 1970). It has been touched on briefly in an earlier chapter. Its relevance here lies with an interesting reversal which allows the definition of the division of responsibility between parent and teacher to be made from another angle. This thesis is concerned with debates over the intrusion of teaching into the parenting realm. On the other hand, some of the later manifestations of the moves towards parent power, the 1988 Education Bill and the introduction in Scotland of school boards, suggest that the intrusions are coming from the opposite direction. This was something I put to parents as a way of getting

other insights into how they viewed themselves in relation to the school. This was brought out in the discussion with Ruby Bolton.

M.W.: What do you think of the introduction of school boards?

R.B.: Not a lot. No, I'm not too keen on that all. I know nothing whatsoever about teaching and I feel, you know, I couldn't sit on a board and dictate to teachers that you should be doing this, that and the next thing.

M.W.: You would leave it to teachers?

R.B.: This is it you know. I'm doing my job bringing them up and when they go to school they get taught at school and when they come home at night teach them sort of the discipline in the house and morals, that kind of thing. But education should come from school which I know nothing about.

In turning to two more examples there is the same unequivocal assertion of the different role played by parent and teacher.

I don't think that parents are qualified. They don't know what they're expected to do. I don't think that I'm qualified. I'm no' saying that parents shouldn't have a say, but they should be guided by the teachers...Are they going to be able to change teachers? That's absolute rubbish. How could I decide who is a good teacher. I'd have to be a teacher to know (GEORGE WILSON).

I don't agree with that. Parents aren't there all day, every day. The majority of parents have no idea as to how a structured class works. They'll only be going from what they read in a book, or someone may have told them. Very few are qualified to oversee a teacher. It would be like me working on a car and you saying well this is how it should be done. It just wouldnae be right (BOB ALISON).

What is brought out here is the importance of the educational role of the teacher which cannot be duplicated by the parent. Proponents of parent power may not be advocating a parental assault on the classrooms, but the kinds of skills that parents would need to have an effective voice in educational matters for the parents involved,

implied that they would need to have the skills which they were unwilling and unable to acquire.

When asked about how they saw the role of the school in relation to parenting more than fifty per cent of parents mentioned the 'bring them up/educate them' dichotomy. Whilst, almost all the other parents in one form or another mentioned that they would only get involved with the school in educational matters if there was a serious problem in relation to their own children. This was reflected by several parents who claimed that parents meetings were a waste of time. Jan Short was asked about the extent of her involvement with the subject choices at the end of her daughter's second year at school (2). She was asked what she thought about the parents meeting to prepare parents for the subject choice.

Okay, but I feel if the children are having a problem then all right by all means, yes, go. But for everybody to come it's a waste of time. Surely the teachers know who has problems. They should maybe say on the form you should come along and see us. Even if it's just one or two subjects instead of going to see them all. Other people who do have the problems could get more time. It's the same with the primary - you have to go.

There were no class differences here. There were as many working class parents as middle class parents making similar points about the inappropriateness of 'parental intervention'. Ian Robbie, a hospital porter had few complaints about the school. Yet he expressed some ambivalence about the usefulness of parents meetings. He was asked about the parents meeting for subject choice.

It was useful but in another way it was a waste o' time. He (son) was doing really well according to his report. He's quite bright and there was nothing really to discuss.

These comments seemed to strengthen a general parental view that there was a strong social division of labour between parents and teachers which went against the decline theorist's notion that balance of responsibilities between parent and teacher had been upset by teachers intruding within the parental realm.

3. The Changing Teacher/Pupil Relationship

Although the previous section suggested that there was a good balance between parent and teacher, there was an interesting change of voice when parents articulated opinions over teaching authority within the context of discussions about pupil/teacher relations. There was more emphasis on the disciplinary role within school. Parents here appeared to be reflecting the parents in the National Foundation for Educational Research's recent study who saw 'good discipline' as the most important criteria in choosing a school for their children (West and Varlaam 1991). In the previous section parents emphasised that teachers were the only other legitimate disciplinary agents outside of the home. As Jan Short mentioned, there comes a point where a parent has to hand over responsibility for the social and moral well-being of the child to the school while the child is in school. Parents may have some notion that the lasting effects of the school on the child will revolve around the educational rather than moral benefits which accrue and discipline may be seen in school as having a more immediate controlling effect on the children than any long term notion of 'bringing them up'. But in this section I suggest that parents have strong opinions about what teachers do and ought to do as disciplinarians which would imply that the disciplinary influence of the school has a lasting effect on their children. Discipline here was

more than just a necessary precursor to the business of 'educating'. Discipline as I go on to show for at least a significant group of parents, was more to do with values of deference and respect, which according to the decline thesis were missing from the classroom situation.

The disciplinary system in a school as Wolpe pointed out is the fulcrum for the successful organisation of day-to-day classroom activities (Wolpe 1988: 19). In Chapter Three I discussed the ambivalence felt by guidance teachers over discipline. Guidance was an area that the teachers wanted to keep separate from the negative implications of discipline. Yet guidance was ultimately seen as a crucial source of information to be drawn on in circumstances surrounding the disciplining of pupils. Guidance could be used to support the child who was about to be seriously sanctioned.

The parents on the other hand had a much less ambivalent view in that discipline was primarily associated with punishment. Discipline in the educational context was about imposing the teacher's power and authority in situations where the control of the class involved an implicit and explicit system of sanctions. Discipline then as far as the parents were concerned was intimately involved with the exercise of authority and power.

Earlier in the chapter parents suggested that disciplinary problems in school were more to do with 'earlier' parental inadequacies. When parents discussed school discipline in substantive terms parents tended to place more emphasis on the responsibilities of the school. When asked about levels of discipline in school, a few parents tended to locate problems of indiscipline within the home rather than the school. Iris Alison was one example.

The lack of discipline is in the home, especially when both parents are out working. You just need to listen to conversations where I work, talking about their children and so on. One woman said her little girl of four wanted a colour television. She said, I'll give her it. It'll give me some peace. Imagine that. A four year old in her room on her own watching tele? You'll get the odd bad teacher but it shouldn't make that much difference.

Yet in general, parents commented on changes that had taken place in teacher/pupil relations since their school days which were having a significant impact on discipline in class.

They write all these reports about how chatty the kids are. But I think they have brought it on themselves, quite honestly. ... I did dining room supervision and really I couldn't believe the way they behaved at primary school. You know, I think of my own children who wouldn't flout authority. Oh, I had a terrible time...I didn't get any backing from the head mistress. She sort of said..one wee boy in particular was swearing at me. She said he comes from a bad background...(RENA MCKAY).

These points sound very similar to the claims made in the decline thesis. Rena Mckay had first hand knowledge of the way children behaved through her voluntary work with the local primary school. The teacher here is blamed for encouraging a more permissive attitude within class which was associated with the more out-of-school concerns of the head teacher. But, this was not the prevalent criticism of the school. There were only two other similar comments passed by the parents. George Deary offered a general critique of "modern teaching methods". Whilst Jim Short commented that there were "too many do gooders" in school. As I stated in the early part of this chapter, no parent specifically referred to any surrogate parental role that the school played. Teachers according to the parents may not be conforming to some normative conception of how the school ought to be run, but this did not appear to be directly connected with any out-of-school activities. There would appear to be little corroboration of one of the strands of the decline thesis, that teachers were too busy acting

as surrogate parents to take control of the classroom situation by exercising an 'educational' authority. The school tended to be criticised for other reasons.

Table Two: *Parent's Perceptions of School Discipline, by Social Class.* (N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Supporter of School Disc. | 15 (62.5) | 6 (30) | 21 (48%) |
| Critic of School Disc. | 9 (37.5) | 14 (70) | 23 (52%) |
| Total | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Two was constructed from parents' responses to a series of questions on their ideas about authority and discipline in class. A supporter of school discipline was someone who was generally happy with the way their children related to their teachers and had few complaints about the ability of teachers to control their classes. A critic of school discipline was generally unhappy with the kinds of sanctions the teacher was able to draw on. Critics of school discipline tended to see the pupil/teacher relationship in terms of an excess of informality, a lack of respect and a general decline in the powers that teachers had over their pupils.

From Table Two working class parents tended to be much more critical of school discipline than middle class parents. The bureaucratic nature of the school came in for some criticism.

Complexity tended to be seen in terms of deferred punishment which parents argued defeated the whole purpose of the idea of punishment in school. Tom Hart, a slater, was clear in his assessment of school discipline.

I don't agree with them giving them an exercise to do four or five hours later, it should be done there and then.

The emphasis on immediacy was something Tom Hart expressed earlier in the interview when discussing his own disciplinary approach. When asked whether he ever discussed how he was going to discipline his children he replied

they're usually disciplined at the time. I do believe in that and no' disciplining them hours after. I'm a strict believer in disciplining them at the time.

George Deary, a sheet metal worker, made a similar claim in disparaging the system because of the unnecessary paperwork. This was argued to not only undercut the idea of discipline as an immediate remedy to classroom disorder, but undermined the ability of the teacher to assert any authority in situations when it was most needed.

To me if they're doing wrong and they're punished there and then for it that's it over and done with. You see this giving them lines to do, that's no' any punishment. They sit and laugh at you while they're doing it. When you take it to the teacher the teacher will tear it up in front of the pupil. Lines are really a joke. if you don't do them theyre doubled etc. Where is it going to end. It's a waste of time.

One alternative to "paper work" was the organising of a detention system whereby the teacher would recommend that a badly behaved pupil stay in school after normal hours for a predetermined period. In principle, parents thought that this was more effective than lines. For George Wilson his son was being punished because he was having to forego a favourite past-time.

They keep them in.... they finish at 12.30 on Fridays and if they misbehave they have to go back after lunch on Fridays for half an hour which I think is not a bad thing.. because Donald (his son) plays golf on a friday afternoon and he really feels it. So it's a good thing for him.

Yet in practice many parents were opposed to detention because it made it more difficult for parents to supervise their children. Detention tended to cause logistical problems for children who relied on the school bus. This was reflected in the school policy at St. Mary's which had a wide catchment area. Detention was not administered there because of the problems the children would have getting home safely after school hours. Bill Wilkins reflected many of the concerns outlined in the previous chapter over the uncivil society:

I dinnae agree with detention because of our situation. If he's late from school....he goes to his grannies and his grannie would worry...You're really feared for your kids at night, especially in the dark. There's a lot of crazies gaun' about. likes of when I was a kid we used to play to ten and eleven at night and our parents never worried because there was nothing to worry about.

There is an interesting irony here in that punishment designed to outlaw possible delinquency in school itself is outlawed because of the threat of delinquency outside of the school. The parent's concern for the child's safety provoked George Terry into saying that "detention probably punishes parents as well".

4. The Symbolic Role of the Belt

Most parents tended to evaluate authority in school in relation to what was for them the most important departure from their own experiences as pupils, the disappearance of corporal punishment. One of the most potent symbols of the change in the system was the disappearance of the belt. As can be seen from Table Three more than two thirds of the parents were able to give unequivocal opinions on

the status of corporal punishment. It is an area in general that evokes a great deal of emotional debate, particularly when tied to the role that corporal punishment should play in the home.

Table Three: *Parental Opinion on the Return of Corporal Punishment, by Social Class.* (N = 43)

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|----------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| For | 10 (42) | 16 (80) | 26 (59%) |
| For/Restricted Usage | 9 (37) | 1 (5) | 10 (23%) |
| Opposed | 5 (21) | 2 (10) | 7 (16%) |
| Unsure | - | 1 (5) | 1 (2%) |
| Total | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

The belt had two symbolic functions; it emphasised continuity or lack of continuity between the parent's own experiences in school and those of their children's. It also served to crystallise opinion on the extent to which the decline in authority within school was interpreted in negative terms. A caveat must be introduced here in that although we can see from Table Three that the majority of parents

were in favour of the idea of corporal punishment, one or two of these parents were less enthusiastic about its return. Interestingly, where the teachers in Chapter Three were in general opposed to the return of the belt but were more positive about its general utility, the parents were in general in favour of the return of the belt but had reservations about how it could be abused. George Deary was one parent who didn't want to see the return of corporal punishment despite the criticism offered earlier on the existing school sanctions. In principle he saw the belt as the most effective form of school discipline.

They all say spare the rod and spoil the child, but you can do as much wie' your tongue as you can wie a belt. There again discipline in the school, that's different. The old belt they hud in school was a great deterrent, but no' for teachers tae have a free for all. I think that would be the tendency now. Now it's away I wouldnae like to see it come back because I feel it would be abused now. If it came back, teachers have been abused so much in the past five or six years, I think it would be a free for all if they brought it back. They might just go over the top some teachers. There would be murders committed. At the same time it wis a great thing when it was there.

From Table Three we can see that a large majority of parents favoured the return of corporal punishment in some form. There were quite clear social class differences which to a certain extent corresponded to the differences in response made over the degree of support for discipline in school. Working class parents tended to be more critical of discipline in school now. They also tended to see the problem in terms of the decline of physical punishment and were more in favour of the return of the belt. Jean Robbie, a nurse, made the point that classroom control was now a much more difficult task. This point was further emphasised when discussing the advantages she had over the teachers in being able to administer a short, sharp, shock to her children.

I feel quite sorry for them actually (the teachers). It's aw' right them being at home and they're really bad you can give them a walloping, but at school you're no' allowed to touch any o' them now, because the law comes intae it. So if someone is really being quite nasty, I think it must be quite hard for them to keep their temper (JEAN ROBBIE).

The Whites further exemplified the working class position.

M.W.: What are your opinions on corporal punishment?

J.W.: They should never hae done away wie' it.

M.W.: Why do you say that?

J.W.: Well, it never done us any harm. If ye got the belt ye knew what ye got it fir...I dinnae feel the teachers have the same...they dinnae sort of have anything over the kids now. If they misbehaved well they goat the belt fir it and they knew whether they were being punished for misbehavin'. Half the time now they get detention they dinnae get it because the teachers dinnae turn up for it. That's no a punishment (JANICE WHITE).

Jane White drew on more modern sanctions as a way of emphasising the lack of punishment in class. Like the discussion in the previous chapter on the rationale behind parental sanctions, children had to be made to feel that they had done wrong. The belt was the most effective way of doing this. Her husband concurred but also associated the belt with a particular type of teacher/pupil relationship.

M.W.: What do you think of the belt?

J.W.: They should have kept that.

M.W.: Why?

J.W.: It never done me any harm. It made me think twice.. Well when I was at school if you didnae do your homework you got it, right? The next you minded that you had to do it. If you got a strict teacher. You got some of them, they only tickled you.

M.W.: Has it had an effect on discipline within the school?

J.W.: Oh Aye. I worked at Bellshill Academy for a year...Some of the things...the way kids talk to teachers in the corridors an' that. If he's a kindae softish teacher..I feel like getting hold of the laddie and saying you cannae talk to adults like that son. He wis informal but cheeky wie' it.. 'Aye that'll be right' kindae thing. If an apprentice said that to me he'd be taking a walk, ken, he'd be off the job, know wit a mean? So if she had the power to say let's have the belt, well I think it would have a wee bit of effect then (JOHN WHITE).

The belt was seen by those who advocated its return as an effective way of controlling the class. But it was also seen as a powerful instrument in maintaining a 'respectful' distance between teacher and pupil. This was touched on by John White. It was more explicitly brought out by one of the middle class parents who advocated the return of the belt. Evelyn Dobbie summed up the importance of the belt in this respect.

I don't see any harm in it (the belt). I had it when I was at school. It was a deterrent... They don't seem to have the same respect nowadays than even when we were at school. That's less than twenty years ago when I was at St. Mary's. When you were there you knew the difference between pupils and teachers. Pupils knew how to respect the importance of the teachers. Nowadays they talk to the teachers as if they were talking to a pal..They don't seem to be respectful at all. I can even see it at primary school, compared to how we behaved. I wouldn't go so far to say we were terrified, but you knew there was a limit. These kids seem to stretch the teachers beyond the limit sometimes. Teachers are absolutely powerless to instill any discipline.

An important characteristic of the "inner-directed" teacher is invoked here, the status difference between teacher and pupil. In the past the teacher had the authority to determine the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour through an adherence to the subject, with the presence of the belt as a powerful reminder of what would happen if anyone stepped out of line. The belt then was an important educational resource. The absence of the belt is associated with the decline in the teacher's authority in that teachers are no longer able to draw on the one sanction which helped them maintain their authority. The issue here is not so much classroom chaos but the

values of respect and deference. There is some implicit notion here that pupils will not learn if teachers are valued in the same way as peers. The emphasis here is more on the way children behave and the lack of power that teachers have to control them.

There was less correspondence between the figures for middle class parents in Tables Two and Three. Middle class parents tended to be more supportive of current school discipline whilst advocating the return of the old approach of belting pupils. This inconsistency was partially mitigated by their advocacy of a more restricted use of the belt. This reflected the idea that parents were not completely sold on the traditional parent/pupil relationship. Whereas some parents saw the restoration of the belt in its old form giving teachers a form of instant punishment, others invoked a counter image of the teacher as the strap wielding calvinist demon. From Table Three we can see that almost a half of the middle class parents favoured the conditional return of corporal punishment. Most of these parents had painful memories of teachers who had abused their power in class. For these parents it was the very idea of the belt which acted as a deterrent that attracted their support. Jim Short exemplified this position.

I had it a few times. I'm not against it, but with the teachers nowadays you get bad and good. It's good in that it's immediate but the major issue is who's giving the belt. That would be my main thing against it, the sadistic teacher.

Parents in this category emphasised the loss of potential which the teacher previously had to control the class quickly. Loss of power here was a question of the loss of an important deterrent within the school. Parents saw the threat of being sent to the headmaster for the belt as a much more potent form of the punishment than the habitual giving of the belt by the classroom teacher. This point was expressed by Ian Dobbie:

I think the head should still have a belt in his drawer. There was a real disgrace in being belted by the head. The belt stung like hell but the disgrace was worse.

Of the small minority of parents who completely rejected the belt, there was a feeling that the day of the strap wielding demon had gone. George Terry, a photographer, was unhappy with the physical excesses of some teachers, but his concern was that the belt was used in the past to obscure the teaching inadequacies of certain teachers.

It seems to be that these days teachers can't hide behind this sort of ritualistic punishment they used to get. They've got to actually get the kids' respect. It's very noticeable more and more nowadays teachers are earning respect. That's really it.

This point was also made by Ronald Bone, a computer manager.

They would have to take the class with them rather than standing up in front saying I am the teacher and you will listen to this they have to be more like the university lecturer who has to try and take the class with him, converse with them and be amongst them and chat to them rather than say the first person to speak will be in terrible trouble. They can't impose their authority by fear because they haven't got anything to back it up with.

Several parents offered unsolicited assessments of the changes that had taken place in the teacher/pupil relationship as a product of wider social change. Ian Davies was more philosophical in his assessment in the decline of teaching authority.

Because they may be seen as not having the same sort of sanctions, the draconian sanctions that existed previously, they may be perceived as having less authority. But all we might be saying there is that rather than getting six of the best they get one hundred and fifty lines. We also live in a less disciplinarian type society. So they have less power and parents have less power. I think it's a general descaling across society. It would be misleading to say that just about teachers.

Others were more specific in following this agnostic line. Ruby Bolton offered the assessment that adult expectations of the behaviour of children had radically altered. The quality of childhood had changed.

When asked whether teachers had lost any of their authority:

I dont know if they've got less authority. I think the kids are just more, you know, well when I was at school you had respect for your teacher you, were frightened of them. Nowadays the kids seem to be totally different, you know. They want to be heard, they make themselves heard, they must be noticed. So I think it's very hard for teachers nowadays.

Parents were more concerned with the pedagogic qualities a teacher ought to have. It is pretty clear from these assessments that the abolition of the belt plays a less central role in parents' explanations of the decline in authority. But there is nevertheless an association between moral decline and an absence of legitimate physical punishment (3).

5. Conclusion

One of the important themes that continued to appear throughout the parents' interviews, one also picked up through the teaching interviews, was the division of responsibility between the parents who 'brought up children' and teachers who 'educated' them. This was a generalised, common sensical notion invoked by parents time and time again in emphasising the importance of both teaching and parenting roles. But it was also a way of asserting the more influential role that parents had than the sources of moral and social support outside of the family, particularly in relation to discipline. I summed this up by using the phrase parental primacy. By drawing on this concept, parents appeared to contradict the idea put forward in the decline thesis that teachers had usurped their roles as parents. Interference from teachers did not appear to be a problem. Very few parents had experience of teachers offering them unsolicited advice on how to

'bring up' their children. Most of the contact parents had with the school served to emphasise the educational role of the teacher in helping their children acquire skills and qualifications.

By invoking parental primacy, parents were claiming that parents were causally responsible for indiscipline in school which accorded with the teaching assessment. Many parents argued that teachers were put in a difficult position in trying to teach a classroom full of indisciplined children where the cause of this indiscipline was located firmly within the home. Parents imputed a more practical disciplinary responsibility to teachers where they had to take action in controlling the class, but it was up to the parent to try and solve the problem of an indisciplined child in class.

If we turn to the discussions with parents over the nature of the pupil/teacher relationship there is an interesting change of emphasis in the way the responsibilities of teachers are defined. Parents here, particularly working class parents, argued that independently of parental primacy, teachers had a responsibility to intervene and assert an authority in class. Parents here tended to see classroom indiscipline as a consequence of a lack of authority being exercised in class by the teacher. A different picture of discipline in school emerges in discussions over the alleged decline of authority in class. Parents tended to place much more of an emphasis on discipline in class as an important moral function when discussing the changing nature of the adult/child relationship. Discipline within this context was seen more as a function in its own right. Discipline was here seen more as the means of exhibiting an authority over the pupil, which had an important social function in reinforcing the deference the pupil showed towards the teacher. Working class parents in these discussions tended to reflect one of the strands of the decline thesis, that

teachers had lost an educational authority in not being able to control the class.

Working class parents tended to be more critical of the loss of teaching authority than middle class parents. Yet it was the school rather than the individual teacher that was blamed for the decline in that the means by which discipline was enforced - the sanctions available to the teacher - were argued to have become more bureaucratised and therefore less immediate. This had the effect of weakening the extent to which teachers were able to respond quickly and efficiently to classroom disorder. For some parents teachers could not now assert their status in class because they could not now punish pupils.

To some degree this position was reinforced by working class parents in their advocacy of corporal punishment. The belt was seen as the one sanction that would help reinstall the position of the teacher in class by giving teachers back the ability to punish pupils. The belt was seen as a potent symbol of the distance that separated pupil from teacher.

Middle class teachers, on the other hand, were more cautious in their views over corporal punishment. Although forty two per cent advocated the return of the belt, thirty eight per cent were wary of giving the belt back to the front line teacher. Like the teachers, middle class parents were more interested in the utility of the belt, but had reservations about its possible indiscriminate use within the privacy of the teachers own classroom. If it was to be used at all it was to be used as a deterrent. Middle class parents wanted teachers to be able to threaten pupils who seriously misbehaved with the belt from the headmaster. This reflected more varied middle class opinion on discipline in school. Parents from both social classes were unanimous in the changes that had taken place in class. Teachers had become less

distant, more informal and much less concerned with status. Whereas working class parents tended to see this in negative terms as a decline in teaching authority, middle class parents tended to express one or a combination of two themes:

a) teachers had lost authority and this was no bad thing. Teachers were now more approachable and less likely to be able to use their status in masking a teaching deficiency.

b) Teachers had not necessarily lost authority. Teachers now had to adapt to wider social changes. From the parents there was a "general descaling across society" and the more assertive demands of children. Authority then was either an anachronism or took more managerial forms.

We might speculate here by saying that middle class parents were more concerned with how their children were progressing educationally. Any concern over the teacher's status thus had to be linked to how it would affect the quality of teaching. Unlike the decline thesis, middle class parents see no necessary relationship between the status a teacher has and the quality of their children's education. In comparison, working class parents tended to see the values of respect and deference as a more integral part of the school curriculum. Their idea of how their children was taught was more bound up with a hierarchical relationship between their children and the teacher that reflects these values.

6. Notes

1. Some parents referred to the parents charter of 1981 in Scotland. The majority of these parents thought 'parental choice' was less important given the desires of their children to follow their friends from primary to secondary school and the desire of parents to send their children to a school within the local catchment area. See MacBeth 1989: ch.5, for a summary of the 1891 Parents' Charter. We must also had here that although parents were legally entitled to educate their children at home, the conditoins and circumstances surrounding this position are so exceptional that very few parents would consider this a viable option. Certainly, no parent from the sample expressed this as an option.

2. See Chapter Four for more details.

3. The association stretched in some quarters to conflating capital punishment with the decline in schools. When asked about corporal punishment, George Wilson argued that it would be one way of getting rid of the hooligan element in school, and then offered the unsolicited "I think they should have the death penalty. Just the fact it's there."

CHAPTER SEVEN

SCHOOLING AND SEXTALK WITHIN THE HOME

1. Introduction

Introducing the subject of sex education here has three purposes. First, I see it very much as a testing ground for the decline thesis. Sex education, its proponents argue, ought to be the responsibility of parents. In Chapter One, I outlined the importance that Longford and Szasz placed on children being given some guidance on sexual matters. This sense of importance was shared with other authors. The Rapports paid particular attention to sexuality as a primary source of tension between parents and adolescent children. They argued that the development of the self is inextricably bound up with how adolescents perceive themselves as sexual beings which sharply contrasts with their parents own more repressive image of their adolescence (Rapports 1977: 299). This point seemed to have been anticipated by Davis a decade and a half earlier when he identified in parents an "extraordinary preoccupation with the sex lives of their adolescent off-spring" (Davis 1962: 350). He argued that this was because

our morality is sex-centred. The strength of the impulse which it seeks to control, the consequent stringency of its rules and the importance of reproductive institutions for society make sex so morally important that being moral and being sexually discreet are synonymous (ibid.).

In relation to sex education this 'preoccupation' is at the heart of the debates over how parents can best secure the moral well being of their children. Conservative thinkers like Thomas Szasz suggest that parents are best suited to take "care and control of the sexual life of (their) children" (Szasz 1980: 153). Sex education in these terms is a central concern of a parent's responsibility to 'bring up' the child. Proponents of the decline thesis argue that the systematic

introduction of a sex education curriculum in schools has taken away a parental right to introduce moral and sexual matters to their children. The question needs to be asked, are parents preoccupied with the sex lives of their children; is this preoccupation a result of the seeming tension between societal expectations that they and only they have the right to discuss sex with their children, and the professional and knowledgeable role of the teacher of sex education?

The theorists of decline acknowledged the difficulties that parents face in discussing sex with their children. In Chapter One I suggested that the theorists of decline saw this as a problem that could be more easily dealt with one parents were free to dictate the terms of the discussions on sex with their children. Other literature tends to see this problem as part of the normative structure. The problem could be seen as part of a contrary set of assumptions about discussing sex within the home. Farrell quotes Gagnon and Simon,

learning about sex in our society is learning about guilt; conversely learning how to manage sexuality constitutes learning how to manage guilt (Farrell 1978: 6).

Gagnon and Simon point to a sex taboo which is general to the whole society. Parsons in his analysis of sex within the family more specifically relates to a prohibition on incest (Parsons 1964). If we refer back to Harris's version of the decline thesis, a tension is articulated between a parental responsibility as a given moral absolute and a parent's ability to control and discipline their children. Sex education offers an interesting theoretical parallel in that the decline thesis suggests that parents have ultimate responsibility for discussing sexual matters with their children. Yet the decline thesis says little about how parents are simultaneously deprived of the ability to discharge this responsibility because of a set of countervailing values which come under the general rubric of a

sex taboo. There would appear to be a tension that parents need to deal with; between the normative idea that parents ought to have responsibility for the moral education of their children where their future sexual identities are crucial, and the generalised problem about talking about sex. If we focus more on the latter, criticisms of the school would seem to be misplaced. The skills and training of the guidance teacher may very well off-set the personal discomfort experienced by parents when discussing sex.

Finally, sex education is of interest to the argument because in Chapters Four and Six both parents and teachers emphasised the educational role of teachers in contradistinction to the more all encompassing 'socialising' role of the parent. The respondents here were reflecting the idealised division of responsibility put forward through the decline thesis. Two questions need to be asked here: given the moral importance attached to sex education as a parental responsibility, can the fact/value distinction implicit in sex education be grafted on to the 'bring them up/educate them' dichotomy? Or, does as the decline thesis suggests in somewhat ambiguous form, the school need to explicitly reflect a dominant set of morals about sexuality?

The first part deals with ideas teachers have about who ought to have responsibility for sex education and how this squares with their own experiences as professional sex educators. These assumptions are also constructed from responses teachers gave to questions around the importance of social class and gender in formulating opinion on the kinds of parents who have difficulties with sex education. Like the earlier discussion on indiscipline in class, we need to know whether teachers base their assessments of 'parental inadequacy' on considerations of class and gender.

Part Two looks at assumptions parents make about their own roles as sex educators in relation to sex education in school. Sex education is defined here in its more deliberate discursive forms which range from parents responding to queries made by their children and using these as the basis for discussions, to the more pedagogic approaches initiated by parents. This part is divided up into three sections. Section One highlights the importance given to sex education by the parents. This was articulated through accounts the parents gave of their own inadequate sex education in the 1950's and 60's.

In Chapter Five I discussed the extent to which parental authority could be associated with either a paternal or maternal responsibility. Section two assesses the extent to which we can talk about a collective responsibility for sex education within the home. Section Three looks at parental opinion on the role of the school with reference to difficulties parents encountered in discussing sexual matters with their children. The issues in Part Two will be dealt with in social class terms. Where appropriate, I assess the significance of social class in differentiating between the assumptions and practices of parents (1).

In Part Three I sidestep the established terms of the debate. I argue that despite difficulties parents have with the sex education as a formal practice, at an informal level parents are still able to keep track of their adolescent children's developing sexual identities. I identify everyday talk which contains implicit and explicit sexual codes that generate ideas and values. This allows parents to monitor and contribute to the sexual development of their children.

The final two parts bring the analysis up to date in that the particular form that the public discourse on sex takes places greater emphasis on the pedagogic roles of both parents and teachers. Discussions with both parents and teachers on the AIDS crisis allowed

me to assess two things: the extent to which parents thought there ought to be moral limits on what the school discusses, and the extent to which teachers had difficulties discussing sex in class.

2. Teaching Assumptions About Parental Responsibility

2.1 Whose Responsibility?

Almost all the guidance teachers had sex education responsibilities. They all stressed the importance of guidance and instruction in sexual matters. Dorothy Small, a teacher with thirty years experience, outlined the context within which sex education assumed such importance.

It (sex) is such a basic part of life. It's of tremendous concern to parents especially of girls. Relationships we make can make or mar our lives. Again coming back to society. There is so much in society... the people who are wanting the equality of the sexes. There are people who are maladjusted in some way and there seems to be... it might be statistical... there seems to be much more abduction, rape, violence against women... wife battering. Although you don't hear about it so much. Marriages not lasting as long as they used to. Children being left to pick up the pieces of their lives. So much now seems to hinge on the little act of sex. It leads to people having polarised views. People on the one hand saying of course they should know about contraception, responsibilities involved in relationships, shown what a condom is and told about abortion. On the other hand, there are those that say all this teaching of sex education just leads to promiscuity. It's telling them how to do things that they shouldn't know how to do.

Table One: *Who Ought to Have Responsibility for the Teaching of Sex Education?* (N = 20)

| | Nos of Teachers |
|------------|-----------------|
| Parents | 15 (75%) |
| School | - |
| Joint | 3 (15%) |
| Don't Know | 2 (10%) |
| Total | 20 |

It can be seen from the Table One that there is overwhelming support for the view that the responsibility for guiding children through this tricky moral and social terrain lies ultimately with the parents.

Dorothy Small again:

Given the right kind of parent and the right kind of relationship I would think that the parent was the ideal person to guide their children into the adult world as far as sex is concerned.

Dorothy Small is drawing on a normative notion of what parents ought to be doing. I want to concentrate for the moment on what this normative notion of parental responsibility might consist of. Although teachers claim a de facto responsibility for sex education, they do have a more detailed account about the de jure responsibility of parents. There would appear to be three dimensions to the concept of parental responsibility suggested here. First, parents take responsibility for encouraging questions on the subject of sex:

If a child is getting into difficulties with a sexual relationship where do they turn to? Unless the groundwork has been laid by the parent, they won't be able to turn to the parent (IAN HOWE).

This "groundwork" takes place before the children reach adolescence, which means it takes place before they meet guidance staff. Thus the teachers would expect parents to have said something to their children before they got involved in sex education as a more organised group activity outside of the domestic unit. The timing of sex education was crucial according to Norah Bowles.

It should be discussed at home when they are at primary school, especially with the girls. Parents should speak about it as long as the kids ask questions about it. I don't think you need to force it on them and say here are the facts of life. If they ask questions you give her straight answers. If you've got that kind of relationship developed early with your child then they'll ask you questions. If you haven't done this early enough, say from the age of five then they're not going to ask you.

Second, parents are to provide a minimum level of factual knowledge on sex. Interestingly, this contradicts a Weberian interpretation of sex education which would map the fact/value distinction on to the instrumental/affective axis. Thus according to the teachers, parents are not charged solely with the task of drawing moral boundaries around the 'physiological facts of life' which are provided by 'instrumentalist public agents' such as teachers. Teachers only invoked this model as a last resort. That is, in circumstances where parents had abdicated responsibility for sex education. Anne Smart invoked a more dynamic relationship between fact and value.

By the time they come to secondary school they should be well grounded in sex education. I think it is very much the parent's role rather than the teacher's role. I like to see myself as somebody who talks about the moral aspect of it, the emotional side rather than having to go through the actual facts of life. Having said that, growing up in the family is an implicitly moral thing and sex education comes through there. But I like to feel that when we're discussing generally certain aspects...you see a fifteen year old girl if she loves somebody should she go away with somebody etc.... girls being responsible for their own bodies that's the kind of thing I'm happy discussing. I'm not very happy telling a class of kids about sexual intercourse. I really feel that that's up to the parents.

Third, parents sustain a dialogue with their children on sexual matters throughout their childhood; a period which would include some input from the schools. In this situation it is much easier for teachers to work with parents. Mary James from the catholic school:

I think there should be a mixture of both parental and school involvement. It's all right parents teaching on their own but they do need the backing of the priest, the church and the school. Parents need support because for the kids what the parents say doesn't matter - they're old fashioned!

The teachers were sometimes able to offer explanations as to why they thought parents rather than teachers should take responsibility. Teachers would sometimes answer these questions with an air of incredulity - for them the answer was obvious. I asked Anne Smart why parents ought to take responsibility:

Because it's their children. They want their children to grow up to be responsible adults so....It's within the family unit.. they're growing up within the family. Maybe children are being born into the family. To me its a natural process. If there's another child, where did the baby come from? Obviously parents must adopt the moral side of it as well.

Ross Stewart was less accepting of the the abdication of parents here because their responsibility was seen as a natural one.

I feel one thing talking to my colleagues, it still astounds me that we still do sex education at the school that we have to do this in a world full of adults and people who bring children into the world. Parents should have responsibility. They've got a role in life. These people (parents) indulged in what we're talking to the kids about. They're the adults, they're responsible. They brought them into the world, they've got a responsibility. I think its almost criminal. It annoys me intensely as a guidance teacher I get a parent here and some of them show so little interest in their kids. They expect the school to do X, Y, and Z. I'm just astonished. Maybe people should be trained more diligently to be parents. The art of parenthood from some of the parents I've interviewed is sadly lacking.

The incredulity which almost verged on disgust, expressed here was not over the self-evident nature of the answer to my question - for Ross Stewart the question was a perfectly pertinent one. The incredulity was expressed over the complete lack of parental interest and effort.

2.2 Teachers' Assessments of Parents' Involvement

Teachers measured the extent to which parents took any responsibility by drawing on a set of normative obligations parents had towards sex education. This assessment was based to a large extent on how children behaved in sex education classes. In the previous section Ross Stewart implied that very few parents measured up to this ideal. He was asked whether children ever mentioned things they had heard from parents. He claimed that he often used to ask pupils whether they had ever discussed sex with their parents.

In general I sometimes say to a class, have any of your parents mentioned to you anything about sex? Any of them taken you aside and told you the birds and the bees? You'll get the heads all turning to see if some one has put a hand up. If one puts a hand up you might get two or three more following suit. But again you won't get them all honestly responding. I would say it's a fairly small percentage of pupils who have admitted to some parental sex education.

This approach was also used by Ian Howe who came to similar conclusions.

I don't think they talk to their parents about sex. I've been teaching this for over sixteen years and that has remained constant, an inability for a whole host of reasons to talk to their parents about sex. I asked a group of twenty whether they had discussed sex with their parents. Probably no more than twenty five per cent, mainly girls. Mainly related to menstruation.

Given the inhibiting nature of introductory classes in sex education teachers didn't always get an accurate reflection of parental involvement using this method. Teachers tended to be able to sense that pupils received little information and guidance on sexual matters

through the quality as well as the quantity of responses from children in class on a whole range of subjects on sex. In discussion with George Barry;

M.W.: Would you prefer that the children came into the classroom better informed?

G.B.: I think I would do if they came in with information from their parents, from people who are knowledgeable. a lot of them come in with information which is picked up on street corners or from their big brothers or sister which is usually complete rubbish.

The assumption here is that parents either give sensible information or none at all. Thus if pupils bring incorrect or unacceptable ideas into the classroom about sex, teachers tend to see take this as an indication of the power of more illegitimate sources of sex education which are located outside of the domestic unit.

The teachers offered some reasons for parental reticence to discuss sex with their children. A few teachers saw this as an indication of a more generalised level of parental inadequacy.

We have to remember that all parents are not all well adjusted and articulate enough. Therefore we have a responsibility within the school to make sure that our pupils leave school having been given the opportunity to hear and to discuss adult relations responsibly. We have a responsibility to make sure that they know about conception and contraception and the pitfalls and difficulties around that. Ideally thats part of the parents role but we've got to be aware that all parents aren't capable of playing that role and that we have to make sure that we fill that gap (DOROTHY SMALL).

Explanations revolved around the idea of a sex taboo which tended to be expressed by the teachers in terms of parental, and to a certain extent adolescent, embarrassment. Alice Tay expressed her own embarrassment in trying to introduce sex to her adolescent son.

All parents should teach their kids about sex but I can see that it's difficult. Morality rubs off. I don't think you need to vocalise it. They pick up standards... what's acceptable. They're living in a house where they pick these things up. They'll pick up attitudes without having to sit down and thrash them out. I've found it difficult to engage my own son in conversation. It's got to come naturally. Really its got to come from them. They've got to bring things up. A lot of parents find it embarrassing. A lot of the kids don't want to see their parents as sexual people. I think they can be a lot more open with an outsider.

Ian Dury had extensive ties with many of his pupils' parents through twenty three years of experience at the catholic school. As well as knowing many of his pupils on a personal basis he had also taught many of their parents:

I do think that children should know as much about sex as they possibly can. I know many people shy off from this - an awful lot of catholics are shocked when it's mentioned. It's something all children are fascinated by. They better have the right attitudes and the right information, they might as well get it from me as anybody else. But I'd prefer of course that parents do this, but parents don't do this. Mary was doing a thing a few weeks ago (another guidance teacher) when an outside agency comes in and does things with the girls. So I took all the boys. I told all the boys what the girls were away for and they all sat and listened while I went through the video the girls were seeing. I said really ideally, your parents should tell you. You should ask your parents. But I know that many of you feel that you couldn't ask your parents and your parents wouldn't want to be asked. So you can ask me or your own guidance teacher.

This was also expressed by George Barry;

They (parents) are embarrassed about it. They find it difficult to get in to, to make a start on the subject, to introduce the subject, to set time aside and talk about it. So I think this is what they would have to do. They would have to get some time where it would crop up on television or something like that. I don't think they're very happy bringing the subject up.

The teachers as I discussed earlier in Chapter Four were working with the products of the labours of others, no matter how inadequate they might have thought the results were. Most of the teachers were pragmatic enough to adjust their everyday working commitments to what

they thought parents had been doing with their children with regards to sex instruction.

Much of the current political and moral debate over the universalistic nature of the post war welfare system revolves around lack of differentiation between those who 'need' and those who don't 'need' material and educational support from the state (Friedman 1962; Levitas 1986; Mishra 1986). Whether or not the welfare state undermines the educative functions of parents who are quite capable of taking responsibility for the sex education of their children, teachers' do still see themselves as having a responsibility to teach sex education to all pupils (2). With the recent advent of AIDS (to be discussed later), teachers take very few chances when it comes to offering this support in the form of information and advice on sex. The assumptions teachers have about the role of parents here are always conditioned by this generalised assessment. Vivien Willis summed up this pragmatic approach best:

Sometimes parents have asked about what's in the sex education programme, not often though. I think they're quite happy. They don't want us to duck any issues because some of these pupils are going to leave at sixteen and this'll be the last enclosed area for discussion that everybody will be in, they're going out into the world and they're going to be bombarded with lots of media ideas, and lots of peer group ideas. They're not going to have a space, many of them, to think their ideas through. For some sex education is too soon that's the trouble. That's just one of these things. It's better its done than not at all.

2.3 The Importance of Class and Gender

From the teachers' point of view any de facto responsibility assumed by teachers would appear to be based ultimately on acutely moral and psychological criteria. From the following figures teachers didn't think that social class was an explanation of why some parents didn't discuss sex with their children.

Table Two: *The Extent to Which Social Class Features in Teachers' Perceptions of Sex Education Within the Home* (N = 20)

Social class had no significance : 13 (65%)

Working class children had more knowledge than middle class children : 5 (25%)

Middle class children had more knowledge than working class children : 2 (10%)

These figures are based on the impression that teachers had from their own experiences. What teachers were claiming here was that the kind of training they had received, the kinds of close contacts they had with the children in conducting classes and discussion groups on sex, and the kinds of values they brought to the teaching process didn't lead them to think that there was a systematic enough difference in quality and quantity of sex education taught and discussed in families along social class lines. Sixty five per cent of the teachers claimed that social class was not a significant factor. Of the minority that were able to assess the extent to which their pupils had received sex education in class terms, most argued that working class kids were more knowledgeable.

It may be that these children were more street wise and therefore more likely to pick up sex education outside of the home and the school. This may help explain the following statement by Anne Smart:

some of the ones from the poorer backgrounds had very strong views about things; very keen to make points about a woman's role or whatever. The better off ones were slightly more reserved in a sense in discussing it.

Yet teachers when giving reasons for why they thought working class children had more knowledge of sex mentioned the children's home circumstances. Ian Howe argued that

Working class children are more likely to have uncles or aunties or brothers or sisters who become parents at an earlier age. I think the young married relative will probably talk about looking after a young child.

In contrast, teachers tended to recognise differences *within* families along more familiar sociological categories. In looking more specifically at which parent and which child was having particular difficulties the teachers tended to focus on both father and son. This was brought out partially in the discussion on the significance of social class in that several teachers stated that it was sex rather than class which was far more significant, but also more substantively when asked about gender differences. The behaviour and general dispositions of girls were seen to be qualitatively different from the that of the boys in the sex education classes. This difference in behaviour would seem to have some of its roots in the kinds of ways boys and girl were treated as future sexual beings within the home by their parents. This was brought out in the interviews with George Barry and Ruth Smith when asked about the role they thought parents played in general:

I think a lot of them are doing very little... giving the youngsters little information, especially the boys. I think the girls are a wee bit more aware now. I think mainly their mums do talk to them about it. But I would say in the main boys don't get a lot. With girls there is occasion. It's often there for them to speak and get some information. They could be doing a lot more, but in many cases they just don't bother (GEORGE BARRY).

The "occasion" that George Barry was referring to was the more marked physiological developments of girls than boys. Ruth Smith was asked whether she thought her pupils had received sex education from their parents:

Some of them seem to, but a lot of them don't. They get embarrassed. From what the kids say the boys might talk to their dads a bit but I don't think they discuss an awful lot with each other. There's not an awful lot of communication between them. The girls might say a bit more to their mums about certain things periods etc. but probably not actual sex (RUTH SMITH).

3. The Parental Perspective

3.1 Repeating the Mistakes of the Past?

The early adolescent experiences of parents was an important component of the normative expectations of parents. This was particularly important with respect to sex education. Most of the parents were aged between thirty six and forty four. They were therefore growing up in the late 50s and early to mid 60s; adolescence falling for many during the period before the so called permissive era. Parents when asked to go back 20 and 30 years parents were often only able to give very impressionistic answers (3). Yet the figures from Tables Three and Four would appear to accord with the figures in Allen's study in that parents held their own sex education in "very low esteem" (Allen 1987: 107).

Table Three: *Parents' Own Sex Education, by Sex of Parent (N = 44)*

| | Father | Mother | Total |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Had Sex Education from Parents | 1 (5) | 2 (9) | 3 (7%) |
| Had Sex Education from School | 2 (9) | 3 (14) | 5 (11%) |
| No Sex Education | 17 (77) | 12 (54) | 29 (66%) |
| No Response | 2 (9) | 5 (23) | 7 (16%) |
| Total | 22 | 22 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets without percentage marks refer to percentages within the social class category.

Table Four: *Parents' Own Sex Education, by Social Class (N = 44)*

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|----------|
| Had Sex Education From Parents | 3 (12.5) | - | 3 (7%) |
| Had Sex Education From School | 3 (12.5) | 2 (10) | 5 (11%) |
| No Sex Education | 14 (58) | 15 (75) | 29 (66%) |
| No Response | 4 (17) | 3 (15) | 7 (16%) |
| Total | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets without percentage marks refer to percentages within the sex category.

Only eight parents had received any sex education; a majority had received it at school. Jean Robbie, one of the parents who had had some sex education:

Going back to when I was younger we didn't talk about it in your home. Your mum and dad didn't tell you about anything. At school you were shown films but you didn't actually talk to your mum and dad about it. There was always a sort of barrier when talking about sex.

There were those like the Ropers who were critical of the form sex education took when they were at school. Alice Roper emphasised the problems the school had in dealing with the physiological aspects of sex. For her sex education was

taught very badly..a mixed class...with an embarrassed teacher showing slides and photographs. I picked up half of it wrong just the mechanics. More a biology lesson rather than sex education. It was just uncomfortable for everybody involved.

This was reiterated by her husband:

My own sex education at school just wasn't worth having...usually a fifty year old spinster or batchelor. It was all the birds and bees, pollen and fish and eggs and things like that.

Iris Alison rather humourously describes the lengths to which other authority figures went to ensure that sex was discussed only in the most discreet and privatised of circumstances.

I went to a convent school and we had a book. My kids all laugh at this. It was in a sealed brown envelope and it was to be given to your parents for their approval first.

In Table Four slightly more middle class than working parents received some sex education and a higher proportion of working class parents had received no sex education from their parents. There was also an interesting gender difference. Within the group of parents who had received no sex education, five fathers claimed to have been influenced by external sources. These fathers tended to invoke the public sphere in vaguer, more evocative terms. Three of the fathers defined their sources around the peer group with the "gents toilets" (George Wilson), "behind the gym" (Richard Stone) and "dirty magazines" (Bob Alison), figuring as focal points for their "education". For John White and Dave Deary sex education was something they picked up "through life". Whereas more fathers drew on the

public sphere, mothers tended to draw on what they expected from within the private sphere of the family. That is, what they picked up from the outside was negatively valued in relation to what they thought their parents should have been doing. If we return to Elizabeth Johnston:

I didn't get any at school. I noticed that my mother had a little cutting from something that she was going to send away for, a book or something, but she never did. I was reading other girls' books at school that their mothers had given them.

Rather than direct her criticism at maternal neglect in general, it was her own mother who was seen as wanting. A similar point was made by Betty Deary, but her criticism was directed at mothers in general.

I know for a fact my mother never ever spoke tae me about anything. It was the most gruelling thing when you had tae listen tae other people. I think it's up tae the parents really to try and explain things like that. I went out into the wide world completely ignorant about these things...I always maintained our two kids would never go through life the way I did.

Again, allowing for the small numbers, we may be able to discern a pattern here by drawing on notions of the public and private spheres as gendered categories. Mothers were critical about what they felt their own mothers ought to have done. Whilst a minority of fathers were more ambivalent about their own past, simultaneously glorifying a rugged individualism of finding out for yourself in a world outside the formal confines of the home whilst stressing the importance of the formal sources for their own children (4).

What was surprising about discussions on sex education was the fact that information on parents' own sex education was offered sometimes in an unsolicited fashion. Parents would invoke their own experiences as a means of comparison with what their children were receiving or ought to be receiving. Parents would contextualise the

demands they made sometimes on themselves, but usually on the schools, by referring to their own inadequate sex education. This inadequacy was an important factor in shaping the ideas they had about how their own children should be treated as future sexual beings.

This point can also be brought out if we refer to the limitations of these accounts in using them to deduce anything about the parents' sexual lives. Sex education was experienced by most of the parents as adolescents as a significant social and moral lacuna. Yet there would appear to be little manifest evidence of this as a social problem for parents as sexual beings. Nothing was said about how their lack of sex education had affected their sex lives or their treatment of each other as sexual beings. Accounts of their pasts as children, rather than acting as indicators of their own "inadequate socialisation", were used as reference points as to how their own their own children ought to be treated. Parents seemed to be saying that there was more necessity now for their children to know about sex in a more informed manner. Parents were expressing the view that children were growing up in a more 'public' environment. Their world views were being shaped less by what was specific to their particular families and what was said by their own parents. This was exemplified by the Dobbies. Evelyn Dobbie talked in more general terms about the past experiences of parents:

Depends on how you've been brought up yourself. A lot of people have been brought up where it's forgotten about. You end up getting no sex education and finding about it yourself. You end up growing up totally ignorant. I mean why have your kids totally ignorant to all these things going on. We dinnae just volunteer the information. You dinnae just come out and say it. If they ask questions you answer them as best as you can and make sure there's no embarrassment. We don't want them to be really shy about these things.

This was corroborated by her husband John who saw sex education as part of a much broader process of the opening up of the public arena to children.

J.D.: My parents and Evelyn's parents were embarrassed. But we just bring it up in natural conversation.

M.W.: What about the moral aspects?

J.D.: AIDS and abortion are things that are talked about on the television, on the news and in the papers. Michael and Alison both read the newspaper and see the headlines. They're taught to do that in school though, which is something we were never encouraged to do.

The point being made here is that children are being encouraged now to discuss issues that were previously seen as only adult pursuits: the discussion of politics, morality and sexuality. Whereas the decline thesis might take this as just another indicator of the power of social and moral frames of reference outside of the family over the "natural" authority of parents, the parents interviewed were more positive about the consequences for their children in terms of the high value placed on the commodity of knowledge. In Chapter Five we saw how parents perceived their children as morally and socially naive - unprepared for the 'uncivil society'. Evidence from parental perception about their children's sexuality would appear to contradict this. In relation to sexual issues parents tended to see their children as being more mature; much more worldly about sex than they were at their age. George Terry brought out this point when comparing his own sex education with that of his three teenage sons: "sex was never mentioned when I was at school. They all know far more than I knew at their ages." This adolescent worldliness was also a prominent feature in discussions with Will Barnes:

I think you've got to give credit to the kids now. They are not that naive. They know what's going on socially. They are very aware, especially now. When he was younger he (his son) embarrassed us a couple of times because of the knowledge he had. You tended to think that at the age he was at the time he wouldn't have that knowledge. But I think that was because we were a bit backward in that respect. We didn't know that when we were younger.

3.2 Sex Education as a Collective Parental Responsibility?

Parents often talked about parenting as a collective responsibility in relation to sex education. Yet it became clear as the interviews progressed that parents were articulating important differences in the way they and their spouses attempted to discuss sex with their children. The analysis at this point is restricted to the more formal aspects of sex education. Tables Five and Six give a fairly crude shape to the concept of collective responsibility in that parents are able to state more or less who does what with regards to the formal aspects of sex. The lines drawn between the categories are by no means mutually exclusive in that although the mother only category meant that mothers had a major role in sex education within the home, on occasions father did become more involved. Table Five suggests that social class might not tell us much about the way that parents divide up the responsibility for broaching the subject of sex with their children. But Table Five does suggest that social class might be important in differentiating between households where sex was discussed and households where sex wasn't discussed.

Table Five: *Division of Responsibility for Sex Education Within the Home, by social class. (N = 22)*

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Joint | 6 | 5 | 11 (50%) |
| Mother only | 6 | 2 | 8 (36%) |
| No Sex Education | - | 3 | 3 (14%) |
| Total | 12 | 10 | 22 |

If we turn to Table Six the three working class couples who hadn't attempted to discuss sex were parents with boys only. Now the figures are insufficient to make the connection between numbers of parents who had discussed sex with their children and the gender of their children, but some parents did articulate important differences between how their sons and daughters would be treated. At one end of the spectrum of parental opinion was Dave Deary who stated that

sex isn't something that's discussed much here. I think my wife will tell the girl. Girls need more enlightenment than boys. Well that's ma opinion, anyway. There again, I'm getting back to the old fashioned ways.

Dave Deary's views were atypical in that he was the only parent who completely rejected "modern methods" of child rearing. But parents were articulating some sense of difference between how boys and girls ought to be treated with regards to sex education. This difference was discussed by Christine Terry who had discussed sex with her three sons. When asked to comment on the controversial nature of sex education she said: "It isn't anything I worry about. I might if I had girls". When asked why, "I don't know really. I suppose girls get into more scrapes than boys".

More generally, this difference was brought out through the more gendered pattern of parenting. Table Six appears to reflect the findings in the Allen study. Teenagers and parents were asked which parent tended to discuss sex within the home. The teenagers claimed that 72 per cent of fathers and 43 per cent of mothers said nothing. This of course wasn't corroborated by the parents (we would expect there to be some difference in response between the recipient and donor of sex education) with 37 per cent of fathers and 21 per cent of mothers claiming not to have discussed sex (Allen 1987: 84-87).

Table Six: *Division of Responsibility for Sex Education Within the Home, by sex of children. (N = 22)*

| Sex of Children | Both | Girls Only | Boys Only | Total |
|------------------|------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Joint | 5 | - | 3 | 8 (36%) |
| Mother only | 5 | 3 | 3 | 11 (50%) |
| No Sex Education | - | - | 3 | 3 (14%) |
| Total | 10 | 3 | 9 | 22 |

The important point to be made here is that although there was no consensus as to whether both boys and girls required the same level of sex education, mothers had more responsibility. Mothers took exclusive responsibility for their daughters. Both parents saw this as natural given the greater insights and experiences of mothers in the development of female sexuality. Mother/daughter relationships here

take on an acutely privatised form with fathers having little or no direct input. This was brought out by Ian Davies:

There have been no open discussions about sex. I'm not privy to the extent of her discussions with my wife. From time to time my wife will go up and say good night and they'll get into discussions. I hear about a discussion having taken place but not all the ins and outs.

The exclusion from the mother/daughter relationship didn't always mean that the father had no power or influence over matters. Farrell argued that fathers backed up their spouses 'responsibility for sex education by "allowing mothers to 'do' most of the informing" (Farrell 1978: 99). Tom Mctear was able to keep an eye on his daughter indirectly through his wife who would frequently report back to him:

Personally, I would find it difficult to start the conversation, just actually broaching the subject. But fortunately I have a good wife in that respect. She finds out all these wee things and talks them through especially with the lassie. She'll come to me and she'll say, she'll tell me what's going on. That way I'm no' in the dark. I know what's happening. It doesn't need me sticking my nose in. At least I can watch and see what's happening.

If we turn to the sex education of sons there isn't an equivalent degree of paternal responsibility. Although there was some expectation that fathers would be more involved, there certainly wasn't the same close knit intimacy between fathers and sons which excluded mothers. For some mothers there was an acute awareness of what their husbands ought to be doing. In five out of the eleven relevant households with sons there was a tension between the fathers' reticence to take their sons aside and their wives inevitable acceptance of this through having to take responsibility which they felt ought to lie with the father. June Wilkins although taking responsibility was still actively pushing her husband to do more:

I must admit when even when he's talking to me, I'd much rather he asked his dad. You know, but he won't for some reason. He usually comes to me. There are some things that are best coming from a man. He's a big boy now. I find it slightly embarrassing, I must admit.

Kathleen Adams was in the process of discussing the moral aspects with her daughter and was hoping that her husband would take responsibility for her son. In conversation with Kathleen she said

It's about time Jim was told and my husband says he's going to do it. He hasn't got round to it yet but he's got a book to help him.

Although he claimed to do "an awful lot of pontificating from (his) soap box", George Adams was having problems in getting round to discussing sex directly with his son. There was a strong desire on the part of both the Adams that Jim would be taken aside within the next few months and there was frequent mention of the book that George had bought for the job.

In summary we might say that fathers had most difficulty in reconciling their parental obligations with sustained and consistent action which forced mothers to play the major and in some cases sole role as sex educator within the home.

3.3 Normative Responsibility for Sex Education

I have stressed the importance that parents placed on their children receiving an adequate level of knowledge on sexual matters when reflecting on their own inadequate sex education. I have also discussed how this normative idea about their children's sex education was put into practice as a maternal responsibility within the home. In this section I discuss the importance of sex education by directly addressing the decline thesis's notion that teachers undermine a

parent's capacity to introduce sex education within the home. Table Seven suggests that parents do not share the same fears as the decline theorists concerns over sex education in school.

Table Seven: *Parental Opinion on Who Ought to Have Ultimate Responsibility for Sex Education, by Social Class.* (N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | TOTAL |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| PARENTS | 3 (12.5) | 2 (10) | 5 (11%) |
| SCHOOL | 5 (21) | 8 (40) | 13 (30%) |
| JOINT | 16 (66.5) | 10 (50) | 26 (59%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Only four parents asserted that parents had more responsibility than the school. Alice Roper was an exceptional case in arguing for sole responsibility:

M.W.: What do you think about the school discussing sex in terms of health and moral issues?

A.R.: Well, I think it's the parents' job to do that rather than the schools. I really think, especially moral attitudes. It has to come from the parents. You have to show them moral values.

M.W.: Some people are quite happy with the school taking a big part in this.

A.R.: No I think it's up to the parents to teach right from wrong, what's acceptable and what's unacceptable.

M.W.: Why parents?

A.R.: Who knows their children best? Also they've got to live in the real world, not an ideal version which they get from school.

Almost all parents asserted the importance of the role of the school in discussing sex with their children. In contrast to the teachers, Table Seven shows that a thirty percent of all parents interviewed thought that teachers were best placed to take responsibility for sex education. This at least in part reflects the embarrassment parents felt in discussing sex with their children as shown in Table Eight.

Table Eight: *Parents Who Expressed Embarrassment When Discussing Sex With Their Children, by Social Class. (N = 44)*

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Embarrassed | 8 (33) | 9 (45) | 17 (39%) |
| Not Embarrassed | 16 (67) | 11 (55) | 25 (61%) |

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

There is an interesting social class difference, with a larger number of working class parents than middle class parents embarrassed when discussing sex education. Although the figures are not large, this does seem to correspond to the figures in Table Four where fewer

working class couples than middle class couples had attempted to discuss sex with their children. Tables Four and Seven do address different issues. Table Four gives figures on the numbers of parents who don't attempt sex education: Table Five looks at the numbers who have difficulties once the subject has been broached. But we might speculate that middle class parents may have more confidence in their abilities which allows them to both introduce the subject and successfully carry it off.

These figures do not appear to be corroborated by the numbers of parents who preferred the school to the parent (5). Where parents were more likely to be embarrassed and more likely to avoid the subject, we might expect them to leave sex education to the school. The figures in Table Seven do not contradict this hypothesis but there is not enough to support it. Table Seven would appear to point to a more the general trend, that a majority of parents from both social classes thought teachers were at least as well qualified as they were. Teachers had two important functions in this respect. First, the teacher played a crucial outside role as *the stranger*, in introducing sex to their children. Parents lacked the psychological and moral space within which to discuss sex with their children. Parents were implicitly drawing on some notion of a sex taboo in invoking the role of the stranger. This directly conflicts with more conservative opinion on the advantages that the privacy of the home has for discussing issues such as sex. For the parents the teacher plays a legitimate role as an outsider in resolving the tension which revolves around biological and affectual closeness and sexual distance which were discussed earlier. When asked whether she ever discussed sex with her children Betty Deary, a part time cleaner, replied

Billy has never once really said anything...with Jean I've spoken a wee bit, but Billy gets awfy embarrassed. He gets embarrassed when you try tae explain what they were saying on the television.

When asked if she had ever discussed the moral side of sex she replied, "with Billy I feel my face goes as red as his". Parental embarrassment was more specifically referred to by David Roper, an unemployed sales assistant. When asked if there was anything he was uncomfortable discussing with his children:

I imagine I'm fairly typical because I break out in a cold sweat when I have to talk about sex. Probably my upbringing. Sex was never discussed in my house with my parents.

Frank Rodgers, a social worker:

M.W.: Do you find sex difficult to discuss?

F.R.: There are easier subjects to discuss, things we'd prefer the teacher to bring up.

M.W.: Why?

F.R.: Because of the subject...people are embarrassed, naturally shy etc. I think if I taught it I'd die of embarrassment.

As well as parents feeling uncomfortable with sex education, they also felt unqualified. The teacher was not only someone that the parents trusted, but someone who was trained to discuss sex education. The teacher acted as an *informed* legitimate stranger. Although a class difference doesn't hold in terms of the numbers of parents who advocated school, in discussing the technical advantages the school has over the parent, there is an interesting difference in response. This can be exemplified by comparing two discussions. The first was with John White, a plumber:

M.W.: How do you feel about the school teaching sex education?

J.W.: All right. It's better that they listen to a stranger telling them than us. We've no books on it or anything so I suppose they can put it in better words and the kids will understand it better than what we could.

M.W.: What about the moral aspects?

J.W.: Aye it's better for the school to talk about it.

M.W.: Why?

J.W.: It is easier for strangers to discuss it than parents. They'll no' take it all in and maybe laugh with parents. Whereas wie' strangers they'll take, it in better.

M.W.: Some people say it's no business of the school's?

J.W.: No, no. I'm a great believer in everyone to their own trade. The teacher knows better about teaching than a do. If I knew as much as a teacher I'd be a teacher, and no' a plumber, know what I mean.

M.W.: A recent thing they're saying in some quarters is that it was the parents' responsibility then and it still should be.

J.W.: I'm quite happy that the school does it because I think with the school doing it and you've got them all as a unit, twenty or thirty o' them au the gither, they could treat it more openly. They may get a wee snigger at the start of it in the first or second lesson, but it'll be treated as a subject after that and they can all sit and discuss it quite seriously I'd imagine.

Although broadly in agreement with this approach George Terry, a photographer with the Civil Service, offered a slightly different version:

M.W.: Have you ever thought about taking your sons aside?

G.T.: Frequently but I just don't know where to start.

M.W.: You're having difficulties?

G.T.: I would find it difficult because I wouldn't want to confuse them. If I started I'd probably give them too much information. This is becoming less of a problem the older they get. When they are sort of nine I'd probably give them too much. For this reason I'd certainly prefer the school. They're better at it than I am. They've got more knowledge as to what children can absorb.

M.W.: What about the moral aspects?

G.T. A great minefield. I'm quite happy for it to be dealt with in the school. I don't want to sound complacent but it's an area where I think the school is better.

George Terry's response This class difference is interesting because although these examples would suggest that there is some credence to the claim that the middle class has greater access to a body of technical knowledge, this does not automatically mean that middle class parents can apply this knowledge with any great confidence. George Terry acknowledges the superior skills of the school in that teachers knew how to handle this knowledge. Teachers knew better than parents *when* to introduce information on sex to children. Both middle class and working class parents invoked the bring them up/educate them dichotomy here again, with sex education being defined in mainly educational terms. But working class parents defer to the school because of their general educational expertise. Middle class parents on the other hand see the school as having more specific knowledgeable advantages than themselves. In these terms teachers have more *specific* educational advantages over parents.

If we refer back to Table Seven a majority of parents, (59%), mentioned a division of responsibility between the home and the school (6). Although more middle class than working class parents invoked a form of division of responsibility, there wasn't any social class difference in the ways that teachers and parents ought to be working together. Some parents found it easier to tackle the questions they were asked by their children after the school had been involved. Like the previous section, parents here were expressing a confidence in the schools in their ability to introduce sex formally. For many parents this meant minimising the possibility that their children would be asking inappropriate questions or making comments picked up outside of

the home and the school. In complete contradiction to the claims made by the teachers about parents setting the agenda, parents were asserting that the school was laying the factual ground upon which parents would be able to confidently express their opinions on sex. When she was asked about the extent to which she had discussed sex with her children June Wilkins, a part-time cleaner, replied:

I think it would probably be easier after the school's done it because then again they (the children) come and ask you the questions... I mean teachers are just as qualified as me to teach it.

Sex can be introduced in a professional manner within the classroom. This would provoke the child into initiating the discussion at home as the knowledge picked up in the classroom is brought home to the parents for confirmation and clarification. Jim Short, a self employed builder, indicated the problem of parental embarrassment in relation to the factual aspects of sex education but qualified the role of the school:

I think they have to discuss it now. (the school) It's always going to be an embarrassing thing for parents. I think the schools can put it over in a very formal way. The school is the place for it, yes.

When asked about the moral dimension he summed this up by saying; "teaching morals is the parents' job, sex should be taught by the schools." Sex education for Jim Short was the province of the schools because sex education was defined in more factual terms.

The Davies, through their strongly held christian convictions, were both concerned about the kinds of values that were being discussed within the school. Ian Davies had

no fundamental objections. The physical side has got to be discussed ethically and morally. Not so much in the vague sense of just man and woman, but husband and wife. I believe the nature of the relationship should be discussed.

Doubts about whether the school would be able to do this were

expressed by Alice Davies.

I'm happy with them dealing with the physiological aspect. I don't know in this day and age that I expect them to take a moral stance because I know that my moral stance is not going to be the same as somebody else. So how can the school take an absolute straight moral stance.

The Davies were pointing to one of the difficulties that runs through much of the debates on sex education; the necessity of talking about the physiological side of sex in a moral way which implicitly means the school taking on board some of the moral responsibilities that traditionally parents are supposed to have had. Ian Davies again:

In terms of acquiring and imparting knowledge, yes because that's their business. From an ethical point of view they probably have to put across a standard moral line. To what extent they can modify that to include their own viewpoints, I don't know. It's an area that up until you asked me about it I'm not one hundred per cent sure where the obligation lies in terms of how they direct the ethical issue.

4. The Normalisation of Sex Talk

4.1 The Routine

In the previous section I was concerned with the more formal aspects of sex talk within the home, which tended to be seen by parents as problematic. Although many parents wanted to discuss sex with their children in a more formal manner, parents tended to see these encounters as dramatised moments which would create a great deal of embarrassment. In this section I outline situations described by parents where sex is discussed in an informal routine way with their children. Following this I look at instances where parents try and contain discussions on sex within the family routine by *normalising* situations where children confront parents with questions that are potentially embarrassing (7).

Where parents had difficulty broaching the subject directly, sex was quite often discussed in relation to a third party. Parents might openly discuss a friend or relative who is having an affair or getting divorced. This was something that would sometimes crop up in daily discussion around the meal table. Parents' attitudes on extra-marital sex, divorce and teenage pregnancies will work their way through these discussions. The Wilsons both expressed difficulties when discussing sex with their children. Both confessed that they were embarrassed and ill equipped to deal with their children's developing sexual awareness. Their daughter, Lynn, was seventeen and had just met her first boyfriend. He was starting to spend more time in Lynn's room listening to records. Whereas her father tended to worry about the length of time they spent together on their own, her mother stated that she "totally trusted them". She spoke with confidence about this trust:

the children know what you're talking about even within the family. George (her husband) has a brother who's had one wife then a girlfriend. His wife had a baby and this other girlfriend he's going about with with now has got a baby. It's something we talk quite openly about. The kids'll discuss it and they'll say 'what away for uncle davy to carry on. He must have kids all over the place!' It's more that sort of thing....they obviously know they're sleeping together.. you just come to an understanding that we know know that they know the facts of life. They have quite strong views which they must have got from us at some stage. I'm quite happy that they've all got standards (JEAN WILSON).

Routine contacts with other adults outside of the home can also serve as opportunities for parents to discuss with children sexual behaviour and morality. This was brought out by Christine Terry who mentioned homosexual friends who regularly visited the house.

I haven't said anything that I've shown prejudice about. A couple of chaps that regularly come round to see us are practising homosexuals. But I never say to the kids this is...he's a homosexual. It's like religion you hope that they sort things out for themselves and don't make any wrong decisions. I wouldn't say you mustn't.

Christine Terry took a fairly agnostic line when it came to morality. Her main worry was that the school would push any form of moral approach. She was particularly opposed to religious education.

I've always assumed that these things had a balance in school. Someone had raised the point that that the anti-abortion group had brought out a video that they were circulating in the schools and they weren't giving the other point of view. They did concede that you had to give a balanced view in sex education but to get round this they introduced it in religious education. I would certainly raise it with the school if they brought it in that way... A child has got to make up its own mind on certain things. I mean they could grow up absolutely anti-abortion and I'd be perfectly happy with that but they should have a balance so that they can decide these things for themselves.

For Christine Terry sex talk was more fully integrated in family life because to treat it as something out of the ordinary was to heighten a particular moral approach which would inhibit her sons development of their moral autonomy. The fact that they had gay friends made it easier to talk about sexual morality within the home.

A more complex version of Christine Terry's approach was offered by Elisabeth Johnston. She saw sex education in terms of the fact/value distinction. The physiological aspects were easier to talk about:

by the time John was eight he knew everything from amniocentesis (she had just given birth to Philip) to everything about childbirth. There was nothing biological he didn't know. It came as no surprise, there was nothing surprising for him.

Elizabeth had used her pregnancy - the birth of her second son - to discuss the physiology of sex with her eldest son. The birth of the second son was defined very much from within; very much a "family matter". Elizabeth was able confidently to draw on experiences that were defined uniquely in her own terms. At the same time she used her own experiences as an example of the general: what Elizabeth was going through was what all mothers were going through.

Although the physiology of sex was an integral part of the family routine, difficulties were encountered in talking about sex within a moral or ethical context. Unlike situations where parents would rather downplay more deliberate discussions about sex within the home, the moral and social aspects of sex were deliberately dramatised. When asked whether she'd ever discussed the moral aspects she paused for a long time and said

I don't think we'd talk about that particularly... it has to, you know...obviously when we talk about marriages breaking up and responsibility for it or no responsibility for it.... we've had a lot of friends who's marriages have split up. We've spoken about it, and John's watched the other children go through it.. in a joking way I think we've talked about how we got married or you know our relations before we got married....kidding in public in front of John about our different relations before and John loves these stories.

The break up of many of Elizabeth's friends relationships were defined almost in terms of their inevitability. According to Elizabeth "divorce is very common these days". This created anxieties for Elizabeth because there was a question mark over how her children experience these break ups. Elizabeth's worry was how her own children perceived these breakdowns. There were two aspects to this: how John experiences his own friends reactions to their parents breaking up, and more importantly here, how John interprets this in terms of his own parents' relationship.

These tensions made Elizabeth uneasy in trying to explain how sex works socially. Parents here cannot simply adopt the same intimate tones of the natural in talking about sex in terms of relationships. For parents there can be nothing routine about parental break down. This creates an obvious difficulty for parents in broaching the subject of their friends' break ups. Parents need to emphasis the exceptional nature of divorce in situations where divorce is happening to more of their friends.

In some instances these tensions can be offset by humour. The situation can at least be partially redeemed by drawing on stories about their sex lives before they were married. The curiosity of the child can be channelled through stories about the parents before they were married. When asked whether John ever talked about sex Elizabeth replied:

Yes, a little. I think sometimes he's testing us out here...but also.. he's very forward with telling us his new jokes. I think it's also his way of asking us what this means or telling us 'look what I know now!'

Jokes were his way of introducing the subject of sex into conversation. This clearly, corresponds to his parents' tentative approach to the problem of sex as a moral subject for discussion.

Humour featured in other households as a response to public awareness of the AIDS issue. Families were subject to detailed information on the homosexual and heterosexual act, emphasis being placed on the use of contraceptives as a necessary precursor to sexual intercourse. A few of the parents mentioned the influence of the campaign through the almost institutionalised usage of the word 'condom'. Their children were starting to use the word in conversation with other members of the family. Alice White laughed at how easily this had been accepted within the family.

They get a lot from the television. Ian is at the awkward age, he's sniggery about it the now. But Jim seems tae be taking it in. His dad and my brother, the things that they are saying to them, to Jim the now, they're slagging him about condoms all the rest o' it. The jokes that are passed between them sort o' makes it easier for them now. Then Jim will come hame wie' a new joke for his dad and he'll say 'dinnae you let your mother hear that!

Jim's father was able to offset some of the tension felt when the subject of sex arose because he was able to joke with his son about a "serious" socio-moral matter. When going out to the school dance he would joke with his son by reminding him "no' tae forget his condom".

4.2 Television and the Normalisation of Sex

The television was another medium through which sex was discussed in the home. This is reflected in recurrent public debates over the power and influence of the media. Questions of taste, choice and censorship have been expressed which highlight the distinctions made between "external" and "internal" censorship of what children watch on television. Should there be state censorship or should parents be left to determine what their children watch? (8). In my sample parents appeared to oscillate between these two positions. Sex on television can embarrass both parents and children. For the parents part of the problem is feeling that they have a duty to respond to what they see as unsuitable or risky programmes. Some parents will actively censor what their children watch by anticipating programmes that are thought to be too sexually explicit. Others will invoke their own version of the nine o'clock threshold as a way of screening out potentially unacceptable programmes. Jim Short outlines his views on this:

I'm an old fashioned father and I don't like it (sex) being mentioned. I don't watch much television but if I see something risky coming on I tend to chase them.

The television though can be used more positively by parents in trying to normalise sex within the home. Parents deliberately avoided heightening sex as something special and treated it like any other subject which comes up in conversation. For George Terry this was case of:

trying not to make anything out to be a big deal. You can have very explicit programmes on television and they just watch and sometimes they ask what's going on and we tell them.

Ian Davies recounted how he coped when his eleven year old son asked him what rape was after having picked up the word from the television.

I said something like it's a very serious assault on a woman by a man. I thought at that stage that would be enough. I tend to give the answer that would suffice under the circumstances. But I also think you need to answer their questions as casually as possible. That is, not to sound too.. heighten it. Make it as casual and normal as possible.

For Frank Rodgers the unexpected sex scene on television and the aspects of the sexual vocabulary questioned by their children, although still embarrassing, are occasions for discussion and clarification (9). When I asked him if sex ever cropped up in normal discussion he said

Oh yes, last night for instance. They mentioned the word 'impotent' on television. They asked what was that? We told them. It just came up in natural conversation.

5. Sex Education and the Education System

In discussing how parents coped with the problem of sex education there appeared to be little contact between the school and the home. A majority of parents were quite happy to leave sex education to the school. Very few parents discussed sex education classes with the

teachers and there were very few sustained efforts by the school to involve the parents.

There is as yet no legislation which allows parents to withdraw their children from sex education classes. In 1986 a group of Tory M.P.s narrowly failed to introduce an amendment to the 1986 Education Act which would have given parents a veto over sex education. All of the schools taught sex as part of a broader social or health curriculum. All of the schools made some form of formal statement about their children receiving a social or health education curriculum as a compulsory, unassessed aspect of their child's education. Yet the formal documentation sent to parents at the beginning of the academic year rarely gave more detailed information on what social education consisted of. Sex education was not explicitly referred to. The one exception was the catholic school where it was mentioned as an aspect of social and religious education (10). A form of parental veto existed in this school because it included the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education in its catholic form. (There was a small minority of non-catholic children). Thus in theory some non-catholic children could miss out on the sex education that was taught within the religious curriculum. In the other schools parents tended to be informed by letter that sex education was going to be discussed as part of social education, but the burden was very much on the parents to question the legitimacy of this. Parents were never actively encouraged to exclude their children from sex education classes.

The parental veto was a very thorny issue for teachers. This was because it highlighted a tension between the moral and social ideals of the school and professional practice. In the previous chapter the teachers stressed the importance of sex education. The parent was seen as the ideal and "natural" source of information and guidance on

sexual matters. But the degree to which parents neglected this area of their responsibility and the extent to which parents supported the role of the school, was a sufficient reason for the school to take responsibility for sex education. Any attempt to undermine this approach was interpreted by the schools as intrusion. As I have argued, in relation to parent power this was a more general problem. The problem was not that parents actively undermined the professional *raison d'être* of teachers, it was that a veto had to provide the means whereby parents had the power to intervene in the education process. This was summed up by Ruth Smith. She was asked whether she ever discussed sex education with parents.

If they bring it up I would. (the parents) A while back we used to send a letter allowing them to opt out. But now we don't do that. I think there's information in the school book that they all get and they're all told that sex education is taught. If they want to opt out I dare say they can but we don't make it easy for them.

This wasn't simply a question of the school setting up barriers of "social enclosure". There was an important teaching reason for discouraging parents from opting out. Ruth Smith continued:

I think if a child has to sit in another room when sex education is being taught the other children know. It puts that child in a difficult situation.

The emphasis was on the problems this created for children that were excluded from normal classroom activities. From the child's point of view there is probably a degree of stigmatising going on, a process which guidance teachers were only too aware of and eager to avoid.

Although a parental veto would have the potential for creating problems for teachers, in practice very few parents tried to withdraw their children from sex education classes. This was obvious given the high priority parents placed on the role that the school played in

the previous chapter. In relation to what the teachers said about the parents they dealt with, There was some variation according to school. Borestone Community High had a high proportion of Asian children (17%). Parents, particularly of muslim girls were more likely to insist that other arrangements be made. In the other schools most of the teachers interviewed were usually able to mention one or two cases where parents had objected to sex education on religious or cultural grounds, but these were always recounted as exceptions. This was borne out by the parents interviewed. None of them ever brought up the subject of sex education at parents meetings.

Where contact was more consistently and more formally made by the school was in the area of health education, particularly over the AIDS issue. All schools were directed by the education department to discuss in detail the dangers of the AIDS virus. Head teachers had to write to every parent informing them of the nature and extent of the information that was being discussed in the classrooms. Some of the schools also invited parents to view the video that was going to be shown to their children in class. Thus the AIDS issue seemed to have galvanised the schools into taking more action as regards to informing parents.

6. AIDS and the Moral Limits of Schooling

The foregoing discussion on the activities of parents and teachers suggests that there were few problems with the school taking responsibility for sex education. In this section I want to suggest that some parents and teachers encountered problems when AIDS was discussed in school. In principle the parents had no objection to AIDS being discussed within the classroom. Yet anxiety was expressed by a few parents over the extent to which their children were privy to the

details of how the virus might be contracted. A minority of parents here tended to conflate the role of the school with the role of the media in developing a public discourse on AIDS. There were two strands to this concern; the universal nature of the campaign and the extent to which a moral dimension was being discussed. The Mctears both expressed the first anxiety.

We are in an age now where kids have got to know about these things. It's just how much they talk about it and how much they put it over. Some kids are ready to accept, some kids aren't even although they are the same ages. I don't think they take these things into consideration... (TOM MCTEAR).

This view was corroborated by his wife:

I suppose they have to know. I cannae see Gordon, he's only thirteen. I know its happening; you lift a newspaper, you see it on television. I honestly think there's too much talk about sex...I don't really think Gordon's going to think about getting AIDS or Paula for that matter. My older son I did say to him one night 'do you realise you have to take precautions these days? ' (ANNE MCTEAR).

There is the articulation again here of the ambivalence over the status of the adolescent. Both parents here had very fixed views about how and when their children become autonomous sexual beings. The Mctears were representative of a minority of parents who didn't want their children exposed to the "nitty gritty" of the homosexual act in the classroom.

Several other parents with religious convictions were more concerned about the moral stance the school was going to take and whether this conflicted with their own position. Again there was no objection to AIDS being discussed, but the advice that some of their children were given went against their own moral convictions. When asked whether he thought it was a good thing that things like AIDS and abortion were discussed in school, Will Barnes, a Catholic parent replied

Yes, but it depends on what they are putting across. If it went against my beliefs I'd be against it in the school and I'd like to be made aware of it.

Kathleen Adams, a Baptist, was more specific about what she thought was unacceptable:

I saw one of the school's videos on AIDS. They said if you're going to have sex use a condom. I disagreed with them saying that. They should have encouraged them not to have sex in the first place. Schools should really push the no sex angle. But I do accept that there are stupid pupils where it's probably necessary to talk about condoms. For me sex equals marriage.

Parents here echo the ambiguity concerns expressed through the Longford Report. On the one hand, there is the fear that factual discussions encourage adolescents to experiment. On the other hand, there is a concern that the school doesn't go far enough in placing the sexual act within a traditional moral context. But these concerns need to be set against the more general feeling among the parents that the school was the most appropriate place to discuss AIDS. An extensive campaign conducted through the media was having a considerable impact on the schools sex education curriculum. Television drew on the famous and the knowledgeable through advertising and discussion in putting across explicit messages about how AIDS could be avoided. There was a general recognition throughout the schools that the AIDS situation warranted a considered and immediate reaction. The school was able to present itself as a professionally competent teaching establishment to the parents. We have seen earlier in the chapter that this was only confirming what parents already thought about the school - that it was the most appropriate place for the dissemination of information on sex. Thus rather than seeing the sex education in school as a symptom of a more general arena of public amorality the school was seen as the safest place to discuss sex.

Most of the parents had received letters and leaflets from the school on what was going to be discussed. When discussing the immediacy of the problem Frank Rodgers stated that

it needs to be touched on.. I know in a lot of homes it's just not discussed. At least in school they get the facts and they get guidance.

This was echoed by John Dobbie when asked whether the school should be discussing things like AIDS and abortion he answered

Yes, it's a good thing. There might be some kids whose parents never bother to discuss these things. It'll definitely benefit them and won't do the others any harm. There might be things that we haven't covered. They might be able to help us in that matter. I cannae see it being harmful.

In turning very briefly to how teachers conducted themselves, like the parents some teachers experienced a certain amount of embarrassment. Questions on AIDS were useful here for two reasons; it was an area which tended to crystallise these difficulties. They allowed teachers to talk more freely about problems in general associated with the teaching of sex education, Ross Stewart felt that male teachers were at a disadvantage discussing sex with female pupils (11).

I don't know if I'm more sensitive to the way girls react because I'm a male teacher. I try and think that I'm professional enough to do my job, but I still have inhibitions. For example with a group of boys I'll more readily use all the names that are used for a penis. Whereas I find myself a little bit inhibited about saying 'right girls, the vagina. Now tell me what are all the names? It's easier when it's all boys together.

There were similar problems for the two female guidance teachers at Stenhouse. For Ruth Smith

Vocabulary can be a problem. I'm not very happy with swear words I have to say, but apart from that I'm okay. Sometimes I ask them what sort of words they use. One of the techniques recommended was to brainstorm at the beginning and use all the words. Stick them all up on the board and get it out of the way. I couldn't quite bring myself to do that.

In Norah Bowles's case

In biology It was quite easy, Its in biological terms. I'm quite comfortable with them. I tend not to go red. Sometimes you get a few giggles but not always because they have to try and remember it all. I wasn't too comfortable with social education which I taught for the first time. It became a more personal thing. Not using biological terms. The children wanted to know the nitty gritty. I questioned the class and I was asking myself what have I let myself in for? I tend to go red very easily. It's a thing I never manage to control. I wasn't comfortable with the slang words for the genitalia.

The problems were most acutely felt at St. Mary's, over the issue of AIDS The guidance staff and management were experiencing similar problems to the "religious" parents. All teachers interviewed from this school stressed the importance of discussing morality within the context of the Catholic doctrine. Bill Short, the assistant head, was asked about discussion on AIDS within the school:

Catholic teaching in that area is quite clear. The church sees it going against nature. It's a natural product of intercourse within a loving marriage. Homosexuality in that context is simply an abberation. We can be sympathetic to homosexuals who feel that way... are attracted to their own sex but the activity is not acceptable.

Concerns here were more related to their own religious beliefs and the more generalised expectations that a catholic school couldn't be seen to condone contraception no matter how rationally defensible the campaign was. Because there was little pressure from within the school to include it within the sex education curriculum this wasn't seen as a problem for the teachers. They simply didn't discuss AIDS. Mary James became very angry when the subject of AIDS was brought up:

We were just suddenly issued with a package which I only saw for the first time last term. I hadn't had time to look at it. I took it along to a class and started on it and I was really disgusted. I took it back to the A.H.T. (assistant head) and said I am not prepared to dish that out to the children. I felt it was just putting ideas into the children's heads on homosexuality, explicitly detailing how to go about it. To me that is putting ideas into children's heads. Some of the children had never heard of such a thing. It was quite disgusting telling them how to use condoms, telling them what homosexuals do. I don't think there's any need for children to be bombarded with this stuff at this age. I refused to teach it. I don't feel competent to dish that out.

Finally, teachers sometimes had to face the problem of challenges to their authority from what Liz Sim called "breakaway groups". Pupils could on occasion exploit the position of the teacher by testing the teacher out. As we have discussed in the previous section the different spatial environments can have some impact on how the child will behave towards a figure in authority. As we saw earlier in the chapter the intimate and affective relationship the child has with the parent is inhibiting for both parties. But where the authority figure is in a physical minority the potential for exploitation of the authority figure is greater. The embarrassment of the child can be submerged within the group leaving teachers in a position where only their embarrassment is manifest.

Willing not to be embarrassed, that's the main thing. Teenagers being teenagers, they'll try and embarrass you because it's a way of handling their own embarrassment. Whenever the subject comes up there's usually some joke or smutty comment....they'll project their own embarrassment on to somebody else. You have to be totally unembarrassable or pretend to be.

We can see from what several teachers have said about the actual practice of teaching sex education within the classroom that sex is not a subject that can be readily transformed into a subject that can be taught with a great deal of professionalism. Most teachers at the end of the day are able to overcome the various problems associated

with "talking about sex". In one sense, particularly where a school is bound by a particularly strong moral code or ethos, the introduction of certain sexual issues, that is, the very mention of these issues can quite easily be interpreted as departing from what can be safely contained within certain moral parameters. The AIDS issue seems to serve as one example of this. In another sense the AIDS issue acted as useful medium through which teachers were able to gauge levels of awareness and opinion on sexual morality. Dorothy Small introduced AIDS to a group fifteen year olds and was surprised at their lack of knowledge.

In the fourth year we were talking about homosexuality. The kids had no real idea what this was. Some of the kids were genuinely upset about the practice of homosexuality. I wondered then whether I should be doing this or let somebody else.

Vivien Willis was asked whether she found sex education more difficult because of the AIDS issue;

No. it's made it easier. From the point of view of discussion. People are aware of the facts. You don't have to teach so many facts nowadays.

Interestingly these statements seem to contradict each other. but they do serve to emphasise the way teachers can measure levels of knowledge about sexual matters. Even more interesting were the connections that some of the teachers were able to make about the level of understanding within the classroom and the kinds of verbal symbols that circulated within the household. Vivien Willis continued

I've noticed that they use the word celibacy which I wouldn't have expected children to know the meaning of. It's been picked up from parents. The idea that no sex before marriage or no sex until a stable relationship is very much more to the fore now. AIDS has had the spin off of a lot of discussion on morality and probably a lot more discussion with parents on morality because it's in the living room now, on television. Parents have been helped to talk more openly with their children.

7. Conclusion

Critics of sex education suggest that the school has taken away a primary moral responsibility of parents. In this chapter I have demonstrated that parents do not concur with this thesis. Parents tended to see the school as an important resource to be drawn on in the difficult task of ensuring that their children are aware of the factual and moral dimensions of sex. A significant minority of parents, of whom a majority were working class, saw sex education as part of their children's education in much the same terms as any other subject. Parents here felt less qualified to discuss sex with their children. For middle class parents in this group, the problem was one of timing. They felt confident with the content of sex education but didn't know when to apply it. Implicitly, middle class parents tended to be aware of a developmental framework within which the school taught sex education. Parents here saw sex education as a much more sophisticated process of contextualising the biological facts of sex in ethical terms as children moved through the age grading structure. Middle class parents thus tended to express reservations about intervening within this educational process because they had insufficient professional experience.

Over half of the parents, of which a majority were middle class, tended to invoke the division of responsibility for sex education along the lines of the fact/value distinction. Parents here tended to prefer teachers to introduce the physiology of sex. Parents would then be able to respond to what their children had heard in class. Sometimes this meant parents corroborating what was learnt in class. On other occasions parents invoked the 'educate them/bring them up' dichotomy in the form of the fact/value division with parents placing greater emphasis on the moral aspects of sex.

Although parents were less enthusiastic about taking responsibility for sex education, they all acknowledged its importance. This was brought out by parents when asked about their own adolescent experiences of sex education. A majority had had no sex education and of those who had received some, there was an almost unanimous condemnation of its quality. In a period where sexuality is high on the political and social agenda parents tended to assert their child's access to sex education as a right, as a precondition of growing up.

The importance placed by parents on sex education was also reflected in the attempts parents made to introduce it. In Chapter Four although mothers tended to take a major role in dealing with disciplinary matters, responsibility for disciplining the children was not simply imputed to mothers. In some households fathers played an important disciplinary role. With respect to sex education was much more of a maternal responsibility. To a certain extent this was dictated by the sex of the child. Fathers avoided any discussions with their daughters - this was left up to mothers. Fathers had more involvement with sons, but mothers more than fathers felt under pressure to say something.

A subtext to the critique of sex education, and to some extent the decline thesis, is that the *right* moral values would be transmitted to children by parents within the home ensuring that sex would be discussed within a context of monogamy and heterosexuality. Although a few parents placed moral limits on what the school ought to be discussing, within the context of mounting public concern over AIDS, parents felt that children should know the risks associated with AIDS. Parents were unable to control the information that their children picked up through the media. By contrast they expressed

confidence in the school's ability to guide their children through the moral maze of issues which AIDS generated.

If we turn to the teaching perspective, teachers were committed to ensuring that their pupils were given a minimum understanding of the more factual aspects of sex whilst creating an environment within which pupils were able to bring up personal and moral problems about sex. Teachers did not claim to be guided by considerations of social class and gender in the way they dealt with sex education lessons. Teachers tended to err on the side of too much information. This may have had the effect of duplicating ideas that children had already picked up from their parents but in the main the teachers felt that this would affect only a minority of pupils. Teachers worked on the basis that very few children will have been given the 'right' information prior to entering a sex education class at the age of twelve or thirteen.

Despite the role that the school played in sex education, teachers strongly advocated that parents ought to have responsibility for sex education. Teachers expressed many of the views of the critics of sex education in their invokation of the 'natural' skills that parents had. Whereas parents preferred that the school introduces sex, the teachers argued that parents ought to set a moral agenda by introducing sex before it is discussed in school. Ideally then, a majority of guidance teachers anticipated that by the time they had been introduced to the children, that is, by the time they had reached secondary school age, they would know the basic 'facts of life'. Given that teachers had expressed very strong views about their educational responsibilities in previous chapters, it was often very difficult to know why teachers preferred parents to *teach* sex education. Some teachers defined sex education in less educational terms by invoking the advantages parents had in being 'naturally' responsible for their

children's social and moral welfare. Sex education also appeared to be one area of the curriculum which was not easily translated into normal classroom practice. A few teachers claimed that sex was the one aspect of the curriculum that they were not trained to teach. The explanation of teaching problems may be simpler - teachers suffered from the same problems of embarrassment as the parents.

It would be wrong to deduce from this assessment that parents were not skilled in ensuring that their children had some information on sex and reflected some of the values they held on sexual morality. Allen's study focused specifically on the more pedagogic aspects of sexuality. She concluded that

in the majority of cases, both parents and teenagers say that no conversation or discussion on particular topics (on sex education) took place (Allen 1987: 87).

I would argue that this wasn't the case with the parents interviewed for this study. In spite of the fact that the great majority were quite happy with the school taking responsibility, many parents were able to recount situations where they were able to cope with their children's awkward questions by adopting various coping mechanisms. At the formal level there were considerable problems with sex education. But the majority of parents, albeit a gendered majority, attempted to discuss sexual matters with their adolescent children. More significantly, by drawing on the more routine levels of parenting I identified the informal modes of communication which parents used to keep abreast of their children's developing sexualities. This also allowed parents to check that their children were picking up the 'right' values.

8. Notes

1. Social class is notably absent from the most recent and comprehensive study of sex education, Isobel Allen's Education in Sex and Personal Relationships 1987.
2. See Dorothy Small's comment on p.10.
3. There is an interesting discussion about the limitations on relying solely on "first recollections of 'learning' about reproduction" in Farrell 1978: 54-55). 4. In the Allen study 63% of mothers were dissatisfied with their own sex education whereas only 41% of the fathers expressed the same opinion. This would appear to correspond with the gender difference (Allen 1987: 107).
5. Although Farrell has no class data on the numbers of parents who had problems discussing sex with their children, she argued that there was some class difference in the advocacy of the school. Slightly more working class parents than middle class parents favoured the school introducing the topic (Farrell 1978: 87).
6. The figure was 60 per cent in the Allen study (Allen 1987: 87).
7. Giddens offers an interesting distinction between life events which disrupt the routine, such as births and deaths, and critical situations which are almost exclusively contingent. Whereas the former can still be conceptualised as part of the routine in that life events are not necessarily unpredictable, the latter are situations that social actors face which are so unpredictable that they lead to social disorientation. Sexual pedagogy is an interesting case in that although parents are continually predicting when they will bring up the subject of sex (the procrastination), there is also a sense of social disorientation in the singular nature of the interaction (Giddens 1984: 60-61).
8. References to this debate ran through *the Times* editorial columns in the mid 1980's. For some examples: 28.11.85; 21.2.86; 22.10.86.
9. Refer to p.26.
10. Sex education here is defined as an "extension of the religious and social education programme" in St. Mary's :Parent Guide, 1988: 11.
11. This wasn't a problem at St. Mary's as classes were single sex and female teachers had sole responsibility for the girls.

CONCLUSION

1. Parental Authority and Adolescence

The propositions at the end of Chapter One can now be readdressed in the light of the evidence produced. Propositions One and Two focused on the loss of parental authority. The decline thesis suggested that parents find it almost impossible now to underwrite their children's moral and social well being. The decline thesis doesn't tell us at what stage of the parent/child life cycle these experiences are most marked. I argued in Chapter One that the decline theorists drew on two incompatible social theories of childhood development: an individualistic model which emphasised the withering away of parental authority and a more traditional model which emphasised parenthood in what Bernstein termed 'positional' terms where the positions of both parents and children remain in place indefinitely (Bernstein 1971: 143-169). We might take into account the importance of the parent/child life cycle by accepting the conventional notion that adolescence is a period of parent/child conflict. Yet the conflicting social theories underpinning the decline thesis, would appear to confuse rather than clarify the ways that parents are able to exercise an authority over their adolescent children. As it is, this thesis as well as asking the question whether parents still exercise an authority over their children, implicitly asks whether it is appropriate for parents to exercise an authority over their adolescent children. In many ways the two questions are related. Parents were able to say that they exercised an authority over their adolescent children *because* they felt it was appropriate. The data suggests that,

although parents acknowledged the changing status of their children, parents were not yet willing to accept that their adolescent children could be left to their own devices.

The extent to which parents felt confident in their abilities to circumscribe their children's moral and social well being depended on the contexts within which parents felt they had to take action. In the case study, a majority of parents felt more confident when handling their children's misbehaviour within the home. Several parents expressed an ability to assert themselves through verbal pressure. Others drew on more material sanctions which they knew to be effective in punishing their children. These material sanctions excluded the use of force which was no longer deemed an appropriate punishment for adolescent children. Yet a few parents reacted against their children's behaviour by slapping them. These were usually recounted by the parents involved as isolated and exceptional situations where they had reacted to something their children had done. Although this didn't appear to have the same agenda setting function as 'smacking', utilised when the children were younger, we could interpret these incidents as parents trying to exercise an authority within a context where their authority is being legitimately challenged.

Problems that parents had with adolescence were more evident in relation to how their children behaved outside the home. A few parents worried about whether those outside the home would think that their children's bad behaviour was a reflection of the quality of their parenting skills. These parents appeared to offer some evidence of Proposition One that parents had little sense of their children developing an independence vis-a-vis themselves. But more parents expressed the worry about how their children would cope in a public sphere that had become more dangerous since their day. Parents here

invoked the outside world as an uncivil society, a terrain that their adloescent children weren't able to negotiate on their own.

We would expect these concerns to be more pointedly expressed in relation to the role of the school. The decline thesis sets the school up as a conflicting locus of moral and social frame of reference for children. Harris in particular, argued that parents tended to see the school as part of a wider public arena of values and practices that intrude upon their parental responsibilities. But most parents saw the school as an important means of supervising their adolescent children's public lives. Parents' worries about the outside world had forced them to adopt several means of circumscribing their children's behaviour by keeping tabs on them, by supervising their children's spare time. But they also relied heavily on the school's ability to keep a firm watch over their children's moral and physical integrity.

2. Parents and Teachers: A Division of Responsibility

A second issue was over the involvement of the school in the alleged decline of parental authority. Propositions Four and Five stated that teachers rather than parents were now argued to be a more significant moral and social frame of reference for children. Given that the guidance structure within school had a panopticon effect in the way it was able to potentially underwrite all aspects of the child's well being, it was inevitable that guidance teachers would adopt a more out-of-school approach in dealing with problems that might be defined by non guidance teachers in more strictly educational terms. Given that guidance teachers had a central role within this framework, the bring them up/educate them division of responsibility was more an ideal to aim for rather than a working model that approximated to the day to day reality of school life.

Guidance teachers then had the potential to act as effective parental surrogates. Yet guidance teachers were very aware of this potential. For many of their responsibilities included setting up contracts and giving advice to parents, and in more serious cases, linking up with outside welfare agencies. In effect, teachers dictated a moral and social agenda to a few parents by reminding them of their responsibilities; by encouraging them to exercise an authority over their children. In other situations teachers tended to see themselves as taking over from parents. Yet, there remained a paradox. There was a sense in which guidance teachers' relations with parents, reinforced their separateness from the parents. The teachers still saw themselves as professionals who were acting in the best interests of the pupils. Teachers still claimed to work within an educational framework in carrying out their guidance duties.

The parent/teacher division was also reinforced by teachers where the intervention was perceived to come from the opposite direction. The teachers claimed that their educational responsibilities from time to time were challenged by 'over ambitious' parents. The category of 'problem parent' was then not just the parent who seemed to have lost any sense of her own responsibility, it was generated through situations where parents claimed to know more about their children's well being than the teachers.

A third issue was set out in Proposition Six: an extrapolated causal link between the out-of-school ethos in schools - the surrogate parental role of the individual teacher - and the teacher's loss of educational authority in class. This was not borne out by the parents for the simple reason that only a few parents were able to recount situations where the teacher had tried to assume any of their responsibilities. In discussing the role that the school played in relation to their own responsibilities, parents tended to affirm the

distinction between teachers who had a responsibility to educate their children and parents who brought them up. Parents from both social classes had a strong sense that these spheres of influence remained relatively intact. This tended to contradict the decline thesis's view that parental authority had been undermined by teachers.

3. Parental Give and Take and Teaching Authority

If we turn to a second omission from the decline thesis - the lack of analysis of different types of parents - this study addresses difference in parental practice and perception along social class lines. Class was significant in discussions that parents had over the loss of authority in school. The value that working class parents placed on school discipline was dependent on the context of the discussion. Parents at one level appeared to be tapping into the decline thesis when discussing the role of the teacher in class. Although they did not make the connection between a loss of teaching authority and an increase in parental surrogacy, working class parents did acknowledge the loss of authority in class. This was linked to ideas parents had about the teacher's loss of control in class. Discipline and control were used interchangeably here. Both were linked to the values of deference and respect. Discipline ought to serve the dual purpose of being an immediate remedy to classroom disorder, and an important means of reasserting the status of the teacher. Yet when discussing discipline in terms of the division of responsibility between parents and teachers, discipline had a secondary status as a classroom function. Discipline in this context was primarily a parental affair.

If we compare this view of classroom discipline with what working class parents in the case study said about their own approaches, some parents emphasised a level of consistency across the home and the classroom by defining discipline as a system of immediate sanctions. Yet there is an interesting reversal of the moralise/educate dichotomy which underlies the division of responsibility between parents and teachers. The idea of bringing up children encompasses a wide range of parenting activities. Parents implicitly counterposed this with a much more circumscribed range of teaching functions. For parents this appeared to make it easier for teachers to discipline their children. Without a hint of resentment, George Terry seemed to sum up this feeling among the parents.

I hope it's very noticeable with my three (sons) that if a teacher says something to them they believe it, they trust it and do it. They feel obliged.. they tend to listen to teachers much more than they listen to parents. I've no doubt other parents would say the same thing.

There was a sense here then that this ease was defined in terms of a directness of approach and clarity of relationship between teacher and pupil which didn't exist between parent and child. Although working class parents had a strong sense of their role as primary socialisers, they also implicitly identified a degree of give and take within the family, which had crept into the classrooms making it more difficult for teachers to exercise authority. One of the ironies of Lasch's 'haven in a heartless world' was that by defining the home as a retreat from the rigours of the outside world, by defining the family as a private locus, he was implicitly sanctioning the home as a space where love took precedence over discipline; where work discipline could be relaxed, in sum where authority relations were more negotiable. Parents seemed to reflect this in saying that where deference ought to characterise the child's disposition in

school, at home there is a degree of emotional latitude between parent and child which makes any disciplinary code more elastic; more open to negotiation.

Some of this elasticity can be explained in terms of the child contending with two authority figures within the home. The various permutations of the parental dynamic identified in Chapter Five hopefully put paid to the two notions which run through Proposition Three: the idea of the 'absent father' and the view that mothers are either too weak or over dominant in imposing their views on their children. We can then say that whereas the pupil normally contends with one authority figure in class, she has to contend with two authority figures within the home. The parent/child relationship is then a more complex *nexus* of relations where there is always potential for parental inconsistency and disagreement, and as was commented on by the teachers, where there is room for children to exploit potential parental differences.

Much of this give and take is also characteristic of the middle class families in the case study. But whereas working class parents tended to accentuate differences between parents and teachers in terms of the degrees of permissive that could be found in both types of relationships, middle class parents tended to minimise the extent to which teachers had a more rigid and formalised relationship with their children. There was much more of a range of opinion on the quality of teacher/pupil relations here. Middle class parents were less inclined to criticise the changes that had taken place in the classroom. Whereas working class parents tended to identify the loss of ritualistic punishment and 'positional' difference between pupil and teacher, middle class parents identified benefits in the way teachers and pupils moved towards an almost collegiate type of relationship.

Parents here offered their children's educational advancement as an important rationale. Although middle class parents expressed some concern about the ability of the teacher to sanction the pupil, as exemplified through the favouring of the return of the belt, they appeared to be less preoccupied with the social and moral benefits that might be gained through the reassertion of the old pupil/teacher relationship.

We might speculate here. Middle class parents appeared to be more pragmatic about how their children were educated. The important thing for parents here was that they were educated. This speculation is strengthened if we refer back to Chapter Five and the concerns that parents had of their children's behaviour in school. Whereas more working class parents than middle class parents in the case study worried about their children's behaviour in terms of how children ought to behave in class, more middle class than working class parents tended to link behaviour to how children were getting on with their schoolwork. What middle class parents seem to be suggesting here is that the educational well being of their children is not necessarily a consequence of teachers imposing an authority in class. This would seem to accord with the ideas discussed in Chapter Three that teachers adopt a variety of styles and approaches in setting an agenda in class. Whereas the decline thesis links control in class with the exercise of an educational authority, a significant minority of teachers suggested that a more relational approach, which underplayed the formal powers a teacher had in class, was just as effective in keeping control.

Teaching and parental data on discipline in school then suggests two models of classroom teaching. One approximates to the decline thesis in its emphases on hierarchical relations and the visible powers of the teacher. The other can be adapted from Donzelot's model

of family relations, classroom order is sustained through more 'relational' techniques: horizontal links with pupils which breakdown potentially conflictual formal authority relations between teacher and pupil (Donzelot 1979: 211). A majority of teachers favoured the former, a minority favoured the latter. Parental opinion was also split with working class parents preferring stronger discipline. Middle class interest in educational ends rather than disciplinary means, as exemplified through the over ambitious parent, led to a greater acceptance of more relational techniques which were assumed by both sets of parents to predominate.

4. Sex Education

Sex education at many levels turned out to be a curious test case for the decline thesis. The decline thesis argues that, left to their own devices, parents would want to play the primary role in educating their adolescent children about the physiological and moral aspects of sex. Furthermore, if we see discipline as the means by which parents underwrite their children's moral and social well being, and acknowledge the importance that parents in this study placed on getting this right, we would expect parents to interpret the systematic teaching of sex education in school as an unwarranted infringement of a parent's rights. In the case study, parents still saw themselves as having some responsibility for sex education because most of them stated that they had made some attempt at discussing sex with their children. Whereas, in relation to discipline responsibility couldn't easily to be assigned to either mothers or fathers, where parents had attempted some sex education, mothers were clearly the responsible agents. But both parents and teachers made it clear that teachers were more involved in discussions about sex than parents.

Although parents acknowledged the importance of sex education the great majority preferred the school to play the leading role. Schools were both setting the agenda for discussion and informing their children about the 'facts of life'.

In one sense parents were actively redefining their responsibilities in terms of how the school was able to underwrite part of their children's sexual development. The lack of ground rules, the inability to know how to approach a child who at least in sexual terms, appears to have a more developed sense of self, and the acknowledgement that the public world seems to make fewer distinctions between childhood and adulthood all serve to inhibit a parent's ability as sex educator. If we also take a still dominant taboo about talking about sex within the home, we can see why both middle and working class parents preferred the formalism of the school.

Yet in another sense parents had some input into their children's developing sexuality. At an informal level - a level of activity hidden from the teachers - parents were able to keep tabs on their children's knowledge and understanding of sex. To a limited extent then there was a similarity between this form of supervision and the management of their children's free time discussed in Chapter Five.

Whereas parents tended to muddy the parameters of their responsibilities when discussing sex education, the teachers tended to reflect the decline thesis's position that parents had ultimate responsibility for all aspects of their children's social and moral well being. Yet their experiences as sex educators did not lead them to expect that parents would have covered the crucial aspects of sexual development. The same paradox applies to sex education as it does to discipline. Although professional sex educators appeared to exercise the kind of powers that have allegedly deskilled parents, the

experience of teaching sex education tended to strengthen the teaching view that parents were best equipped to guide their children through the 'moral minefield' of sex. Teachers thus contradicted the assumptions made by parents that the school had the necessary skills for discussing sex. Both parents and teachers then appeared to shift responsibility on to the other. This reflected the difficulties that both parents and teachers experienced in talking about sex within their own respective 'private' spheres of influence.

A final concluding point would appear to be frustratingly elusive. Although parents had mixed views about the disciplinary role of the school, and there was a blurring of the moral responsibilities that they and the school had for sex education, the decline thesis cannot be said to reflect the views that parents have of their sense of authority. A majority of parents did not see themselves as powerless and frustrated. Few parents saw the school as an institutional locus that either competed with, or intruded upon, what they saw as their responsibilities.

On the other hand, the decline thesis did not get everything wrong. Paradoxically, it was the teachers, those agents that appeared to exhibit the most prominent features of the 'intrusion', who expressed concern about the way some parents had abdicated their responsibilities for bringing up their children. The teachers, like the parents, asserted the bring them up/ educate them dichotomy in defining their roles as socialisers. But, whereas, the parents tended to think that they and the teachers were able to maintain their own spheres of influence, the teachers argued that in some cases they were reluctantly forced into a position of reconstructing the responsibilities what parents ought to be doing.

Whether or not we can say for certain that these boundaries are being sustained by the wider population, the future of the debate on

who has power and authority over children is assured. As I write, the loss of parental and teaching authority has once more become an issue as members of the government, the church and the media are asked to assess the causes of a spate of inner city disturbances. The division of responsibility between parents and teacher for the moral and social well being of adolescents will continue to be a matter of debate in both popular and academic circles.

Appendix One

Department of Sociology
University of Edinburgh
18 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9LN
9th January 1988

Dear Sir and Madam,

I would be very grateful for your help. I am a post-graduate at Edinburgh University. I am interested in the views of parents and teachers on authority and discipline within the home and the school. I would like to interview each of you at a time that is convenient to you. Ideally, I'd like to speak to mothers and fathers separately and would anticipate two visits. I will be interviewing three or four other parents in your area in January and February. If you are interested in participating I would like to interview sometime during this period. Would you please complete the tear-off slip at the bottom of the page and return it to the school.

I must stress that all interviews will be completely confidential and the eventual thesis will scrupulously maintain the anonymity of all those involved. The success of the project depends very largely on your help and of others like you. I thank you in anticipation of this.

Yours Sincerely

Michael Wyness

Names

Address

I would/would not be interested in taking part in the interviews.

Would you be willing to be interviewed in your home?

If not, would you be willing to be interviewed at the school?

What times are suitable?

Further Information

The project will involve approximately twenty sets of parents from five areas within the region. This will be followed by a series of interviews with the guidance teachers from the schools in the region - in your case four of the guidance teachers from Stenhouse Academy. These interviews will focus on a similar set of issues in relation to the authority teachers have over teenage children in classes S1 to S4. I am also interested in the contacts that parents have with teachers, particularly guidance teachers, and I will pursue the issue through the interviews with both parents and teachers.

My interest in these issues comes from the undeniable importance of the family and the school in childhood development. There is a lot being said about parents at the moment and about the different jobs of parents and teachers. I think it is important that parents speak for themselves on such issues. For this reason it is important that I speak to parents about the kinds of ideas and values that they pass on to their children and their views on child rearing practices in general.

The interviews will be divided up into four areas:

1. This section will look at how work and decisions concerning the children are divided up between husband and wife.
2. This section will look at how parents view the role of the teacher with particular reference to two issues: the teaching of sex education and the ways that decisions are taken on the subjects children have to take in S2.
3. In this section I am interested in how parents discipline their children and their views on discipline within school.
4. In this section I will look at the kinds of links parents have with the community. In particular, when and for what reasons do parents meet the guidance teachers.

Appendix Two

Interview Schedule for the Guidance Teachers

Background Information

Age

Married

Children

What subject

How long a teacher

How long in this school

How long a guidance teacher

How long in this school

1. Discipline

I would like first of all to ask you a few questions about your day-to-day experiences as a (maths) teacher. I'm particularly interested in how you maintain order and discipline within the classroom. I've divided this section up into two areas: informal and formal sanctions. The informal sanctions are forms of discipline and punishment that teachers use to control situations within the school outwith the referral. The formal sanctions are forms that involve the parents and other teachers.

A. Informal

I want to get some idea about how you typically deal with disciplinary issues.

you think back the last couple of weeks and tell me about the situations when you had to use certain informal sanctions.

or

What are the situations when you have to use informal sanctions within the classroom?

How do you deal with this? - what kind of sanctions?

- silences and disapproving gestures

- tellings off

- threat of removal to another seat
- removal to another seat
- sent outside room for some minutes
- threat of referral

How do the kids react to this?

Who tends to be more involved in these situations: boys or girls?

Do you have different sanctions for boys and girls?

Do you tend to use different sanctions for different age groups?

Could you expand on that?

Can you generalise about the types of pupils who are disruptive?

- social class

Why do you use these sanctions rather than say [prompt. more effective]

Have you ever tried.....?

What happened?

Would you say that informal sanctions you use are the same in situations outside the classroom - playground, stairs?

B. Formal

What are the situations when you have to go through the referral system?

How do you deal with this?

- give them a recorded punishment exercise?

Would you administer this to both boys and girls?

Would you administer this irrespective of age?

In what situations would you give them detention?

- Both boys and girls?
- all ages?

Would you say that there was a tendency for pupils from certain social class backgrounds to be more involved in these referral situations?

Both these forms of sanctions involve the parents in as much as they are informed of what has been done. Is there any comeback from them?

Which parent signs the punishment exercise form?

What are the situations when you have to remove them from the class?

Is this an effective measure?

Does this equally effect boys and girls?

All age groups?

Do you ever threaten children with detention?

Is this an effective deterrent?

Have any of your children been temporarily been suspended?

For what reasons?

Have any of your kids been formally excluded?

For what reasons?

Are boys or girls more likely to be involved in these two types of situations?

What about age?

Do these kids come from particular types of social class backgrounds?

Is there a school psychologist?

What kind of contacts do you have?

What kind of contacts do you have with the truancy officer?

2. Discipline and Guidance

I want to move now on to your role as a guidance teacher but still stay on the general topic of discipline. In many ways the early warning system, although an aspect of the formal referral system, is a way of trying to nip in the bud the possibility of a child going any further through the disciplinary system. Yet despite these measures the behaviour of some children is impossible to anticipate or legislate for - the school unfortunately has to take action to protect the educational well being of the rest of the pupils.

In the deliberations over whether a child is to be suspended or excluded do you play any role?

Do you form pictures of these particular pupils?

What are these?

As a guidance teacher you can also take action against children that are referred to you by other teachers?

Is this something you do quite often?

How often are you in contact with the parents through the early warning system?

What form does this contact take?

How do parents respond to these contacts?

Do you discuss with the parents their disciplinary role?

What tends to be their reactions?

Do you think that you should have the right to use corporal punishment given that it is still used by many parents?

I'd like to ask you one or two general questions on discipline within the school.

Can you tell me a little bit about the general ethos of the teaching approach at this school.

Within this context how do you view the role of discipline?

How about its role in general?

3. The Teaching of Sex Education

Can you tell me a little bit about how you teach the subject?

- in single sex classes

How do the children react?

Are there differences in the way boys and girls react?

What are they?

Can these differences be generalised to include social class?

Do they ever mention the kinds of things they hear from their parents?

What are these?

Do they ever mention the kinds of things they pick up from their friends?

What do they say?

What in your opinion are the major difficulties in teaching sex education?

Why do you say that?

What kinds of skills do you think a teacher needs to have for teaching sex education?

How do you feel about teaching sex education? - the role it plays

In general, why do you think the teaching of sex education is so consistently controversial?

I asked the previous question partly because it is a controversial subject at the moment. The new local government bill has proscribed the teaching of homosexuality? Can I ask you to comment on this?

Will this make the teaching of sex education more difficult?

Has the A.I.D.S issue had an effect on sex education being taught within the school?

B. Sex Education and Parents

Do you discuss sex education with parents?

What forms do these discussions take?

- do the parents tend to contact you?

- is it more impromptu and tends to come up in more general conversations?

Can you tell me a little bit about what you discuss?

Does one of the parents take a more active part ? [a consequence of only one being present or a particular parent taking a dominant role in the proceedings)

Which one does this tend to be?

Do parents tend to discuss the sex education of their children differently when they are talking about their daughters or their sons?

In what ways?

How often do you discuss these matters?

In general, how do the parents react to sex education?

Are you able to generalise about these reactions interms of particular types of parents?

poss. prompt - social class

What role do you think the parents play in the teaching of sex education?

What role do you think they should play in matters of sex education?

5. Curriculum Choice

I'm interested in the process of how the children decide on which subjects to take, whether there is a role here for the parents, what form it takes etc.

In what ways do you advise pupils on what subjects to take?

What kind of criteria are you working with when you are advising parents and children over what subjects to take?

For this particular issue what kind of contact do you have with the parents?

Is this something that is discussed with parents?

Who tends to sign the subject choice form: mothers or fathers?

Who tends to be involved most in the discussions?

- mother
- father
- equal participation

Do you ever have problems with the parents in this respect?

prompt

- disagreements over the subjects

How do you resolve these problems?

Do parents take an active part in the structuring of the curricula for their children before the choices are offered?

- contacts with the parents of kids in 1st and 2nd years

To what extent are the children themselves involved?

- discussions with the kids before the formal involvement of parents

6. Teacher/Parent Communications in General

We've talked about how the school has links with parents in relation to the teaching of sex education; discipline and the choosing of subjects. What are the other circumstances when you have contact with parents?

- school outings

- parents meetings

any others?

What kinds of things do you discuss with parents at parents meetings?

Are they well attended by parents?

What kinds of parents tend to come?

What about the ones that you never see?

Can you say that either mothers or fathers are better attenders?

Which ones?

You've said that you visit them at their homes on occasions to discuss discipline etc. (or haven't said this as the case maybe)

Do you go to their homes for other reasons? (or) Do you ever visit parents in their homes?

What are these circumstances?

How do the parents react to this?

In general terms how do you see your role as a teacher vis-a-vis the parents?

How do you see your role as a guidance teacher vis-a-vis the parents?

Would you like to see a general improvement in relations between parents and teachers?

I've asked parents to describe their ideal teacher. Who would your ideal parent be?

What are your views on parent power?

Appendix Three

Interview Schedule For the Parents

Background data

Age

Occupation

Religion

How long married

Length of time in the area/community

Previous abode

Membership of trade union, local community group P.T.A. etc.

Ages and Names of Children

Religion of Children (if different from above)

1. Who Exercise Authority?

I'd first like to talk about the kinds of things you think are important in bringing up your children. I'm particularly interested in how you arrive at important decisions.

- Discipline

Who decides when it's necessary?

Who decides when how the children are to be disciplined?

How is this decision made? prompt, do you sit down and discuss it ?

- Money Matters

Who decided on giving them pocket money?

How did this come about?

Who decides on when to spend money on big items?

- Other Areas

Do you ever discuss the types of friends Johnny has?

Which of these friends are allowed into the house?

Who makes these decisions?

Who decided on how many children you were going to have?

Did the Children go to playschool or nursery?

Who took this decision?

Who decided what schools they would go to?

Do you discuss any of these things with the children before making the decision?

2. Current Division of Labour

I'd now like to ask you a few questions on how you divide up your time in bringing up the children. I'm particularly interested in whether you have routines which you try to stick to.

Who does the cooking?

Is this usually the case?

probe Can you be more specific here? How many times per week? etc.

Who does the dishes?

Shopping?

Cleaning the children's room(s)?

House in general?

Who washes the children's clothes?

Pays the pocket money?

Who tells the children to go to bed?

Who gets them up in the morning?

Who buys the children's clothes?

Who mends the childrens toys and clothes?

Who goes to the parents meetings? How often?

Who signs the school report?

Who takes the children to school for the medicals?

Who contacts the doctor when the children are ill?

Who has most contact with the community?

Delegation of Tasks to Children?

3. The School and the Family

I'm particularly interested in two aspects of your children's schooling. First, sex education - how it is taught - your views on this. Secondly, how you decided on what subjects Johnny was taking.

- Sex Education

Do you ever discuss sexual matters with your children?

Would you mind telling me a little bit about the kind of things you talk about?

What type of skills do you think parents need for telling their children about sexual matters?

I'd now like to talk a little bit about these issues being taught in school.

First of all, does Johnny ever discuss with you the kinds of things he hears about on sexual matters at school?

If so, what kind of things?

Is Johnny being taught sex education at school?

How do you feel about this?

Did you ever discuss this with the school?

What form did this take? prompt, did the school write to you?

Have you met the teacher responsible for sex education?

What is your opinion of this teacher?

What types of skills do you think the teacher needs to teach sex education?

Was sex education taught when you were at school?

How did you learn about sex?

(General question) How do you feel about sex education in general?

- Curriculum Choice

What subjects is Johnny taking?

When were you informed by the school that Johnny had to choose the subjects he was going to take?

How did you come into contact with the school?

How did the school make contact with you?

How was the decision made about the subject choice?

Were you and your spouse equally involved?

If not, who played the prominent part?

Can you say who eventually decided?

What kind of advice did the school give?

What did you think of the advice at the time?

What do you think of it now?

How is he doing?

Do you think the right decisions were made?

4. Discipline and Reason

How much time do you spend with your children discussing their

i. school work;

ii. their friends;

iii. your work?

discuss prompt, for fuller answers in terms of how they
these issues.

Do you discuss going on holiday with the children?

Are there any things you are uncomfortable discussing with your children?

If so, can you tell me why?

Are these things you think your children wouldn't understand?

Do your children bring ideas into the home which you disapprove of?

In these situations what do you do?

How do your children react to this?

The last question touched on the subject of misbehaviour. Can you tell me a little bit about situations when you have to discipline your children?

What are these situations?

How do you respond?

Why do you prefer this to say? (mention another sanction)

Do you ever resort to smacking? How do you feel about doing this?

Do you see this as a last resort?

Do you worry about how Johnny and Harry behave at school?

If so, why?

Do you worry about how they behave in public?

If so, why?

Is this always the case?

- School Discipline

Can you tell me a little bit about the kinds of things they do at Johnny's school when there is misbehaviour?

Do they still have corporal punishment?

What is your opinion on this?

Other forms of sanctions, prompt by mentioning other forms?

Does the school keep you informed about disciplinary procedures?

How often?

Have you had cause to contact the school on this matter?

Can you tell me why you did this?

Can you tell me about these meetings?

Do you often discuss Johnny's behaviour with the school?

What other things do you discuss?

Has the school ever had to write to you formally about Johnny's behaviour?

What had Johnny done?

Do you ever discuss the children's behaviour with anyone else?

Who do the kids go to with problems?

Has this always been the case?

Do you think that your children view you differently as they get older? In what way?

Do you see less of them now? How do you feel about this?

5. Parent/Teacher Network

This is the last section and I'm interested in your's and your children's ties with the local community?

Do your children play a lot with the local children?

What kinds of things do they do?

Are they members of any local organisations?

Do your relatives live locally?

How often do you the children visit their grandparents/uncles/cousins?

How often do your relatives visit you?

Do you find that you are often given advice by your friends or your relatives on how to bring up your children?

What type of advice?

Do you find this useful/intrusive?

We talked a little earlier about contacts you had with the school in connection with sex education and subject choice. I'd now like to ask you more general questions about the school.

How often do you see Johnny's teachers?

Can you tell me a little about these meetings?

Do you go on school trips etc?

Do you attend P.T.A. meetings?

Do you attend sports day?

Do any teachers offer you advice?

What types?

Are you ever summoned to meetings at the school?

How do you react to this?

Does the school write to you much?

What do you think of Johnny's teachers?

What is your idea of a good teacher?

What do you think of current government policy towards the family? I'm thinking particularly of the changes taking place in education - giving parents more say in how the schools are run?

How do you see your children's future? Do you have any plans for them?

Appendix Four

Aspects of the Family Routine as a Division of Labour

Table One: *Who Sends the Children to Bed?*, by Social Class (N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|---------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 4 (17) | 2 (10) | 6 (14%) |
| FATHER | 2 (8) | 4 (20) | 6 (14%) |
| NO PREFERENCE | 15 (63) | 10 (50) | 25 (57%) |
| CHILDREN THEMSELVES | 3 (12) | 4 (20) | 7 (16%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

Agreement (P.A.) The percentage of parents who responded the same ways as their spouses. 55%

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Two : *Who Gets the Children Up in the Morning?*, by Social Class (N = 44).

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|---------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 1 (4) | 15 (75) | 16 (36%) |
| FATHER | 11 (46) | 3 (15) | 14 (32%) |
| NO PREFERENCE | 2 (8) | 1 (5) | 3 (7%) |
| CHILDREN THEMSELVES | 10 (23) | 1 (5) | 11 (25%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

P.A 77%

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Three : *Who Pays Out the Pocket Money, by Social Class (N = 44)*

| | M/Class | W/Class | TOTAL |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 7 (29) | 8 (40) | 15 (34%) |
| FATHER | 9 (37) | 2 (10) | 11 (25%) |
| NO PREFERENCE | 4 (17) | 4 (20) | 8 (18%) |
| NO POCKET MONEY | 4 (17) | 6 (30) | 10 (23%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

P.A. 82%

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Four: *Who Mends the Children's Toys and Bikes, by Social Class (N = 44).*

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 2 (8) | 1 (5) | 3 (7%) |
| FATHER | 17 (71) | 13 (65) | 30 (68%) |
| NO PREFERENCE | - | 1 (5) | 1 (2%) |
| KIDS THEMSELVES | 5 (21) | 5 (25) | 10 (23%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

P.A. 73%

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

Table Five: *Who Goes to the Parents' Meetings, by Social Class*
(N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | TOTAL |
|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 8 (33) | 8 (40) | 16 (36%) |
| FATHER | - | 2 (10) | 2 (5%) |
| BOTH | 15 (63) | 10 (50) | 25 (57%) |
| DON'T GO | 1 (4) | - | 1 (2%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

P.A. 77%

* Figures in brackets refer to per centages of parents within each social class category.

** 'Mother' here means a spectrum of parenting activity from mother going more often than her spouse to her spouse never going.

*** 'Father' here means a spectrum of parenting activity from father going more often than his spouse to his spouse never going.

Table Six : *Who Mends the Children's Clothes?, by Social Class.*
(N = 44)

| | M/Class | W/Class | Total |
|------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| MOTHER | 21 (88) | 13 (65) | 34 (77%) |
| FATHER | - | 3 (15) | 3 (7%) |
| NO PREFERENCE | 1 (4) | 1 (5) | 2 (5%) |
| DON'T GET MENDED | 2 (8) | 3 (15) | 5 (11%) |
| TOTAL | 24 | 20 | 44 |

P.A. 77%

* Figures in brackets refer to percentages of parents within each social class category.

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