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THE SIXTH FORM AND EDUCATIONAL
AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

submitted by:

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FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

7 MAY 1975 182956

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June 1974

A B S T R A C T

This thesis suggests that insight into decision making between educational and occupational alternatives by sixth formers can be gained by combining into a more coherent whole three theoretical frameworks offered in the literature.

The factorial, processual and rationality frameworks are each examined and the strengths and limitations of each when used in isolation are indicated. An empirical test using the rationality framework in a wider context than previously employed is offered to indicate the promise of this, as yet, underdeveloped framework. The empirical context of this test, the sixth form is taken as the setting for an exercise in framework amalgamation from which explanations of choices made between alternative types of institutions of higher education and employment are offered.

This study is of a longitudinal nature involving the collection of data at four points in time during the respondents' final year in the sixth form. The techniques employed in the collection of this data are questionnaire scales and interviews.

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CHAPTER I

The Setting

Sociology abounds with studies of educational processes and educational institutions, as such this piece of research operates in an already well explored context. The focal point of this thesis is the sixth former and his choice of higher education or employment. Research on educational and occupational choice will be evaluated and from an empirical study, suggestions made as to the most profitable path for future research.

Although the term occupational choice will be used here, attention will be mainly directed to the sixth former's choice of higher education as opposed to the decision to enter the labour market on leaving school. The data will not distinguish between jobs chosen by those entering work at eighteen, but will only concern itself with the decision to seek employment or to enter various kinds of institutions of higher education. Emphasis will be placed on individual choice as made by members of one social group rather than on the levels of work or educational attainment achieved by status or social class groupings. It is therefore not the intention of this thesis merely to show that the majority of sixth formers opt for higher education. Rather it will set out to demonstrate how type of institution is chosen or how the decision is made to enter the labour force. The main body of the research will be concerned with one particular collectivity, the grammar school sixth form, within which context individual choice will be highlighted. The data will therefore demonstrate how individuals in the sixth form make their choice from a limited range of alternatives.

The suggestion that the range of choice available to these individuals is limited pin-points a difficulty raised by the terms occupational and educational choice: does choice in any sense exist? Clearly open ended choice is not available to the vast majority of individuals in society. Processes of socialisation, selection, self recruitment and differential access to knowledge and skill hierarchies ensure that choice is limited to those alternatives normally available to the status level at which individuals are located. However in the final analysis choice does occur at the individual level when selection is made from a range of alternatives. Although that range has limits and barriers it nevertheless allows for decision making and as such makes choice a possibility.

This study will see four possible choices available to the sixth former given the status level at which he is located. These are entry to a university, entry to a polytechnic, entry to a college of education or entry to the work force. These are not separate levels but alternatives contained in the sixth formers opportunity structure. It is choice between these alternatives that will concern us here.

To date our sociological store-cupboards are not well stocked with studies that significantly further our knowledge of how this kind of choice is made. This of course does not mean that occupational and educational choice has been ignored by behavioural scientists, but suggests that much of the work done so far has been of a fragmentary nature. This study of sixth formers will seek to combine the most useful elements of the approaches adopted in the literature and demonstrate how a fuller understanding might be achieved.

Writers are generally agreed that one of science's chief objectives is the achievement of explanation and prediction, that is, to give organised accounts of the universe which fit together statements embodying the knowledge that has been acquired. The sort of systematic relatedness aimed at in scientific theory is a deductive relatedness and, if a theory has been fully articulated, it will achieve an explicit deductive development and interrelationship of the statements it encompasses. Of course in practice few theories have achieved such a formalisation. This is certainly so in the case of occupational choice at the individual level where few interrelated propositions have actually been set down. Consequently our ability to explain and predict choice at the individual level is low.

Of course, it is not necessary for a theory to yield numerous empirical predictions. A small number of exact predictions can make it relatively easy to test, and then accept, reject or modify the theory as necessary. When there is a small number of imprecise predictions however, there will always be quite a few alternative theories which also cannot be rejected on the basis of evidence. The result is often an extremely large number of equally less than satisfactory explanations remaining to clutter up the literature.

Now this is the case with the literature of occupational choice for whilst attempts have been made to approximate a theory of choice they have not achieved a satisfactory level of prediction or understanding at the individual level. Although choice can be predicted at the social or social category level by reference to the local social structure, less is known about decision making within the context.

The need for deductive theories when combined with the need for testable theories that are sufficiently complex to give really new insights, poses a major problem for the theory builder. In order to develop deductive theories one needs to begin with a few simple relationships that are usually totally inadequate to mirror the whole of the real world. These are improved upon when new variables are added a few at a time from which more realistic theories can be constructed. There is no real alternative to the process of abstraction, omission of details, analysis and synthesis. If theories are to be simple they cannot contain very many variables, therefore simple theories must omit numerous explanatory factors. The factors that are included however should bear a close relationship to the real world and be empirically testable.

A range of disparate small studies based on a number of theoretical frameworks has not produced the progress in our understanding of occupational and educational choice that might have been hoped for. Consequently a sufficiently articulated and adequately demonstrated framework for understanding and predicting individual choice is still needed. The aim of this study is to suggest how a framework might be developed from approaches used to date.

In order to demonstrate this possibility we must first examine the theoretical frameworks that have formed the basis of data collection thus far. Three perspectives seem to have been used. The first is the factorial which abstracts and then concentrates on the influence of certain factors in the social structure on the actual choice made. For example the role of the family, the peer group, the education system are often identified in this way as being instrumental in decision making. The second framework that

has been used is the processual which explains choice in terms of time sequences. Here occupational and educational choice is viewed as the outcome of a process or a series of processes that have shape and form, and this framework is an attempt to understand those shapes and forms. Although similar to the factorial approach the processual is distinguishable in terms of its emphasis on patterns, on sequences and hence on the passage through time. Finally there is the rationality framework which concentrates on the actual point of decision making, suggesting that antecedant variables contained in the process of socialisation can be taken as given. This framework therefore directs attention to the rationality element in occupational choice where certain ends are weighed against the perceived probability of their attainment.

The argument presented in the following chapters is that an amalgamation of these theoretical perspectives into one larger and more unified scheme would help us to understand and predict individual choice to a greater extent. This unified approach would see occupational and educational choice as the end product of a process, would allow for mechanisms to identify the factors involved in that process, and would show how such factors operated on any rationality element involved in decision making.

The following chapter describes the theoretical frameworks referred to above. It is our intention to demonstrate that a synthesis of these approaches is both possible and desirable if our understanding of individual choice is to be developed. It will be shown that while there is a useful body of knowledge demonstrating the possibilities made available by the factorial and processual frameworks, progress is to be made by relating this understanding to the rationality framework. To achieve this more detail is needed about the operation of the rationality framework and it will be shown via empirical tests how this may be gained.

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CHAPTER II

The frameworks of occupational and educational choice.

The factorial approach

The sort of problem posed by this perspective is, 'if phenomena A and B are associated, why is B the end product rather than something other than B, like C or D for example?'. The question asked by factorialists is therefore 'under what conditions does B appear and under what conditions does it not?' The factors that have been identified in the literature of occupational choice as being associated with certain choice patterns i.e., certain B's are the family, the school, the peer group, the neighbourhood and exposure to work and industry.

McKinley (1964) offers evidence of the significance of social class when he relates the quality of socialisation in various social groups to the type of occupation chosen by the son. He focusses mainly on Roe's (1956) categories of work which are:-

- (1) Organisation: concerned primarily with the organisation and efficient functioning of governmental and commercial enterprises.
- (2) Technology: which includes all the modern industrial occupations except the managerial, clerical and sales. Technological occupations deal with the production, maintenance and transportation of commodities and utilities.

McKinley found that sons who were more severely socialised would be more likely to choose technological occupations. There was also evidence to suggest that at the upper social level the form of a mother's socialisation technique was more predictive of her son's occupational choice, but at the lower social level the father's practice gave a better prediction. McKinley adds a caution against placing too great a causal emphasis on severity of

socialization in occupational choice since it may be that a sub-culture that traditionally uses severity in socialization will also value occupations with a practical and scientific orientation.

Kahl (1953) used the factorial framework to examine occupational aspirations rather than choice and offers a study of the relationship between family, social class and education and occupational aspirations. Although his original questionnaire study showed that both IQ and family status were effective predictors of the educational and occupational ambitions of high school boys, they did not account for the variation in ambition at the individual level between boys of equally high IQ in the 'common man' class (working class). As a result of further research into common man' families Kahl found that although that class shared in general a common way of life, only some were content, and those who were not, trained their sons from the earliest years of grammar school to aspire to a middle class occupation. Whilst the education system was recognised by these parents as the ladder to success, the schools themselves remained a means and not an initiator of ascent.

Reynolds and Shister (1949) suggest that house and neighbourhood experiences create job horizons beyond which few individuals look. As a result job selection seems casual. It does not seem to involve an assessment of the market possibilities but an apparently unthinking acceptance of the suggestions and recommendations of relatives and friends. The information about job opportunities given by parents to children is mentioned by Carter (1962 and 1966), who showed that many working class parents revealed little knowledge of wider work situations which were separated from their own milieu and much parental advice was found to be of a negative nature.

Occupational choice may be modified as a result of contact with other social classes. Sewell and Orenstein (1965) have suggested that where young people are in daily contact with people of high socioeconomic status they are constantly receiving a flow of information about such people and come to take them as role models.

This flow of information and this level of contact can take place in school and this leads us to consider a further body of factors which play a part in occupational choice - educational institutions. Parsons (1962) suggests that the school has two functions, firstly to internalise in its pupils both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles and to allocate these human resources within the role structure of the adult society, the latter becoming increasingly important with the increased emphasis on qualifications in the sphere of employment. Parsons sees the fundamental conditions underlying the process of socialisation and selection in the elementary school as:

- (a) Emancipation of the child from the primary emotional attachment to the family.
- (b) An internalisation of a level of societal values and norms that is a step higher than those he can learn in his family alone.
- (c) A differentiation of the school class in terms both of actual achievement and of differential valuation of achievement.
- (d) From society's point of view a selection and allocation of its human resources relative to the adult role system.

At the secondary school, however, the focus is on the differentiation of qualitative types of achievement, as for lower status people it is the principal spring board for entry to the labour force and for higher status pupils the differentiation will lead to broadly different roles in college.

English studies of educational achievement point to the superior chances of children born into a middle class family. Glass (1954), Banks (1955), Halsey and Floud (1961), Little and Westergaard (1964), Douglas (1964) and the Robbins report (1963). For children born into working class families, educational achievement and career opportunities are highly dependent upon parental attitudes. Floud et al (1956) found that in areas where working class children had a real chance of a grammar school education, grammar school admission was related to parental attitudes. Himmelweit (1955) adds to this by showing that working class boys at grammar schools tend to come from families that over-conform to middle class values and behaviour patterns, the parents exerting strong pressure upon the child for educational achievement.

Morris (1969) examined the part played by the school in entry to higher education. He compared comprehensive and grammar schools in terms of the influence of school type on choice of post school activity. He found no significant differences between the two types of school when class background and local authority were held constant, nor was school organisation an important variable in determining entry to the sixth form. Morris's results did not produce a straightforward pattern but were extensive enough to support the view that the school does have a differential effect. In the sample he

studied, the differences in prestige of the colleges chosen were marked and consistent when the two largest grammar schools were compared. He also found that differences existed between grammar and comprehensive school pupils in the patterns of advice seeking with relation to educational and career decisions. In Turner's (1960) sense the school might be seen as a sponsor in the achievement of social mobility. However Morris's findings tend to suggest that the school played a supporting and clarifying role rather than an innovatory one and that they were somewhat more successful in inducing those with home backing to continue their education than in inducing those with little backing to do so. As such home sponsorship was rather more influential than school sponsorship. Other factors identified by Morris included 'O' level results and attitudes towards college which were also determinants of choice between types of college. In the multi-variate analysis the main determinants of the choice between work and full time further education were parental expectations and the perceived usefulness of college education for the desired career. Morris suggests that earlier school performance and parental background may have been causal factors in determining future plans and that attitudes towards continuing education were often intervening variables resulting from school achievement and parental background, but probably preceding the making of firm decisions about college.

Timperley and Gregory (1971) in a study of career choice of sixth form school leavers suggest that one of the most important factors at work on career choice and perception is the amount and quality of information he or she receives about sectors of economy, occupational areas and specific jobs. The authors found a high reliance on college and university prospectuses for

those wishing to enter higher education, but apart from this suggest that there is a levelling out among the three major sources of information (school, home and external) and they show the small impact of the youth employment service on choice of occupation by sixth formers.

Within the school itself it would appear that the school careers teachers provide more information in a purely formal capacity e.g., distributing literature, than in an informal or guidance capacity, where their role compares unfavourably with that of other teachers. The most influential school source of information appears to be the careers convention organised by the school. The most important home sources are parents and relations and friends already at university or college. A major problem in this study which is recognised by the authors is that it is difficult to distinguish between the quality of information received and the quantity and therefore difficult to ascertain the importance of information on occupational choice. However this study does highlight other variables which act as factors operating on choice. A significant point emerges from an analysis of the sex of the students wishing to enter industry and commerce and those wishing to enter education. Industry claimed twice as many males as females. Among students wishing to enter education the balance changes completely and there are four times as many females as males in this category. Similarly subjects being studied at school seem to play some part. Timperley and Gregory found that 70% of all those sixth formers wishing to enter the educational sector were taking either languages or general arts subjects at 'A' level, but only 12.3% were taking science subjects.

Students' perception of employment possibilities also may be seen as a factor, suggest the authors. They found that a much more favourable or positive view of industry was held by those with a desire to enter that area than is held by those who desire to enter education.

Turning from school to a consideration of university as a factor in occupational choice we may consider a study of universities as selecting and socialising agents in Sweden by Carlsson and Gesser (1967). They suggest that universities not only have the function of providing professional training and selecting and screening students in terms of their abilities, but that they also provide a continuation of the general and civil education that began in school. The environment of the university with its opportunities for social interaction could bring about a change in attitudes and opinions especially because many of the students are removed from their homes for the first time in their lives. In an empirical study reported by the authors it was found that the influence of the family and social class persisted although some signs were noted of a narrowing of the political gap between students of different social origins.

Joan Abbott's (1971) study of three British universities saw the structure of these institutions as an intervening variable modifying processes of selection, institutional socialisation and allocation which are at work in education and which are related to the inequalities in society, which they reflect. Abbott nevertheless concludes that social classes persist both as cultural collectivities and conscious groups within the student body. Kelsall (1972) also points to the prevalence of social class groupings as persistent factors where higher education has been experienced. Indeed

as Kelsall notes, the experience of higher education does not lead to any decline in the prevailing ideologies of traditional male/female roles among the educated elite. However members of this elite still tend to place career second to family and this has led to a decline in the number of career oriented women who are eager to reach the top. In fact preparation for work is seen as 'half-hearted' and has to fit in with domesticity.

An approach which considers the joint effects of the family, school and neighbourhood as factors, is that of Veness (1961). She divides her respondents reasons for taking a particular job into Riesman's categories of tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed. The main contribution of this study however lies not in its classifications but in a request for an instrument to detect the basic attitudes about the functions of work which individuals may have. She argues that the orientations of the respondents can be revealed by his choice among alternatives systematically presented by items. This is an avenue which this present research considers important and we shall return to the question of people's orientations to work later. *

* FOOTNOTE:

The study of attitudes can present difficulties for the researcher as Cohen (1966) has pointed out. It is worth bearing these in mind.

1. Individuals and groups do not bring a single attitude or set of attitudes to each situation, nor do they learn one set of attitudes in each situation. Yet it is one attitude or set of attitudes which is elicited by a particular set of circumstances. Knowing all the attitudes in advance will be helpful only in so far as it enables one to rule out the influence of those attitudes which are not there at all. It will not enable one to know which attitude is to be elicited.
2. The relevance of attitudes may depend on their strength to change or to resist changes in social structures.
3. Attitudes which appear stronger on an attitude test may not for all that be stronger in all social situations.
4. An attitude can only affect social conduct in particular ways if the situation permits this.

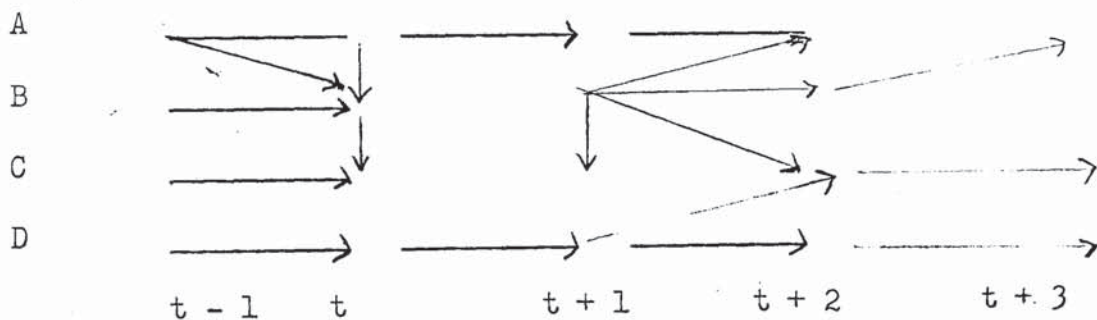
Before leaving factorial studies it is important to examine the effect of a person's awareness about a job on his choice. Haystead (1971) considers this is a factor to be considered when we are looking at occupational choice. She suggests that a person's job choice is affected by his awareness context. Included in his context would be knowledge of the job's requirements in terms of entrance qualifications, knowledge of personal characteristics required by employers, and competition for entry to the job. An awareness would also include information about rewards and costs such as amount of pay, type of work, hours, training required etc., and his value hierarchy in terms of the rewards and costs that are important to him. In other words job choice will be affected by access to or lack of information. It will also be affected by the way in which job characteristics correspond with his own values (e.g., the desire to become rich, important, or have any easy time).

The awareness context is therefore yet another factor to be considered by researchers. The implication of this is that people with varying awareness contexts (A) may make different occupational choices (B) - thus A is in some way an influence on B. There is a more significant point than this. If we compare the work of Veness and Haystead there is the suggestion in both that an individual's values and his perception of work locales are important factors in job choice. We shall show later that not only are they factors but can also be incorporated into a wider theoretical framework which will answer some of the questions posed by Veness and Haystead. That approach will be examined when we have considered the next framework that has been used in the literature of occupational choice - the processual.

The Processual Framework

Whilst the factorial approach identified certain factors which help to explain why certain occupational choice patterns occur, it does not allow us to explain how potent those factors are and how they precisely exert their influence. The processual framework tries to overcome some of these difficulties. Generally it is directed to the problem of assuming that if phenomena A and B are associated, can we identify the sequence of stages, the network of links which connects the two. Answers to these problems have been sought by sociologists for some considerable time. MacIver (1942) for example, recognised that the empirical study of social processes, requires an examination of the interplay of specified variables; that is, it is not enough to analyse the process in terms which draw upon an unspecified and therefore often changing array of implied variables.

One of the clearest demonstrations of the basic idea of a processual approach is put forward by Tinbergen (1940).



In his scheme, represented in the diagram above, on the horizontal axis are charted the successive periods of time at which observations are made. On the vertical axis are letters designating the variables under observation. The arrows in the scheme represent the relations between these variables. Some of the arrows have time lags. We might, for example, ask whether an

individual's job intention is affected by what he has read at an earlier time. Other of the arrows relate different variables of the same time period. We might want to find out for example whether an individual shares his opinions with his peers. Still other arrows cross several time periods and several variables. For example exposure to a friend's opinion at a time t may be followed by a new way of looking at a job at time $t + 1$ and finally by a changed job choice at time $t + 2$.

From this kind of processual scheme econometricians devise systems of formal equations which are rooted in a theoretical tradition, prominent in which is a concern for the dynamic interaction of a limited number of key variables. Some studies of occupational choice have had the same dynamic character but have been more descriptive and less translatable into mathematical models. For better or for worse they have also used a large number of variables chosen more to serve the problem at hand than derived from a formal system. Musgrave (1967) offers us a processual view of occupational choice in terms of socialisation and role learning processes. He suggests that socialisation is closely geared to organisations such as schools and factories, and divides socialisation carried out there into three kinds; primary socialisation, which refers to roles played in all settings; secondary socialisation, to roles played in some settings; and tertiary socialisation to roles played in only one setting.

Miller and Form (1949) had proposed a similar scheme which suggested that a child builds up a role map which has three developmental phases:

- (a) The initial work period which covers jobs held while still at school.
- (b) The trial work period while a young worker shops around for a job.
- (c) The stable work period.

Musgrave criticises this scheme on the grounds that it neglects parts of primary socialisation and seems unrealistic in that the final stage may never be reached. His own scheme sees occupational choice as part of the process of economic socialisation which has four stages:

1. Pre-work socialisation - this occurs through contact with the family, the school and the peer group. For this child his parents are the main point of juncture between the family and the economy as father and mother hold positions in both systems and therefore children are able to learn from this dual role structure. Musgrave suggests that it is here that the child also learns obedience which may help him to behave functionally at work. Similarly the school has a part to play as it intentionally or unintentionally restricts future occupational choice by working as a selecting agent. The peer group exerts its influence here also, often acting as an escape from the values of school and family, and according to Musgrave, may be an important source of dysfunctional economic socialisation. Able children may leave school early because their friends have started work.
2. The second stage in the process is entry to the labour force when selection becomes choice.
3. The third stage is described as socialisation into the job and is important for three main reasons. Firstly, initial job choice may not be the final choice even assuming that the best possible advice is given; some unknown demand of a specific job may prevent an individual from settling down into a position. Secondly, since the process of moving into the initial job is not particularly efficient some subsequent change seems inevitable. Thirdly the accelerating rate of technical

change ensures that many individuals now have to change jobs at least once during their working lives.

4. The fourth stage is their job change. Musgrave argues that job changes may be due to changes in the occupational structure because of technical change. Such changes can result in occupational mobility for adults who have to choose a new job and be socialised into it in somewhat the same way as is the case for adolescents. This re-socialisation is normally of the tertiary type since it is only relevant to one setting, namely the work situation.

An additional analytical tool introduced by Musgrave is the concept of anticipatory socialisation. The process of moving through the various positions involved in the four stages is often made easier if the individual has prior knowledge of what is involved in filling these positions (awareness context). The individual in anticipation, practises taking the values and behaviour prescribed for an occupational role in which he sees himself. Despite this, deviance and delinquency are quite possible. Deviance in producer roles for example involves occupations that recruit, for the most part, individuals who are unable to play normal economic roles because of personality problems. Musgrave suggests in addition that there are those who through primary socialisation come to have personalities such that they are willing or able to play roles of a certain type, namely those that are either looked down upon or that cater for individuals who are 'slightly unusual'. An example of this type of occupational role is that of prison warden or long distance lorry driver, on the grounds that recruits to these occupations wish to work with particular groups or work entirely alone.

Keil (1967) has levelled certain criticisms at Musgrave's arguments. She suggests that he has used an excessively individualistic view of society in which the concepts of role and socialisation are used with little reference to an on going social structure. Musgrave's work ignores the realities of deviant occupations, suggests Keil, in that he is mistaken in believing that there is a general consensus as to unusual or deviant occupations, for stereotypes of occupation vary by social class. One can only understand the job of prison warder or long distance lorry driver by considering the evaluations of such occupations in different social groups. Keil also criticises Musgrave for arguing that the child learns obedience in the family and that this helps him to behave functionally at work. The assumption of Musgrave's argument is that work operates upon the basis of obedience which may not be true, and in any case the idea of 'us' and 'them' in industry may well be just as strongly influenced by teachers and schools.

Musgrave's suggestion that the peer group may be dysfunctional, in that it represents an escape from the values of family and school is also open to criticism. Musgrave's use of the work function seems to denote a unified value system between the family and the school which has not been empirically verified in all social groups. Musgrave may also be criticised for taking little account of the conflicting demands made by managers and workmates and its effect on the young person entering the work situation. Musgrave has thus ignored the problem of conflict.

Of course a theoretical framework is never totally inclusive, it must therefore be selective in the variables it considers and the picture of reality it attempts to furnish. Musgrave's leaning towards a functional processual approach has produced the difficulties referred to by Keil. Her critique

however has a wider significance than these points of detail because she is really saying that a functional processual framework is not totally adequate to explain occupational choice - a point which we are anxious to stress. Thus whilst Musgrave's work has merit, his pre-occupation with a socialisation over-emphasizes choice against opportunity. In varying economic climates it is possible to envisage a large number of school leavers choosing from only a limited number of jobs. As we shall demonstrate later, it is important when considering occupational choice to bear in mind the individual's own perception of what is available and his perception of the chance of obtaining a particular job.

Keil (1966) herself has put forward a processual view of occupational choice, again focussing on socialisation as a key factor in occupational choice. "The socialisation of the young person to the world of work, together with previous work experiences and wider social influences, lead on the one hand to the formulation of a set of attitudes and expectations about work which together provide the explanation for actual job entry and from this experience as a worker, leads to a situation of adjustment or non-adjustment for the young worker which can be expressed either by a measure of satisfaction, by a reformulation of attitudes and expectations, by ritualised dissatisfaction, or by job change."

The references to adjustment to work clearly relate Keil's processual framework to Merton's explanation of anomie, according to which, society establishes culturally acceptable goals and recognised means of achieving those goals. Where there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals, a situation of anomie develops, producing for Merton the ritualist, the rebel, the retreatist and the innovator. Keil implies the same kinds of possibilities and therefore benefits from the implications of Merton's work in that it attempts to link social behaviour and the

There are however difficulties raised in his work which equally apply to Keil's processual framework. Firstly, it is often difficult to identify goals in society and meaningfully distinguish goals from means e.g., can we consider making money a goal in itself or simply as a means to other goals? Secondly even if goals could be separated from means there is the additional difficulty of identifying a set of cultural goals that are universally appreciated throughout society. This problem leads to a third one in that the Merton scheme stresses position in the social structure as the important variable in explaining behaviour without considering the importance of sub-cultures. A fourth problem is that the important role of social control in defining roles is largely ignored; that is who is a deviant and how social labels come to be attached to a person. Merton assumes that the individual is a free agent and does not recognise the importance of group interaction. A final difficulty associated with Merton's scheme but which Keil in her critique of Musgrave is clearly aware of, is the assumption that particular kinds of behaviour or occupations are associated with different social strata or 'kinds' of individuals.

Roberts (1969) offers the concept of opportunity structure as a part solution to some of these difficulties. He rightly suggests that much of the early research on occupational choice was of a fragmentary and descriptive nature which didn't add up to an explanation of individual choice. This multiplicity of approaches concentrated on such things as vocational aspirations; the identification of factors relating to different types of occupation; a description of the structure of vocational opportunities open to school leavers; reactions to work and attitudes to it; and a concentration on the roles played by schools, colleges and the Youth Employment Service.

To find an explanation for job choice Roberts turns to the work of Ginzberg and Super. Ginzberg (1951) regarded occupational choice as a developmental phenomenon. Although the term occupational choice is used to describe the ambitions of individuals at different ages, Ginzberg found ambitions of differing age groups to be quite varied. The occupational aims of adolescents were only fantasies and Ginzberg demonstrated that only as the individual progressed through adolescence, and in so doing obtained a growing appreciation of his own interests and capacities, did choices become sensible attempts to relate his abilities to occupational fields.

Ginzberg carried out his empirical work on American college students and found that they gained some realistic knowledge of what various occupations involved at college and only at this stage did their ambitions crystallise upon a firm and realistic occupational choice. A follow up study of post-graduate students (1964) suggested that in entering employment and pursuing their careers young people realise ambitions that have gradually developed over a period of years, usually crystallising before their education was complete.

Two points emerge from Ginzberg's processual approach. Firstly we should remember that it was applied to educationally privileged people and may need modification before being applied to other groups. Secondly, however it does suggest that there are relationships between ambitions and their determinants, between jobs entered and people's feeling about their work. Super (1957) proposed the hypothesis that during their early years in employment young people's ambitions were both directing and being modified by their own work experience until eventually the two came into harmony

with one another, the individual settling down to an occupation and experiencing a feeling of achievement and self-fulfillment. There is of course a certain rigidity to Super's approach arguing as it does that job changes occur in order to satisfy ambitions already formed. It ignores the possibility that ambitions may change over a period of time or become suspended by temporary circumstances.

Roberts (1968) offers an empirical test of the work of Ginzberg and Super from which he formulated three hypotheses.

1. Young workers' ambitions will gradually become more consistent with jobs as they develop.
2. Job satisfaction will gradually increase as careers develop.
3. Occupational mobility will decline in frequency as careers progress.

The first hypothesis is particularly interesting in that it is a foretaste of the theme of the rationality consistency approach which we shall suggest is promising for predicting and understanding individual choice. We shall return to this idea of consistency between ambition and perception of what is realistically available later.

In examining all three hypotheses Roberts could establish no clear cut rejection or acceptance and concluded that among young people in Britain at least, occupational choice does not play the key role in the entry to employment that Ginzberg and Super suggest. He lists three types of evidence to support his conclusions:

1. Most occupational mobility is not anticipated. Ambitions in fact adjust to occupational changes rather than changes being planned in order to realise previously developed ideas.

2. Many school leavers fail to enter their chosen jobs but few are dissatisfied with the employment they do obtain.
3. Young people are not over-ambitious. They certainly have fantasy ambitions which are soon abandoned and their later ambitions become based on the occupations they expect to enter rather than on vocations which they would ideally choose to follow.

Roberts therefore rejects the Ginzberg and Super approach and proposes in its place the opportunity structure explanation. His argument is that the school leaver's proximity to certain jobs is the result of the structure of educational institutions, the family and early work experiences. In other words the momentum and direction of school leavers' careers are determined by the way in which their job opportunities become cumulatively structured and young people are placed in varying degrees of social proximity, with different ease of access, to different types of employment. The ambitions of school leavers adapt to the direction that their careers take and are not major determinants of the occupations that young people enter.

Roberts is adopting the position that choice is not an open ended activity, although the act of choosing clearly exists. However the social structure has fed the individual through a process which eventually leaves him in close proximity to certain kinds of work. It is from this level or status of work that the actual occupation is chosen and once selected, acts as a springboard for future occupational choice which for most people, will always be at a similar status level. The difficulty and obvious limitation of the opportunity structure idea is that along with other processual schemes it cannot in itself offer an explanation of why a particular job

was chosen in preference to another within the same status level.

Another approach to occupational choice that is essentially processual concentrates on the ordering of needs. As a result of the socialisation process certain social groupings may have a common ordering of needs which results from their contact with family, school, peers, neighbourhood and other institutions within society. Individuals develop certain priorities and these motivate his actions in terms of certain selected goals which are seen as sources of satisfaction for these predominant needs. Needs are, in a sense, certain desired end states which may be achieved in the choice of an occupation. Psychologists have often used the word 'need' to mean a lack of something which the individual is driven to try to make good. In terms of occupational choice he may achieve this desired end state and thus make good what is lacking. Included in this category are the needs identified in the Maslow (1948) typology which are: The physiological needs; the safety needs; the need for belongingness and love; the need for importance, respect, self-esteem and independence; the need for information; the need for understanding; the need for beauty; and the need for self-actualisation.

Centers (1948) investigated the possibility that certain groups have a common ordering of needs. He classified occupations into five groups and asked samples from each of these groups to distinguish the type of job that would appeal to them most; the ten options include factors like opportunities for leadership, security, social service and independence. Centers concludes that these value preferences express important differences in needs, the lower strata for instance set a high premium on security whereas self-expression becomes more important among the higher strata. This approach

tackles the problem of occupational choice at a very early stage in the individual's development, when the basic aspirations towards a high or low status occupation are formed. On this basis, people for whom safety and security have never presented pressing problems can afford to search for occupations which are likely to fulfil such needs as leadership, self-esteem, power and self-expression.

Rosenberg (1957) suggests that people entering different types of occupation have basically different outlooks on work as a facet of life. Work may be an end in itself or just a means to obtain leisure and luxury, or alternatively provide an opportunity to be of service to others, the exact nature of the work being of less importance.

Similarly Simpson and Simpson (1960) recognise that the values and personal influences which accompany the choice of basically different occupations are systematically related to each other and to the nature of the occupation chosen. Although they attempt to distinguish between those choosing business occupations, scientific and aesthetic occupations and general cultural occupations, the sample consists entirely of college students who thus have in common the decision to approach a career through the paths of education beyond school level. The same limitation applies to Rosenberg's (1957) own empirical investigation into the choice of careers following college education, and the British study of Swinhoe (1967) of the factors affecting career choice among full-time students at a college of commerce.

The limitation however springs not from the context of the studies per se but from the inadequacy of the theoretical framework in terms of which they are carried out. The failure to generate hypotheses capable of verification at an empirical level in other contexts contributes to the fragmentation

of approaches. There is no particular limitation in studying students or sixth formers for one is merely examining the occupational preferences of those, whose opportunity structure, in Roberts' sense, is further or higher education. If studies of such groups based on a processual scheme had, however, yielded hypotheses, we should not have been forced to blame our lack of progress on contexts but would have realised that the boundaries of the framework and not the contexts were the cause of the difficulty.

It is interesting to note that the Swinhoe study almost offers a solution to this difficulty by combining a factorial dimension into his general processual approach. This study deals not only with the satisfactions sought by students in a career but also with the influence of family, peer group, school, vocational guidance and brief work experiences on occupational choice. The data revealed that parents left the choice of career to their children and offered only encouragement never interference. Schools, which were predominantly grammar schools, offered some vocational guidance but only 20% of the sample considered that their school help had been adequate, a strong complaint amongst students being that their school seemed to be solely interested in getting their sixth form into a university or college of education.

The processual view recognises that the process of occupational choice is lengthy and may still continue when training for a specific occupation is undertaken. Becker et al (1961) studied the professional socialisation of medical students and demonstrated how the idealism of the student entering medical school has to be subordinated to a perspective tied to the solution of the immediate problems presented by training routines. However the idealism persists and later finds expression in their professional attitudes to the practice of medicine. Lortie (1959) however, discussing the impact

of law school considers that professional socialisation takes place after graduation, as students leave law school only with a hazy idea of what a lawyer's job is really about. Carper and Becker (1957) discussing the problems of adjustment to an occupation suggest that when conflict occurs it centres on disparities between parental and occupational expectations; whereas young engineers had little difficulty in meeting their parents' expectations, as engineering was understood by their parents as leading to positions of prestige and economic return in industry, physiology students often had parents who had wanted their sons to have a medical career and physiology was used as a stop-gap measure if medicine was denied to them. In the course of their training, however, many of the students come to accept their profession's ideology that physiology is superior to medicine. The third group of students in this study, the philosophers, experienced little conflict over parental expectations as the graduate study of philosophy does not represent an occupational commitment for the student and in this study the sample of students did not come from backgrounds with strong family influences.

Westby (1960) discussing the career experience of the symphony musician found that although the young musician was concerned with artistic and professional values, the older musician becomes settled in his ways, as success comes early or not at all, and once his own limitations became apparent, the older musician withdraws from the values of his youth, rejects the quasi-bohemian style of life and becomes a community involved man.

A study of changes in occupational preferences during time spent as an undergraduate is offered by Hind and Wirth (1969). This study draws on the work of Davis (1966) who showed that in high quality colleges students

tended to move away from those occupations which demand great intellectual commitment during the undergraduate years, and that this shift occurs more often in high quality than in low quality colleges. Hind and Wirth suggest that as students progress through university they are in competition for a number of rewards i.e., high grades. Students tend to measure their ability with reference only to their classmates rather than to their age group as a whole. Consequently those who receive lower grades are expected to evaluate their academic performance negatively and move away from occupational goals which have high academic pre-requisites and generally to lower their occupational aspirations. By investigating changes in choice over a period of four years Hind and Wirth concluded that it is not simply a selective institution that will drive students away from academically demanding careers but that students, even those of apparently high ability are driven away from academic careers and the traditional professions if they receive low grades. We ourselves shall later return to this point on the influence of academic success on choice.

We are now in a position to compare the factorial and processual approaches to occupational choice. Whilst the factorial view considers the connection between antecedent variables and occupational choice, the processual scheme incorporates the factors into a time sequence. Thus job choice is the result of cumulative experiences within the process of socialisation. We now turn to the rationality framework as applied to occupational choice which focusses on the actual point of entry to a job, rather than on antecedent factors contained within the process of socialisation.

The Rationality Framework

The rationality element in occupational choice has been suggested by a number of authors but the approach is most fully articulated in the work of Box and Ford (1967).

Rationality has many components; it is attributed to those views which can be shown to be based on facts or on science, indeed on evidence that can be justified. Rationality is also goal directed and rational beings are seen to be judgemental, decision making, choice declaring creatures. Rationality can also be seen as a form of sub-cultural value but it is not in this sense that the term is used here. This framework is called a rationality approach simply because it concentrates on decision making, often at the individual level, but almost always on decision making based on evidence available to those actually deciding.

Box and Ford (1967) suggest that a common, if unstated, theme seems to be found in the literature of occupational choice, that is a focus on the reconciliation of values and expectations with opportunities available. Occupational choice represents the culmination of a process in which hopes and desires come to terms with the realities of the market situation. In this situation the individual is seen as attempting to realise his occupational values in his choice of employment and thus his choice is a function of his values and his perception of the chances of realising them in the alternative occupations. Box and Ford's demonstration consists of two basic propositions:

1. That in choosing between alternative occupations a person will rank the occupations available in terms of the relation between his values and perceived characteristics of the occupation; the higher the coincidence between the characteristics of the employment and the individual values, the higher the rank.

2. The higher the person perceives the possibility that he will obtain employment in the higher ranked occupations the more likely he is to choose that occupation.

A sample of final year chemistry undergraduates were classified into three groups according to their differential commitment to the values of the scientific community. These values were expressed via the norms of:

1. Communalism - the imperative to publish academic work in order to share knowledge.
2. Disinterestedness - to seek a position in which rewards such as power, income and other material benefits are secondary to the intrinsic rewards of scientific research.
3. Organised scepticism - to accept no claims on trust but to examine each including his own in an attempt to falsify it.

The three groups of scientists were seen as

- (a) the Public scientist who accepts all three norms
- (b) the Private scientist who has internalised only the second and third norms and
- (c) the Instrumental scientist who attaches little importance to any of these norms.

Respondents were asked to rate salaries, freedom of publication, freedom to choose research projects etc., on a five point scale for both industrial and university employment. The replies showed that the different types of scientist opted for different occupational choices, the public scientists for instance who perceived university as offering more professional freedom, preferred university to industrial work, but only if he anticipated a high degree result. The important point about all this is that whilst most students saw industry as providing better salaries and universities providing

more freedom, for different students different features of the two locales assumed importance.

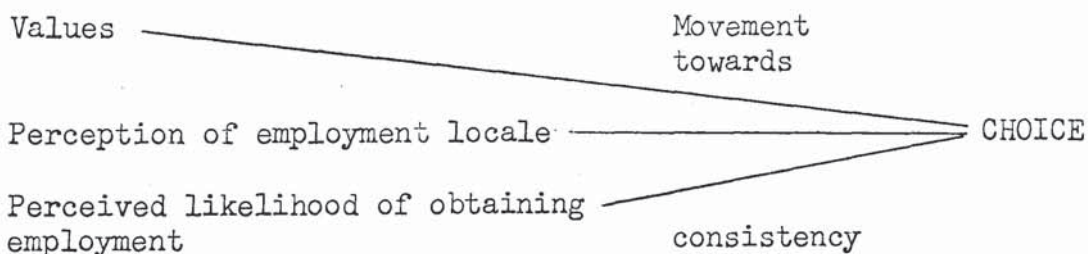
A measure of the students' likelihood of obtaining the preferred employment was taken by asking the respondents what class of degree they expected to obtain. It was argued that a first or upper second class honours degree would be necessary for a successful university career and this was classified as a 'high' result. Any other expected result was classified as a 'low' result.

When all three variables i.e., values, perceived characteristics of preferred locale and likelihood of obtaining that job, are taken into account the prediction rate of occupational choice is quite high. For example 80% of public scientists perceiving university as providing better professional freedom than industry and expecting a high degree result, chose academic employment, whilst less than 10% of instrumental scientists perceiving industry as providing higher salaries than universities and expecting low degrees chose such employment.

There are two major problems which Box and Ford's investigation uncovers and which are of an empirical nature in essence. As the authors themselves have pointed out, their own analyses was empirically limited as it only considered students preferring industrial or university employment, some occupations which clearly might have been considered e.g., teaching, having been ignored. In addition the empirical test offered by Box and Ford only gives examples of secondary choice. Their respondents had already made one basic choice which was to read Chemistry at university, and were therefore left with a relatively narrow occupational spectrum from which they could choose.

Nevertheless the Box and Ford findings have wider implications than may have appeared in their own study. In essence the rationality consistency framework rests for its successful application on a level of consistency between certain independent variables. These variables are the individual's commitment to certain values which derive from his socialisation, secondly his perception of the characteristics of the occupations open to him, and finally his perceived likelihood of obtaining a position in those occupations.

The consistency aspect means that an individual's commitment to certain values is supported by his perception of the characteristics of the occupations open to him and that he perceives a likelihood that he will obtain the desired type of occupation. Values play a part by inducing the individual to seek out employment which he sees as offering support for those values. The consistent individual will therefore choose an occupation that is accessible and which also offers support for his value commitments. Such consistency can be measured by scores on Likert and Semantic differential scales as will be shown later. In the meantime the diagram below illustrates this rationality consistency framework.



It has three independent variables which can each be seen as playing a part in determining the individual's occupational choice, and certain predictions about occupational choice can be derived by considering the direction and strength of these variables. As the level of consistency

between the variables increases so does the confidence level of job prediction. This approach also has the advantage of not being limited to initial job choice but may be used to explain any number of subsequent changes.

It is arguable of course that one empirical study does not adequately demonstrate the usefulness of this rationality consistency framework. The approach is however found elsewhere in the literature and is often applied to school leavers entering employment for the first time. At first sight it may appear that the assumptions of rationality contained in this framework are unrealistic in that it could be argued that the transition from school to work for many children cannot be described as a process of choice at all. They may not know the full range of jobs available to them and have no means of differentiating one job from another.

Carter (1966) has argued that "when we come to trace the stages of the move from school to work we will see that many of the inadequacies which I have indicated, manifest themselves in the haphazard method of finding jobs, the casual way in which jobs are left and new ones found....."

Yet for an individual's behaviour to be rational and hence fall within the scope of this framework it is not necessary for him to have a complete knowledge of all the available alternatives. No matter what the school leaver's values, no matter how acquired and however mistaken his perception of employment and his own chance of obtaining various jobs, it is still possible to determine the extent to which he attempts to distinguish between jobs.

Some spectrum of occupations available to young people can exist as E.M. and M. Eppet's (1963) study of teenage values among working class Londoners indicates. They argue that fewer than one in three were unrealistic

in their goals and wishes for jobs. Support for this idea comes from Carter (1966) who suggests that "fewer than ten per cent of the two hundred Sheffield boys and girls could be said to have serious job ambitions that they had no hope of fulfilling. On the contrary the Sheffield children had clear ideas about employment that was not our sort of work - posh jobs that are for people who've been to grammar."

In the work of Clements (1958) a study of 271 children attending grammar schools, technical schools and secondary modern schools in the Manchester area, there is an implied use of the rationality framework in the choice of occupations by fifteen year old leavers. "The analysis of jobs chosen and of those mentioned as to be avoided, suggested that these children did not choose from the wholerange of occupations though they may not have realised this - their mental endowment and their social and educational milieu have established broad limits, the particular segment of possible occupations in terms of which they think. It does not occur to the secondary modern boy that he might at least aspire to become a barrister, whilst the clever grammar school boy seldom entertains even the notion of becoming a semi-skilled mechanic and positive choices have been made from a restricted number of possibilities."

R.N. Morris (1969) adopts the rationality framework in his study of entrants to college and university. "There are differences in values and aspirations among the occupations which college entrants subsequently enter One would therefore expect to find links between the value which a sixth former has absorbed and the type of higher education he desires to enter, and between the values absorbed and the type of career which he plans."

One thread in this framework suggests that an individual's entry into an occupation is the outcome of a complex process of interaction between the characteristics of the individual and those of the society in which he lives. It depends both on the individual's hierarchy of choices among various occupations and upon a selecting agency's hierarchy of choices among various individuals. These hierarchies of choice are not however independent of one another since the choices may be assumed to result from some sort of compromise between what the individual or institution would prefer and what they perceive they are likely to succeed in obtaining. Holland (1966) interpreted rationality to consist of seeking out an occupation that was seen to correspond to certain personal orientations. He distinguished six types of occupational environment corresponding to types of person orientation, based on the assumption that valid stereotyped classifications of occupations exist. A person manifesting for example a predominantly intellectual orientation will tend to choose one of those occupations classified as providing a predominantly intellectual environment. Another aspect of the rationality framework examines the role of the vocational self-concept in terms of a person's assessment of himself in relation to the abilities which he believes necessary for success in an occupation. Rosen (1961) investigated this aspect in a controlled laboratory experiment. Adolescent boys were given false information supposedly based on the results of an aptitude test, about their chances of gaining entry into certain occupations. This led to systematic changes in their ratings of the attractiveness of these occupations. For example, of those who were told that they had little chance of entering an occupation which they had

rated as highly attractive, 50% lowered their ratings, and 91% of those told they had a very good chance of entering an occupation to which they were previously neutral, rated the occupation as more attractive. Clearly views as to the likelihood of successful entry into an occupation may influence ideas about selecting that job.

Within the approach there is some measure of agreement that choice consists of a compromise. Blau (1956) refers to occupational choice as "a process involving a series of decisions" and sees the eventual course of action on which an individual decides, as reflecting a compromise between references and expectations. Simon (1957) states "In an important sense all decision is a matter of compromise The environmental situation inevitably limits the alternatives that are available, and hence sets a maximum to the level of attainment of purpose that is possible. The final decision will depend both on the relative weight that is given to the different objectives and on the judgement as to the extent to which any given plan will attain each objective." The same author (1956) pointed out that 'administrative' or 'social man' uses a simplified picture of the situation to make his choice, and in so doing takes into account just a few of the factors he regards as most important and relevant for his purposes, and overall has a limited knowledge of the possible alternatives.

One attempt to describe the way in which people actually behave in making occupational decisions in a rational way is offered by Hilton (1962). He suggested that decisions are derived from an initial set of beliefs or premises. These may be self-perceptions, felt values, perceived attributes of occupational roles or beliefs about occupational opportunities and about the relative benefits to be gained from different occupations. Decision making behaviour is initiated by a stimulus

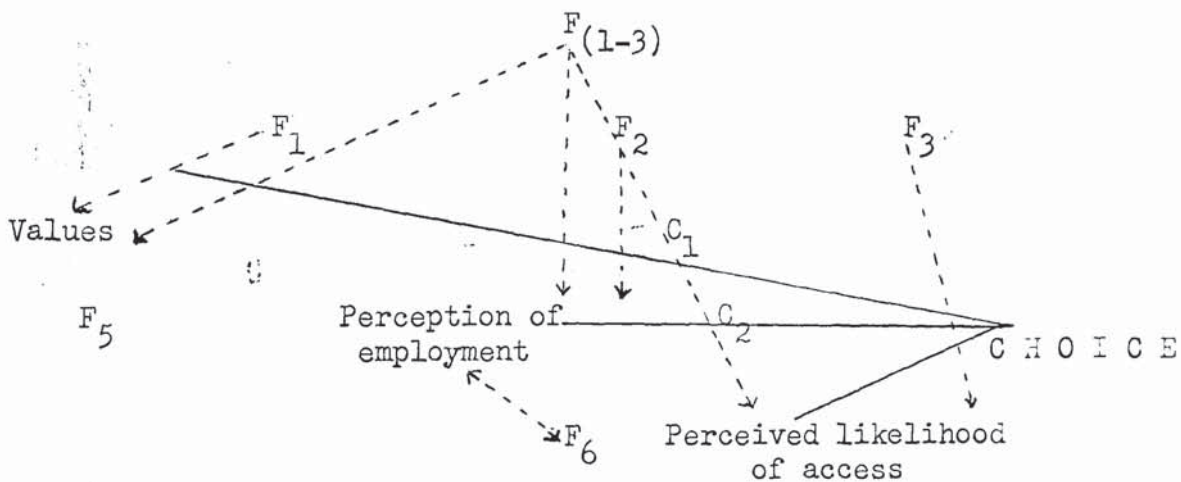
from outside such as the offer of a job or the approach of the closing date for college entry applications. Arising from this stimulus or from one's premises, tentative plans are formulated. These are judged as satisfactory or unsatisfactory on each of the criteria implicit in the decision maker's premises. The plan eventually decided on in the first one to be formulated which is not inconsistent with any premise.

But all of this does not sufficiently demonstrate the value of the rationality consistency framework in understanding and predicting individual choice. In particular the most explicit formulation, that of Box and Ford is empirically limited and is in need of development in a wider context. Nevertheless some measure of understanding of choice is available from this framework even in its limited form, in that a reconciliation between values (produced during socialisation) and opportunity structure is offered. It shows how choice is dependent on value commitments linked to a perception of available alternatives and the likelihood of realising those alternatives (opportunity structure).

We may now talk of the individual as having experienced a pattern of socialisation (a process) made up of the influence of various agencies (the factors) which have equipped him with certain values relating to occupational choice. The alternatives available to him are limited because his proximity to a status level has been structured by those agencies (opportunity structure). He therefore relates his values to those alternatives he sees as (a) existing and (b) specifically available to him. The rationality framework now suggests that he will decide between alternatives on the basis of consistency between his values, his perception of the

of the characteristics of the alternatives and his perceived likelihood of realising the alternatives.

An empirical study extending the approach adopted by Box and Ford will be offered from which a longitudinal study will demonstrate how the processual factorial and rationality frameworks might be combined to provide an understanding of individual choice. These exercises will take place within a sixth form context and will indicate that the combination of approaches illustrated in the diagram below is a promising avenue for research into choice making at a given status level.



C_1 , C_2 and C_3 represent the development of rationality consistency.

F_1 indicates those factors operating on the development of values.

F_2 indicates those factors operating on the development of perception of locales.

F_3 indicates those factors operating on the development of perceptions of likelihood of access to various locales.

$F(1-3)$ indicates that factors may exert an influence on more than one variable either separately or simultaneously and at many points in time.

F_5 and F_6 indicate the mutual influence that independent variables may have on each other.

It should be stressed that the factors identified in the diagram refer to the nature of groups of factors operating within the process rather than suggest a finite number of possibilities. F_1 for example, refers to those factors contained in the socialisation process that influence the development of values. Such factors may well operate during the whole process of socialisation and of occupational choice, and thus have important and long term consequences for decision making. The particular factors to be found in this category would be parents, siblings, the neighbourhood, the extended family, possibly the mass media and probably early school experiences.

The factors contained under the heading of F_2 would not necessarily differ in origin from those seen as F_1 but their particular role is to provide information that leads to an individual's development of a perception of various employment locales. Again parents, elder siblings, peers and early work experiences would play a prominent part here. For some individuals, according to social class membership, neighbourhood, and school attended, teachers and other school based activities would be an important source of influence. Visits to employers, interview, career courses and contact with the Youth Employment service as well as subject teachers, could all play a part as F_2 .

Factors seen as F_3 will be a little more restricted in origin for these are agencies that provide information that is used by the individual to estimate his likelihood of entry to a particular job or range of activities. In some circumstances such information may come from parents' friends, particularly where the activity under consideration is situated within a relatively closed or paternalistic milieu e.g., small scale retailing and

manufacturing, printing and dock work.

Equally, according to circumstances, such information would be provided by the education system. Information gleaned from prospectuses, teachers and peers would indicate what sort of educational performance was necessary to gain access to various activities and this would be weighed against the individual's perception of his school career to date. These would then be combined to give a perception of likelihood of access based on a weighing up of employer or institutional demands and individual perception of their likely satisfaction. A further factor that can operate as an F_3 would be the prevailing economic climate which may in times of depression, involve not only economic stagnation but cut backs in public spending, all of which may mean that a number of previously accessible activities now become more remote. This may in turn lead to a new set of perceptions of likelihood of access and indeed to a whole new range of activities being considered.

$F_{(1-3)}$ in the diagram does not refer to any particular species of factor but indicates that within the process of choice making a factor may exert an influence on more than one independent variable at any point in time. Thus parents may be important both in the development of values, the development of perceptual map of work or education and in the creation of a perception of likelihood of access. This may well be an on-going process over long periods of time whereby the operation of the factor eventually leads to a consistent position on all variables which results in a particular alternative being chosen.

F_5 and F_6 continue this idea of simultaneous influence. Where F_1 , F_2 and F_3 produce a change in one independent variable, that change may in turn lead to a movement in one or more of the as yet untouched variables. This may set up a reaction whereby independent variables readjust (and hence lose a measure of independence) to become mutually reinforcing. From this combined framework specific hypotheses can be developed for application in the sixth form context. The ones that will be examined here are:-

1. That choice between alternatives occurs at the end of a process that varies in length for individuals and social groups.
2. That the process of choice consists of interaction of individuals with factors of socialization that produce a flow of information.
3. That this interaction and information flow is instrumental in the development of values.
4. That interaction and information flow produce a perception of the attributes of a limited range of alternatives.
5. That interaction and information flow produce a perception of the likelihood of access to those alternatives.
6. That interaction produces a sufficient range and depth of information to facilitate discrimination between alternatives.
7. That individuals will tend to choose that alternative which is seen to embody characteristics which satisfy and support value commitments and is perceived to be accessible.

These hypotheses will be tested in the context of entry to higher education or employment after the sixth form. Equally they may be applied to an analysis of job change.

The factors involved in any choice of occupation are encompassed in a process whereby certain variables are subjected to influence from a very early age, whereas others are less stable and are continually being modified as new information is fed into the process. Although an occupation may be chosen on the basis of a level of consistency between variables it does not mean that perfect congruence must pertain for choice to occur. Clearly under certain circumstances the degree of consistency may well be relatively poor. Even so individuals still make a choice on a rational basis from low levels of consistency by simply selecting the alternative that accorded best with the consistency principle.

If the 'fit' between variables remains low then job change is a likely consequence, especially as perceived alternatives become more attractive. Such alternatives may be seen as attractive when an originally consistent position becomes unbalanced due to the influence of new or latent factors. These factors may have either short or long term consequences according to the range of perceived available alternatives. If however the new information derived from a factor causes a major imbalance that persists for a period of time, then job change may ensue as a new and permanent level of consistency is sought. The factors themselves could influence singly or simultaneously any or all of the independent variables considered in the hypotheses. An example of the creation of imbalance might be exposure to adult education perhaps in terms of the Open University where the values created and developed during a lengthy period of socialisation may be subjected to influences that cast doubt on their acceptability. If this occurs, leaving a perception

of current employment that is inconsistent with these new and changing values, then the individual may begin to reappraise his position.

If he perceives a style of work available to him once his Open University qualification is gained, that is attractive in terms of these new values, then change in values, perception of employment and perception of access may begin to complement each other in a new congruent situation.

Thus the influence of one or more factors may produce imbalance in a previously consistent pattern, which can lead to change in other variables as a new consistency is sought. It is probable that an individual's value system will be quite highly internalised and therefore less susceptible than other variables to change. If values remain constant and perceptions change then a new occupation may be chosen that accords with basic values. However, it is possible that changes in value commitment could be initiated that in turn result in new perceptions of present and possible future occupations. This may lead to a reinforcement of the initial change, whereby an alternative is chosen on the basis of a changed set of values and a new set of perceptions of locales. Whatever movements may occur, the hypotheses suggest that changes may be induced by an imbalance in variables caused by the influence of new factors and that the new alternative chosen will be selected on the grounds of the consistency principle. For some individuals a high level of imbalance will be tolerated if no suitable alternatives are seen to exist or be accessible.

Just as job change could be explained within the compass of these hypotheses, so it is suggested could the initial job choice of that majority of school leavers who do not experience more than the minimum legal requirement of education. One apparent difficulty in applying these hypotheses to the

situation of the 16 year old leaver is that the rationality employed by such groups may be of a qualitatively different nature to that of sixth formers. Clearly in deciding between the alternative courses of action that daily confront them people do not make their choices tabula rasa, or upon the basis of an abstract and mechanical rationality. The style of rationality used to arrive at a situation of consistency will not be identical for all groups. Simon (1957) has suggested that "the task is to replace the global rationality of economic man with a kind of rational behaviour that is compatible with the access to information and the computational capacities that are actually possessed by organisms, including man"

The nature of our rationality is the product of our processes of interaction with a social structure, and whilst that structure may be seen in a different way by different groups and the nature of this information derived from it may vary, this does not automatically imply overwhelming variations in quality or degree of rationality.

The behaviour of a sixteen year old leaver could be both explained and understood in terms of the hypotheses. As Lane (1972) suggests: "Assumptions are traditionally made about working class behaviour defining it as motivated by and being directed towards values that are poorly adapted to the contemporary situation and that is by implication non rational. On the contrary such behaviour is fully rational given the information that is available . . . where past experience leads man to believe that life is unstable, insecure and unpredictable they will tend to see investments in the future as being unlikely to give reasonably certain results. As a consequence they will quite rationally within the constraints of the information available to them tend to adopt for strategies of choice investments . . . where the time horizon is near and the pay offs immediate.

In contrast to this, our sixth form will have experiences that indicate the world to be stable and predictable and, equally rationally within the scope of their information, will tend to defer immediate gratification in favour of higher education where their opportunity structure is located. The point is that the pattern of decision making of both sixth formers and of 16 year old leavers may be seen as maximising a goal based on the consistency principle, but this is in the light of differing streams of information creating differing value commitments, perception of the economy and access to its various rungs.

The scene is now set for our exercise in amalgamation. In subsequent chapters the procesual factorial and rationality frameworks will be combined in an empirical study of sixth formers and will attempt to demonstrate how individuals choose from a range of alternative courses of action.

In the meantime the foundations for this exercise will be laid in chapter three when a study of the occupational and educational choices made by a sample of sixth formers will be reported. This study uses the rationality framework as a basis for data collection and will illustrate the potential of this approach as a basis for understanding individual choice and as a foundation for the combination of theoretical frameworks. The sixth form context is particularly useful for a demonstration of this range of identifiable goals. These goals are entry to various types of institution of higher education or to employment and certain fairly well defined qualifications, e.g. examination passes, are needed to reach these

goals. Therefore differences in anticipated success at 'A' level can be used as a criterion for evaluating the chances of attaining each goal. This particular study will be examined in some detail since the methods of data collection and analysis will be employed again.

C H A P T E R I I I

The Rationality Framework under examination

Richards (1971) tested the following hypotheses:

1. That in choosing between alternative post 'A' level activities or institutions, a person will rank those activities or institutions in terms of the relation between his values and the perceived characteristics of the activity; the higher the coincidence between the characteristics and his values the higher the rank.
2. The higher a person perceives the probability that he will be able to undertake the high ranked activity, the more likely he is to choose that activity.

This retest of the rationality consistency framework was an application of it to the entry of sixth formers to higher education and employment. For the purpose of this investigation sixth formers in their Advanced level G.C.E. examination year were chosen for study. There were two reasons for this: firstly, the sample would not be subject to the secondary choice problem faced by Box and Ford; secondly, in taking sixth formers we avoid the difficulty of looking at only one kind of student, our sample consisting of arts and science students. In addition such students would have a wider avenue of post 'A' level activities open to them than would final year chemistry undergraduates.

The investigation fell into four stages: firstly, the preliminary work described below; secondly, the drawing up and administration of the questionnaire to a sample of sixth formers in a pilot study; thirdly, the administration of the questionnaire to the main sample and the interview programme; finally, the analysis of results of the test.

The Preliminary work

A meaningful classification of sixth formers according to their

values was achieved by measuring differential commitment to 'A' level work. By the time the sixth former reaches his 'A' level examination year he has been exposed to various rationales justifying his work in the sixth. These rationales come from the school itself, the peer group within school, the peer group outside, from parents and the community in which he is located.

These values can be said to result from experiences that the individual evaluates and which lead him to regard some things more highly than others. The values of the 'A' level student are related to his general conception of his sixth form experiences derived from his work at school. To obtain an initial measure of these values eighty-four upper sixth formers in two grammar schools were asked to write an essay entitled "Why be in the sixth? - a personal view". This work was carried out in November 1970 when they were preparing for their 'A' level examinations of that academic year and would also be starting to make some decisions about the post 'A' level choice of activity.

An analysis of the essays revealed three value clusters which could usefully be classified as Academic, Instrumental and Careerist.

1. Academic values

By academic values students revealed a commitment to their work in terms of the pleasure which a subject gave, and a recognition of achievement and satisfaction gained from the study of a particular subject in depth. This is the value area which involves studying history for history's sake! The comments which were typical of this value area were as follows:

"I like the subjects I'm studying and would like to carry on studying them for as long as possible."

"The sixth form widens your scope - it's different from the lower school, you don't have to cram in trivial factors, you can think about the relevance of the work you're doing."

"I think if I pass 'A' level I'll have proved to myself that I can do difficult work and cope."

and finally very succinctly

"I like doing 'A' levels - the subjects interest me."

Here then we have a picture emerging - a commitment to the academic nature of 'A' level, to the subject matter and the innate satisfactions derived from that commitment. Such students might be called 'Academic' students.

2. Instrumental values

Here 'A' levels were seen in terms of bringing rewards and satisfactions of a material nature at some time in the future. These rewards were expressed in terms of finance and of the status that 'A' levels would bring.

Typical of comments here were:

"You get a better job if you've got 'A' levels".

"Without qualifications you're stuck with a dead end job and low pay for the rest of your life, I want to get my qualifications whilst I'm young so that I can get on quickly."

"People respect qualifications - look at teachers, they used to be highly respected because they had qualifications which few others had, now everyone's after a piece of paper so they can have some measure of respect."

"It's the money really - you can't make money without qualifications unless you're fantastically lucky and I don't want to leave it to chance."

"I'm not too sure why I'm doing 'A' levels, I think it's mainly that I wanted to get on in life and this seemed a good way to do it."

These comments are those of the Instrumental student who sees 'A' level study as a form of investment which will pay its dividend later in life. This group contrasts with the Academic group who seem to be reaping some reward even now, via the satisfaction which they derive from their work.

3. Careerist Values

The third and final group to emerge were to be called Careerists. These were students who had already made a career or job choice and therefore had a more definite plan of their future occupation than had the Academic or Instrumental student. The careerist has worked out his idea career pattern and was progressing through the stages needed to reach his career goal. Such students saw 'A' levels as one of the rungs which had to be climbed before the career goal could be achieved. This does not mean that such people were necessarily more immediately employment oriented, as higher education was a still further rung to be climbed for many. Typical of comments in this category were:-

"I wanted to become an architect and needed 'A' levels to do this."

"I think I want to teach eventually and I need 'A' levels to get into college."

"It seems important to have a career in mind. I have one or two ideas in mind all of which need 'A' levels and that is why I'm doing 'A' levels now."

"My father is a doctor I think I'd like to be the same - if I do become a doctor I'll have to get good 'A' levels to start with."

Three sets of possible value orientation were thus initially identified (see Richards 1971) from which certain basic distinctions could be drawn. Clearly the process of socialisation has affected sixth formers in different ways and therefore there is justification for taking differential orientations to 'A' level as independent variables classifying students into one of the three categories according to their patterned internalisation of these values.

One further point needs to be made here. There appeared to be no marked differences in the direction of the reasons given by boys as against those given by girls. Both exhibited traits of the three value clusters, Academic, Instrumental and Careerist. We therefore suggested at this early point that sex is not a significant variable in the operation of the model, it only becomes significant when we look at the choice of post 'A' level activity made by the sample.

The same sixth formers were now asked to consider the areas open to them after 'A' level. Four possibilities emerged:

1. Attendance at a University
2. Attendance at a College of Education
3. Attendance at Polytechnic
4. Employment of various natures.

Obviously many varied forms of employment were suggested and it was felt that no meaningful distinction could usefully be made between them in this investigation. Employment was therefore used as an all embracing post 'A' level alternative to and meaningfully distinguished

from the forms of higher education mentioned in that it did not involve full time education. This is not to say that employment involves no training or further education, all that is being suggested is that direct entry to employment as an alternative does not involve continuous full time education on a course in a recognised institution.

Perception of post 'A' level alternatives

The model states that "in choosing between alternative post 'A' level activities a person will rank the activity in terms of the relation between his values and the perceived characteristics of the activity; the higher the coincidence between the characteristics and his values the higher the rank." Therefore the next problem was to gain some measure of the perceptions of the four alternatives which our 'A' level candidates had. Again the initial sample was asked to write a brief description of the characteristics of each of the four institutions to include anything they thought to be

- (a) typical of that institution or activity and
- (b) important to them as individuals.

The essays produced showed a wide variety of perspectives amongst these students but what was significant in their perceptions was that Academic, Instrumental and Careerist elements appeared. It was in fact possible to identify all three characteristics in three of the four activities. Not too surprisingly no one identified employment as an academic activity.

In general students tended to share a common image of a University in that it was the most academic of the four alternatives and that College of Education appeared to rank second as an academic institution.

University, College of Education, Polytechnic and employment were all seen to exhibit instrumental and careerist characteristics with no obvious ranking of institution appearing.

It is not simply the facts about the various post 'A' level alternatives as perceived by the student, that will affect his decision making, rather it is the meaning that he attaches to these facts. In short, for different students different features of the competing locales will assume importance. It follows from our conception of the Academic student that the factors which assume the most critical importance in his assessment of the alternative choices are: opportunities to develop interest in the subject itself; to see that the institution will be staffed by experts; that his peers in that institution will be equally interested in the subject matter and have invested just as much as he has to gain access to that institution.

The Instrumental student will value the status which the institution may have in the wider community, the training for a lucrative career which it may offer, the social contacts it may provide, the salary range it puts within his grasp and the opportunities it offers for his general self-advancement in the wider community.

The Careerist student will value the meaningful stage in his career which that institution offers, or indeed the career goal which it can provide.

Perceived chances of success

The second part of the model argues that "the higher a person perceives the probability that he will be able to undertake that high ranked activity, the more likely he is to choose that activity."

We therefore need an index of the student's perceived chances of obtaining a place in the four alternatives available to him after 'A' level.

The initial sample was asked to indicate what grades they expected to gain in their 'A' level examinations the following summer. In addition they were also asked to specify what grades would be needed to obtain entry to certain courses at each of the three institutions of higher education and into employment.

Responses indicated that the students were well aware that the type of post 'A' level activity they could realistically hope to take up depended very much on the grade of pass they achieved at 'A' level. It is not suggested here that 'A' level grades are the only factors considered by a student to be the essential key to future activities but it is unlikely that students expecting poor 'A' level results would view their chances of obtaining a place at university as good. On the other hand poor 'A' level results do not seem to be a barrier to obtaining a place in other institutions.

Box and Ford along with many others have pointed out that expected results are a poor indicator of actual results. However this did not invalidate the investigation for the hypothesis concerned the individuals assessment of the chances of success - at this stage such an assessment would have been made on the basis of the only information will come from the school itself in that the student will know from his work to date if he is likely to be a good 'A' level candidate and similarly information about University and College requirements will come from those institutions who have already offered places to sixth formers. As we have mentioned a large measure of agreement

emerged from respondents as to the grades of pass which would have to be obtained in order to gain a place in the various institutions under consideration.

The grades quoted by the sample were checked by the author and compared with grades being demanded for various courses in a selection of departments at the University of Leicester, the University of Nottingham, the London School of Economics, the University of Birmingham, the Polytechnic Wolverhampton, the City of Birmingham Polytechnic, Lanchester Polytechnic, the City of Leicester Polytechnic, Trent Polytechnic and at seven Colleges of Education.

We were thus in a position to argue that a meaningful classification could be made between those sixth formers expecting high and low results for each course and institution by establishing a minimum numerical score necessary to obtain entry. The scoring to be used was as follows:

Expected pass at 'A' level Grade A	= 5 points
Expected pass at 'A' level Grade B	= 4 points
Expected pass at 'A' level Grade C	= 3 points
Expected pass at 'A' level Grade D	= 2 points
Expected pass at 'A' level Grade E	= 1 point
Expected 'A' level fail or 'O' level pass	= 0 points *

The Questionnaire Design and Pilot Survey

The preliminary work in our investigation has so far leant towards the use of fairly subjective material and the minimum use of quantification - essays had been used merely as a probe to indicate the possible validity of the model. It was now decided to use a structured questionnaire, which would be administered to sixth formers and this questionnaire

* FOOTNOTE: This represents the usual entry requirements in terms of expected number and grade of pass at 'A' level needed to gain entry to various courses and professional institutes. It is not a guarantee of a place but an indicator of the current market position.

Of those aiming at university	32/40 (80%)	knew	"	"	"	baseline.
Of those aiming at College of Education	19/20 (86%)	knew	"	"	"	
Of those aiming at Polytechnic	3/8 (37%)	knew	"	"	"	
Of those aiming at employment	14/14 (100%)	knew	"	"	"	

would be followed up by instructured interviews carried out in the school towards the end of the investigation. The major reason for using the questionnaire was that the original test of the model by Box and Ford (1967) had adopted a positivistic approach and so, in order for this piece of work to be a reliable replication, it was felt that the same leanings should be found in this investigation. Nevertheless a great many valuable ideas had been generated by the preliminary scheme and it was felt that much substance could be given to the analysis by following up, via an interview, at a later date, a further sample drawn from respondents who had completed the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

The information required for the test was gained from sixth formers during the months of January and February of their final year at school. The schools selected were visited to contact the sample and to supervise the completion of the questionnaire. This avoided any collusion between respondents which might have been possible had they kept the questionnaire for some period of time, and also ensured a high response rate.

The questionnaire was divided into five major sections the first of which was designed to gain certain pieces of factual information e.g. sex, subjects studied, expected grades at 'A' level, choice of institution or activity after 'A' level. Expected results were divided into high or low using the scoring scheme outlined earlier. The details of this scheme are as follows:

1. For those applying to University as first choice

(a) Arts or Social Science course -

a score of 11 or more = high expected score

a score of 10 or less = low expected score

(b) Science, engineering or technology course -

a score of 8 or more = a high expected score

a score of 7 or less = a low expected score

2. For those applying to Polytechnic as first choice -

(a) Arts or Social Science degree course

a score of 6 or more = a high expected score

a score of 5 or less = a low expected score

(b) Science, engineering or technology course -

a score of 4 or more = a high expected score

a score of 3 or less = a low expected score

For all diploma courses at Polytechnic a score of 2 or more equalled a high score - a score of one or zero equalled a low score.

3. For those applying to College of Education -

For all courses:

a score of 4 or more = a high expected score

a score of 3 or less = a low expected score.

4. For direct entry to employment -

a score of 2 or more = a high expected score

a score of 1 or 0 = a low expected score

(See Appendix 1)

Respondents were asked to indicate their commitment to certain statements on a five point Likert scale. The statements were of an Academic, Instrumental and Careerist nature and concerned students' reasons for taking 'A' level. (Appendix 1)

Respondents were then placed into one of the three categories according to the arithmetic mean of their responses to all of the statements. Those having a higher mean on the academic items than on the instrumental or careerist were called Academic, and those having a higher mean on the instrumental items than on the others were called Instrumentals, and so on for the careerist items. The justification for using the arithmetic mean was that it is sensitive to extremes and these were important on the five point scale. We thus wished to distinguish between a neutral response to a statement and one of complete agreement or complete disagreement. Such distinctions were possible using this five point scale and attaching numerical scores to responses.

One criticism of this technique is that some individuals may be forced rather unwillingly into a category. That is, individuals having a higher mean on the careerist items for example, than on the other two would be called Careerist even though their mean may be lower than that of many other individuals who had been classified as Careerist. What is important in this example is that this individual was more Careerist than he was Academic or Instrumental and therefore careerist aspects of post 'A' level locales would be more significant for him than either academic or instrumental aspects. In short, some Academics are more academic than others, some Instrumentals more instrumental than others, and some Careerist more careerist than others. This does not invalidate the analysis as it is the dominant trait in which we are interested and not necessarily the strength of that trait.

The criticism might be levelled in another way. A respondent may have his highest score on the careerist items and therefore be classified

as such whilst at the same time having a higher academic score than others who were classified as Academic because this was their highest score even though the score per se may not have been very high. The answer to the criticism is the same. This model does not need to know the strength of the dominant value in order to operate - it simply needs to know the qualitative make-up of the trait i.e. whether a person is mainly Academic, or mainly Instrumental or mainly Careerist. Whatever the strength of the value commitment it is the dominant one which will become significant in career choice.

The second, third, fourth and fifth parts of the questionnaire were concerned with the measure of each respondent's perception of each of the four post 'A' level choices available. The semantic differential technique, originally developed by Charles Osgood (1957) and associates as part of their quantitative study of meaning, was used here. It consists essentially of a number of seven point rating scales that are bi-polar with each extreme usually defined by an adjective. The respondent is given a set of such scales and his task is to rate each of a number of objects or concepts on every scale in turn. Our own investigation used possible characteristics of institutions as its polar extremes. Identical statements were used for each of the four choices and each respondent completed a differential for each of the alternative institutions (Appendix 1 and 2). In this way a measure of the strength of the academic, instrumental and careerist perception by individuals was made of each of the institutions by calculating the arithmetic mean of the response scores relating to each group of values. (For details of the operation of the semantic differential see A. N. Oppenheim 1966)

The Pilot Scheme

In order to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a small pilot survey was carried out on 52 grammar school sixth formers who were not to be included in the main sample. The 52 pupils were drawn from three schools, one of which was a co-educational grammar school, the other two being single sex institutions. Every third name on the class register of the upper sixth form in the three schools was taken and 27 males and 25 females were contacted. The questionnaires were presented in school and took some 45 minutes to complete after a brief introduction.

An analysis of the responses indicated that distinction could be made between the three types of student we had suggested, the distribution of the sample being 38% Academics, 34% Instrumentals and 29% Careerists. Again analyses of responses on perception of institutions revealed that it was possible to distinguish between institutions being perceived as more or less academic, instrumental and careerist. It was found that each respondent fell unambiguously into one of the three groups and likewise each one gave clear indications which institution be considered to be the most academic, instrumental or careerist. We therefore proceeded to the main sample.

The Main Sample

The main sample was drawn from all five grammar schools in one county borough in the West Midlands. It was drawn from two co-educational grammar schools, two single sex grammar schools and one co-educational grammar technical school, the sample thus being representative of the various types of grammar school. All schools had a sixth form stream in its 'A' level examination year which offered in all a

potential sample of 256 pupils. An attempt was made to contact all of these but due to absences only 236 of the possible 256 were contacted. Nevertheless the sample was thought to be sufficiently representative of the total group and we proceeded with the 236, 121 of whom were boys and 115 girls.

Questionnaires were given out in school and each respondent given a number so that it would be possible to contact those whose answers had perhaps not been clear, and also those who were to be interviewed later. The response rate was 100%.

The Interview programme

The aim was to contact 20% of the original main sample in their own schools after the completion of the questionnaire and to cover essentially the same ground contained in the questionnaire, but in a less structured way. The main sample was divided into schools and sex, where appropriate, and every fifth name was taken from the list which had been compiled at the time of the questionnaire administration, these respondents were then contacted in school. Tape recordings were made of these interviews, respondents being aware that this was happening. In all 43 people were contacted in this way, 22 boys and 21 girls, the same proportion as in the main sample.

The essential purpose of the interview was to gauge the mode and strength of expression of the value clusters we were interested in. In short, we wished to find out how academic, instrumental and careerist values manifested themselves when the rigidity of the questionnaire was removed. The interview was guided to some extent towards these value clusters and also towards the characteristics of employment and the institutions of higher education in question. The end product of the field work was that two sets of data were available;

the interview material described above and the more quantifiable data obtained from the questionnaires. Each interviewee's recording was analysed by content to examine whether value commitments and perceptual frameworks indicated in responses to questionnaire and scale items, corresponded with the views expressed in the interview. There was no contradiction in any of the 43 cases suggesting that the imposition of a questionnaire and attitude scale method of data collection had not distorted the responses of the sample. Interview data was therefore used to emphasise more explicitly the commitments confirmed by both sets of data.

The final stage of the methodology of the investigation was to gauge the reliability of the items included in the questionnaire. This was done by item analysis and T tests. One of the best available measures of a value in question is the total item pool which when purified can be used to gauge the consistency and homogeneity of items contained in a scale. Correlation co-efficients were calculated for each item when related to total score, a method often known as the internal consistency method of item analysis. This procedure was carried out on all items contained in each of the scales which made up the initial questionnaire (Appendix 1 and 2), and then repeated for each cluster of Academic, Instrumental and Careerist items thus finding the co-efficient of correlation between each Academic item with total scores on Academic items and so on for Instrumental and Careerist items. (Appendix 5)

T tests were also carried out on the same items. The method was to consider the frequency distribution of scores based on the responses to all statements. The 25% of respondents with the highest scores and those 25% with the lowest scores on these items were used in T tests to

measure the extent to which a given statement differentiated between the high and the low group. The process was repeated by locating the top 25% and bottom 25% of scores on each Academic, Instrumental and Careerist item and calculating the value of t for each cluster group.

Edwards (1957) argues that "as a crude and approximate rule of thumb we may regard any t value equal to or greater than 1.75 as indicating that the average response of the high and low groups to a statement differs significantly" This particular investigation took a figure of 2.0 as significant (Appendix 5).

The results of the study

The sample divided into one of three value categories. 36% (86) being Academics, 36% (86) Instrumentals and 28% (64) Careerists. A breakdown of value commitment by sex showed no significant trend for anyone value to be associated with a particular sex. This variable only became relevant when considering the activities chosen by the sample: of boys 9.1% chose Polytechnic, 8.3% College of Education, 26.4% direct entry to employment and 56.2% University; of the girls 8.7% chose Polytechnic, 4.7% College of Education, 13% direct entry to employment and 31.3% University.

Apart from choice of activity, sex did not distinguish any one group from another and so the other trends found here applied equally to boys and girls.

An examination of values, perception of activity and choice illustrates a high predictive level when a coincidence between value and perception exists as Table I shows:

Table I Academic Students, perception and choice

<u>Number making choice</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Choice</u>
80% ($\frac{56}{70}$)	University as most academic activity	University
66% ($\frac{4}{6}$)	College of Education as most academic activity	College
0%	Employment as most academic activity	
60% ($\frac{6}{10}$)	Polytechnic as most academic activity	Polytechnic

Thus eight out of ten Academics who saw university as the most academic institution chose it. Similarly two out of three Academics who saw College of Education as the most academic activity chose College. None of the Academics saw employment as the most academic activity but six out of ten academics who saw Polytechnic as the most academic institution made it their first choice.

This level of consistency found amongst Academics is borne out by data from Instrumentals seen in Table II

Table II Instrumental Students, perception and choice

<u>Number making choice</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Choice</u>
53.3% ($\frac{8}{15}$)	Polytechnic as most instrumental activity	Polytechnic
69.6% ($\frac{16}{23}$)	College of Education as most instrumental activity	College
92.3% ($\frac{12}{13}$)	Employment as most instrumental activity	Employment
48.6% ($\frac{17}{35}$)	University as most instrumental activity	University

It can be seen that 53.3% of Instrumentals seeing Polytechnic as the most instrumental activity made Polytechnic their first choice;

69.6% of those seeing College of Education as the most instrumental chose that; 92.3% seeing employment as the most instrumental activity selected employment and 48.6% of those Instrumentals seeing University as the most instrumental made university their first choice activity.

Table III offers the same analysis for Careerist sixth formers:

Table III Careerist Students, perception and choice

<u>Number making choice</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Choice</u>
36.4% ($\frac{4}{11}$)	Polytechnic as most careerist activity	Polytechnic
64.8% ($\frac{16}{25}$)	College of Education as most careerist activity	College
56.2% ($\frac{9}{16}$)	Employment as most careerist activity	Employment
41.7% ($\frac{5}{12}$)	University as most careerist activity	University

It would seem that a reasonable level of prediction could be achieved by linking values to perception of various locales. This particular coincidence of variables is not sufficient in itself to predict choice but serves as a starting point. A fit between two independent variables, that is values and perception of employment locale, furnishes a certain amount of predictability of choice but prediction can improve with the addition of a further variable as will be shown. For the moment the first hypothesis is confirmed i.e. that in choosing between alternative post 'A' level activities and institutions a person will rank the activities and institutions in terms of the relationship between his values and the perceived characteristics of the institutions; the higher the coincidence between his values and the perceived characteristics, the higher the rank.

Values, Perception, expected results and choice

The second hypothesis derived from the model stated that: "The higher a person perceives the probability that he will obtain a place in the higher ranked institution the more likely he is to choose that institution." The analysis was now repeated incorporating the additional variable of expected examination results as shown in Table IV.

Table IV Type of Student, Perception, expected results and choice

<u>Academics</u>	<u>Number making choice</u>		<u>Perception</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
(a)	50%	($\frac{1}{2}$)	Polytechnic as most Academic	low	Polytechnic
	50%	($\frac{4}{8}$)	Polytechnic as most Academic	high	Polytechnic
(b)	50%	($\frac{1}{2}$)	College of Education as most Academic	low	College
	100%	($\frac{13}{13}$)	College of Education as most Academic	high	College
(c)	0%		Employment as most Academic		
(d)	78.9%	($\frac{15}{19}$)	University as most Academic	low	University
	80.4%	($\frac{41}{51}$)	University as most Academic	high	University
<u>Instrumental</u>					
(e)	50%	($\frac{3}{6}$)	Polytechnic as most Instrumental	low	Polytechnic
	55.6%	($\frac{5}{9}$)	Polytechnic as most Instrumental	high	Polytechnic
(f)	44.4%	($\frac{4}{9}$)	College of Education as most Instrumental	low	College
	85.7%	($\frac{12}{14}$)	College of Education as most Instrumental	high	College
(g)	66.7%	($\frac{2}{3}$)	Employment as most Instrumental	low	Employment
	100%	($\frac{10}{10}$)	Employment as most Instrumental	high	Employment
(h)	50%	($\frac{5}{10}$)	University as most Instrumental	low	University
	86.6%	($\frac{13}{15}$)	University as most Instrumental	high	University

Careerists

(i)	40%	$(\frac{2}{5})$	Polytechnic as most Careerist	low	Polytechnic
	33.3%	$(\frac{2}{6})$	Polytechnic as most Careerist	high	Polytechnic
(j)	40%	$(\frac{4}{10})$	College of Education as most Careerist	low	College
	80%	$(\frac{12}{15})$	College of Education as most Careerist	high	College
(k)	50%	$(\frac{3}{6})$	Employment as most Careerist	low	Employment
	100%	$(\frac{16}{16})$	Employment as most Careerist	high	Employment
(l)	33.3%	$(\frac{1}{3})$	University as most Careerist	low	University
	44.4%	$(\frac{4}{9})$	University as most Careerist	high	University

Test of significance for difference in proportions when additional variable is added.

- (a) significant at 0.05 level (b) significant at 0.01 level
 (c) no change (d) not significant (e) significant at 0.05 level
 (f) significant at 0.01 level (g) significant at 0.05 level
 (h) significant at 0.01 level (i) not significant (j) significant at 0.05 level
 (k) significant at 0.05 level (l) significant at 0.05 level.

In nine out of eleven cases the level of prediction of choice is improved when the additional variable of expected results is incorporated into the analysis. For example 50% of Academic students seeing College of Education as the most academic alternative but expecting low results chose college, whilst 100% of those seeing College of Education as the most academic alternative and expecting high results made College of Education their first choice. Similarly 44.4% of Instrumentals seeing College of Education as the most instrumental activity and expecting low results chose it, but 85.7% of Instrumentals with the same perception and expecting high results chose a College of Education. Likewise 40% of Careerists seeing College of Education as the most careerist

possibility but expecting low results selected it whereas 80% of Careerists seeing College of Education as the most careerist activity and expecting high results chose College of Education. These figures indicate the potential of the rationality consistency framework in understanding and predicting choice. The specific contribution is the demonstration that choice is based on a balance between three major variables, value commitment, perception of available alternatives and expectations of gaining entry to certain perceived activities.

The lowest prediction rates are associated with polytechnics, a sector still relatively unknown in schools when compared with university, college of education or employment. This suggests that some information on which to base a perception of an activity is necessary for rational decisions to be made about it, as our definition of rationality at the beginning of this chapter implied. Where information is lacking one's area of choice is naturally curtailed and people are likely to make choices only from occupations about which information is available, and from which a perception can be developed.

It can be concluded from our own test using the rationality framework that such an approach is a viable proposition and furthers our understanding of the process of occupational choice. However the model does lack one aspect which is implicit in the factorial and processual approach that is the variable of time. Our own test and that of Box and Ford considers occupational choice at one point in time, bearing in mind the given conditions at that time i.e. values, perception and likelihood of obtaining employment. But these conditions may clearly change over time and this is not taken account of in the current uses of the model. It could therefore be improved by the addition of a time element so that a

synthesis can be attempted between all three approaches. Specifically we require a study showing the operation of the rationality framework over a period of time examining the effects of 'process' and factors' on the operation of the model.

This need becomes clearer if we return to the interview data gained from our research. There was a feeling amongst some students that their sights must be lowered because they thought that their examination results would not be good enough to get them into a place they had once desired. One boy said:

"I wanted to go to university originally, but quite honestly it's difficult getting in to do Economics and so I suppose I'll go to a Polytechnic. I've had quite a good offer from . . . Polytechnic and I'll probably take it up. Anyway a degree's a degree isn't it no matter where it comes from and who knows I may do quite well in a smaller department."

We can see that the perception of this boy has changed by being placed in a situation where expected results at 'A' level become important. He is almost prepared to see advantages in not going to university as a consequence of his expected examination results. The point is that these expected results do play a part in influencing choice and may themselves change during the final year at school due to additional information gleaned from university offers. Students' horizons are clearly given some shape by their expected examination results as explained by this girl:-

"If I were a brilliant student I'd go to University and if not so bright to Polytechnic. If I failed 'A' level I might go to teacher training college because you can get in without 'A' levels can't you? I suppose I could always get a job whatever happens."

I asked her what she would like to do next year, having already checked from the questionnaire that the girl was an academic student choosing University, seeing it as the most academic institution and expecting high results. To my question she replied:

"I want to do English because I find language fascinating as a subject - actually I don't think I'll do terribly well at 'A' level but this won't matter as I'm going to training college. There are some very good English people in college you know; I think I'll get a lot out of it."

This girl had changed her choice of activity since completing the original questionnaire mainly because she had revised her expectations about examination results - possibly as a consequence of rejection by universities, or possibly due to the results obtained in trial examinations at school. Quite clearly she had altered her perception of the academic institutions. Of course expected or actual examination results are not the only determinants affecting choice nor are they necessarily the most important. The essential point is that traces of redefinition appear in this case, and a new level of consistency has developed as a result of a change in the influence of at least one of the independent variables.

It follows from this that the variables involved in any rationality consistency framework may also change either direction or strength. But why, and how do they change? Indeed are some changes more significant than others in affecting the operation of the model? There is certainly not much doubt that individuals have different goal priorities. According to the action approach, differences in goal priorities are due to differences in values. But how do individuals come to have different

values and why do they project some goals as being more important than others? Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggest that the values an individual holds are received through socialisation into an objective reality. The individual has internalised this objective reality and stock of social knowledge which provides him with an identity. In turn he begins to accept and be able to justify the values of the symbolic universe or objective reality. If values are part of the objective social reality which he has internalised during socialisation, differences between individuals in their goal priorities would indicate that they inhabit different social worlds. At the same time changes in an individual's goal priorities would suggest that further socialisation has introduced the individual to a new world. In order to have a clearer picture of this process we need to know more of the specific ways in which significant periods of socialisation effect value commitment and change. In like manner we need information about the affects of these periods of socialisation on perception of the world, and in terms of occupational choice, perception of what is available and the characteristics of these possibilities.

Some answer to these questions may be provided by incorporating time into a rationality consistency framework. If it could be shown how changes in key variables are affected by specific periods of socialisation and how these changes affect in turn choice, then not only would we have answers to the above questions but we would be closer to an understanding of individual occupational and educational choice.

In this present study we are suggesting that the period of time spent in the sixth form constitutes part of the process of occupational

choice and is thus worthy of consideration. Thus the variables of time included in a rationality framework allows both a factorial explanation and a processual one to be incorporated into one model. There are certain factors at work in the rationality model and they constitute part of the process of occupational choice. By concentrating on one part of that process i.e. sixth form socialisation and the constituent factors at work, we can move closer to an understanding of occupational choice. The question now is what specific factors are involved in the operation of the rationality model at the sixth form stage and how do they relate to the whole process of occupational choice.

Blaikie (1971) has examined in a rationality context the influence of university experience on occupational choice and concluded that there is an association between choice of occupation and occupational goal priorities. Goal priorities, he suggests, are determined by the values internalised as the result of socialisation, and changes in occupational choice are due to the value changes which accompany secondary socialisation in a university. Blaikie's study has empirical limitations since the sample was of a non-random quota nature of third and fourth year students, and that occupational goals at entry to university were measured from memory during the third and fourth years. The naming of occupations which might have been considered by students up to two years previously, clearly introduces the problem of memory error. Blaikie admits that because of the limitations of the study as a whole, it was not possible to test the assumption that value change is the intervening step between re-socialisation and change in occupational choice. We hope to provide some solutions to this problem in our own study.

9.

The work of Blaikie and that of Cotgrove and Fuller (1972) illustrate the current development of work in the rationality arena. In a study of undergraduates Cotgrove and Fuller show that those attending sandwich courses are both more likely to choose industry and slightly less likely to become academics (academic value commitment). Academics were also less likely to choose careers in industry although academics expecting low degree results were intending careers in industry. The important question raised by this study is whether scientists become academics because they have decided to work in universities or whether scientists who have become academics (influenced in part by the education they have received) seek a university post if they think their chances are reasonably good.

The question has a bearing on the whole development of a theory of occupational choice for it asks about the direction of influences, the nature of the influence (factor) and the way these influences operate over a period of time (process). If commitment to an occupation is strong then such commitment may feed back and influence the development of an occupational identity.

We know little of the precise way in which factors influence occupational choice or the development of value commitment. We know even less about the ordering of these factors into a time sequence. Some answers to these problems may be forthcoming by examining in one context the operation of a rationality consistency model and exploring the way in which factors of socialisation operate over time, and hence bring about the rational behaviour leading to a consistency between values, perception, and expectation.

This present study suggests that the time spent in the sixth form constitutes part of the process of occupational choice. Sixth form socialisation is therefore a factor affecting those pupils who find themselves in that location. This factor will be examined as part of a process affecting the operation of rational choice. Such an examination will further our knowledge of occupational choice by showing the extent to which the rationality consistency framework is able to incorporate factorial and processual dimensions into its rationale. Of course the factors and length of process may vary in different social situations, and we shall confine ourselves to an analysis of those who have experienced at least five years of secondary education.

A suitable setting to search for answers to these questions is in the area of occupational and educational choice of sixth formers. This is so for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is clear from the work of Richards (1971) that the rationality model can help us to understand the occupational and educational choice of sixth formers. Secondly a study over this period of time offers a discrete time span with a clearly given beginning and end. This will allow us to isolate the important factors operating on choice during the sixth form. In particular we shall concentrate on the year spent in the upper sixth i.e. the final year in the sixth prior to leaving school.

Morris (1969) has suggested that no firm decisions about post school plans occur before the upper sixth and that choice develops during this final year at school. This view is consistent with that of Liversidge (1967), Jahoda (1953) and Wilson (1953) about the effects of secondary schooling on children's ambitions. Morris argues that the final year in the sixth sees the pupil with a relatively open mind about

occupations or perhaps with some notions of choice, many of which change during the academic year.

We propose to explain those changes by a synthesis of factorial, processual and rationality approaches. The process of sixth form socialisation during the 'A' level examination year will be considered to identify the major factors making up the process and having some bearing on the development of a consistent position on independent variables. The intention is therefore to present something more than a further test of the rationality model, for if it can be shown by empirical investigation how the boundaries of this model can be extended with the addition of factorial and processual dimensions, a useful analytical tool will have been developed.

The potential of this framework in generating explanations of choice has been demonstrated in the empirical studies described above. We now turn to the task of integrating these approaches to explain the patterns of choice adopted by sixth formers.

CHAPTER IV

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

We have implied in earlier chapters that this research is of a longitudinal nature. A longitudinal study may be defined as one which is based upon repeated measurements of the same individuals over time. Such studies are socio- or psycho-dynamic and are interested in change. In the words of the colloquium convened in 1965 by the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development "Only the longitudinal method can show the nature of growth, and trace patterns of change in an individual. Only the longitudinal method can give a true picture of cause and effect relationships over time."

Of course retrospective studies may do this also and are simpler and cheaper to operate, besides lending themselves more readily to precise definition of hypotheses. However human memory is fallible and events which subsequently prove to be critical in their long-term effects may, at the time of occurrence, appear trivial and be quickly forgotten.

We should however proceed bearing in mind that there are difficulties associated with the longitudinal study itself. Individuals for these studies are often chosen in terms of their accessibility and willingness to co-operate which may lead to unrepresentativeness and may make generalisations suspect. Over long periods of time, sample mortality is a problem and it is often difficult to state precisely the comparability of the initial and final groups.

However British experience, particularly that of Douglas (1964) shows that, even over a period of twenty years, it is possible to

maintain the interest and participation of 90% of the initial sample even when this is large and representative. Techniques for assessing interests and attitudes, and estimating, suppressing or allowing for errors of observation have greatly improved during recent years. There are of course still problems as Kodlin and Thompson (1958) suggest, ". . . there is considerable disparity between the soundness of the ideas which underlie the longitudinal approach and the methods by which this approach is carried out. It is this disparity, in some cases obvious to all, that gives rise to uncertainty regarding the value of longitudinal studies. It is well to remember, however, that similar and other shortcomings could be listed for any research, be it concerned with the test tube or with human populations. The shortcomings exist because there is considerable disparity between our conceptualization of how problems should be solved and the adequacy of methods which we can employ to solve them."

Nevertheless, however great the methodological difficulties, the longitudinal approach is essential if we wish to determine the influence of conditions, acting over a period of time on the same individuals.

This study is an examination of the development of occupational choice during the upper sixth form. This period is defined as beginning on September 1st (or the first day of the autumn term) and ending exactly a year later when contact with school would have been complete for these pupils. The final school holiday is included in the period of study as contact between pupil and school may be maintained after the end of term as both parties await the results of 'A' level examinations. This contact may be influential on last minute decision

making after the publication of results, as still further advice may come from school or other bodies at this eleventh hour. We thus include the final school holiday in our time span even though officially sixth formers have left school.

A sample of upper sixth formers entering their final year was selected in September 1972. They were drawn from ten schools in the West Midlands and in West London. The schools comprised of four co-educational grammar schools, two boys' grammar schools, two girls' grammar schools and two co-educational grammar technical schools. Selection from such schools provided a sample of pupils from varying types of sixth form and furnished a sample containing an almost equal number of boys and girls. Each third name on the school register of those beginning their upper sixth year was taken and this procedure yielded a sample of 204 respondents (106 boys and 98 girls).

The sample was to be followed and carefully studied during the year, being subjected to questionnaires on four separate occasions. In addition half the sample completed an intensive interview programme, again on four occasions. There is of course always the danger, in this type of study, of panel conditioning when interviews are used and a certain rapport is sought between interviewer and interviewee. Although this was not a major worry in this study a control and experimental group were thus set up allowing any interviewer/interviewee effects to be noticed. In fact there is no evidence to suggest that such effects did occur in this study as both groups behaved in very similar ways and therefore we shall draw no distinctions between the group interviewed and those only completing the questionnaires.

The method of data collection used in this study was essentially that used by Richards' (1971) test of the rationality consistency framework.

The same initial questionnaire (see Appendix one) was administered asking for information relating to subjects taken at school, estimates of 'A' level results, and choice of activity after the sixth form. A Likert scale measured value commitment and a semantic differential scale measured individual perception of each of the available post sixth form institutions. A further questionnaire was also administered (Appendix 3) dealing with the factors influencing choice of post 'A' level activity. This was completed by all respondents on each of four occasions and in addition formed the basis of the additional interviews conducted with half the sample. This essentially unstructured interview based on Appendix 3 allowed probing and exposition of factors already identified via the questionnaire. These factors were seen as the influence of parents, teachers peer groups, employers visits to factories and other institutions, examinations, interviews and the Youth Employment Service, on choice. Where respondents in general had clearly been influenced to a large extent by one particular source this area was followed up in the interview situation. The same sample of institutions (see Chapter III) were again contacted to establish if any change in entry requirements had occurred since 1970 - this was virtually nil.

The first set of data was gathered in September 1972 when respondents completed questionnaires giving information about subjects, commitment, perception of post 'A' level institutions and choice of activity after the sixth form. A questionnaire was also completed giving information on the factors influencing choice at that time. In all cases schools were visited and questionnaires were completed in class. Collusion between respondents during this time was at a minimum as all the

schools involved created situations whereby pupils were physically isolated from each other as they completed the questionnaires.

Those respondents who were also interviewed gave up their lunch times and breaks, the occasional free period, and even time after school. With the knowledge and consent of these respondents, interviews were tape-recorded for later analysis. During this period of data collection two respondents were not contacted despite further visits to the schools concerned and thus the effective sample dropped to 202. This was further reduced by one non contact in December and one more in February - thus an effective final sample of exactly 200 pupils (103 boys and 97 girls) was arrived at and data reported in this research refers entirely to the final sample of 200.

The position reached in September was that sixth formers were identified and placed into one of the three value commitment categories according to responses to the Likert scale. Perception of institution, expected examination results and choice of activity were also recorded. As with the 1971 test of the model, each respondent fell clearly into one of three value clusters and all were prepared to estimate their results in forthcoming 'A' level examinations and to state a first choice activity after leaving school.

The first term in the upper sixth is one where certain decisions about post school activity may be under consideration. It is during this time that application forms to university are forwarded to the offices of the Universities Central Council on Admissions. A similar activity faces those wishing to apply to a College of Education application forms for which are sent to the Clearing House during the autumn term. Applications to Polytechnic and for employment are not centralised in the same way and therefore this first term may not be greatly influential in these latter spheres of activity.

Other factors may well be at work during this period of time. Students taking entrance examinations for Oxford and Cambridge will in fact go to these institutions to sit their examinations during the early part of the autumn term. The experience of visiting such institutions may be important in influencing future plans as of course may be the outcome of the examinations themselves. Some sixth formers are also involved in taking trial examinations at school which may be influential. In addition students may be called for interview at college or university or by employers or indeed receive offers of places or jobs during this period all of which may influence choice. Schools themselves may also run coaching sessions prior to interviews, visits, or the completion of application forms.

It can be said therefore that this first term in the upper sixth may well yield factors which are influential in the process of occupational choice. In order to examine the effect of these influences a further period of data collection was held in late November and early December 1972. Again respondents completed the questionnaires detailed in Appendix 1, 2 and 3, half the sample was in addition again interviewed and asked to consider the factors influencing their choice process.

A third period of data collection began in late February 1973. This time of year was mainly selected to encompass trial or mock 'A' level examinations which might have been held at school. All schools in the sample in fact had such examinations during this period although not at exactly the same time, the earliest beginning in mid February, and the latest at the end of that month. In all cases the data was collected after the sample had taken their examinations and had the results from their school.

It may well be that these examinations, the last internals taken at school, provide the final confirmation (or destruction) of initial choice. It is not difficult to imagine candidates with high aspirations having their hopes shattered by mediocre performances at this time. It is equally easy to imagine candidates having their own hopes about their plans confirmed. The data collected at this point would yield information on this area.

In addition of course, other factors are probably still at work, the school in general via its personnel, the family, peer group and other wider social influences may continue to influence choice of activity.

The final period of data collection took place in June and July 1973. This was timed to coincide with the end of 'A' level examinations proper and indeed with the end of formal association with school. Questionnaires and interviews were completed as far as possible soon after examinations were finished. In many cases this proved to be difficult as candidates often had to wait for a week or more to take a final paper and under these circumstances 23 candidates were questioned before the final paper was taken. It is not suggested that this made any material difference to replies as all 23 had already sat a minimum of five papers and thus were in some sort of position to estimate their chances of success and relate them to their post 'A' level wishes.

A further 15 respondents were contacted by post as they had left school on the day of the completion of their examinations. Of the fifteen four had originally been interviewed and so although questionnaires were completed by all fifteen errant respondents four interviews were lost. This loss in no great way affects the data obtained from the total sample of two hundred as the four 'missing' respondents still provided information

for tabulation purposes. Of course four developmental interviews were lost and consequently the selection of comments quoted from the fourth stage of data collection was drawn from ninety-five interviews and not from the full complement of ninety-nine (fifty per cent of the total sample). However, it is probably safe to assume that this loss is minimal as a total of three hundred and ninety-two information yielding interviews were successfully completed during the year.

One methodological task now remained. Having studied the choice intentions of a group over a period of time it was obviously important to have information on their actual choice of activity for the following year. The collection of this information would provide comparative data allowing not only the identification of important factors in the process of choice but would also pin-point the time or times when projected choice bore the closest resemblance to actual choice. In short, within the sixth form context one could almost identify the time when choice was actually made.

Respondents were to be sent a brief postal questionnaire asking for information about their activities during the forthcoming year (Appendix 4). The timing of the collection of this information posed a number of problems. It was obviously necessary to wait for the publication of 'A' level examination results in order that our now ex-sixth formers could relate their success or failure to the requirements of outside institutions. But even at this point in time difficulties are presented to the sixth former who might have to make an abrupt change of plan or perhaps consider activities which before had not seemed to be of interest or importance, hence delaying his final choice.

One way of overcoming this difficulty would be to wait until the beginning of a new term (when most decisions would have been made) and

then to ask for this information. This strategy raises two difficulties: firstly there is the danger of sample mortality if contact were broken for a lengthy period of time; secondly during this period factors unforeseen, and therefore unmeasured by the research, may have played a brief but crucial part in final choice.

The solution adopted avoided most of these difficulties. A few days after the 'A' level examination results were published respondents were sent a brief questionnaire asking them to name their choice of activity for next year now that they knew their results and in an open ended question were invited to describe how they actually made up their mind once results were known, identifying any events, people or institutions playing a part in this final decision. Respondents were asked to return questionnaires only when they had reached a final decision, and this meant that replies could be received any time during the next six weeks at best or at worst, never, if respondents didn't bother or simply made no decisions about their activities (although the latter is unlikely for the vast majority).

During the weeks following the publication of results the sixth former may go through a number of decision making processes. For many, re-assessment of activity may not be necessary as their hopes will have been confirmed by their results. For others contact with universities, colleges and polytechnics must be re-established informing these institutions of 'A' level results. In many cases candidates will have been given offers of places on the basis of certain successes and these people are therefore in a position to make an immediate decision once results are known. Others may have to reapply (particularly to Polytechnics) at the eleventh hour if their results were not as expected, or decide on other avenues.

As suggested, all of this could take time but in fact events showed that fears of non-response or undue delay were to a large extent unfounded. Some 55% of the sample replied to this final questionnaire within two weeks of its being sent out. A further 28% were returned during the following week and 3% during the fourth week since despatch. The speed of the return of the questionnaires in fact indicated the speed with which decisions were finally made, for examination of the data showed that in general those who replied quickly were those who did not have to make a re-examination of the situation and reconsider their choice. A response rate of 86% was thus achieved without follow up which is extremely high for a postal questionnaire but not too surprising given the longitudinal nature of this research.

Follow up questionnaires were sent to non respondents a month after the originals, to remind the missing 14% that replies would be appreciated but only when a final decision had been taken. A further 5% eventually replied producing a total response rate of 91%. Thus one could at least relate actual choice with projected choice in 182 cases out of 200 and in any case one had factorial, processual and rationality data for 200, the loss was therefore regrettable, but by no means catastrophic.

The field work for this piece of research therefore took place over a discrete period of time - a school year and corresponding holidays. Within that time span certain points for the collection of data were chosen with a view to identifying important points of time for occupational choice in the school calendar. The timing of data collection has been school based simply because there are relatively easily observable events in the school calendar which are possibly important for decision making.

It is naturally far more difficult to hypothesize precise points in time when the family, or the peer group, for example are likely to be at their most influential, but it is hoped to demonstrate their importance within the school based timetable described above. The research will thus attempt to show the part played by the family, school personnel, school activities, the peer group and wider social influences on occupational and educational choice during a limited period of time. It must be emphasised that there is no suggestion implicit at this stage that all the factors identified are necessarily at their most powerful during the period of the study - indeed to measure the influence of the family alone would require a longitudinal study covering almost a lifetime. The objective here is quite straightforward, to show how, within just one context factorial, processual and rationality consistency frameworks may be combined to explain the selection of one educational/occupational item from a list of alternatives.

CHAPTER V

THE RESULTS - PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

Before beginning an examination of the data it should be made clear what is being demonstrated in the empirical part of this study. It is suggested that a rationality consistency framework can predict choice at the point of entry to, or selection of, an activity. In order to have a level of understanding of choice it is however necessary to see this behaviour as the result of a process of social interaction through which individuals pass. Within that process certain factors can be identified as influencing the direction and force of the process and in turn play a part in the operation of rational, consistent behaviour.

This study will show how certain factors operate within one part of the process of choice making of a particular group, and thus aims to demonstrate the combined value of three frameworks for an understanding of occupational and educational choice. Before any breakdown of factors is offered it is obviously necessary to demonstrate that the rationality consistency framework is applicable to the data collected in this study.

The specific hypotheses set up within the framework are:-

- (1) That in choosing between alternative post 'A' level activities or institutions, a person will rank those activities in terms of the relation between his values and the perceived characteristics of the activity; the higher the coincidence between the characteristics and his values, the higher the rank.

- (2) The higher a person perceives the probability that he will be able to undertake that high ranked activity the more likely he is to choose that activity or institution.

Table 1 below shows choice, the dependent variable related to three independent variables, values, perception of institution and perceived likelihood of success in gaining entry, all measured in September 1972.

TABLE 1: Values, perception of institution, expected examination results and choice

<u>Value Commitment</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Expected Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
1.			
(a) Academic	Polytechnic as most academic	high	43% ($\frac{3}{7}$) Polytechnic
(b) Academic	College of Education as most academic	high	75% ($\frac{3}{4}$) College
(c) Academic	Employment as most academic	high	0% Employment
(d) Academic	University as most academic	high	71% ($\frac{32}{45}$) University
2.			
(a) Instrumental	Polytechnic as most instrumental	high	50% ($\frac{4}{8}$) Polytechnic
(b) Instrumental	College of Education as most instrumental	high	69% ($\frac{9}{13}$) College
(c) Instrumental	Employment as most instrumental	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) Employment
(d) Instrumental	University as most instrumental	high	53% ($\frac{8}{15}$) University
3.			
(a) Careerist	Polytechnic as most careerist	high	33% ($\frac{2}{6}$) Polytechnic
(b) Careerist	College of Education as most careerist	high	55% ($\frac{5}{9}$) College
(c) Careerist	Employment as most careerist	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) Employment
(d) Careerist	University as most careerist	high	55% ($\frac{5}{9}$) University

Table 1 shows that for each value cluster with a consistent perception and a high expectation of success, a high level of prediction can be achieved from the model. Thus 75% of Academics who see College of Education as the most academic institution and expect high enough results at 'A' level to gain entry, chose a College of Education. Similarly 71% of Academics seeing University as the most academic institution and expecting sufficiently good grades at 'A' level chose University. No Academics saw Employment as the most academic activity.

The highest figures for Instrumentals is found amongst those Instrumentals who saw College of Education as the most instrumental activity and expected good grades at 'A' level, 69% of whom chose College of Education. Amongst Careerists the largest percentage is found amongst those Careerists who saw Employment as the most careerist activity and expected high 'A' level grades, 66% of whom made Employment their first choice.

It is noticeable that the smallest percentages in each value cluster are found amongst those respondents selecting Polytechnic. An explanation for this will be offered later. Otherwise the data collected in September offers considerable support for the hypotheses.

The second stage of data collection took place in December 1972 and in Table 2 below, which refers to this data, some changes in the proportions can be seen in a number of cells.

TABLE 2: Values, perception of Institution,
expected examination results and choice

<u>Value Commitment</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Expected Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
1. (a) Academic	Polytechnic as most academic	high	62% ($\frac{5}{8}$) Polytechnic

<u>Value Commitment</u>	<u>Perception</u>	<u>Expected Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
(b) Academic	College of Education as most academic	high	80% ($\frac{4}{5}$) College
(c) Academic	Employment as most academic	high	0% Employment
(d) Academic	University as most academic	high	76% ($\frac{35}{47}$) University
2.			
(a) Instrumental	Polytechnic as most instrumental	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) Polytechnic
(b) Instrumental	College of education as most instrumental	high	69% ($\frac{9}{13}$) College
(c) Instrumental	Employment as most instrumental	high	70% ($\frac{7}{10}$) Employment
(d) Instrumental	University as most instrumental	high	73% ($\frac{11}{15}$) University
3.			
(a) Careerist	Polytechnic as most careerist	high	57% ($\frac{4}{7}$) Polytechnic
(b) Careerist	College of Education as most careerist	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) College
(c) Careerist	Employment as most careerist	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) Employment
(d) Careerist	University as most careerist	high	60% ($\frac{6}{10}$) University

The figures in Table 2 again support the hypotheses derived from the rationality consistency model. A closer examination of each cell reveals however, that in eight cases out of twelve the percentages making a choice from a consistent position have improved. Thus 80% (from 75% in September) of Academics seeing College of Education as the most academic institution and expecting high results chose college. Similarly 73% (from 53% in September) of Instrumentals seeing University as the most instrumental activity and expecting high results made University their first choice. In addition 57% (from 33% in September)

of Careerists seeing Polytechnic as the most careerist institution and expecting to perform sufficiently well at 'A' level to gain access, chose a Polytechnic.

The figures in general not only seem to confirm the hypotheses but do so rather more substantially than those collected in September. In other words, there seems to have been a tendency towards a higher proportion of consistent behaviour (in the sense of the model) at the end of the first term than at the beginning of it. Of course the numbers in each cell are small and hence percentage figures may indicate larger movements than in fact is the case. Thus in order to establish that some movement in consistency and choice patterns has taken place, tests of differences in proportions between cells during the period appear below.

In nine cases the number of respondents in the cell altered between the two dates of data collection. Table 3 below shows whether those differences in proportion were significant.

TABLE 3: Test of difference in proportions

<u>Cell Number</u>	<u>Significance level of difference in proportion between September and December</u>
1 (a)	significant at 0.05 level
1 (b)	not significant
1 (c)	no change
1 (d)	not significant
2 (a)	significant at 0.05 level
2 (b)	no change
2 (c)	not significant
2 (d)	significant at 0.05 level
3 (a)	significant at 0.05 level
3 (b)	significant at 0.05 level
3 (c)	no change
3 (d)	significant at 0.05 level

Of the nine changes in proportion three are not significant but in six cells there is a significant increase in the proportions making a 'rational' choice between September and December. There is therefore a significant increase in the number of Academics seeing polytechnic as the most academic activity and expecting high results, making that particular choice. The same argument applies to those Instrumentals who saw Polytechnic as the most instrumental activity and expected good 'A' level results, and similarly to Careerists with a careerist perception of polytechnic and an expectation of high grades. There are significant improvements in proportions for one cell of Academics (1 (a) those choosing Polytechnic), in two cells of Instrumentals (2 (a) and (2 (d), those choosing Polytechnic and University), and in three cells of Careerists (3 (a), 3 (b) and 3 (d), those choosing Polytechnics, College of Education and University).

One noticeable pattern begins to emerge at this stage, namely an increase in the consistency of those selecting Polytechnic. A movement is also clear in wider choice patterns as consistency begins to increase and leads to the predicted decisions being made. However a rationality framework in itself does not allow a real understanding of reasons for these changes. In order to arrive at a level of understanding one would be obliged to examine the nature and extent of any influences affecting this new level of consistency and new patterns of choice. The nature of the influences would best be examined via a factorial framework but in order to determine the relevance of these influences over time the data would have to be related to a processual framework. Thus three models are needed to explain the movements in educational and occupational aspirations seen among this sample of sixth formers during the autumn term.

Before extending the analysis by applying additional models, we shall first find out whether the trends noted are continued during the following term. Table 4 below reports the value commitments, perceptions of institution, expectations of success and choice of activity found in February 1973, when data was collected following trial 'A' level examinations.

TABLE 4: Values, perception of institution expected examination results and choice of activity in February

<u>Value Commitment</u>	<u>Perception of Institution</u>	<u>Expected Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
1.			
(a) Academic	Polytechnic as most academic	high	75% ($\frac{6}{8}$) Polytechnic
(b) Academic	College of Education as most academic	high	80% ($\frac{4}{5}$) College
(c) Academic	Employment as most academic	high	100% ($\frac{1}{1}$) Employment
(d) Academic	University as most academic	high	85% ($\frac{40}{47}$) University
2.			
(a) Instrumental	Polytechnic as most instrumental	high	89% ($\frac{8}{9}$) Polytechnic
(b) Instrumental	College of Education as most instrumental	high	61% ($\frac{8}{13}$) College
(c) Instrumental	Employment as most instrumental	high	80% ($\frac{8}{10}$) Employment
(d) Instrumental	University as most instrumental	high	73% ($\frac{11}{15}$) University
3.			
(a) Careerist	Polytechnic as most careerist	high	71% ($\frac{5}{7}$) Polytechnic
(b) Careerist	College of Education as most careerist	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) College
(c) Careerist	Employment as most careerist	high	80% ($\frac{8}{10}$) Employment
(d) Careerist	University as most careerist	high	70% ($\frac{7}{10}$) University

The figures in this table indicate a further movement towards consistency in cells 1a, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2c, 3a, 3c, and 3d. Thus 75% (62% in December) of Academics seeing Polytechnic as the most Academic institution and expecting sufficiently good results at 'A' level chose Polytechnic. Similarly 85% (76% in December) of Academics seeing University as the most academic institution and expecting good grades made University their first choice in February.

In order to establish the reliability of these figures it is again necessary to carry out tests of significance of differences in proportions. The results of these tests appear in Table 5 below. Column 1 contains the cell numbers referred to in Tables 1, 2 and 4; column 2 illustrates any significant movement in proportion in cells between December, the second point of data collection, and February, the third point. The third column gives the significance in movement in each cell between September and February, that is between the first and third points of data collection.

TABLE 5:

<u>Cell Number</u>	<u>Significance of differences in proportion, February against December</u>	<u>Significance of differences in proportion February against September</u>
1 (a)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.01 level
1 (b)	no change	not significant
1 (c)	not significant	not significant
1 (d)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level
2 (a)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.01 level
2 (b)	not significant	not significant
2 (c)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level
2 (d)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
3 (a)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.01 level
3 (b)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
3 (c)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level
3 (d)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level

Examining column two above it can be seen that in seven cells there has been a significant movement towards consistency during the period December 1972 to February 1973. An apparently huge increase from 0% in cell 1 (c) in December to 100% in February can be explained by a change in the perception of one respondent. Until February no one saw employment as the most academic activity, however during the period December to February one respondent had reached the view that employment was the most academic activity - his case is worthy of discussion for it highlights the working of one factor and we shall return to this later.

A clearer picture of the general trend towards consistency can be gained by looking at Column three. In nine out of twelve cells significant improvements in consistency have occurred between September and February in three cases highly significant changes have taken place. These changes occur in those cells concerned with choice of Polytechnic, irrespective of value commitment. It would seem that Academics, Instrumentals and Careerists are all influenced by a process or set of factors that produce a considerable movement towards consistency between February and September resulting in Polytechnic becoming the chosen activity. An explanation for this phenomenon will later be offered in the context of factorial and processual frameworks.

Two main points, worthy of mention at this stage emerge from a close look at Column three. Firstly, whilst a movement is unidirectional i.e. that despite some changes in proportions within each cell a clear pattern of increased levels of consistency can be discerned. Whilst bearing this in mind, a second point should not be overlooked. Clearly some cells are affected to a greater extent than others between periods of data collection. For example in cells 2 (d) and 3 (b) there

is no change in proportions between December and February, but a significant change had occurred between September and December. Explanations for these movements will be offered later when the factors inducing such changes will be examined and an attempt made to identify the points in time when they are most influential in the development of consistency.

To complete the picture of movement throughout the academic year, data collected in June 1973 is presented below in Table 6.

TABLE 6: Values, perception of institution, expected 'A' level results and choice of activity in June 1973

<u>Value Commitment</u>	<u>Perception of Institution</u>	<u>Expected Results</u>	<u>Choice</u>
1.			
(a) Academic	Polytechnic as most academic	high	87% ($\frac{7}{8}$) Polytechnic
(b) Academic	College of Education as most academic	high	100% ($\frac{5}{5}$) College
(c) Academic	Employment as most academic	high	100% ($\frac{1}{1}$) Employment
(d) Academic	University as most academic	high	91% ($\frac{43}{47}$) University
2.			
(a) Instrumental	Polytechnic as most instrumental	high	89% ($\frac{8}{9}$) Polytechnic
(b) Instrumental	College of Education as most instrumental	high	61% ($\frac{8}{13}$) College
(c) Instrumental	Employment as most instrumental	high	80% ($\frac{8}{10}$) Employment
(d) Instrumental	University as most instrumental	high	73% ($\frac{11}{15}$) University
3.			
(a) Careerist	Polytechnic as most careerist	high	75% ($\frac{6}{8}$) Polytechnic
(b) Careerist	College of Education as most careerist	high	66% ($\frac{6}{9}$) College
(c) Careerist	Employment as most careerist	high	80% ($\frac{8}{10}$) Employment
(d) Careerist	University as most careerist	high	72% ($\frac{8}{11}$) University

Comparing the figures in Table 6 with those in Table 4 we can initially identify any movement taking place between February and June, the end of the school year for these sixth formers. The most striking feature to emerge is that in seven of the twelve cells no change in proportions whatsoever has taken place, illustrating no apparent change in consistency or choice patterns during the period of time. Looking more closely at the cells undergoing change we find a movement towards consistency in three of the four academic cells 1(a) 1(b) and 1(d) and a similar situation in two of the careerist cells 3(a) and 3(d). There is no movement in the instrumental cells.

In order once again to establish whether these movements are significant tests of significance in differences in proportions were carried out and appear in Table 7 below. Column one shows cell number, column two June proportions compared with February proportions i.e. fourth stage of data collection with third, and column three shows September proportions compared with June proportions, that is the fourth stage with the first.

TABLE 7:

<u>Number of Cell</u>	<u>Significance of differences in proportion, February against June</u>	<u>Significance of differences in proportion, June against September</u>
1 (a)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.01 level
1 (b)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level
1 (c)	no change	not significant
1 (d)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.05 level
2 (a)	no change	significant at 0.01 level
2 (b)	no change	not significant
2 (c)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
2 (d)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
3 (a)	significant at 0.05 level	significant at 0.01 level
3 (b)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
3 (c)	no change	significant at 0.05 level
3 (d)	not significant	significant at 0.05 level

The data in Table 7 confirms that three of the four academic cells show significant movements towards consistency between February and June and that one careerist cell behaves in that fashion. Other cells show no change or a non significant change between February and June.

It would appear then that Academics move still further towards a position of consistency on independent and dependent variables during this final time span, but that this movement does not apply to Instrumentals and Careerists. For these latter groups the point of highest consistency was reached between the second and third periods of data collection that is sometime between December 1972 and February 1973. The reason for these differences in patterns of behaviour will be established later.

The third column in Table 7 provides a summary of the general direction of consistency and choice patterns during the year and it can be seen that there are significant developments in consistency in ten out of twelve cells. As we have noted, some patterns of consistency are achieved earlier than others and we shall proceed to analyse in more detail the timing of the arrival at such a position and the factors influencing its development.

This preliminary analysis demonstrates, on four separate occasions, the usefulness of a rationality framework which had previously been subjected to a few empirical tests. More significant than this demonstration, is the evidence indicating movement within the sixth form context whereby rationality consistency reaches a peak some two thirds of the way through the particular period being studied. The rationality framework itself can only highlight this phenomenon, it can do little to

account for the development of consistency nor can it specifically identify the factors within this process and show at what point in time they are at their most influential.

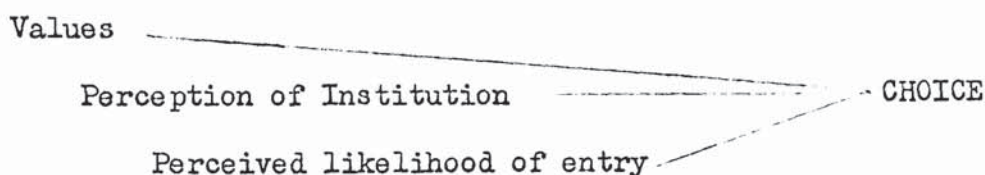
It is the intention of the next chapter to try to fill these gaps by pointing to certain explanations for the movements described above and to suggest how and when factors operate to produce this movement towards consistency. In addition an attempt will be made to answer some of the perplexing questions raised by the preliminary examination of data in this chapter.

CHAPTER VI

AN ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

This chapter presents an examination of the changes in strength and direction occurring in each independent variable. These changes will be analysed and explanations put forward as a consequence of adding factorial and processual dimensions to the rationality framework.

It will be remembered that this framework can be depicted as in the diagram below:



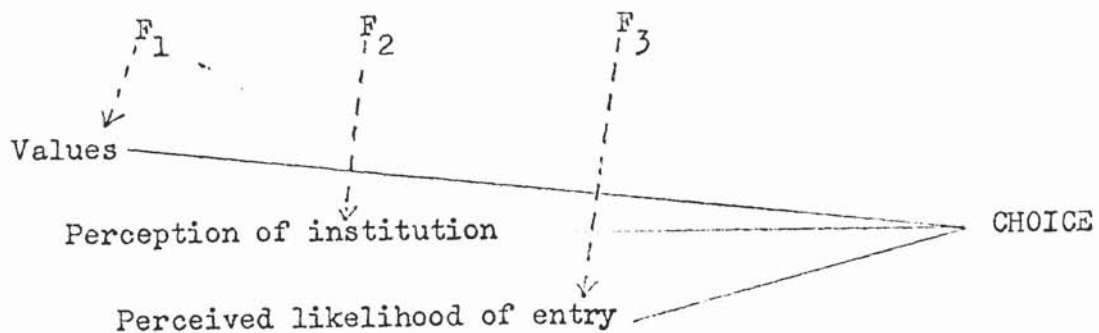
This framework contains three independent variables which are all considered to influence the dependent variable, choice. The general prediction derived from the model is that a high level of consistency between the independent variables will produce a pattern of choice which can be explained as a consequence of that consistency.

In the previous chapter it was suggested that a movement towards a position of consistency occurred amongst sixth formers during their final year at School reaching a high point for most during the penultimate term. Since each independent variable is seen to play its own individual part in the general development of consistency each may be subject to different sets of factors. Such factors have often been classified by source, distinguishing between those factors that are home and neighbourhood based, those school based, and those emanating from wider society. Whilst this distinction is useful in some contexts it will not be strictly applied in this analysis. Rather, independent

variables will be examined in turn to illustrate movements which lead to the development of consistency - such movements will be interpreted as the result of the influence of certain factors operating as part of a process.

The variables to be considered are firstly values, secondly perception of certain post 'A' level activities and finally perceived likelihood of their attainment. No attempt will be made to present an account of the whole range of factors acting upon independent variables since this will follow in more detail in the following chapter. Case studies will be used to illustrate the mechanisms underlying the movements in strength and direction of independent variables from which tentative explanations of such change will be offered. The main intention is however to demonstrate that the incorporation of factorial and processual dimensions into a rationality consistency model can help to explain movements seen in both the independent and dependent variables.

The explanation now offered may be illustrated in the diagram below:-



F₁ summarises those factors identified via case studies that are seen to operate on the variable of values, F₂ refers to those factors influencing perception and F₃ those leading to a development of perceived

likelihood of entry. The main focus will be on the mechanisms involved in the development of variables rather than on the range of factors contained in this process.

1. Values

We begin by considering the role of values in the development of choice during the final school year of sixth formers. Many values of course could have been identified in this piece of research but the analysis was restricted to the three value clusters identified in previous studies as having a particular relevance to post 'A' level choice. Clearly an individual's values develop at an early age as a result of contact with the family during socialization. At the age of four or five he is introduced to the values of individuality and perhaps achievement when he first enters formal education.

His first acquaintance with academic, instrumental and careerist values will come later in life probably crystallising at the secondary school and will undoubtedly be influenced by wider sources than simply parents and teachers. These three values may well be fostered by the mass media particularly television and films which in many ways impress on the viewer the values of instrumentality. The point here is that a longitudinal study of this nature does not allow a precise analysis of the factors in the general process of socialization that have led to the development of these values. However more importantly such a study would be possible given time and resources, for with an adequately formulated theory of occupational choice one could show in a factorial and processual sense how values develop and how in a rationality consistency sense they influence choice.

In this present study respondents were divided into value clusters on four occasions during the year. Although they had developed value commitments which were directly relevant to their sixth form milieu from many as yet undetected sources, one could at least plot any movements taking place in values during the year and relate them to the operation of certain factors.

Two hundred respondents were classified into one of the value clusters at each point of data collection. No great difficulties were encountered in classifying respondents as each individual fell clearly into one of the three clusters. Thus on each occasion all respondents were either dominantly Academic, Instrumental or Careerist. Table 8 below shows the distribution of value commitment throughout the year. (See appendix 6)

TABLE 8: Value commitment in September and December 1972

February and June 1973

<u>Type of Student</u>	<u>September</u> Number of Students	<u>December</u> Number of Students	<u>February</u> Number of Students	<u>June</u> Number of Students
Academic	37% (74)	37% (74)	38% (76)	37.5% (75)
Instrumental	35% (70)	35% (70)	33.5% (67)	34% (68)
Careerist	28% (56)	28% (56)	28.5% (57)	28.5% (57)
TOTAL:	100% (200)	100% (200)	100% (200)	100% (200)

X^2 test not significant

Table 8 shows that very little movement apparently takes place in value commitment during the final school year. It would appear that a maximum of three people change their value commitment between any two periods of data collection. However this table could disguise many movements because of its apparent simplicity. A number of possible changes could have taken place:

1. Although proportions in each cell have made no significant movement nevertheless many individual changes could have occurred e.g. the 37% who were Academics in December may have been a totally different group to the 37% who were so classified in September.
2. The distribution in the table may mask differences in value commitment caused purely by sex differences in the sample.
3. Although commitment to a value cluster may be dominant in each respondent on all occasions has the strength of this commitment remained the same? If not then a change in strength may well be crucial in explaining any movement towards consistency.

Let us consider each of these difficulties. An individual analysis of responses indicated that only 3 out of 200 respondents actually changed value commitment during the year. As Table 8 shows no apparent change took place between September and December and in fact no real change did occur as each respondent indicated the same value commitment in December as he had done in September.

In February however, two respondents originally Instrumental had become Academics and a further Instrumental had become Careerist. By June some slight reversal had taken place. One of the original Instrumentals who became an Academic in February remained so throughout the year. Another Instrumental who became Careerist in December remained so throughout the rest of the year and one Instrumental who became an Academic in February had swung back to an instrumental commitment by June.

Thus less than 2% of respondents had changed their value commitment. This is not surprising given the length of time over which value

commitment had been built up. For many of these respondents values had probably developed at least five years before the collection of this data and had been reinforced by school, family and peers. There is much evidence to suggest that even deliberate attempts to change values in laboratory situations have a low degree of success because of the generally deep rooted nature of a value commitment. (see Milgram (1965) Lifton (1957) Newcomb (1952) Schein (1957)). Yet three of our respondents did apparently change. Although they represent a very small minority it will be revealing to examine in some detail these three cases.

Case A

Boy originally classified in September as Instrumental had the following mean scores on value commitment:

Instrumental 4.15	Academic 4.00	Careerist 2.4
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In December the same respondent presented these scores:

Instrumental 4.15	Academic 4.1	Careerist 2.2
-------------------	--------------	---------------

By February his scores had become

Instrumental 4.00	Academic 4.2	Careerist 2.2
-------------------	--------------	---------------

and by June the following picture emerged

Instrumental 4.00	Academic 4.25	Careerist 2.5
-------------------	---------------	---------------

Although the respondent was classified as Instrumental in September and December his academic scores are also high and very close to his instrumental mean score. As the year progresses this respondent becomes slightly more academic and slightly less instrumental so that behind the shift in value commitment lies a steady movement towards a new position. The interesting point is the proximity of instrumental and academic scores throughout the year. Here is a respondent with an almost equal commitment to two values so that in September he was a rather

ambiguous instrumental in that his academic commitment was also strong. His careerist commitment remains weak throughout the whole year and seems to have little significance for him whereas the instrumental and academic values which he seems to have internalised cause, as we shall see, some measure of conflict which he resolves by emphasising one commitment eventually to the detriment of the other. Thus by June this boy had become much more clearly academic than he had been instrumental in September when originally measured.

The apparent reasons for this conflict and its resolution are extremely revealing for they show that value commitment is likely to be influenced in an indirect way via contact with agents or institutions which alter perception and then value commitment. This respondent was also in the interview sample and thus his comments are available for analysis. The following extract is worth quoting at some length:

"I'd always wanted to get a good job. You know one with a good steady salary and one which made my years at school worthwhile. My Dad was particularly keen on this being a self made man. My brother had gone in with Dad and was doing quite nicely for himself. Somehow though I wasn't very interested in hosiery and wanted to do something with electronics. I'd no idea what mind you - just something. I got some pamphlets and things from our Physics teacher who explained to me that there were full time degree courses where electronics played a big part. Well I started to think about this and soon realised that I could kill two birds with one stone. After all there's plenty of money in electronics and I would still be doing something well paid and at the same time enjoying it."

This extract was taken from an interview conducted in February when the academic commitment had overtaken the instrumental. In June according to the mean scores the academic commitment was now dominant as the following extract from an interview at that time shows:-

"Well if all goes well with my 'A' levels I shall go to University to read Physics and my course will have a strong electronics element. I've worked pretty hard during this term because I've somehow become very interested in work, its almost as though I've found something I've always wanted to do although I'd never realised it before. I haven't made up my mind about a job when I leave University, but I know in what field it will be. I shan't be going into hosiery money or no money although I still don't intend to work for peanuts."

Here we can see how an academic value commitment has overtaken an instrumental one. As the mean scores show both are still quite strong and certainly the original interest in instrumentality hasn't disappeared - it has simply taken second place for the time being.

Case B

A girl originally classified in September as an Instrumental on the basis of the following mean scores:

Instrumental 3.70	Academic 3.40	Careerist 3.00
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In December the following figures emerged

Instrumental 3.65	Academic 3.50	Careerist 3.20
-------------------	---------------	----------------

In February the girl was reclassified as Academic in view of these figures:

Instrumental 3.6	Academic 3.75	Careerist 3.15
------------------	---------------	----------------

In June she was again reclassified as Instrumental on the basis of the following data

Instrumental 3.70 Academic 3.60 Careerist 3.20

The most noticeable feature about these mean scores is their similarity throughout the year. Although this respondent can be classified into a value commitment at each stage of data collection she is very much a borderline candidate. A score of three indicates a neutral position and thus in all three areas she exhibits a low and relatively uniform value commitment. A detailed breakdown of the scores of all respondents at each of the four stages of data collection shows that this girl is the most ambiguous of respondents. However her changes do not invalidate the model for as in Case A it can be seen that this girl oscillates between the two value commitments having the highest scores throughout the year. There is, for example, no haphazard swing to a careerist commitment and this cluster has consistently the lowest score throughout the year.

Here then perhaps we have a respondent experiencing a mild form of conflict but probably it is not as extreme as Case A for the value commitment scores are generally lower. An examination of some of the interview data collected from this respondent highlights this mild conflict more clearly:

"When I went into the sixth form I had no idea why I was there. I had always been told at school that I had to do some work to get on in life and that without qualifications I would get nowhere. My father is a journalist and very keen on his job because of the 'purity' of the work he does. He says that reporting is honest and provides an important public service. According to my mother however, it doesn't pay very well.

Take my mother, she's very status conscious, likes to be well thought of and is always saying to me that I shouldn't rely on marrying a man with a good job but that I should make sure I can look after myself."

The extract from an interview recorded in September 1972 clearly reveals the lack of commitment and the cross pressures to which the girl is subjected. Whilst school and mother seem to be putting forward a primarily instrumental orientation as perceived by the girl, her father offers values closely resembling an academic commitment. It is not surprising therefore that the instrumental and academic value clusters both rate highly for the respondent. By February 1973 the dominant commitment had become an academic one yet traces of uncertainty still remained.

"The only thing I'm really interested in is English I suppose. I enjoy reading novels even set books and I think I'd certainly like to do something with English. In fact a fortnight ago I went for an interview at Polytechnic for a place on a general arts degree course. I was quite impressed with the place particularly the staff I met who seemed lively and go ahead. The course looks good because it has a strong emphasis on the novel which is my main interest and I'll probably go to if I get decent enough 'A' levels."

It is interesting to note that the respondent has now reached a position of consistency. She can be identified as having a primarily academic value commitment from the responses to questionnaires and similarly the semantic differential shows her as seeing Polytechnic as the most academic activity available. She also expected sufficiently good 'A' level results at this time to get her in. Therefore

after some initial uncertainty and wavering she had chosen an activity from a consistent position.

When she was contacted again in June 1973, the girl had reverted to an instrumental commitment. An examination of responses to questionnaires and completion of scales showed however that other variables had also changed direction to give a new position of consistency. The girl was now an Instrumental who saw Polytechnic as the most instrumental activity, expected sufficiently good 'A' level results and made Polytechnic her first choice activity. So whilst being consistent in terms of the rationality model nevertheless it was a new consistency that had emerged. The following extract from the interview recorded in June 1973 reveals the mechanism leading to the new position.

"Since I last saw you a few things have happened. I got a rejection from Polytechnic for that arts degree which made me start to wonder what I'd do with a degree if I got one. Anyway I asked my English teacher who reckoned I would get nowhere in publishing, which is something I'd like to do, if I hadn't a degree. I don't think I'd get into university (nor do my teachers!) and anyway I think I'd prefer a Poly and they say Poly's are best for job training. Anyway I've had another interview at Polytechnic and here the course was quite different. It took four years some of the time actually spent working, possibly in publishing. I think this is a good idea because it gets you used to work and you make contacts so that you may land a good job when you qualify. I think Polytechnic courses are much more useful than University ones because they lead you more directly to a good job."

It is interesting to note that despite the change in value commitment and perception of institution, the changes have been such that a consistent position is still maintained. At this point the rationality consistency model can offer no further explanation and one needs to seek in a broader context the reason for these changes.

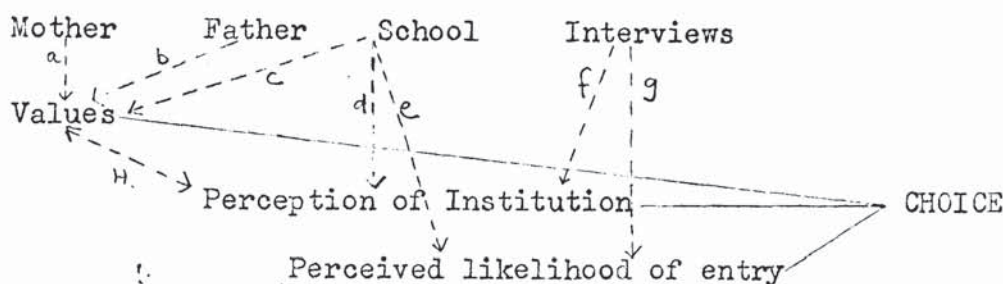
A detailed examination of responses to questionnaires shows that factors identified by the girl in February 1973 as most influencing her choice were numbers 21 (interviews at Polytechnics), 29 (father), 7 (main subject teacher), 8 (head teacher) and 30 (mother). Here is a confirmation of the presence of those factors quoted in the interview. Ranking those items we find that 21 (interviews at Polytechnics) comes out top followed by 29 (father) and 7 (main subject teacher) joint second, 8 (head teacher) and 30 (mother) fourth and fifth. If these influences are ranked again in June we find the following order, first 21 (interviews at Polytechnic), second 30 (mother), third 7 (main subject teachers) and 8 (head teacher) and fifth 29 (father).

It seems that the generally instrumental influences of school and mother begin to outweigh the more academic influence of father between February and June. Despite these changes the Polytechnic interview was considered by the respondent to be the most influential factor in both February and June even though perception of that institution seemed to have changed between those dates. Hence from this respondent emerges a highly illustrative picture of rational consistent behaviour in terms of the model, and by examining that behaviour in a factorial and processual context we begin to see the importance of these dimensions in understanding the development of consistency.

Although the majority of sixth formers do not change value commitment during the final year at school, it is still possible to explain

the behaviour of those who do by recourse to model amalgamation. The addition of these new dimensions leads to a clearer understanding of the development of choice. The mechanisms now drawn out from this case study offer an explanation for both conformists and deviants which would be an important requirement of any theory. Although many sixth formers do not change value commitment the case study helps us to understand those who do change, and in this way we can begin to understand the nature of the mechanisms that produce values in all sixth formers.

The diagram below represents the general movement towards consistency of this respondent and highlights some of the factors that have been at work:



It will be remembered that the respondent in case study B had two major value commitments, an academic and an instrumental, between which she oscillated. Arrows A + C show the primarily instrumental influences of mother and school whilst arrows B indicates the more academic influence of her father. In this case study the school is seen via its personnel to influence not only value commitment (arrow C) but also perception (arrow D) and perception of likelihood of entry (arrow E). Of course these three factors, mother, father and school could have influenced any or all of these independent variables in many possible combinations. The point is that for this respondent at least, an understanding is achieved of the mechanism by which certain factors influence the shape of the process that leads to consistency.

Rather like school, interviews have more than one directional arrow, F for example showing how the interview provided direct evidence of the orientations, the social relationships and values perceived to be part of the institution. Arrow G shows how the interview also gave direct evidence of entry requirements which could then be related to estimates of performance at 'A' level developed in school (arrow E again). Arrow H shows how in this case values and perception of the institution have a mutual relationship in that a value commitment may lead to a selection of perceptual stimuli supporting that value commitment and suggests the possibility of a new perception gained via the interview (arrow F again) allowing an original value commitment to re-emerge thus creating once again a consistent position.

This lengthy detour into one apparently deviant respondent illustrates how factorial and rationality frameworks may help to explain the fluctuating behaviour of one respondent. It is clear by now that when both frameworks were incorporated into a rough explanatory scheme a clear picture began to emerge. Although many factors were not included because they were not considered relevant by the respondent and hence given low scores, what we have seen in a representation of the development of choice through the eyes of one respondent. From that case a tentative amalgamation has been put forward which allows a formal explanation of that respondent's behaviour. The missing link in all of this is the time variable for we see fluctuations in movement only during one small section of time in the general development of choice. That is we see the final movements and the factors at work at that time - we do not see the whole process. Nevertheless this does not mean

that whole processes cannot be viewed, cannot be studied. We shall show later how a more meaningful processual model may be incorporated into the factorial rationality amalgamation we have proposed.

Case C

The reader will remember that there is a third deviant in terms of changing value commitment. The information on this respondent is unfortunately less detailed than in cases A and B for this boy was not part of the sample subjected to interview.

In September 1972 he was placed in the instrumental group on the basis of the following value commitment scores:

Instrumental 3.8	Careerist 3.6	Academic 2.0
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by December these scores had emerged:

Instrumental 3.7	Careerist 3.6	Academic 2.2
------------------	---------------	--------------

In February a slight reversal had taken place

Careerist 3.6	Instrumental 3.4	Academic 2.1
---------------	------------------	--------------

and in June the position was:

Careerist 3.6	Instrumental 3.4	Academic 2.4
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We can see that instrumental and careerist values dominate to the exclusion of an academic one which is consistently given a low a score. During the year the respondent was re-classified from Instrumental to Careerist. A careful look at the scores above shows that this reclassification becomes necessary, not because of a rise in careerism, but because of a steady decline in instrumentality.

Since there is no interview data on this respondent one needs to examine completed questionnaires and scales if one is to suggest an explanation for this change. Looking at the second independent variable, perception of institution employment was seen in September and December to be the most instrumental activity and in fact was the choice of this respondent on both occasions. Employment also had a high careerist rating on both occasions which continued to grow during the year thus by February and again in June, employment was seen as the most careerist activity. Thus as the instrumental value commitment has declined and given way to a careerist commitment so perception of the chosen institution has also changed from instrumental to careerist. As in case studies A and B we can again see that a new position of consistency is being developed from an original consistent position which however had not been firm. Two variables are changing in this case study, the value commitment and the perception of institution but whilst changing they are operating unidirectionally i.e. moving from instrumentality to careerism.

This change has been plotted within the context of a rationality consistency model but the change itself remains unexplained. An examination of the factors influencing choice may produce an explanation however.

In September and December 1972, those factors considered to have a 'great influence' or 'quite a large' influence on choice were numbers 16 (Literature from employees), 26 (Periods spent working in industry), 28 (Friends at college or university) and 29 (Father). For this respondent school based factors are not considered to have more than "some influence". By February the same set of factors are quoted as having the most influence on choice, but a new one is now added that of 31

(parents' friends) which is now considered as having a "great influence". These same factors are given a high score in June. At first sight it appears that basically employment oriented factors have been the agents leading to the choice of employment - thus a positive evaluation of employment gained via the influence of these factors associated with a movement towards consistency. However reference to these factors does not explain entirely the change in perception of employment and value commitment that has occurred. A look at the respondent's reply to question four (Appendix 3) "Write down one reason why you chose it" (first choice activity) is illuminating. The boy in fact gives two carefully spelled out reasons when he writes, "because a friend of my father's told me about a small engineering factory he had, and the unhappiness of my friends at college who find it pointless."

Now we can see the part played by factor 31 (parents' friends). This new influence clearly offered some kind of careerist confirmation of employment to the respondent. It is surely no coincidence that this factor is mentioned at a time when change in value commitment and perception of institution are clearly taking place. The second part of the comment explains the presence of factor 28 (Friends at college and university). Here the respondent has been influenced by the negative feedback he receives from this source, feedback which confirms a picture of higher education as not having the necessary attributes to suit his value commitments. The last point will become important when the general distribution of factors is examined, for the importance of negative influences has now been highlighted. In other words a respondent may give a very high rating to a factor influencing his choice of activity because that particular factor turned him away from a certain alternative. Furthermore as can be seen from case study C above these negative factors

may operate directly on independent variables, perception, values or likelihood of entry and need not have a direct link with the dependent variable, choice. It is possible for factors to play a rather unobtrusive part in choice as they are merged into a factorial rationality scheme, their influence becoming latent rather than manifest, delayed rather than immediate. For example, the respondent Case C has clearly felt that his observations of friends at college and university were meaningful throughout the year, as throughout the period of the study this factor was given a high score. It was not until February when a further factor, the information provided by a friend of the respondent's father was also introduced that the peer group at college became very important. It was at this time that these two factors confirmed a perception of employment as essentially careerist and college and university as unsatisfactory in these terms. (The last point is borne out by measurements of the respondent's careerist perception scores of all three institutions of higher education, which on the semantic differential are much lower than the careerist perception of employment.)

The time devoted to these case studies has been justified. They have highlighted further facets of the factorial rationality combination and pointed to possible explanations of the apparently deviant behaviour noted in these three cases. In fact on closer examination their behaviour was seen to accord with the hypotheses of the rationality model and the addition of a factorial dimension allowed a more thorough understanding of the movements predicted in those hypotheses. We have shown how values when not strongly internalised may be changed by new perceptions and that these changes in perception specifically lead to revised value commitment which are consistent with new perceptions. The changes in perception themselves were shown to be influenced by both positive and negative evaluation of factors by respondents.

The reader will remember that an examination of the case studies arose in response to the possible difficulty referred to at the beginning of this chapter when it was suggested that statements of total value commitment at certain times in the year may lead to a masking of vast movements in value commitments. A huge majority of respondents ($\frac{197}{200}$) did not change values during the year and those who did ($\frac{3}{200}$) were seen to have changed within the terms laid down in the rationality consistency model - that is from weak consistent positions they sought out newer and firmer positions.

We can therefore conclude that values themselves as independent variables on choice, once internalised are not subject to great directional change. Those individuals who do change have found themselves having no clear cut commitment but broadly accepting some facets of more than one value cluster. They therefore oscillate between the two dominant ones (as measured by scores on the Likert scale), those clusters having a low score playing no particular part in the establishment of new commitments. It is rather the work of certain factors derived from family, school and wider society, which operate on the independent variables which in turn leads to the emergence of a dominant value that is consistent with the other changed independent variables.

At the beginning of this chapter a further potential difficulty was suggested namely that a summary of value commitments at various points in time may mask differences in commitment between sexes. Table 9 below helps to dispel this difficulty by showing that at no point in time were there any significant differences between the number of boys and girls having each value commitment.

TABLE 9: Value commitment and sex(a) September 1972

<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		
		<u>Number of Students</u>		<u>Number of Students</u>	
Academic	39%	(40)	35%	(34)	
Instrumental	33%	(34)	37%	(36)	
Careerist	28%	<u>(29)</u>	28%	<u>(27)</u>	
Total:		(103)		(97)	(200)

x^2 test not significant

(b) December 1972

<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		
		<u>Number of Students</u>		<u>Number of Students</u>	
Academic	39%	(40)	35%	(34)	
Instrumental	33%	(34)	37%	(36)	
Careerist	28%	<u>(29)</u>	28%	<u>(27)</u>	
Total:		(103)		(97)	(200)

x^2 not significant

(c) February 1973

<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		
		<u>Number of Students</u>		<u>Number of Students</u>	
Academic	40%	(41)	36%	(35)	
Instrumental	31%	(32)	36%	(35)	
Careerist	29%	<u>(30)</u>	28%	<u>(27)</u>	
Total:		(103)		(97)	(200)

x^2 test not significant

(d) June 1973

<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
	<u>Number of</u> <u>Students</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Students</u>	
Academic	40% (41)	35% (34)	
Instrumental	31% (32)	37% (36)	
Careerist	29% (30)	28% (27)	
TOTAL:	(103)	(97)	200

x^2 test not significant

Table 9 shows that there are no significant differences in value commitment between sixth form boys and girls at any point during the final school year. Therefore it can be argued that no one sex is subject to the influence of a set of factors that produce a significant change in the inter-sex ratio of value commitment. As far as values are concerned in the sixth form, sex is a constant.

The third difficulty raised at the beginning of this chapter concerned possible changes in the strength of value commitment. It is clear that directional change is rare and occurs when individuals have weak or conflicting value commitments. However movements in strength of commitment are evident as in Table 9 (b) below:

TABLE 9 (b): Mean score on dominant value commitment

<u>Value commitment</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
(a) Academic	4.42	4.55	4.65	4.67
(b) Instrumental	4.37	4.5	4.54	4.68
(c) Careerist	4.43	4.59	4.63	4.68

Analysis of variance significant at 0.05 level for all groups

The above means are quite large which would be expected since it is the mean of the dominant commitment of each respondent that is measured.

Nevertheless a significant increase occurs in all value commitments as the year progresses.

Although changes in value commitment have been used in case studies to explain mechanisms of change, it is clear from the above data that for the majority of sixth formers values become more firmly internalised as the final school year progresses. The pattern is clear and similar for all three value clusters in that Academics, Instrumentals and Careerists show an increase in commitment during the year. It would seem that during this time confirmation of earlier commitment occurs. This may be due to a number of reasons: it may be that certain factors intensify their influence during this time as one June interviewee suggested.

"School has always seemed to me subject oriented but particularly so this year. Form teachers and particularly subject teachers are pushing like crazy to make sure that you're doing enough work to get through the exam"

Another respondent said:

"I've been very much aware of my parents putting the screws on. They're very keen for me to be the first in our family to get into university and since Christmas they've been pushing me hard."

The slight hint of bitterness in these two quotations does not represent a general view. One girl said in February:

"It's really since I've been in the upper sixth that the work has got more interesting. I'm just beginning to feel intelligent now and have some understanding of the world around me".

A boy said in December:

"Now that I've realised that this is my last year at school, it's make or break if I'm really going to be a success. I've got to get into university if I'm going to do medicine and since I don't want to do anything else, it would be stupid to waste my time."

It seems reasonable to suggest that many sixth formers do see this final year as of crucial importance and therefore become more committed to a set of values. For many there is little evidence on which to change values, for school and family seem to confirm positions already arrived at. Of course the stimuli affecting the development of values have been selective, not all respondents have been exposed to the same factors and many may well avoid influences that initially create doubt about original commitments. A male respondent in February said:

"I've been fairly clear in my own mind why I was taking 'A' level - that was because I wanted to teach. I've had this interest in kids for some time now, particularly watching and helping younger one's to learn. Some of my friends tell me that there's no money in primary school teaching, particularly if you haven't got a degree. Anyway I did apply for a place on a polytechnic course just in case I didn't get into training college and the poly called me for interview - but I didn't go. These places are really geared to industry and high finance aren't they - what would be the point of going there just to get a degree - they're not interested in potential teachers, just tycoons."

This respondent had been classified as an Academic in September and December with a score of 4.8 (0.38 points above the mean for that

group in September and 0.25 points higher than the December mean). In February he was totally committed to an academic cluster scoring 5.0 and less than 2.0 on Instrumental items (September 2.7 and December 2.6).

Here is an example of a respondent increasing his main value commitment quite noticeably and reducing the weight given to his 'rival' commitment, instrumentality. As the quotation shows he deliberately avoided contact with an institution that he saw as possessing essentially instrumental characteristics. Not only did he not go for his interview but immediately afterwards gave Instrumentality a very low rating and correspondingly increased his Academic commitment to the maximum, where it remained throughout the remainder of the year.

A careful analysis of the data collected on values reveals other forces at work. If we examine the pattern of increase in value commitment it can be seen that both Instrumentals and Careerists show a fairly steady increase at each time interval. However Academics increase their commitment most noticeably between December and February - is there any reason for this? The scores given by respondents to factors affecting choice of activity revealed certain school based activities at work at this time. In February the following factors, as scored by Academic respondents, show a considerable increase in strength compared with their influence in December. Thus subject teachers increase from a December mean of 3.8 (maximum 5) to a January mean of 4.4 (t test significant at 0.05 level) The most striking increase is in the weighting given to sixth form internal examination results by Academics who gave this factor a mean of 2.4 in September 2.3 in December and 4.4 in February (t test significant at .01 level). This massive increase can only refer to the importance which respondents attach to their trial 'A'

examinations that had just been held. It seems that both teachers and the results themselves exert a powerful 'academic' influence on those committed along that dimension. If the dominant orientation of both staff and pupils is towards the academic then these trial examinations may act as stimuli for both teacher and pupil reaction. Teachers will tend to praise and reward good performance which may lead to pupils responding via an increased commitment to the academic values they have internalised. Here is positive evidence in their eyes from the examination results themselves and from the praise of teachers that an Academic commitment is paying dividends.

The following extract from a February interview with a girl respondent makes this very point.

"For about a month before the mocks our teachers had been pushing us to do well saying that this was the last chance we would get to show whether we knew our stuff before the 'A' levels proper. I was determined to do well and in fact got quite good marks in my mocks. Do you know it all began to seem worthwhile especially when we were told afterwards that the struggle was nearly over and that our work had apparently paid dividends. I can certainly see the point in all of this study when you do well and show what you can do and teachers appreciate it."

A similar analysis of these influences on Instrumentals and Careerists shows no significant movements in mean scores between December and February (t test not significant). We can assume therefore that trial examinations and pupil and teacher reactions to them affect Academics in the main, in that they confirm a commitment to study for its own sake and the intrinsic rewards of academic success. Does this

relationship hold good for those who do less well than expected in their trial 'A' level examinations? It would appear not. By collecting information on performance in these examinations from school records it was possible to compare those Academics who did well in examinations, and those, who did not. Clearly a definition of 'doing well' is needed here and for a working definition simply passing each subject exam taken was considered to be doing well and failing was considered to be not doing well. The pre-examination score of Academics who eventually did well gave an Academic value commitment mean of 4.6 in December. A similar analysis of the scores of those who were to do less well gave a mean score of 4.5. In February when these examinations had been held the mean score of the successful Academics had risen to 4.8 (t test significant at 0.05 level) and the mean score of the unsuccessful remained at 4.5. It would seem from these figures that trial 'A' level examinations exert a positive influence over Academics only when pupils are reasonably successful. Relative failure, that is failing at least one subject in these examinations, seems to leave Academic commitment untouched, and this may be explained by the lack of positive reward emanating from the examination result itself and the possible lack of encouragement forthcoming from teachers for these relative failures. Of course we do not have specific data in this study to test this latter relationship which must therefore remain tentative. Further insight into the importance of value commitment can however be gained by examining some of the differences in factors quoted by each group as influencing choice of activity.

Academics tended to give a consistently high score to school based factors with the result that main subject teachers and friends at college and university received significantly higher scores from this

group that from Instrumentals and Careerists (t tests significant at 0.05 level at all points in time). However in an analysis of factors of this kind one needs to bear in mind that high scores can be given for negative reasons, where factors were seen to divert interest from a particular activity rather than encourage its attainment. This analysis does not attempt such sophistication but merely indicates certain differences in the pattern of factors influencing those with differing value commitments.

Instrumentals consistently rate their father as more influential than do Careerists or Academics (t tests significant at 0.05 level in September and 0.01 level in December, February and June). They also give higher scores to radio and television programmes as influences than do the other two groups (t tests significant at 0.05 level at all points). It may be that fathers exercise a mainly instrumental influence for some, emphasising the application of learning to worldly progress, and the mass media highlighting social status, economic return and the pleasure syndrome.

Careerists do not significantly identify any one body of factors as being more influential than others. Whilst subject teachers, peers, parents and examination results are given high scores they are not significantly larger than scores given to any group of factors that might meaningfully distinguish Careerists from others. For Careerists there seems to be a spread of factors rather than a concentration into any particular source.

A more detailed analysis of the influence of factors will follow later. The argument above has merely attempted to demonstrate that certain reasonably strong associations between factors and value commitment exist. For Academics an association between choice and school based

influences can be suggested, for Instrumentals an association with factors of wider society and for Careerist a broader spread of influence is indicated. The very spread of these latter influences indicates the need for detailed longitudinal studies of the development of independent variables in order that some understanding of the operation of both positive and negative influences may be achieved. High scores only indicate some level of association - they do not lead to an understanding of mechanisms.

Thus to simply associate factors with value commitment tells us that a relationship may or may not exist. If it does exist how strong is the mechanism causing the link and when is it established? The answer to these kinds of questions only become possible when an explanatory system is developed incorporating factorial and processual dimensions into the rationality model. 'When' questions are equally as important as 'why' questions and can only be answered in a processual context.

This analysis of values has suggested why they have certain strengths and directions. Many questions still remain unanswered. We shall continue to search for answers to some of these 'what', 'why' and 'when' questions by turning now to the second independent variable, perception of post 'A' level activities.

2. Perception of available Institutions

There are four institutions under consideration for choice by sixth formers in this study; polytechnics, colleges of education, university and direct entry to employment. It would be useful as part of the preliminary analysis of perception to examine the general perception of these institutions held by respondents. It was suggested earlier that perception is a selective process whereby certain characteristics of an institution are extracted to form the basis of an overall

perception. Perception will therefore be examined in terms of value commitment since they are related variables and Table 10 below shows the perception held of each institution by Academics.

Table 10: Academic Perception

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
12% (9)	12% (9)	15% (12)	15% (12)	saw polytechnic as most academic institution
11% (8)	11% (8)	7% (5)	7% (5)	saw college of education as most academic institution
0% (0)	0% (0)	2% (1)	2% (1)	saw employment as the most academic institution
77% (57)	77% (57)	76% (58)	77% (57)	saw university as the most academic institution
Total(74)	(74)	(76)	(75)	

χ^2 test. not significant

It is realistic to assume that Academics will look for the academic attributes of an institution may be gained through these eyes. In this way one may see the full extent of any academic perception existing since it should be fully articulated for this particular group of people. Table 10 shows that Academics overwhelmingly see University as the most academic institution and that the numerical distribution of respondents having that perception is very constant throughout the year. The overwhelming academic perception of university compared with the other three institutions is probably in part due not just to an individual weighing up of characteristics but also to a societal perception of universities as academic institutions by the community at large. This wider perception by society of universities is expressed in the following extract from interviews. A boy in September said:

"Of course everyone knows that if you want to examine a subject in detail a university is the best place"

A girl said in December:

"You get the brightest people both students and staff at university - it's there that the real experts are."

A male respondent also commented in February:

"Other places are O.K. in their own way but universities have the best facilities for doing detailed and worthwhile work they've got the experts haven't they."

A detailed examination of questionnaire replies and responses to scale items showed that three respondents who remained academics throughout the year made total perception changes. Total perception change is defined as that situation whereby a new institution emerges as having the most academic characteristics for a respondent. Let us again look closely at the changers.

Case study D refers to an Academic boy who saw college of education as the most academic activity in September and December but in February changed dominant perception so that employment was seen as the most academic activity. This is a rather unusual occurrence, since he is the only respondent to have seen employment in these terms. Why the change?

In September his academic perception scores for each institution were low e.g. for Polytechnic 3.9, College of Education 4.2, Employment 3.6 and University 3.8, illustrating a rather uniform, across the board academic perception of these institutions. The same mean scores were found in December. In February the picture had changed somewhat the mean score of academic perception for Polytechnic remaining at 3.9, for College dropping to 3.8, for University rising slightly to 4.0, but for Employment jumping up to 6.0. Thus although no change in value commitment has occurred some very considerable changes have taken place in his

perception of employment. The following extract from an interview recorded with the respondent in February indicates a possible explanation:

"I saw a programme on T.V. the other night about bio-chemical research carried out by . . . company. It was really fascinating to see why research took place and how it was carried out, I'd never realised before that industry actually took so much care about research."

Clearly the respondent has lighted on the research aspect of academic work and via a television broadcast has come to see employment in a new light. This change in perception is supported by the factor scale which gave a score of 1 on a 5 point scale to the influence of radio and T.V. in September and December but gave the media a maximum score of 5 in February and June. This respondent kept his new perception of employment and his original Academic value commitment for the rest of the year.

Case studies E and F concern two girls, classified as Academics throughout the year who in September and December had seen College of Education as the most academic activity. By February both had changed their perception so that they now saw Polytechnics as being the most Academic institutions. One respondent was also an interviewee and in fact offered me a very plausible explanation for this change when I talked to her in February:

"You get the impression from most teachers that there are only three things to do after you leave school. The great God is University, or if you're not so bright College of Education and if you're really going to let the side down

you go to work. I certainly hadn't got a job in mind at all last Christmas and really didn't think I'd get into University so I thought the only thing for me is College. I knew that people who went there and taught there for that matter weren't exactly stupid since they were turning out teachers and anyway our geography teacher went to College and she really knows her stuff. Last month my friend Jane said why don't you apply to Poly - so I did, just for a change. Well I got interviewed within a fortnight and my goodness what a change that produced. I didn't realise that Polytechnics existed let alone what sort of work they did - you know they do the same kind of work as Universities."

An examination of factor scores given by this respondent confirms the story. In September and December she gave her highest factor score to 'main subject teachers' but in February the main subject teacher score had dropped to 4 on a 5 point scale and friends at school had risen from 3 to 5 and interviews at Polytechnic from 1 to 4. Here clearly is an example of the sixth former who develops a perception which changes as a result of the operation of certain factors, in this case friends at school and an interview, and leads to a new institution seen in a new light. This perception was maintained for the rest of the year and the girl eventually went to a Polytechnic.

The other case is less detailed because the respondent wasn't interviewed. She similarly had seen College of Education as the most academic institution in September and December but by February had elevated Polytechnic to this top position. One may tentatively postulate a similar reason for this change, as was shown in the previous case

study, for in February this second girl gave high scores (5 in fact) to factors 19 a and b (interviews at College and Polytechnic) and to factor 28 a (friends at College) and 28 b (friends at Polytechnic). It is possible therefore that this girl was given, or sought out information from friends she had at one or both of these institutions which, along with interviews she had had at both College and Polytechnic, would help to account for this change in perception.

From this analysis of Academics and their perception of the four institutions in question it is clear that in the main perception when measured in direction alters little. The overwhelming majority of Academics see University as the most academic institution, only one person sees Employment in this light although his interpretation is a very realistic one in many senses, and a declining number see College as the most Academic. This leaves Polytechnic, which is seen by an increasing number of Academics as the most academic institution. Because of the large numbers in the University cell the remaining three are relatively small - nevertheless small numbers do not preclude one final and interesting analysis on academic perceptions.

Whilst it has been argued that directional change is slight no evidence has yet been offered on the strength of perception. Such information can be gained by computing mean academic perception scores of all Academics for each institution. These mean scores are presented below in

Table 11: Mean Academic Score by Institution

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
a)	3.94	4.43	4.98	5.69	Polytechnic
b)	4.64	4.59	4.53	4.51	College of Education
c)	1.27	1.26	1.27	1.25	Employment
d)	6.17	6.28	6.45	6.74	University

Analysis of variance: a) significant at 0.01 b) not significant
c) not significant d) significant at 0.05 level.

The above means are derived from the scores on each academic item for

each institution made by each Academic respondent. We thus gain a general impression of academic perception irrespective of which institution is considered by an individual as being the most academic. Table 11 shows that not only are universities seen by a majority of Academics to be the most academic institutions but that the perception is strongly held. That perception is seen to intensify in strength during the year and to remain the strongest academic perception held. The academic perception of employment remains low throughout the year whilst the academic perception of College of Education declines slightly during the year and the academic perception of Polytechnic strengthens. In September University had been clearly seen as the most academic institution by Academics, followed by College of Education and then Polytechnic with Employment as having few academic characteristics. By June of the following year the academic perception of University has intensified whereas that perception of College has declined. The academic perception of Polytechnic has correspondingly increased with the result that in June Polytechnics have the second highest academic perception having overtaken the Colleges of Education.

We now turn to examination of the instrumental perception held of these institutions and again that perception will be viewed through the eyes of Instrumentals who should offer the clearest definition of the instrumental aspects perceived in each institution. Table 12 below shows the number of Instrumentals having an instrumental perception of any institution during the year:

Table 12: Instrumental Perception

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
14% (10)	17% (12)	25% (17)	26% (18)	Saw Polytechnic as the most Instrumental institution
26% (18)	23% (16)	19% (13)	19% (13)	Saw College of Education as the most Instrumental institution

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
21% (15)	23% (16)	19% (13)	18% (12)	Saw Employment as the most Instrumental institution
39% (27)	37% (26)	36% (24)	37% (25)	Saw University as the most Instrumental institution
<hr/>				
Total:(70)	(70)	(67)	(68)	

X^2 p. not significant

Table 12 demonstrates that there is no clear cut perception by Instrumentals of any one institution as being outstandingly instrumental in nature. A much more even distribution being seen than in the academic perception of these institutions. It is perhaps not surprising that University again comes out on top at least in terms of frequency of perception since the attractions of this institution would be highlighted in a grammar school ethos. from which this sample was drawn. Whilst it would seem that the academic aspect of University has been stressed and perceived, rather than its instrumental characteristics, it is important to remember that these characteristics have not gone unnoticed by sixth formers. The following comments make this abundantly clear.

A girl in September said:

"We all know that University graduates get the best jobs, where can you go without a University degree today."

In December a boy told me:-

"University has everything, experts, and it can lead to a high status job working with interesting people and doing important work."

A February male respondent made a similar point:

"Look at all those Oxbridge people who get top jobs in the Civil Service, you've got to have a degree to make it if not from Oxbridge then at least from Redbrick - its no good having your degree from Wimbledon Tech."

Instrumental perception of Polytechnic, College and Employment are fairly evenly distributed and this fact highlights the importance of individual perception of an institution in the process of choice. There does not seem to be a societal definition which is commonly accepted here, therefore sixth formers extract perceptions as a result of the stimuli they receive from certain factors. As mentioned earlier Instrumentals tend to emphasise factors drawn from wider society rather than from school in particular thus confirming the view taken here that the grammar school influence is primarily an academic one.

There is no significant change in the proportion of Instrumentals seeing University as the most instrumental institution between September and June nor in the proportion having this perception of employment. There is however a significant increase between September and June (test of difference in proportion significant at 0.01 level) in the proportion of Instrumentals seeing Polytechnic as the most instrumental activity and a significant fall (at 0.05 level) in the proportion seeing College of Education as the most instrumental activity.

Of those respondents who remained Instrumental during the year only five changed their dominant institution perception. No case study is offered here because all five were not members of that part of the sample interviewed. However a detailed examination of their questionnaire and scale item responses shows that all five possessed borderline perceptions of the institutions. In other words for all five respondents the initial perception of the institution they had seen as the most instrumental had not been strong. In all five cases the institution which originally had the second highest score became the one that eventually took on the most instrumental characteristics in the eyes of these respondents.

Whilst the timing of these changes shows no particular pattern, one relationship is clearly observable. Although one person had originally seen University as the most Instrumental, two had seen Employment in this light and another two had likewise seen College of Education, all five had rated Polytechnic second in their instrumentality scores. Eventually all five promoted Polytechnic to first place with a considerably higher score than their first choice had received earlier. None went back on this which indicates a considerable increase and strengthening in instrumental Polytechnic perception. This pattern is presented in Table 13 below:

TABLE 13: Mean Instrumental Perception Score for changers

<u>(a) September</u>	<u>Polytechnic</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>University</u>
Case G	3.80	2.90	3.5	4.25
Case H	4.00	2.50	4.25	3.66
Case I	3.75	3.25	4.00	2.50
Case J	4.75	4.80	4.66	3.75
Case K	4.25	4.50	4.00	3.66
<u>(b) December</u>				
Case G	4.00	2.75	3.75	4.33
Case H	5.25	3.00	4.33	3.50
Case I	3.75	3.66	4.00	2.75
Case J	4.75	4.80	4.66	4.00
Case K	4.33	4.66	4.25	3.75
<u>(c) February</u>				
Case G	5.00	2.50	3.66	4.33
Case H	5.25	3.25	4.50	3.50
Case I	4.50	4.00	4.25	2.80
Case J	5.00	4.75	4.50	4.00
Case K	4.66	4.66	4.25	3.75
<u>(d) June</u>				
Case G	5.25	2.75	3.75	4.00
Case H	5.25	3.25	4.33	3.66
Case I	4.75	4.00	4.25	2.75
Case J	5.50	4.75	4.75	4.00
Case K	5.00	4.66	4.33	3.75

Case G had seen in September University as the most instrumental activity, this was still so in December with Polytechnic a clear second. By February the Polytechnic score has jumped by one whole point, improving further in June as the University correspondingly declines slightly.

Case H saw Employment as the most instrumental activity in September with Polytechnic a close second. This time by December Polytechnic has taken over as the most Instrumental with Employment relegated to second place. These positions are hardened somewhat during the rest of the year as the Polytechnic score improves and the employment one lessens. Case I shows a respondent who in September gave his highest instrumental perception score to Employment with again Polytechnic in second place. Positions remain the same in December but by February Polytechnic has taken on more instrumental characteristics than Employment and this relationship is maintained for the rest of the year. Case J highlights a respondent who in September saw College of Education as the most instrumental activity followed by Polytechnic, a position maintained until February of the following year when a change in positions and scores occurs to give Polytechnic first place on instrumentality. In June the Polytechnic score increases even further.

Case K illustrates the change in a respondent who in September also saw College of Education as the most instrumental activity, maintained this in December, produced equal scores in February, but by June had changed perception so that Polytechnic had the highest Instrumental score.

But what of the general trend in strength of instrumental perception during the year, are the case studies above reflections of a general tendency? Table 14 below would suggest an affirmative answer to that question:

TABLE 14: Mean Instrumental Score by Institution

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
(a)	2.93	3.87	4.67	5.84	Polytechnic
(b)	4.71	4.69	4.66	4.59	College of Education
(c)	4.94	5.25	5.23	5.24	Employment
(d)	5.61	5.70	5.86	5.80	University

Analysis of variance (a) significant at 0.01 level

(b) not significant

(c) marginally significant at 0.05 level

(d) marginally significant at 0.05 level

The above means are derived from the scores on each instrumental item for each institution made by each Instrumental respondent. The above figures furnish us with a general overview of instrumental perception irrespective of dominant instrumental perception for any one institution. Table 12 demonstrated the slight numerical preference for University as the most instrumental institution and Table 14 confirms the strength of that perception. Again University is seen by Instrumentals as generally the most instrumental alternative. Perception of employment is relatively clear and constant although a slight rise in the figures can be noticed. Similarly perception of College of Education is again reasonably constant although here a slight fall in clarity of instrumental perception can be seen.

The most striking set of figures however concerns perception of Polytechnic. The instrumental perception made by Instrumental sixth formers is very low in September but increases dramatically during the year resulting in Polytechnic having the highest perception score by June. This pattern is similar to the one detected for academic perception of Polytechnic which showed a considerable increase in score during the year.

Earlier arguments suggested that grammar schools will tend to emphasise entry to University as a desired goal. They will also highlight Colleges of Education as second choice institutions for those who are likely to perform less well at 'A' level, and for those with no further interest in formal education, Employment will be the next step after school. Many schools will find support coming from wider society, from the family, friends, the media etc., who will in their own way also point to these alternatives. Traditionally there has been no place for Polytechnics in the scheme of things firstly because they have a comparatively recent history, and because schools and sixth formers seem to have been largely unaware of their existence. Hence perception of this type of institution has been hazy as exemplified by the low initial perception scores highlighted in this section.

Putting it another way, perception of Polytechnics lags behind perception of other institutions because there has been little evidence available to sixth formers on which to base any perception. They are just therefore unsure of the characteristics of this institution. Yet during the year forces are clearly at work which help to lead to a clarification of perception, and indeed these forces are so successful that perception improves so that for Academics and Instrumentals it is second only to perception of University - an institution having a great deal of support in school and wider society. Is it not surprising therefore that when the rationality model was tested both in 1971 and 1972/73 that its level of prediction was rather low for those choosing Polytechnic. A glance at Tables 1, 2, 4 and 6 will show how prediction for those choosing Polytechnic improves dramatically throughout the school year.

This is so because initial perceptions are vague and based on a limited amount of evidence, but as factors begin to provide evidence so it is built into a perceptual framework. This perception may of course be erroneous but this is unimportant if the sixth former believes it to be correct for he will still use it in his decision making.

This argument helps to explain the improvement in prediction for those choosing Polytechnic referred to in Table 1, 2, 4 and 6 but it also highlights a very important wider issue. If we are to have a complete understanding of choice we need not only to see behaviour in a rational consistent way but also to explain why this kind of behaviour occurs (factorial) and when (processual). On a very practical level it becomes necessary for us to understand what factors lead to perceptions of Polytechnics and when they operate. It may well be that at this moment those factors are appearing too late on the scene for real choice to be in any way affected. If for example application to Polytechnic had to be made by September for entry the following year, it would seem from our data that sixth formers just would not have the evidence on which to base a perception of the institution and would not know what in fact they were aspiring to. This seems particularly important when individual perception is concerned. The data on academic perception shows that a generally accepted academic view of University is taken and a very non-academic view of employment. Data on instrumental perception indicates that no such overriding view exists and that in a very real way individuals extract characteristics which they see as predominating in that institution rather than in others.

Turning to an examination of careerist perceptions of Polytechnic, College of Education, University and Employment we find again that no overall perception of an institution exists. Table 15 below shows the number of Careerist sixth formers having a predominantly careerist perception of each institution during the school year.

TABLE 15: Careerist Perception

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
16% (9)	18% (10)	21% (12)	21% (12)	saw Polytechnic as the most careerist institution
29% (16)	31% (17)	33% (18)	33% (18)	saw College of Education as the most careerist institution.
29% (16)	26% (15)	25% (14)	25% (14)	saw Employment as the most careerist institution.
26% (15)	25% (14)	21% (12)	21% (13)	saw University as the most careerist institution.
(56)	(56)	(56)	(56)	

X^2 test p. not significant.

From this table it can be seen that there is no one overwhelming perception of an institution as outstandingly more careerist than any others. College of Education is seen by slightly more than for other institutions, as the most careerist and this proportion increases slightly but not significantly as the year progresses. It is probably not surprising that this perception exists since of the four activities under consideration College of Education is the only one that specifically exists to train personnel for a clearly identifiable profession.

Equally the minimal fall in the proportion of Careerists seeing University as the most careerist activity may be due to a realisation that, with the exception of medicine, law and dentistry, Universities do not provide courses leading to automatic entry to specified occupations.

But what of those Careerists who changed their dominant perception at some time during the year? Of those who remained Careerists throughout the year a total of five changed dominant perception. Of these, one who had seen University as the most careerist in September saw Polytechnic in that light by December; one who had seen Employment as the most careerist in September saw College of Education as the most careerist by December; in February two Careerists who had seen University as the most careerist in September and December changed perception so that one saw College of Education as the most careerist and the other Polytechnic as the most careerist; at the same time a further Careerist who had originally seen Employment as the most careerist activity in September and December had re-adjusted so that by February he saw Polytechnic as the most careerist.

An interesting pattern in these changes is that the movement in dominant careerist perception is either towards College of Education or towards Polytechnic. Does this indicate a movement in strength of perception by the Careerists in general? Table 16 below suggests that this is the case:

TABLE 16: Mean Careerist Score by Institution

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	
(a)	2.75	3.56	4.85	5.83	Polytechnic
(b)	4.66	4.75	5.46	5.59	College of Education
(c)	4.80	4.82	4.86	4.75	Employment
(d)	4.75	4.68	4.75	4.75	University

Analysis of variance (a) significant at 0.01 level
 (b) significant at 0.05 level
 (c) not significant
 (d) not significant

The above means derived from the scores on each careerist item for

each institution indicate that careerist perception of University and Employment is stable. However both Polytechnics and Colleges of Education are seen as increasingly careerist as the year progresses which supports the trends shown in Table 15.

Why do changes in strength and direction of careerist perception occur? Some indications of the mechanisms involved can be gained by returning to those Careerists who altered their dominant perception. Three of the five changers were part of the interview sample and their cases will be considered in detail. But first it is important to ask if any one body of factors were selected by these respondents as influencing their decision to change choice.

All five changed their choice of activity at the same time as the change in dominant careerist perception occurred with the result that choice of activity was in line with that dominant perception. An examination of factors quoted by the five Careerists as playing a large part in their choice of activity revealed a variety of patterns which confirms the earlier argument that influences on careerist choice come from all directions. However one factor in all five cases was given increased weight at the time when perception changed, this factor was the interview. A closer examination of interview later provided by two of the changers shows how the interview became important.

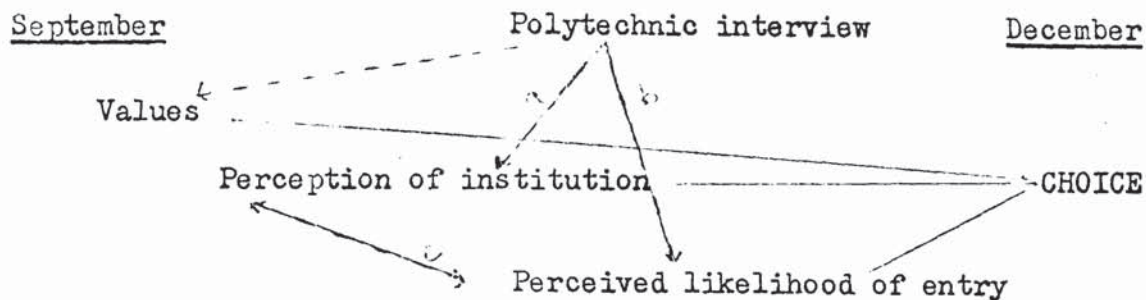
Case Study L

This concerns a girl who throughout the year was consistently a Careerist. In September she has seen University as the most careerist activity and made that her choice of activity. In December she changed her dominant perception so that Polytechnic was seen as the most careerist activity and her first choice now became Polytechnic. In September she had told me that she wanted to become a personnel manager in industry

and that she felt that University offered the best opportunity for achieving that goal. She also heard that Polytechnics offered degree courses in business studies that allowed specialisation in personnel management so she applied. She continued her story in December:

"I didn't know what a Poly was, let alone what would be in the course, but I read in a newspaper I think about business studies degrees and from a list of places they mentioned applied to I went up there in November for an interview, still none the wiser. The interview was very different from what I'd expected because they did most of the talking and told me about the nature of the college course and the practical training I would be doing in industry. I was very impressed with all this because honestly I didn't know that this sort of thing went on - it certainly doesn't in University. Anyway I managed to fumble my way through the interview and they offered me a place there and then I really had no idea you know that you could actually train for personnel and get a degree and you only need two 'A' levels to get in."

This girl has clearly met with new information about Polytechnic which furnished her with a strong careerist perception of this institution. The interview also provided information about ease of entry to the course that seemed to please her. Within a short space of time this girl had changed one independent variable in her choice pattern and probably had two others confirmed with the result that a change in choice of activity ensued. This change can be represented via the diagram below:



The diagram represents a snapshot of the change in post 'A' level choice of activity occurring between September and December 1972. In September both perception and choice had been different but change occurred in these variables between that time and December of the same year. Taking each model in turn let us examine how useful factorial processual and rationality/consistency approaches are in explaining the behaviour of this girl.

A rationality framework is clearly important for in September and December the consistency aspect helps us to explain choice of activity. Thus in December this girl who is a Careerist sees Polytechnic as the most careerist activity, expects to get the required grades at A level and makes therefore Polytechnic a first choice. A similar consistency had appeared in September when the girl had seen University as the most careerist, had expected good enough results and chose University. Why the change in consistency and therefore choice?

Here the factorial framework enters the discussion for one factor has triggered off the movement towards a new consistency. The Polytechnic interview has changed perception of the institution (arrow a) whilst at the same time confirming the applicant's expectations about likelihood of entry (arrow b). Perception and likelihood may now have a reciprocal influence on each other having been confirmed individually (arrow c). Arrow d suggests that the interview may also have confirmed

a careerist value commitment highlighting for the applicant the positive aspects of careerism. No direct evidence of this is offered in this particular case study hence the arrow is dotted remaining at the level of a plausible suggestion.

Case Study M

This concerns a boy who throughout the school year remained quite clearly Careerist in value commitment but who changed dominant perception of institution during the course of the year. In September and December this boy had seen University as the most careerist institution and had chosen this activity. By February perception had changed so that College became the most careerist institution and choice of activity changed accordingly. Why did these two changes come about? It would seem that two factors induced a new perception of College which eventually led to a new choice of institution - these two factors were friends at College and University and the College interview. The respondent had made it clear in his September and December interviews that he wanted to become a teacher and felt that going to University offered the best possibilities of achieving this end. He had been interviewed at University and had received an offer of a place which he had provisionally accepted. After Christmas he was interviewed at a College of Education for a place on a course of initial teacher training then leading to a B.Ed degree. He rated this interview as having a 'great influence' on his decision to choose College of Education giving this factor a maximum score of 5 on the Likert scale, when questioned and interviewed in February. This extract from the interview data gives some indication of the reason for that high rating.

"I already had a place at University to read English and I was then going to do a one year Cert. ed to get my teaching

qualification. I'd applied to College just as a safety net in case I didn't get very good 'A' levels and then I got called for interview. At the interview I was really impressed with the way they sold the professional training aspect of the College. It wasn't simply studying your subject and then topping up with a teaching certificate like University, but an integrated course of subject matter and education leading to a degree and qualified teacher status at the end of four years. All this made me realise that Colleges actually trained for teaching specifically and this was their main objective - unlike the Universities."

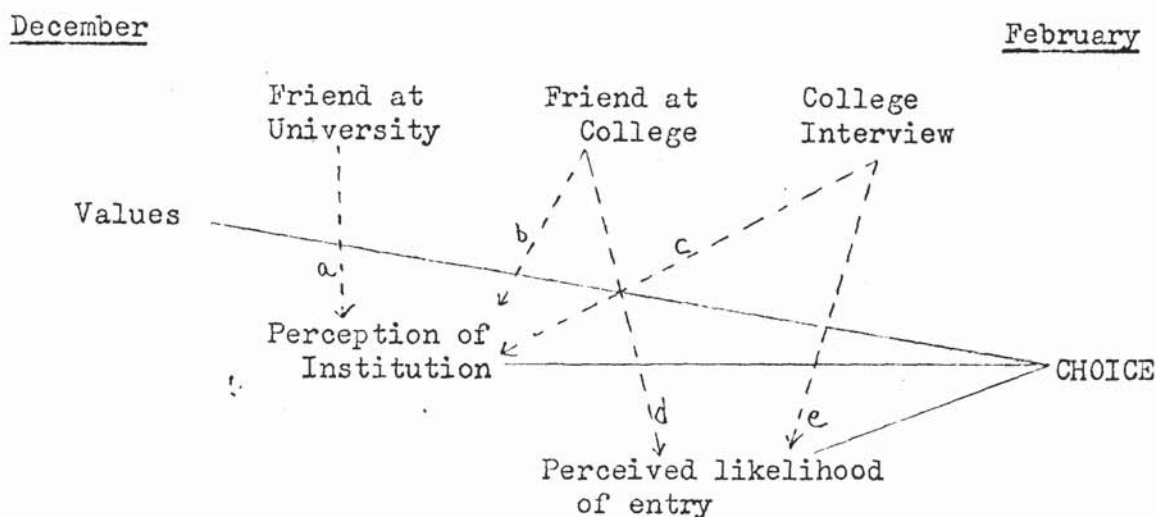
The careerist perception of College of Education was further enhanced by the second set of factors quoted by this respondent namely friends he had already at College and University. In February he told me that:

". . . I know someone who went to University to get a degree and then did a one year cert ed. and felt that he got no real experience of what teaching was like in his one year education course and that he was really unprepared for the job "

At the same time the respondent had also been influenced by a friend still studying at a College of Education.

"Tony (my friend) who's at College says that the main emphasis of the course is to prepare you for a teaching job and that this is evident right from the first day. In any case you're taught by people who were themselves teachers at some time and this helps enormously "

It is fairly clear from these two extracts that the respondent has received positive and negative support for a new perception of College. His friend who went to University before undertaking a course of teacher training feeds in negative feedback about this method of entering the profession whereas the friend still at College of Education gives positive feedback supporting the image of College presented at the interview. The weight of these three factors now causes a change in perception of institutions which leads to a new first choice activity. This movement can be represented in the diagram below:



The activity is largely taking place between December and February and thus the diagram highlights that part of the process of choice. Line (a) shows the influence of the friend at University helping to change perception of College and University and line (b) in like fashion shows the influence of the friend at College. The latter also played a further part by telling our respondent that he was offered a place at College with just two passes at 'A' level. This supported the new choice of College as the respondent fully expected to get three 'A' levels at Grade C - he therefore felt that entry would not be too difficult.

Line (d) shows the influence of the College interview which directly affected the perceptions held by the respondent. A further line (e) is included because the candidate was in fact offered a place at College with the proviso that he passed at least two of his 'A' level subjects. Here then, positive information is given at the interview explicitly stating the entry requirement and which in this case was not excessive and apparently well within the capabilities of the candidate. It might of course be argued that the respondent simply changed his choice of activity in February because he expected poor results at 'A' level and therefore felt that he would not get into University. There is no evidence to support this view in this particular case - in fact the candidate achieved one grade B pass and two grade C's which were the University requirements, yet he in fact went to the College referred to in his interview in February.

This particular case illustrates the difficulty and importance of building in a time variable into any theory of occupation choice. Although the diagram above looks only at a period between December and the following February, it does so because that was when factors exerted their most potent influence leading to a change in independent variables in the rationality consistency model and hence to change in choice of activity. Data was not available however to gauge over what period of time friends had in fact been exerting an influence. Whilst these factors were given high scores in February they may well have been exerting an unconscious influence for a much longer period of time before that date but only became significant when the added weight of the College interview was applied. In other words the combination of factors applied at one particular point in time was the lever which triggered off a chain of events leading to a new choice of post 'A' level activity. It is

clearly necessary to be able to develop conceptual schemes which not only highlight significant independent variables acting on choice and in turn factors influences those variables, but one must identify points in time when single factors and combinations of factors come together to exert the powerful influence that has been demonstrated in this case study. The empirical difficulties are considerable but not impossible, with careful monitoring of respondents and with the use of both depth and breadth data it is possible to arrive at answers which highlight the importance of combinations of factors at specific points within a much longer process of choice.

This section has highlighted the importance of perception in the choosing of an institution or activity after 'A' level. The data has demonstrated that changes in perception can lead to changes in choice of activity and that perception changes can be attributed to the operation of certain factors which vary from case to case. These factors exert influences, individually or collectively, at certain points in time when occupational choice is developing and tend to confirm old positions of consistency or activate a movement towards a new level. In either case it can be seen that perception of institution is subject to many influences which may be operative over a long or short period of time. The essential point to remember here is that our understanding of choice is increased when we move beyond the operation of perception in the rationality consistency model and try to demonstrate why and when perception occurs and therefore why and when this variable becomes important in occupational and educational choice.

One further independent variable now remains to be analysed namely perceived likelihood of entry to institutions, and it is to an examination of that variable that our attention is now directed.

Perceived likelihood of entry

The measurement of this variable rests upon three assumptions: firstly that institutions demand differing yet measurable entry qualifications; secondly that those hoping to enter these institutions are aware of those qualifications; and thirdly that aspirants have some information on which to base a prediction of their likely chances of attaining those entry requirements.

There is no doubt that sixth formers are aware of conditions one and two, and information leading to this awareness comes from a number of sources which are nevertheless primarily school based. The school plays an important part also in the dissemination of information leading to the pupil's own estimate of his likely performance. In the case of the sixth former a secondary school career that has stretched over five or more years has provided information about his own ability both in terms of examination results and via the attitudes of the staff within the school. School staff, peer groups, literature, careers talks and visits to Colleges, Universities and Industry, all contribute to the sixth former's perception of what 'A' level grades are required to read different subjects at each type of institution. Evidence collected in 1970 and referred to earlier in this study shows that sixth formers have a real awareness of what is specifically required by these institutions in that their own estimates of required performance coincide very much with the actual expectations of institutions for different subjects.

One can proceed armed with the knowledge that in the main, sixth formers are well aware of the market situation and of the demands that will be made of them. However a potential difficulty remains in classifying results into high or low. This can be done along two dimensions an overall dimension and an institution specific dimension.

The overall expected result is high if it is a result that would gain entry, in the appropriate subject, at University level and is in turn the highest demand that would be made in any subject area. Thus if a sixth former expects high results overall he also expects high results in terms of the other three institutions. However since Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and direct entry to Employment generally require lower grades or fewer subject passes at 'A' level it is important to distinguish between high and low expected results in terms of the demands of specific institutions. Thus a Polytechnic or College of Education applicant may expect high results in terms of that institution but low overall results i.e. in terms of University requirements. In this case his choice based or institution based expected result are just as important as overall expected results since they provide information about the institutions that are within his reach and those that are apparently unavailable. This argument also applies to those desiring to enter employment but here information about institution based expectations is more fluid since employers rarely lay down specific requirements in terms of 'A' level grades.

In analysing perceived likelihood of entry we shall consider both overall expected results and institution based expected results in turn. The actual measurement of expected results were described in Chapter three therefore we can turn to an examination of the patterns of expectation identified between 1972 and 1973. Table 17 below shows the percentage of the sample expecting high and low overall results during this time.

TABLE 17: Expected results in 'A' level Examinations

	<u>High</u>		<u>Low</u>		
September	42%	(84)	58%	(116)	(200)
December	43.5%	(87)	56.5%	(113)	(200)
February	41%	(82)	59%	(118)	(200)
June	38.5%	(77)	61.5%	(123)	(200)

X^2 test p. not significant

Less than half of the respondents expected to gain good enough results at any one point in time that would allow entry to University in their chosen subjects. A marginal increase in optimism occurs in the autumn but by February has been replaced by a small measure of pessimism that continues for the rest of the year. But in general no significant change occurs in the number expecting high results as the year progresses and the slight movement towards pessimism may only be a reflection of post examination gloom.

Before examining the mechanisms of change in a number of case studies, it is worth considering whether the apparently stable position indicated in Table 17 conceals differences in expectation between value commitments. Table 18 below examines this relationship.

TABLE 18: Value commitment and overall expected results at 'A' level

Value commit- ment	<u>September</u>		<u>December</u>		<u>February</u>		<u>June</u>	
	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
(a) Academic	51%	49%	58%	42%	59%	41%	64%	36%
	(38)	(36)	(43)	(31)	(45)	(31)	(48)	(27)
(b) Instrumental	34%	66%	33%	67%	23%	77%	21%	79%
	(24)	(46)	(23)	(47)	(18)	(49)	(14)	(54)
(c) Careerist	39%	61%	37%	63%	26%	74%	25%	75%
	(22)	(34)	(21)	(35)	(19)	(38)	(15)	(42)
TOTAL:	(84)	(116)	(87)	(113)	(82)	(118)	(77)	(123)

X^2 test significant at 0.05 level.

Test of differences in proportion between September and June

(a) significant at 0.05 level

(b) significant at 0.05 level

(c) significant at 0.05 level

This table suggests that Academics expect to perform better in their 'A' level examinations than do Instrumentals or Careerists. In fact Academics show increased optimism as the year progresses whereas both Instrumentals and Careerists show a reverse trend as a smaller percentage of these groups expect high results as the year passes. Thus the apparently stable position identified in Table 17 in fact hides some considerable movements in expected results between Academics, Instrumentals and Careerists.

Why should there be differences in expected performance between these groups? Academics are the bulk of the university aspirants, and since the definition of high and low results used at the moment corresponds with a university definition it is not surprising that Academics in general anticipate good results at 'A' level. Indeed a rationality framework would predict some measure of consistency between values expected results and choice. This is exactly what we have here when Academics expecting 'university grades' at 'A' level choose university. However identification of consistency is not the same thing as explaining its existence.

A tentative explanation couched in terms of the ethos of the grammar school might help us to understand why in particular Academics expect good results and Instrumentals do not expect to achieve such high

grades at 'A' level. Many sixth formers see the dominant orientation of the grammar school as primarily academic whatever their own individual value commitments. Here is a selection of comments collected during the year:

- (1) "Schools are only interested in getting you through 'A' levels not in anything in the long run . . ."
- (2) "My own experience was that school was concerned with getting as many people into University or College of Education irrespective of what you wanted to do yourself."
- (3) "The main emphasis is on work for work's sake. You study, read, write essays, for what purpose? Simply to pass 'A' levels and get into higher education to carry on doing the same thing."
- (4) "Just because teachers are interested in their subject it doesn't follow that we have to be."
- (5) "Headmasters are only interested in University entrance numbers"

Of course some comments were extremely favourable towards an academic regime

- (6) "Schools are bound to be subject based how else can you get to grips with fundamentals"
- (7) "I think that the work in the sixth is very interesting because you really feel that you're learning something at last."
- (8) "The nice thing about school is the feeling that you are at last learning something more than ordinary run of the mill text book stuff."

This short selection of comments indicates that the feeling is certainly present among sixth formers - but to what extent? A breakdown

of the responses to the questions on likes and dislikes at school shows that Instrumentals are more likely to mention the academic nature of school as a dislike.

TABLE 19: Percentage of respondents giving an academic dislike of school

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
(a) Academics	5% (4)	2.5% (2)	2.5% (2)	2.5% (2)
(b) Instrumentals	67% (47)	76% (53)	77% (52)	79% (56)
(c) Careerists	30% (16)	32% (18)	26% (15)	30% (17)

X^2 test between Instrumental and others significant at 0.01 level at each point in time. Test of difference in proportions between September and June significant for b at 0.05 level.

It is clear from Table 19 that Instrumentals object to the perceived academic nature of the grammar school sixth and that more are prepared to give this kind of reason as the year progresses. Academics are not concerned by this, since the perceived orientation coincides with their own value commitment and Careerists are very much less concerned with this aspect of school than Instrumentals.

Therefore we suggest that the clash between a perceived academic orientation in school and a personal instrumental value commitment increasingly produces a feeling of uncertainty which is expressed in terms of poorer expected examination results. Instrumentals feel that they are fighting a losing battle - they are not interested in work per se but in some long term goal whereas school to them seems to be only interested in short run objectives which concentrate on the absorption of knowledge and the development of subject based interest. The following interview extracts crystallise this feeling. An Instrumental boy said:

"It's very difficult when you've got different interests from those of your teachers. I want to do as well as any one but I'm not particularly interested in becoming an expert in a subject and I certainly don't want to teach it. You're considered to be a bit of a rebel if you want to do things the 'easy way' as they call it - but I work as hard as anyone it's important for me to get good 'A' levels - it's just that I feel that they're losing interest in me."

A girl said:

"Some teachers lose interest in you if they feel that you're not really interested in your work. They stop pushing you and say 'so and so's just filling in time before being forced to leave school' - I object to this because I want to get good 'A' levels to get into College, it's not my fault that I'm not crazy about History. You somehow feel that you're becoming an outcast which makes you a bit worried about your chances of passing 'A' level but at the same time you become more determined just to show them that you can do it."

Thus perceived clash of interests between pupil and teacher is important in the development of one independent variable in the rationality model in that it provides feedback to the sixth former as to likelihood of success at 'A' level, and hence perceived likelihood of entry to various institutions. Whether fears about poor performance at 'A' level are warranted or not, that perception is important if it used to assess the relative accessibility of institutions and incorporated into a consistency pattern leading to choice of activity.

For Academics no such clash between personal value commitment and perceived school orientation occurs - in fact they are mutually reinforcing.

and this is an important factor in the creation of optimism that is expressed in terms of improved examination expectations. For Academics the pressures are generally unidirectional and the confirmation of purpose produced from this unidirectionality creates a feeling of optimism and well being that the game is being played according to the proper rules and that just reward will duly come.

Turning away from overall results we now consider institution based expected results. Although a majority of sixth formers do not expect to gain sufficiently good results at 'A' level to gain entry to University nevertheless many expect to perform sufficiently well to enable them to secure a place in the institution of their choice.

Table 20 below shows the percentage of sixth formers in this study who expected to get high results in terms of the institution they had chosen at each point in time when measurements were taken.

TABLE 20:

Percentage of sixth expecting high institution specific results, by choice of institution

<u>Institution</u>	<u>September</u>		<u>December</u>		<u>February</u>		<u>June</u>	
	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
Polytechnic	71% ($\frac{12}{17}$)	29% ($\frac{5}{17}$)	85% ($\frac{28}{33}$)	15% ($\frac{5}{33}$)	93% ($\frac{43}{46}$)	7% ($\frac{3}{46}$)	90% ($\frac{45}{50}$)	10% ($\frac{5}{50}$)
College of Education	81% ($\frac{43}{53}$)	19% ($\frac{10}{53}$)	77% ($\frac{34}{44}$)	23% ($\frac{10}{44}$)	83% ($\frac{33}{40}$)	17% ($\frac{7}{40}$)	93% ($\frac{28}{30}$)	7% ($\frac{2}{30}$)
Employment	90% ($\frac{36}{40}$)	10% ($\frac{4}{40}$)	94% ($\frac{34}{36}$)	6% ($\frac{2}{36}$)	93% ($\frac{28}{30}$)	7% ($\frac{2}{30}$)	94% ($\frac{29}{31}$)	6% ($\frac{2}{31}$)
University	68% ($\frac{61}{90}$)	32% ($\frac{29}{90}$)	70% ($\frac{61}{87}$)	30% ($\frac{26}{87}$)	71% ($\frac{60}{84}$)	29% ($\frac{24}{84}$)	67% ($\frac{60}{89}$)	23% ($\frac{29}{89}$)

An examination of the data in the above table reveals that never less than two thirds of those choosing an institution at any

time during the year expected to get sufficiently good 'A' level grades to gain entry into the chosen activity. In many cases the proportion is as high as nine out of ten. Thus although a majority of sixth formers do not expect to gain University entrance requirements they do choose an institution which they see as being within their grasp at least in terms of entry qualifications. This again highlights the importance of the consistency principle when selecting an institution for yet another example of rational consistent behaviour has emerged. The question still remains however as to the actual development of expectations about performance both within a factorial and processual context and this will be revealed by an examination of a number of case studies.

It will be remembered that when looking at overall results a total of fifteen respondents altered their expectations so that they moved across the divide between high and low expected results. It will be useful to take this movement as potentially the most revealing since sixth formers will have experienced two possible situations, one where expected results fall so that University (= overall expected results) at least is no longer perceptually available, and the reverse where University at least was previously not available but now in theory is. As we have demonstrated that sixth formers are aware of the market situation concerning entry qualifications it is realistic to attempt an explanation of the develop of new expectations and the effect on proposed patterns of choice.

The fifteen cases under consideration have one feature in common. Although all were classified into high or low expected overall results at four points in time the divisions were not clear cut. In other words these were very much borderline candidates whose expectations were just inside or just outside the overall high category. In fact an expected

grade change in just one 'A' level subject would have produced a re-classification for these respondents and this in fact occurred. For the rest of the sample estimates of expected results did not vary greatly and this is not surprising since this expectation is based upon at least six years of secondary schooling, numerous school examinations, teachers' reports, performance at 'O' level or C.S.E. and on current work progress. It would be truly surprising in the face of these long acting influences if vast changes in expectation were noted. Fifteen respondents did change estimate however - let us examine why this occurred and its consequences.

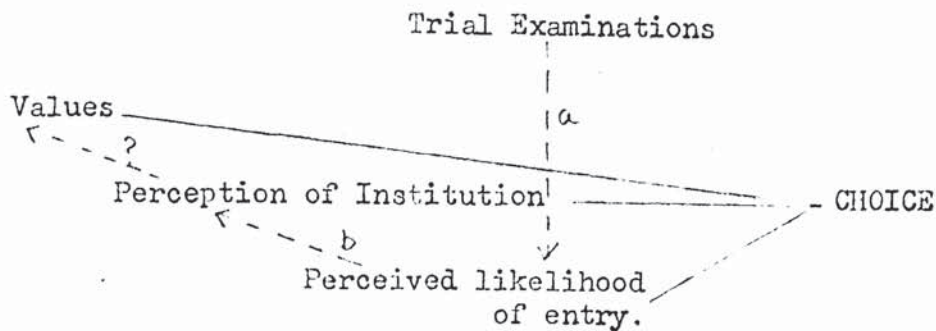
Of these fifteen, five initiated a change in expected results between September and December and ten between December and February. Changes after February were simply returns to old positions which had been taken up earlier. It would seem therefore that a very important time for changes in estimates of likely examination success is the period between the end of term one and the middle of term two. What specifically occurs at this time that is likely to induce this change? An examination of factors affecting choice shows no obvious reason for changes occurring between September and December but between December and February the ten respondents who changed estimate during this time increased the importance they attributed to 'sixth form internal examination results'. Between September and December this factor had a mean score of only 1.8 (maximum 5) but in the period between December and February the same ten respondents averaged a score of 4.4. The examinations they had taken during their year in the lower sixth seemed to have had no particular influence on their expectation of success or choice of activity after school - but this is certainly not true of the examinations they sat in February of their upper sixth year.

The importance of this factor is highlighted in the responses to the question "if your choice of activity has changed since I last saw you could you tell me why?" Below are the written replies of the ten February changers given on the questionnaire completed immediately after their examination results had been published by the respective schools.

- (1) "I picked University but I don't think I'll get in now so I'm choosing Polytechnics because you don't need such high 'A' levels "
- (2) "From Polytechnic to Employment because I just haven't the brains for high level work."
- (3) "From College to Employment because I'm not going to get good 'A' levels."
- (4) "Originally picked University but the competition's too hot - now choosing College of Education "
- (5) "Change of mind from Polytechnic to College of Education - you need fewer 'A' levels."
- (6) "From University to Polytechnic because I did really badly in my mocks."
- (7) "I've changed from College of Education to Polytechnic because I did quite well in my exams and reckon I should aim higher."
- (8) "Originally picked out a Polytechnic but I wish I could choose University because I could probably get in after my mock results."
- (9) "I wanted University but the sweat's not worth it - particularly after this last lot of exams. Would now like to go out to work."
- (10) "Chose College of Education last time but would now choose University if it weren't too late to apply so shall opt for Polytechnic. I did really well in my exams!"

The reason for the high score given to this factor is clear from the comments above for in some way all ten identify their mock examinations as the cause of their change of choice. An obvious question here is whether these comments are simply immediate reactions to a recent experience. If so one would expect all respondents to give some increased weighting to this factor in February. In fact there is an increase in mean score on this factor from 2.2 to 4.06 for the whole sample between December and February.

Trial examinations are clearly an important factor in the development of choice for many sixth formers. In the cases examined above it seems that those pupils who are relatively unsure about their own expected performance at 'A' level derive considerable indication of this from the trial examinations. The new information gained in this way is then incorporated into the overall process of choice and may result in changes of plan when the new expectations gained at this time make an earlier choice now inconsistent with other variables. The sixth formers may in this way change his perception of likely results at 'A' level proper and consequently decide that an original course of action is no longer appropriate and should be altered to become consistent with the new examination expectations. Put in another way one might aim higher as a result of good mark results, and lower if marks were poorer than anticipated. For some individuals, original expectations will hold good and produce no change in plans and for others mock results might be seen as a 'flash in the pan' and again produce no change in plans. Indeed the information derived from mock examination results may be inaccurate but this does not matter if the individual builds that inaccurate information into his perceptual framework and uses it as a basis on which to choose between alternatives.

DecemberFebruary

Arrow (a) shows the specific influence that one factor may have on the independent variable perception of 'A' level results. This factor may confirm an original pattern of consistency which will therefore not result in a change of choice for most people, but on the other hand may equally well destroy a consistent pattern and act as a catalyst in the development of another pattern of consistency and choice. Arrow (b) indicates the start of this movement whereby new perceptions of expected examination results lead to new perceptions of institutions, which is a possibility suggested earlier. It is possible, though unlikely, that the upheaval may stretch back the original independent variable, value commitment. This would be exceptional as our earlier evidence on value change indicates, for this variable has been exposed to many influences over a long period of time and seems to be fairly stable. Not so perception of institution which has been shown to be subject to greater level of change than value commitment. Of course other factors can operate in a direct way on perception of institution so that change or confirmation may take place as a result of factors influencing an independent variable and then in turn another independent variable, or by a whole combination of factors each having a direct influence on independent variables.

Many possible combinations could be identified in just one single case. The essential point though from the point of view of theory development is that it is possible within a processual context (in this case December to January) to identify important factors at work and to trace the influence of those factors on the development of a consistent relationship of variables and hence on choice.

This possibility is clearly expressed in the following interview extract recorded in February with a respondent who had performed less well at 'A' level trial examinations than he had hoped. When asked if he had changed his first choice activity since December he gave the following reply:

"Well actually I have. I originally put down Polytechnic as my first choice because I wanted to do a business studies course and then go into international marketing. They offered me a place if I got two C's at 'A' level - well I don't think I'll quite manage that after my mocks. Anyway I've been thinking that Polytechnics and Colleges aren't the most useful places for breaking into the business world because they're a bit remote from the real world. I've read that Poly's are having difficulty in finding industrial places for their sandwich students so what chance have you got of breaking into marketing. I think it's much more useful to try to get a job with a big firm who have interests in international marketing."

This Instrumental boy retained his value commitment throughout the school year but changed his expected high Polytechnic result in December to an expected low in February - his estimates nevertheless gave him an employment high expected result. In December he had seen Polytechnic as the most instrumental activity and had chosen it but by

February not only did he change his perception of expected examination results he had also changed his perception of institutions so that Employment was now seen as the most instrumental activity. Thus by February a new but still consistent situation had been created by changes in expected 'A' level results which had in turn led to changes in perception of institutions leading in all to a new choice of activity.

In this case the new information provided by mock examination had produced changes in estimates of 'A' level performance and perception of Polytechnic and Employment so that a new pattern of choice developed based on a consistent relationship between values, which had remained unaltered, perception of institution and perception of likelihood of entry, both of which had changed. The interesting point is that the change had been unidirectional and entirely consistent.

This Chapter has shown the movements taking place in independent variables during one academic year. It has shown how changes in values, perception of institution, perception of likelihood of entry to institution all play a part in the process of post sixth form choice of activity. The Chapter has highlighted many of the factors influencing these changes and in a number of detailed cases shows the mechanics of change induced by a particular factor or set of factors operating within a time context. Reference has been made to the effect of all of this on the dependent variable choice of activity but no analysis of choice patterns in full has yet appeared.

In Chapter VII an analysis of these patterns during an academic year is offered together with their relationship to actual choice of activity as far as this is known. In this Chapter an overall analysis of factors influencing choice will also be presented.

CHAPTER VII

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE - CHOICE

It will be remembered that four likely post sixth form alternatives are under consideration in this piece of research, entry to a University, entry to a Polytechnic, entry to a College of Education and direct entry to Employment involving no further full time education at a recognised institution. A breakdown of the choices made in these areas by our sixth formers during their final school year is presented below in Table 21.

TABLE 21: CHOICE OF ACTIVITY 1972-73

<u>Activity</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Polytechnic	8.5% (17)	16.5% (33)	23% (46)	25% (50)
College of Education	26.5% (53)	22% (44)	20% (40)	15% (30)
Employment	20.0% (40)	18% (36)	15% (30)	15.5% (31)
University	45.0% (90)	43.5% (81)	42% (84)	45.5% (89)
	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)

These figures show the changing distribution of choice during the year.

In September 45% of the sample chose University, 26.5% College of Education, 20% direct entry to Employment and only 8.5% chose Polytechnic. By June of the following year 45.5% chose University and second in the list comes Polytechnic chosen by 25% of the sample with 15.5% choosing Employment and 15% College of Education.

Clearly some very substantial movements have taken place in some of these cells. University aspirants remain a relatively stable proportion of the sample, but both aspirations to College of Education and to

employment show a numerical decline whereas the number making a Polytechnic their first choice increases noticeably during the year.

The table above, representing proportions of the sample selecting each institution at a point in time, may disguise a larger number of individual movements. However an analysis of each respondent's replies to the questionnaire reveals that a majority of sixth formers do not change their choice of activity during the final year at school. A total of 34 respondents or 17% of the sample made one or more changes in their choice of post 'A' level activity. Of these 28 made only one change and the remaining six changed twice. Thus 14% of the total sample made one change in choice of activity and 3% made two changes. All of those who changed twice made an excursion into another choice area but later returned to their original choice usually the one picked out in September.

The largest number of changes occurred between September and December, that is during the first term, followed by the period December to February and finally the fewest changes taking place between February and June. Overall these figures illustrate a fairly static picture in terms of movement when it is realised that fewer than one in five sixth formers change their proposed course of action during this year. This is, however, an oversimplification of the case for it has been shown in the previous chapter that considerable movement in the strength of variables can occur and produce the changes in the dependent variable identified above. It seems that those sixth formers most likely to change choice of activity are those with the relatively unclear commitments on one or more dimension associated with the independent variables. The potential for movement is quite large in these cases as many of the individual studies have shown, and it is these individual case histories

which allow a fuller understanding of the interaction of factors in that part of the process of choice that takes place in the sixth form. Before examining more of these examples in detail one gap needs to be plugged, that is the relationship of patterns of proposed choice which have been carefully analysed, and the actual avenues chosen by respondents once they had left school.

It will be remembered from Chapter IV that the activities of actually entered into were known in 182 cases out of the original sample of 200. If the 18 non respondents are removed from the data totally, proposed choice patterns and actual activities of the 182 remaining sixth formers can be compared. Table 22 below shows the choices indicated by this group during the year and their final choice undertaken once the school year had finished.

TABLE 22: Choice of Activity proposed and actual

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Polytechnic	(14)	(29)	(43)	(46)	(45)
College of Education	(49)	(41)	(35)	(28)	(32)
Employment	(40)	(35)	(31)	(33)	(30)
University	(79)	(77)	(73)	(75)	(65)
	(182)	(182)	(182)	(182)	(172)*

*Of the sample of 182 sixth formers ten did in fact not undertake any of the four activities specified in this study. Six returned to school to resit 'A' level examinations in the autumn, three left to go to technical college to resit their 'A' levels and one undertook an Ordinary National Diploma course at a technical college.

If these ten are ignored and a sample of 172 is used one can compare each period of time in terms of proposed choice at that moment and acti-

vity finally undertaken. This comparison appears in Table 23 below.

TABLE 23: Relationship of individual proposed choice and actual activity undertaken

Coefficient of correlation between choice made during the final school year and actual activity undertaken by institution

<u>Institution</u>	<u>Product moment</u>			
	<u>Coefficient of correlation</u>			
	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
(a) Polytechnic	+ .23	+ .56	+ .88	+ .94
(b) College of Education	+ .32	+ .49	+ .86	+ .81
(c) Employment	+ .44	+ .79	+ .96	+ .83
(d) University	+ .63	+ .65	+ .71	+ .68

(1) r significant in cell d in September at 0.01 level in cells b & c at 0.05 level.

(2) r significant at 0.01 level in all cells in December.

(3) In February r significant at 0.01 level in all cells

(4) In June r significant at 0.01 level in all cells

An examination of choice patterns concerning Polytechnics shows that there is an increasing relationship between projected choice and actual choice as the year progresses. In September a figure of + .23 indicated a weak positive relationship between choice of Polytechnic at that time and the number actually going to a Polytechnic after leaving school. Yet this coefficient of correlation figure improves so much during the year that by June a very high figure of +.94 is achieved indicating a very strong relationship between projected Polytechnic choice in June and actual entry to that kind of institution.

This dramatic increase in relationship can largely be attributed to the effects of information flow. At the beginning of the school year sixth formers lack information on Polytechnics and are loathe to choose the unknown. As more information is fed to them from Polytechnics

themselves, from visits, from teachers and from interviews,

so a perception of that institution is built up. The largest increase in coefficient of correlation score occurs between December and February when trial examinations have supplied information as to the likelihood of sixth formers obtaining the necessary 'A' level grades for entry to various institutions, and this information is incorporated into the process of choosing a Polytechnic. A rise in coefficient score of 0.06 between February and June suggests that information flow and perceptual development continue during the closing months of the school year. Those sixth formers choosing Polytechnic throughout the year generally rate school influences as weaker than social influences particularly those instigated by the Polytechnics themselves. Table 24 below gives a detailed breakdown by mean score on a Likert scale of the weight given to each factor by those who eventually entered a Polytechnic.

TABLE 24: Mean score (maximum 5) on Likert scale of influences on choice

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Talks with Careers Teacher	1.63	1.71	1.64	1.61
Careers conventions	1.84	1.72	1.75	1.67
Careers lessons	1.24	1.31	1.25	1.33
Careers literature	2.06	2.33	2.37	2.37
Visits to employers	1.26	1.40	1.38	1.28
Form Teachers	2.56	2.60	2.64	2.53
Main subject Teachers	3.30	3.38	3.40	3.37
Head Teacher	2.06	1.94	2.17	2.22
Friends at school	2.87	2.76	2.74	2.99
'O' Exam results prior to sixth	1.74	1.72	1.73	1.71
'O' Level results in sixth	1.40	1.20	1.28	1.31
Other internal sixth form exams.	1.27	1.26	3.74	3.64

(continued)

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Talks with Youth Employment Officer	1.16	1.23	1.11	1.46
Talks by employers	1.76	1.83	1.82	1.84
Literature from employers	1.22	1.30	1.26	1.26
University Prospectus	3.21	3.27	3.26	3.11
College of Education Prospectus	2.86	2.94	2.91	2.04
Polytechnic Prospectus	4.16	4.36	4.25	4.25
Visits by representatives of Universities	1.26	1.27	1.27	1.24
Visits by representatives of Colleges	1.03	1.04	1.03	1.02
Visits by representatives of Polytechnics	2.54	3.62	3.61	3.58
Visits to Colleges of Education	1.03	1.27	1.27	1.27
Visits to Polytechnics	1.07	3.44	3.61	3.34
Visits to Universities	1.02	1.06	1.03	1.03
Interviews at College of Education	1.00	2.06	2.03	2.02
Interviews at Polytechnic	1.00	4.38	4.46	4.46
Interviews at University	1.00	2.94	2.94	2.90
Interviews by employers	1.24	1.24	1.29	1.27
Radio and T.V. programmes	1.20	1.17	1.14	1.15
Press articles and advertisements	1.14	1.38	1.37	1.34
Holiday work	1.01	1.06	1.04	1.03
Friends at work	2.04	2.13	2.14	2.19
Friends at College of Education	2.84	2.76	2.76	2.74
Friends at University	2.93	3.04	3.00	3.04
Friends at Polytechnic	3.29	3.47	3.46	3.47
Father	2.45	2.53	2.51	2.52
Mother	1.23	1.24	1.21	1.17
Parents' Friends	2.00	2.33	2.31	2.22
Brothers and Sisters	2.17	2.20	2.17	2.20

From this Table it can be seen that school based factors have low scores suggesting a weak influence on choice. Form teachers are rated

more highly than headteachers but not as highly as subject teachers. This suggests that the subject based influences are more important than the more pastoral influences exerted by form teachers and the administrative influence of the head teacher. Friends at school are seen to be more important than either head teachers or form teachers but are not regarded as influential as subject teachers. There is however one further school based factor that plays a part from February onwards. Internal examination results, and indeed other examination results are not rated as highly influential by Polytechnic entrants until the onset of trial examinations in February when a marked increase in mean score occurs. This confirms the important part played in the flow of information of trial examinations which provide an extra source of information that can be related to choice of institution. This factor becomes the most potent school based factor in February and despite a fall in mean score by June is still considered to be more influential than school personnel per se.

Outside the school itself, the Polytechnic prospectus is probably the beginning of a real acquaintance with this type of institution and the importance of this initial introduction seems to be recognised throughout the year via the high mean score given to this factor. The frequency of visits by representatives of Polytechnics to schools is not recorded in Table 24 but the importance attached to such visits is. This visit by representatives is considered more important than visits by any other representatives from College or University. The same argument applies to visits (excluding interviews) to these institutions whereby visits to Polytechnics are considered to have more influence on Polytechnic choice than have visits to other types of institution. This institutional distinction also applies to interviews. The Polytechnic interview receives a very high score from Polytechnic entrants when compared with

interviews at other institutions. The division is further extended to friends already in higher education when friends at Polytechnic are considered to be more influential than friends at any other kind of institution. Of influences springing from the home, fathers are the most highly rated followed by parents' friends, siblings with mothers occupying last position.

Table 25 below summarises the relative positions of the highest scoring factors during the year.

TABLE 25: Major factors influencing choice of Polytechnic entrants

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
1	Polytechnic Prospectus	1 Interviews at Polytechnic	1 Interviews at Polytechnic	1 Interviews at Polytechnic
2	Main subject teachers	2 Polytechnic Prospectus	2 Polytechnic Prospectus	2 Polytechnic Prospectus
3	Friends at Polytechnic	3 Visits by Polytechnic representatives	3 Trial examinations	3 Trial examinations
4	University Prospectus	4 Friends at Polytechnic	4 Visits to Polytechnic	4 Visits by Polytechnic representatives
5	Friends at University	5 Visits to Polytechnic	5 Visits by Polytechnic representatives	5 Friends at Polytechnic
6	Friends at School	6 Main Subject Teachers	6 Friends at Polytechnic	6 Main subject teachers

In September Polytechnic entrants regarded the prospectus as the most influential factor affecting choice. This was followed in order of importance by main subject teachers, friends at Polytechnic, University prospectus, friends at University and friends at school. By December a new factor assumes an important position and this, the Polytechnic interview, continues to be the most highly rated factor throughout the rest of the school year. Also in December non school based influences begin to

dominate the choice of Polytechnic entrants as visits by Polytechnic representatives and visits by pupils to Polytechnics are seen as more influential than main subject teachers. Thus by December influences instigated by the Polytechnics themselves are the five most important influences on the choice of this type of institution.

By February, interviews at Polytechnic and the Polytechnic prospectus are still top rated factors but a new influence has now appeared - the 'A' level trial examination, which takes third place ahead of the other Polytechnic based influences. In June little substantial change has taken place but visits to Polytechnic now take on a less important role since the frequency of this activity declines sharply as the year progresses. The visit per se is generally replaced by the formal interview which is still considered to be the most influential factor. Main subject teachers return in sixth place at this time.

To summarise the position it can be said that Polytechnic entrants are initially influenced by their main subject teachers, Polytechnic and University prospectuses, and friends both at school and already in Polytechnic or University. By the end of the autumn term new external factors have entered the process and Polytechnic based influences dominate the list of factors leading to the selection of this type of institution. By February the Polytechnic interview, the prospectus, the visit to Polytechnic and friends at Polytechnic are still seen as important influences but a new influence, the 'A' level trial examination, enters the scene and feeds important new information into the process creating a hierarchy of factors which alters little between February and June.

The distribution of factors described in Table 25 illustrates two important points about Polytechnic entrants. Firstly they seem to

place little importance on home or general school influences but are mainly affected by activities centring on the Polytechnics themselves. This tends to confirm the view suggested earlier that schools and homes give little direct information on Polytechnics. When influence is limited to these sources as it is at the beginning of the sixth form course, perception of Polytechnics is hazy and hence prediction of choice at this early date becomes haphazard as pupils do not have the necessary information to build into a process of choice. To see choice purely in rational consistent terms is to distort the process for this group at this particular time. Seeing choice as a long process influenced by certain critical factors at fairly well defined points in time, gives a clearer picture of the phenomenon called occupational choice. For Polytechnic entrants, a rationality consistency model applied early in the school year gives only a blurred picture and a low level prediction, as many of the important factors have not yet exerted their influence. Thus a complete understanding of the choice of Polytechnic is only available when processual and factorial dimensions are added to a rationality consistency approach.

The second point is less fundamental to the development of theory but no less important when considering Polytechnic entrants. The high frequency of Polytechnic referents for those entering these institutions suggests that choice is influenced by the positive pull of Polytechnics, once information is obtained, rather than by the push away from other possible activities. This is largely true with one qualification. The reader will have noticed how the number of Polytechnic aspirants increased during the year and indeed continued until June. The majority of those switching from other institutions to Polytechnics

were boys and the greatest percentage swing came from those boys who had originally selected College of Education. A specific examination of the factors quoted by boys switching from College to Polytechnic shows that in addition to highlighting the factors quoted by the general sample of Polytechnic entrants they give a high score to the College of Education interview and the visit to College of Education.

It would seem therefore that the College visit and interview exert a strong negative influence on many boys who respond by opting for Polytechnic instead of College of Education. The trial examinations also exert some negative influence by telling University aspirants that they are unlikely to gain sufficiently high grades in their 'A' level examinations proper which prompts a turning towards the Polytechnic as a University substitute. Apart from these two examples affecting a specific set of respondents it would seem that Polytechnic choice is, to a large extent, influenced by the positive influences exerted by those institutions. As knowledge of Polytechnic increases so their attraction for sixth formers increases and Polytechnics appear in a favourable light because they offer essentially the same qualifications as Universities, do not commit one to a specific career as do the Colleges of Education, and apparently do not require such rigid entry qualifications as do Universities. It is this pull of the Polytechnics which seems to outweigh a push away from other activities.

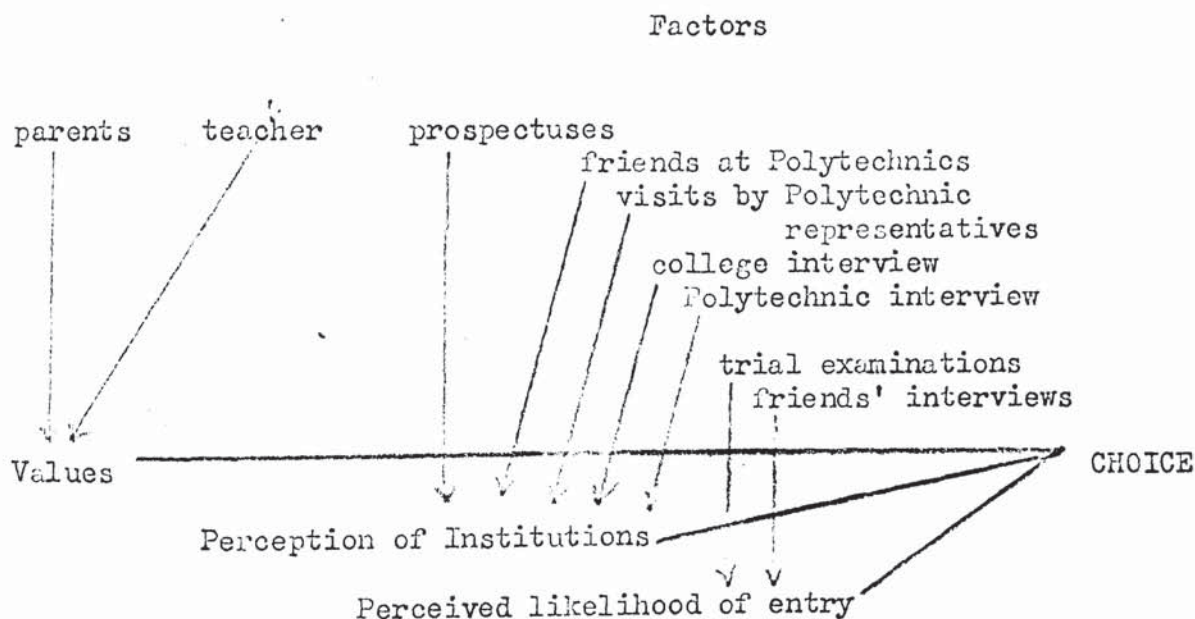
The process of choosing a Polytechnic can best be summed up in the following case study which is based on a collection of interviews obtained during the year from one Academic boy. In this extract from his comments is crystallised much of the meaning of the data described above.

"I was always mainly interested in the subjects I was studying at school rather than planning a career or even looking for a specific job. Both my parents and Mr. Robottham (his maths teacher) had generally encouraged me to persevere at maths and perhaps do something with it when I left school but I honestly didn't know what I wanted to do . . . In September we got lots of University and College prospectuses and looked through them. I was I suppose quite naturally interested in going to University after all that's the goal of most sixth formers I suppose but I also thought that I'd apply to College of Education in case anything went wrong with my University place . . . It all got a bit confusing then because Mr. Robottham said why don't you apply for Polytechnic as well and then decide where you want to go later. Well I already knew a few people at Poly and I made a point of asking them about being at a Poly and it sounded quite interesting . . .

After Christmas we were visited by a bloke from . . . Polytechnic who was really trying to sell the place to us but what he said made the place sound attractive. Not long after that I got interviewed at . . . Polytechnic and I was really impressed by the friendly way they went about it, what they showed me, and how they presented the place. It was fantastic compared with the training college I went to about a week later for interview where they were only interested in how keen you were to be a teacher, not how good you were at your subject. The whole training college scene seemed restricted, just like school really and seemed to be run by matronly school ma'am. So I didn't take much to the idea of College

I never got interviewed at University, but I knew from friends who did or who were offered places that they were asking for quite high grades even for Maths where I thought the demand wasn't too great. The telling blow came in the mocks when, although I did well in maths, my physics and particularly chemistry let me down and I knew I'd never get three high grades at 'A' level . . . So I began to think more and more about Polys and the facilities they offered and what I could do there and after I'd left and things just built up from there "

This case study is particularly useful in that it highlights so many of the factors influencing the choice of Polytechnic which had generally been mentioned by Polytechnic entrants as a group. The diagram below shows in summary the operation of those factors.



According to the respondent his values arise from the influence of his parents and particularly his maths teacher but this is a long

process as we have suggested earlier and to mention only two factors in this context probably oversimplifies the situation. The build up of his perception of institutions is much clearer however. The strongest influences are the polytechnic prospectus, friends at Polytechnic, visit by the Polytechnic representative and the Polytechnic interview, all of which exert a positive pull towards this type of institution. The College of Education interview helps the respondent in his selection of a Polytechnic in that it helps to eliminate College of Education from his list of possibilities as the institution is no longer seen as attractive in terms of the respondents value commitment. The trial examination at school exerts a further negative influence by suggesting that he will not obtain sufficiently high grades at 'A' level to get into University and this view of University expectations is supported by friends at school who have themselves been interviewed at or offered places by a University.

The section above thus presents a picture of information flow about Polytechnics and how it is incorporated into a process of choice. The specific process of choosing a Polytechnic seems to be short in length accelerating during the autumn term of the upper sixth form year and reaching its peak shortly before actual entry to this type of institution. The reason for this acceleration seems clear from the analysis above. Many of the important factors affecting choice do not appear until very late in the school career and are primarily outside the control of schools themselves. Thus the coefficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice of Polytechnic is low at the beginning of the school year but reaches its highest measured point in this study, in June, at the very end of the pupil's school career.

The development of choice of college of education is a slightly different story as will be shown below. Table 23 showed that the coefficient of correlation between projected choice of College of Education and actual choice of that type of institution improves from + .32 in September to + .49 in December to + .86 in February and then declines slightly to + .81 in June. The best time for predicting entry to College appears therefore to be in February at about the halfway point in the final school year. The reason for this may be suggested by a detailed breakdown of the factors influencing the choice of those respondents who actually entered a College of Education.

TABLE 26: Mean score (maximum 5) on a Likert scale of influences on choice of College of Education by those entering such an institution

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Talks with careers teachers	1.84	1.83	1.67	1.66
Careers conventions	1.92	2.07	2.05	2.00
Careers lessons	2.46	2.47	2.46	2.45
Careers Literature	1.87	1.83	1.84	1.86
Visits to employers	1.31	1.34	1.40	1.33
Form Teachers	3.15	3.18	3.04	3.01
Main Subject Teachers	4.12	4.20	4.16	4.14
Head Teacher	3.40	3.34	3.37	3.39
Friends at school	3.87	3.61	3.77	3.64
'O' Exam results prior to sixth	2.74	2.54	2.41	2.40
'O' level resits in sixth	1.34	1.20	1.21	1.20
Other internal sixth form exams.	1.21	1.21	3.22	3.05
Talks with Youth Employment Officer	1.14	1.10	1.08	1.08
Talks by employers	1.21	1.20	1.07	1.04
Literature from employers	1.09	1.14	1.09	1.06
University prospectus	2.21	2.20	2.31	2.16
College of Education prospectus	3.86	3.72	3.63	3.54

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Polytechnic prospectus	1.01	1.04	1.03	1.04
Visits by representatives of Universities	1.19	1.24	1.09	1.08
Visits by representatives of Colleges	2.61	2.71	2.59	2.40
Visits by representatives of Polytechnics	1.04	1.05	1.04	1.06
Visits to Colleges of Education	2.94	3.00	2.76	2.81
Visits to Polytechnics	1.06	1.12	1.08	1.04
Visits to Universities	1.04	1.08	1.06	1.07
Interviews at College of Education	1.00	3.04	3.10	3.08
Interviews at Polytechnic	1.00	1.41	1.45	1.50
Interviews at University	1.00	2.96	2.98	2.77
Interviews by employers	1.03	1.24	1.39	1.34
Radio and T.V. programmes	1.20	1.23	1.16	1.14
Press articles and advertise- ments	1.21	1.34	1.27	1.24
Holiday work	2.96	2.01	1.67	1.41
Friends at work	2.51	2.98	2.94	2.78
Friends at College of Education	3.16	3.23	3.06	3.04
Friends at University	1.76	1.84	1.79	1.77
Friends at Polytechnic	1.24	1.22	1.23	1.24
Father	2.23	2.24	2.26	2.27
Mother	3.13	3.00	2.96	2.83
Parents' friends	2.00	1.94	1.81	1.80
Brothers and sisters	2.19	2.23	2.17	2.23

In September the factors given most significance are main subject teachers, friends at school, College of Education prospectus, head teacher, friends at College of Education and form teacher. It is interesting to note these are nearly all school based influences and contrast with those quoted at the same point in time by the Polytechnic entrants. This importance of school is further borne out by the higher influence

credited to careers lessons by college entrants and to examinations prior to the sixth form. The last point is particularly interesting for 'O' levels are only given a high weighting by college entrants and are considered relatively unimportant by those undertaking other activities. The reason for this may be in the fact that entry to college can be gained on the possession of five 'O' levels and so, even before entering the sixth, college aspirants know that they have at least the basic entry qualifications for college whereas University and Polytechnic hopefuls must gain 'A' level passes.

It has already been noted that the majority of college hopefuls were girls¹ and therefore a breakdown of factors in terms of sex was carried out. Of college entrants, girls gave a higher rating to holiday employment than did boys and investigations revealed that many girls² had worked as nursery assistants during the summer vacation prior to the upper sixth year which may help to explain the importance attached to this activity in the selection of a College of Education. Girls also attached a high importance to their mother as affecting choice, one possible explanation for this lying in the comment made by one girl:

"Mums are quite important because they think of teaching as a nice respectable and well paid job for a girl which she can always go back to after marrying and having a family."

There may be something in this for none of the boys considered their mother to be particularly influential. Girls tended to rate friends at college as more influential than did boys but this may simply reflect the fact that girls had more friends at college than did the boys as colleges are generally numerically dominated by girls. In other areas there were no significant differences (tests of significant difference between mean scores applied) between boys and girls in terms of

FOOTNOTE: 1. Of 32 respondents entering College, 24 were girls (75%)
2. 7 girls had this experience.

the importance they attached to various factors influencing their choice of a College of Education.

By December the dominant factors are still main subject teachers, friends at school, the college prospectus, head teacher, friends at college, form teachers and moving into seventh place, the college interview. It is noticeable that the college interview does not assume the same importance for college entrants as does the Polytechnic interview for Polytechnic entrants. The reason for this may be in the confirmatory nature of the college interview as seen by many college aspirants. Information about college is largely available from teachers at school, friends at both school and college, and from the college prospectus. In addition college hopefuls may already have the necessary academic qualifications to secure them a place even though colleges may expect at least an attempt at 'A' level condoning perhaps ultimate failure. The interview therefore provides little new information for those already committed to a College of Education and its function from the sixth former's point of view is largely to supply information, positive or negative, to those who have not yet made up their mind.

There is a slight tendency for Careerists to rate the College of Education interview more highly than Academics or Instrumentals for the emphasis at the interview on commitment to teaching as a profession may support the values of Careerists wishing to enter college rather more than Academics or Instrumentals - but this is only speculation. The main point is that the interview at college is not seen as influential as school based factors and college interviews do not assume the importance attributed to the Polytechnic interview.

By February the same factors as highlighted in December continued to be seen as the most influential. Main subject teachers, friends at school, the college prospectus, the head teacher still dominated followed now by the internal sixth form examination (the trial 'A' level exam) and then by the college interview. It is noticeable that the mean score given to mock 'A' levels by college entrants is markedly lower than that given by Polytechnic entrants implying that less importance is attached to this in the process of choosing a College of Education. These same factors continued to exert the major influence throughout the year with the result that little change in the ranking of major influences occurs between February and June. Table 27 below summarises the most powerful factors affecting the choice of a College of Education as perceived by those sixth formers who actually entered one.

TABLE 27: Major factors influencing choice of College of Education entrants.

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers
2 Friends at school	2 Friends at school	2 Friends at school	2 Friends at school
3 College of Education prospectus	3 College of Education prospectus	3 College of Education prospectus	3 College of Education prospectus
4 Head teacher	4 Head teacher	4 Head teacher	4 Head teacher
5 Friends at College of Education	5 Friends at College of Education	5 Internal examinations	5 College interview
6 Form teachers	6 Form teachers	6 College interview	6 Internal examinations

The most noticeable feature of the factors listed in Table 27 is their

stability for when those factors having the highest mean scores are considered, little change is seen in the ranking of them as the school year progresses.

In September, College of Education entrants had clearly regarded their school as an important source of influence, for four of the top six factors were school based influences and included main subject teachers as the most influential, with friends at school in second place, head teacher in fourth place and form teachers in sixth place. The other factors in the top six originate in the colleges themselves, in third place being the College of Education prospectus and in fifth place friends already at a College of Education.

The order of the top six factors does not alter between September and December and even by February little change has occurred. At this time other factors begin to influence choice of a College of Education, the most obvious being internal examinations at school and the college interview. External influences however do not override the early importance attached to school influences.

There is a significant* difference to the importance attached to school examinations between Polytechnic and College of Education entrants, the latter regarding examinations as less influential in the process of choice. This, as was suggested earlier, is because college entrants do not derive vital information about their likelihood of being accepted by a college, for many college hopefuls have already had this information fed to them from an early acquaintance with the concept of a College of Education and from their own performance at 'O' level.

The interview is not as influential on entry to college as it is on Polytechnic entrance for similar reasons. The information gleaned

*Difference of means significant at 0.05 level.

from the interview is not as new as it is for Polytechnic aspirants. Information about College of Education is more readily available in school via college-school links for teaching practice purposes, and of course via teachers themselves, a high percentage of whom would have been trained at a College of Education. In addition to this, colleges are seen as an appropriate alternative to Universities and are presented in a favourable light by the schools themselves. Those sixth formers who were classified as Careerist rated the College interview more highly than do Academics or Instrumentals. One respondent put it this way:

"Training colleges are aware that they are there to do a particular job which is to train teachers. They try to make sure when you go for interview that you really are interested in teaching"

The emphasis on training for an occupational goal is most meaningful to those Careerists who already have a commitment to this career goal for it provides support for a belief that investment in a College of Education is worthwhile for a Careerist interested in teaching. The interview correspondingly provides less support for the Academic or Instrumental whose value commitments may not be supported by this emphasis.

But this excursion into the world of the College of Education should not hide the fact that it is the schools themselves who provide the most potent influences on college choice. This is further emphasised by the significantly* greater importance attached to Careers lessons in school by college entrants than by Polytechnic entrants, whereas careers literature per se, which could come from a number of sources outside school, is considered to be significantly* less important

*Difference of means significant at 0.05 level.

by college entrants than by those entering a Polytechnic. The mean score given to head teachers and form teachers throughout the year is significantly higher than that given by Polytechnic entrants to these factors, and supports the argument that college entrants are more influenced by general school factors than by specific social factors or outside events.

There are significant* differences between college and Polytechnic entrants in terms of the importance attached to respective parental influences. Whilst Polytechnic entrants regard fathers as more influential than mothers, college entrants attach more importance to their mother than to their father.

One further important difference between college and Polytechnic entrants remains to be mentioned. It seems clear from the factors identified by college entrants that the actual process of choosing a College of Education is longer than the actual process of choosing a Polytechnic. The factors identified by those going to college have operated throughout the secondary school stage, whereas Polytechnic entrants highlight factors occurring late in the school career. This raises an important point. An analysis of factors influencing choice has suggested that the process of choosing a College of Education is not identical to that of choosing a Polytechnic. In other words understanding of educational and occupational choice can be extended by incorporating a factorial dimension into a rationality consistency framework.

*Difference of means significant at 0.05 level.

Clearly, specific pieces of research could be set up to identify the specific differences in length and intensity of these processes and show how information is fed into a selection scheme and rationally moulded into a consistency pattern. The process of choosing a College of Education seems to reach its peak by February of the final year at school for at this time the co-efficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice is at its highest (see Table 23). This process of sifting information gained from the various factors influencing choice reaches its climax in February for the College of Education entrant whereas the process continues for the Polytechnic entrant reaching its measured peak in June.

The process of choosing a College of Education as identified in this study is typified in the following collection of interview data from one girl Careerist College of Education entrant.

"During the last couple of years I felt fairly certain that teaching was the thing. After all its a natural thing to do when you've spent twelve years at school surrounded by teachers. For one thing its a job you think you know something about because you see people doing it five days a week - in that respect its a job you know more about than anything else . . .

We had lots of college prospectuses at school and they were always kept up to date. I don't think many of us looked at them to find out what colleges were like, generally because we knew from our visits to local colleges, but we did try to find out the ones that were best. I wanted to go to a large mixed college that had a good reputation - after all its

important to get good training if you are going to teach We didn't have prospectuses on Polytechnics and I don't think many of us knew what they were - all I knew was that they didn't train teachers and so I wasn't very interested University prospectuses were always there but I wasn't very interested in University because it takes four years to train for teaching there and you need three good 'A' levels to get in for my subject which I didn't think I'd get - you can get into college with only 'O' levels and I already had enough of those when I left the fifth form. In any case my friends got into college with 'O' levels

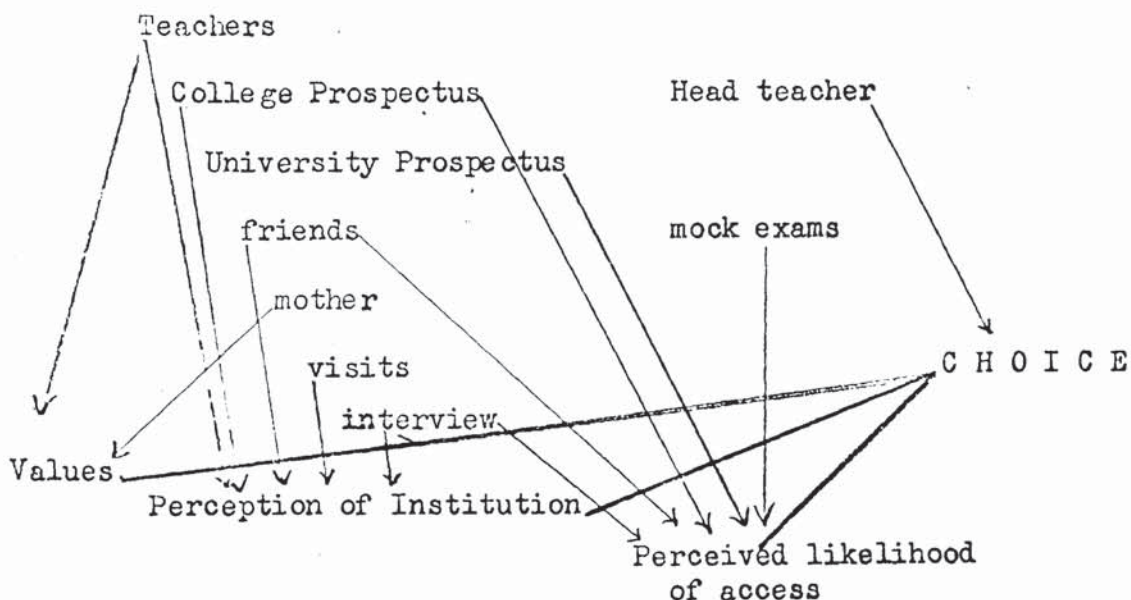
I said that I wanted to teach French and I think this idea originally came from talking to our French teacher when I was in the fourth form - since then I've never really wanted to do anything else. At the beginning of this year all the sixth form were interviewed by the headmistress to talk about our plans after school. When I said I wanted to teach she thought that was a good idea. I got the same reaction from Mrs Forbes my form mistress and from my mother. Actually I remember my mum saying long ago that it would be a nice thing to become a teacher which is something she would have liked to have done because you can make a career of it

Some people got college places early in the year but I wasn't quite so lucky because I didn't get interviewed until January. The interview went quite well and I certainly enjoyed it but I was surprised when they asked me to get two 'A' levels. I'm

not particularly dim but it did come as a bit of a shock and that made me work, especially when I passed all three subjects in my mocks and thought that if I could do it in February I could do it in June. We had quite a bit of training at school for the interview. Mostly our teachers told us what colleges were like and what they were looking for in us, so we knew what to expect at the interview

I suppose I chose college because it offered me the best training for the job I wanted to do and it appealed to me because I thought I'd be able to get in. I chose a good college that one of my teachers had gone to and where I had some friends who like the place"

This case study clearly shows the way in which certain factors have played a part in the choosing of a College of Education for this girl. Although this particular study does not offer detailed information on the complete process of choice because it has not examined the earlier school years it does point to the possibility of an explanation being derived from a theory which incorporated processual and factorial dimensions with a rationality consistency approach. The process of choice of College of Education as revealed in this case study and which is typical of the majority of college entrants, can be represented in the diagram below:



In this case teachers feed in information supporting the careerist commitment of the student, but in a general sense, affecting more candidates, will provide information used in the development of perception of college as an institution. In a similar way the college prospectus supplies a range of information which is also used in perception development. The college prospectus will also help to build up a reasonably accurate perception of likelihood of entry as they will state the specific entry requirements, which some candidates will already be able to satisfy. The University prospectus provided a similar function in that it showed the candidate that the University training period for teachers was too long and that higher academic entry qualifications would be needed. The candidates' friends were also influential for they provided support for the developing perception of college and offered direct evidence of entry requirements which the girl in the case could apply to her own situation. Mother offered support for the careerist commitment of the girl and more particularly support for the idea of applying that commitment to a College of Education. Visits to institutions, in this case to college, were also influential in confirming the perception of these institutions that had developed from the information supplied by friends, teachers and the colleges themselves. The college interview likewise apparently offered support for the perception of college which seemed to have crystallised quite firmly, but fed new information about entry requirements that had to be squared with the old. Adjustment to this new information was satisfactorily achieved once the mock 'A' level examinations had shown the candidate that she could satisfy the entry requirements now demanded. The headmistress's role in this particular case is merely confirmatory in that she supports the decision to go to a College of Education.

Many candidates may not in fact distinguish between the influence of different kinds of teachers but simply be aware that school influences were strong. This may account for the generally high marks given to teachers by College of Education entrants. Certainly an analysis of interview data offers little direct information on the specific influence exerted by head teachers but suggests that they confirmed a commitment to College of Education rather than initiated it. In fact it is not easy to detect the initiators in the process of college choice, although one would look within the school and to some extent within the family for this at an early stage, very careful and sophisticated analyses of the way in which the teaching profession is portrayed by teachers themselves, would be required. College entrants have not experienced sudden influences as had the Polytechnic entrants and there is little doubt that the process of choosing a College of Education is longer for it is initiated earlier; some teachers from the lower school are seen as models that can be closely associated with this type of institution, and parents too have all experienced schools and the teaching process and can exert a considerable influence on their children as we have seen in the case above.

The third activity considered in this study is direct entry to employment which includes all planned activities that involve payment for services, but do not include any further planned full time education at a recognised institution. Those sixth formers therefore who plan to undertake a sandwich course at a Polytechnic or University are considered as choosing those respective institutions and not employment, since they will be effectively undertaking further full time study with practical experience built in. This in principle is no different to attending a College of Education and receiving practical experience in

schools. Thus Table 28 below shows the mean scores given to factors influencing the choice of employment by those who undertook full time work involving no further full time training or education.

TABLE 28: Mean Score (maximum 5) on a Likert scale of influences on choice by those entering employment

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Talks with careers teachers	2.74	2.78	2.69	2.41
Careers conventions	2.87	2.89	2.81	2.80
Careers lessons	1.46	1.42	1.38	1.38
Careers literature	1.67	1.64	1.64	1.63
Visits to employers	2.95	2.96	2.86	2.84
Form teachers	1.76	1.74	1.73	1.72
Main subject teachers	2.97	2.98	3.01	3.00
Head teacher	1.94	1.97	1.94	1.92
Friends at school	3.21	3.23	3.24	3.21
'O' Exam results prior to sixth form	2.46	2.34	2.37	2.39
'O' level results in sixth form	1.94	1.96	1.87	1.89
Other internal sixth form exams	1.91	1.94	3.06	2.90
Talks with Youth Employment Officer	2.61	2.34	2.31	2.04
Talks by employers	1.14	1.32	1.34	1.31
Literature from employers	1.10	1.14	1.14	1.13
University prospectus	1.67	1.69	1.64	1.42
College of Education prospectus	1.41	1.42	1.30	1.16
Polytechnic prospectus	1.07	1.04	1.04	1.02
Visits by representatives of Universities	1.19	1.23	1.18	1.19
Visits by representatives of Colleges of Education	1.03	1.04	1.04	1.02
Visits by representatives of Polytechnics	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.02
Visits to Colleges of Education	1.07	1.09	1.10	1.06
Visits to Polytechnics	1.03	1.04	1.07	1.05
Visits to Universities	1.01	1.02	1.03	1.03
Interviews at Colleges of Education	1.06	1.03	1.06	1.04

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Interviews at Polytechnics	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.02
Interviews at Universities	1.00	1.14	1.21	1.19
Interviews by employers	1.21	2.61	2.84	2.94
Radio and T.V. programmes	1.29	1.34	1.41	1.43
Press articles and advertisements	1.17	1.19	1.14	1.15
Holiday work	2.66	2.59	2.43	2.45
Friends at work	3.11	3.21	3.40	3.41
Friends at College of Education	1.71	1.64	1.53	1.54
Friends at University	1.82	1.81	1.76	1.74
Friends at Polytechnic	1.06	1.09	1.09	1.05
Father	3.16	3.17	3.20	3.20
Mother	1.21	1.24	1.27	1.24
Parents' friends	2.49	2.48	2.47	2.47
Brothers and sisters	2.16	2.18	2.17	2.17

In September those sixth formers who eventually entered employment rated their friends at school as the most important factor influencing their choice of activity. They gave high scores to friends at school, to their father, to friends at work, to their main subject teachers, to visits to employers, to careers conventions, to careers teachers, the youth employment service and to holiday jobs. This represents a wide distribution of influences springing from the home, the school and wider society.

In December this same group gave their highest scores to essentially the same factors. Friends at school were top ranked followed by friends at work, father, main subject teachers, visits to employers, careers conventions, careers teachers, interviews by employers and holiday employment. Some slight adjustment has taken place by February whereby friends at work are now seen as the most important factor influencing choice, followed by friends at school, father, school internal exams, main subject teachers, visits to employers, interviews by employers,

careers conventions and careers teachers. By June little change has occurred in the range of factors mentioned but a few have changed places. Still the most influential factors are friends at work, followed by friends at school, father, main subject teachers, internal examinations at school, interviews by employers, visits to employers and careers conventions.

This mixture of influences needs careful examination if a pattern of choice development is to be built up. To help clarify the picture Table 29 below summarises the six most influential factors quoted by those entering employment.

TABLE 29: Major factors influencing choice of employment

	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
1	Friends at school	1 Friends at school	1 Friends at work	1 Friends at work
2	Father	2 Friends at work	2 Friends at school	2 Friends at school
3	Friends at work	3 Father	3 Father	3 Father
4	Main Subject teachers	4 Main Subject teachers	4 Internal exam results	4 Main Subject teachers
5	Visits to Employers	5 Visits to Employers	5 Main Subject teachers	5 Interviews by employer
6	Careers conventions	6 Careers conventions	6 Visits to employers	6 Internal exams

This table shows a high level of stability of factors but hides a two way process at work in the choice of employment. This process reaches its peak around February of the final year for the coefficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice of employment is at its highest at that time (see Table 23). The following extracts taken from interviews held with some of those entering employment con-

concentrate on references made to factors affecting choice.

In September and December the following collection of comments were made:

"You tend to stick with your friends at school because like you they're not interested in going to University or college but want to get a good job and start work right away."

"Most people in the sixth want to go to University, but there are some of us who want to do a particular job because we're interested in it. Because of this you have your own friends who want to do more or less the same as you do."

"Although we all got on well together there are those people who are going to University and college and those who aren't. If you are one of those not going you seem to take more notice of people in the same boat."

"My father influenced me a lot mainly by showing me that self-made men can really still do it - mind you there is the fact that I can get a job through him whenever I wish . . . "

"Parents are important because they know in a practical sense what work opportunities are like because they've done it - which is more than can be said for most teachers . . . "

"Your friends outside school are important because they're the same age as you yet they can tell you what one kind of job is like at least and also what prospects there are because they've had some experience."

"The only people who really gave me any useful information about work were my friends . . . "

"Teachers don't know much about getting jobs say in management as a trainee because they're really only interested in getting as

many people as possible into University or college. You begin to think that you're a second class citizen if you're not part of the noisy majority."

"It's easy if you're interested in your 'A' level subjects and want to study them after school, then you can get all the help you want but if you're interested in other things well teachers just don't want to know. They plug away at academic achievement so much that you begin to get sick of it which makes you even more determined to do something that isn't like that . . . "

"Visits to offices, hospitals and places like large stores were quite useful to me because they showed me the range of work available and open your eyes to all sorts of possibilities that you'd never thought of in school."

"We had a careers convention in the town which was really good because it was run by the companies themselves. They had all sorts of stands and people to explain to you about career prospects - it was quite well done . . ."

"The careers convention we had at school was important for me because they had outside representatives who could give you all the details you wanted "

In September a few references were made to the Youth Employment Service but these referred to contact with this body earlier in the school career when these pupils had been in the fifth form. As one put it

"They came to see the academic stream just once to find out if on the off-chance anyone was not going to try for University when they left school - they got very few takers at that time."

By December reference to this service had virtually ceased and this trend is reflected in the downward score given to this factor on the Likert scale in Table 28. Thus although the Youth Employment Service has a higher score than many other factors in September, its influence has been exerted earlier in the school career and it is the latent effect of it in the absence of other powerful influences that is measured in September. There is a significant* difference between the score given to this factor by those eventually entering employment and those entering some kind of higher education which rather supports the comment made above. It seems that the Youth Employment Service, as its name suggests, offers little information to those not seeking employment for at least three years and during the latter part of the school career feeds only a limited amount of information to those who will eventually undertake employment on leaving school.

Thus in September and December a number of influences exert a pull towards employment in that they provide information from various sources about the nature of this activity which pupils use to build up a perception of employment. But whilst a pull to employment exists there is also a push away from other alternatives. Table 29 showed that main subject teachers were given a high score by employment entrants throughout the whole of the year. This score indicates that main subject teachers were considered to have an important influence on choice of employment, but the nature of the influence is not clear from the score alone, for the influence exerted by these teachers may be positive or negative. An analysis of the references made by the employment respondents who were interviewed shows that in September, 6 positive and 10 negative comments

*Difference of means significant at 0.05 level.

were made, in December 6 positive and 13 negatives were made, in February there were 5 positive and 14 negatives and in June 5 positive and 15 negative comments.

Teachers therefore exert both a positive informational role in that they provided useful insight to a total of six respondents but initiated negative feed to a total of fifteen. This increase in negative feed is reflected in the increased score given to this factor as the school year progresses.

Why are main subject teachers singled out for this treatment by employment entrants? It would seem that the clue lay in the comments quoted earlier, for the bulk of the negative references show a rejection of the academic influence which this group of respondents saw epitomised in their main subject teachers. Part of the movement towards employment is accounted for by a rejection of the goals of higher education seemingly emphasised by teachers. One must be careful here not to overstate the negative influence of school per se. There is no firm evidence to support the idea that those entering employment have totally rejected the sixth form ethos. Other aspects of school e.g. form teachers, head teachers and careers teachers on average receive scores that are not markedly different to those given by those sixth formers who enter higher education. It is the subject specialists who are seen in a negative light for they represent a subject centred specialism that has little attraction for this group of sixth formers. Of course sixth formers spend most of their class contact time with subject specialists and relatively less time with form teachers, head teachers and career teachers and therefore part of the explanation lies in frequency of contact. A high frequency of contact with subject specialists may expose them more clearly as role models, attractive or otherwise, but always models that can be identified and then accepted or rejected with some conviction.

By February the process of choosing employment is reaching its peak for at this time the co-efficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice of employment reaches a high of +.96. There has been no drastic change in the distribution of major factors influencing choice, but a new one has arrived on the scene, internal examination results. This factor feeds in information about the likelihood of obtaining various goals but its function is slightly different for the employment entrants than for those planning to enter higher education.

It is difficult to estimate what academic requirements are needed to enter employment and this study has taken two minimum passes at 'A' level, or the equivalent, as an employment entry requirement since these are the qualifications demanded by many professional institutes. However one can of course enter employment without 'A' levels and so expected total failure at 'A' level would not preclude entry to employment as it would entry to higher education. The function of the trial 'A' level examinations is not to feed in precise information about likelihood of obtaining employment but rather to tell sixth formers whether other alternatives are likely to be realised and therefore to confirm an original commitment to employment. Therefore trial 'A' level examinations confirm that entry to employment is the most probable choice since a poor performance in these examinations effectively eliminates other possibilities and thus indirectly gives support to the choice of employment.

The following interview extracts collected in February show how the push pull process towards the choice of employment is building up:

"You do react against the pressures put on you to go to University and you begin to think I'll do anything but that."

"Its college all the time - you'll need so many 'A' levels for this and so many for that but not 'why don't you try this kind of job or that?'"

"Some teachers are useful to you - the specialists often don't tell you anything apart from University, but our careers teacher had some quite good suggestions."

"I want to become a nurse, but my teachers said that I'd be wasting myself and why didn't I try for University - honestly that sort of attitude makes you even more determined to try something of your own choice."

"The mocks tell you quite a lot. Even before them I thought that I wouldn't get particularly good grades at 'A' level, certainly not ones good enough to get into University. But now its a cast iron certainty that higher education is out for me because I don't think they'll have me. In any case its not something I wanted to do - its what school thought you ought to do."

"Not very good exam results. That made me even more determined to do something that wouldn't involve more study. I've had enough I've had a complete change."

"Two passes and a miserable failure in my exams - that's not a recommendation for University. I didn't really want to go anyway, but you do feel that its expected of you. Now I can happily join the police, which is something I've always wanted to do really."

Peers, Parents, some teachers, employers and visits all continue to feed in positive information about the nature of work all of which is incorporated into an overall perceptual scheme. At the same time

reactions against the perceived academic nature of subject specialists continues and increases when information from February examinations becomes available. These examinations confirm that entry to higher education is unlikely and accompanying this information is the developing view that employment is the most attractive proposition because it allows escape from the academic pressures which became increasingly problematic for some sixth formers.

By June the process of choosing employment had reached and passed its peak for the co-efficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice of employment had fallen from its peak of $+0.96$ in February to $+0.83$. A similar set of dominant factors appear as did in February although slight changes have occurred. Friends at work, friends at school and fathers still occupy the most influential places with main subject teachers moving into fourth place, interviews with employers appearing in fifth place and internal school exams falling to sixth. The influence of peers in and outside school remains strong as does the influence of the family providing information via fathers. Main subject teachers continue to exert this mixture of positive and negative feed with the emphasis on the negative aspect increasing, as was seen above. Internal school exams have now played their most crucial part and are considered to be less important than they were in February at which time they fed in valuable confirmatory information.

The new factor, interviews with employers, is interesting for it appears when the process of choosing employment is virtually completed. The role of interview contrasts in two important ways with the Polytechnic interview and to some extent with the college interview. Firstly, the employment interview appears much later in the process of

choice than do college and Polytechnic interviews. Secondly its influence is confirmatory rather than innovatory and it is not likely to result in many fundamental changes in career choice but rounds off a decision already taken. The Polytechnic interview has been shown in a more innovatory light and is more likely, because of its nature and earlier appearance, to initiate change in variables as to confirm. The same argument applies when comparing the College of Education interview with the employment one in that the former acts as an initiator for some previously college aspiring sixth formers who receive information leading to a new course of action.

A fuller understanding of the process of choosing employment can be gained from the following collection of interview extracts given by one Instrumental respondent:

In September he began

"I'm really torn between two possibilities, one is going to University or perhaps Polytechnic and delaying my choice of job for at least three more years or getting a job as a

management trainee with a company. My father's a production manager and I feel too that I should like to enter business. School keeps suggesting that we should try for as much education as we can get - I'm not so sure that I want to wait that long . . .

If I do go into a company I should like to work in personnel. I got this idea from a visit we made from school to a local firm where we saw everything from the shop floor up to the management. As I said, I was already generally interested in business because I suppose money is quite important and the idea that you'd be doing something useful, say something that people would see as important. My father says that there's nothing wrong with education as long as its geared to something, because no matter what you study, at some point you have to go out to work - in any case my father has a few contacts with local people and he says that he could give me just as good a start as any University degree . . .

In December he continued

"You do get a bit fed up with the emphasis from teachers on applying to University and college, getting good grades and working hard. Some people at school feel the same way and after a time you stick together over certain things because you become identified as dropouts or second class citizens. It's O.K. if you're sweating away at 'A' levels but if not you're a bit different always in need of a gentle reminder from teachers and you become determined to do what you want. Certainly as I became more interested in work I found that I took more notice of people in school who had the same ideas.

I don't mean that there was any antagonism or great division between people but you did begin to dissociate yourself from the pleas for more work and those who responded to them . . .

In February he commented:

"All of the things I've mentioned before helped me to choose employment rather than University but two things stand out as being important I think. One was someone I met at Christmas - not exactly a friend but my sister's boyfriend's mate who had left this school about four years ago and worked at Ruberry's. I vaguely remembered him from school as a bit of a layabout but you should see him now. Sharp clothes and good car. He said he had no regrets about leaving school and joining a firm straight away because he was progressing quicker than those who joined the firm straight from University. If you worked you didn't need paper qualifications. That had quite a big impact on me

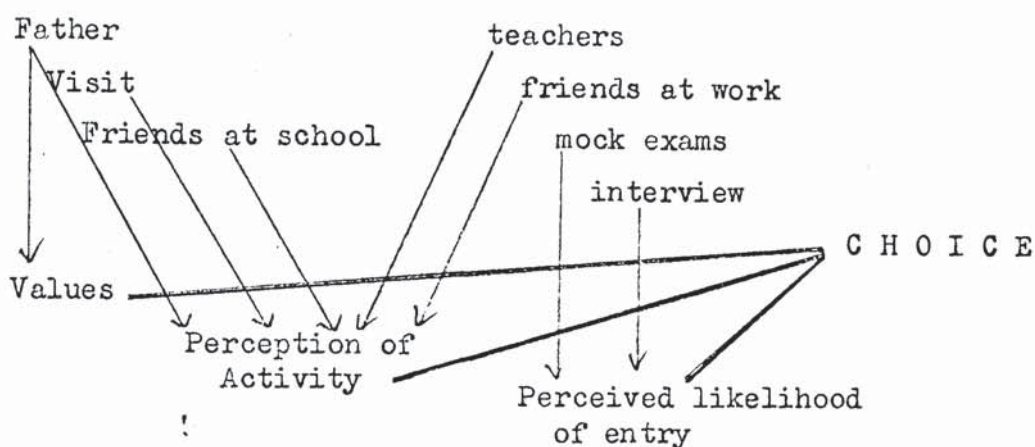
The other thing was my mock exam results which weren't very good. Although I applied to University just in case I changed my mind about a job, I wasn't interviewed and got rejected by my first three choices. With these mock results it doesn't look as though I'd get in anyway even if they did offer me a provisional place"

By June his commitment to employment showed no sign of waning.

"I haven't changed my mind since I last saw you. Since making up my mind not long after Christmas I made a few enquiries with local firms. My father gave me a few suggestions and in April or May, anyway not long before the 'A' levels, I got interviewed

by a firm who said they would take me on. It wasn't much of an interview but just told you what you'd be doing and that your prospects were up to you. I'm really looking forward to it now"

The development of choice of employment by this boy can be represented in the diagram below. Again factors operating prior to the upper sixth form year were at work, most noticeably father. However, the diagram shows how the decision was eventually arrived at within the time limits examined in this study.



In the case of this respondent there are seven identifiable factors operating on choice during the last year at school. Father probably initiated and helps to support an Instrumental commitment in terms of value; he certainly provides positive information about the nature of work and the likelihood of the respondent being able to obtain entry to the sort of position he desires. The visit to the local firm provided information that led to the particular interest in personnel work, it therefore provided an attractive picture of industry which was incorporated into the overall perceptual scheme. The friend at work provided direct evidence that work had instrumental attractions and that entry to a career escalator could be made without

higher education. The interview at the end of the process similarly furnished information about the nature of industry and in offering the respondent a position of course, gave conclusive proof of the likelihood of entry.

At school, teachers contributed to the negative push away from higher education by emphasising an appropriate goal that this respondent rejected. He therefore turned to employment partially as a response to this. Employment and the rejection of higher education were supported by selected peers and therefore evidence was available that his action in choosing employment was not toally deviant. The mock 'A' level examinations also provided negative but useful information in that a poor performance indicated that the required grades of pass in the 'A' level proper were not likely to be forthcoming therefore higher education was not an attainable goal. The emphasis on higher education perceived in teachers and the perceived likelihood that the goal could not be achieved completed the rejection of these alternatives.

The fourth and final post 'A' level activity considered in this study has been referred to many times already and now we turn to an examination of it in more detail. Table 30 below shows the mean score given to factors influencing choice of University by those who actually gained admission.

TABLE 30: Mean score (maximum 5) on a Likert scale of influences on choice of University

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Talks with Careers Teachers	1.55	1.62	1.40	1.30
Careers conventions	1.24	1.23	1.23	1.20
Careers lessons	1.36	1.37	1.30	1.28
Visits to employers	1.26	1.19	1.18	1.19

<u>Factor</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
Form teachers	2.74	2.75	2.73	2.68
Main subject teachers	3.80	3.86	3.84	3.81
Head Teacher	2.66	2.84	2.87	2.84
Friends at school	2.80	2.93	2.91	2.76
'O' Exam results prior to sixth form	3.07	2.77	2.46	2.42
'O' level resits in sixth	1.44	1.32	1.27	1.23
Other internal sixth form exams	1.47	1.52	3.62	3.57
Talks with Youth Employment Officer	1.15	1.13	1.14	1.12
Talks by employers	1.24	1.17	1.14	1.10
Literature from employers	1.31	1.26	1.21	1.20
University prospectus	3.39	3.44	3.15	2.77
College of Education prospectus	2.17	2.19	2.10	2.10
Polytechnic prospectus	1.79	1.81	1.74	1.64
Visits by representatives of Universities	1.83	1.83	1.42	1.41
Visits by representatives of Colleges of Education	1.06	1.04	1.03	1.03
Visits by representatives of Polytechnics	1.28	1.24	1.21	1.23
Visits to Colleges of Education	1.20	1.53	1.34	1.30
Visits to Polytechnics	1.16	1.14	1.14	1.07
Visits to Universities	1.19	1.20	1.18	1.19
Interviews at Colleges of Education	1.00	2.00	1.68	1.43
Interviews at Polytechnics	1.00	1.32	1.39	1.41
Interviews at Universities	1.00	2.96	3.04	2.94
Interviews by employers	1.06	1.14	1.07	1.06
Radio and T.V. programmes	1.94	1.92	1.97	1.84
Press articles and advertisements	1.31	1.24	1.24	1.32
Holiday work	1.07	1.04	1.04	1.10
Friends at work	2.08	2.22	2.06	2.04
Friends at College of Education	2.14	2.51	2.54	2.36
Friends at University	2.62	2.88	2.83	2.69
Friends at Polytechnic	1.13	1.16	1.21	1.19
Father	2.76	2.78	2.75	2.72
Mother	2.44	2.45	2.43	2.44
Parents' friends	1.40	1.41	1.31	1.30
Brothers and sisters	1.47	1.38	1.38	1.39

The general distribution of influences shows that factors in school, in the home and in wider society are considered to play an important part in the choice of University. Table 31 below summarises the most influential factors throughout the year. In the case of Polytechnic, College of Education and employment entrants, an understanding of the process could be derived from an examination of six factors. In the case of University choice the main nine factors at each point in time are shown because they are closely grouped factors having similar scores and being easily distinguishable from other items in the battery.

TABLE 31: Main factors influencing the choice of University

<u>September</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>February</u>	<u>June</u>
1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers	1 Main subject teachers
2 University prospectus	2 University prospectus	2 Trial 'A' level exams	2 Trial 'A' level exams
3 'O' level results	3 Interview at University	3 University prospectus	3 Interview at University
4 Friends at school	4 Friends at school	4 Interview at University	4 Head teacher
5 Father	5 Friends at University	5 Friends at school	5 University prospectus
6 Form teacher	6 Head teacher	6 Head teacher	6 Friends at school
7 Head teacher	7 Father	7 Friends at University	7 Father
8 Friends at University	8 'O' level results	8 Father	8 Friends at University
9 Mother	9 Form teachers	9 Form teachers	9 Form teachers

The outstanding feature of this distribution is the dominant position taken by school influences. When one considers the whole of

the education system and relates it to the economic system, it would seem that schools have tended to support rather than initiate decision making. However the link between grammar schools and Universities is long established and many schools see the gaining of places in University as a primary function. It is therefore not surprising that school factors are seen to play a large part in the decision to go to University for it is a goal that has traditionally appealed to the grammar schools. It is an activity about which they have considerable information and an institution that many of its staff have attended.

A closer examination of factors will reveal the specific way in which the process of choosing a University develops during the upper sixth form year. The factor seen as the most influential is the subject specialist at school, a position he retains throughout the year. The 'A' level teacher provides the necessary expertise needed by candidates to pass the examination and because of his own experience probably sees the university as the appropriate institution for furthering any interest that his pupils have developed. It is likely then that the main subject teacher will tend to value expertise in his subject and encourage pupils to pursue this at the specialist institution, the University.

The obvious bait of subject specialism appeals to the Academic sixth former as was shown in earlier chapters and a large percentage of University aspirants and entrants are Academics. The subject specialist is then influential in the choice of University as an

appropriate post 'A' level activity. The influence springs from the fact that University is a natural continuation of the development of specialist skills that he has been trying to inculcate in his 'A' level course. Polytechnics, Colleges of Education, and direct entry to employment are less attractive in these terms.

The following interview extracts indicate the importance attached to main subject teachers by University entrants:

"They were very important to me in stressing that University was the place to go if you wanted to become an expert in your subject."

"Certainly your specialist teachers play a big part in your interest in University because its something many of them have known from their student days and they see University as the ultimate goal."

"Teachers delight in getting as many sixth formers as possible into University because it is the height of academic respectablity."

In September and December the University prospectus was considered to be an important factor for it provided information about courses and in certain cases gave direct information about entry requirements. The University prospectus does not seem to have initiated the process of University choice in many cases but acts as an important source of information once the process is under way.

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"You look at the prospectus to find out what the course is like generally but also to get some idea of what grades at 'A' level they're looking for."

"The prospectus tells you important details like whether you need 'O' level Maths to read Chemistry or 'O' level Latin to read English - you can only get this information from the prospectus."

"You develop an interest in University almost as soon as you enter the lower sixth I think, but you don't really make up your mind until the beginning of the supper sixth when you're encouraged to look at the prospectuses and consider what sort of course you want to do."

"The prospectus helps you to decide between Universities depending on the course and the entry requirements - it can also help you to decide between University and going to say a Poly if the prospectus is sufficiently informative."

In September 'O' level results appear as the third influential factor and are deemed important because they provide information useful on two fronts. They firstly indicate whether the sixth former has sufficient and the correct combination of 'O' level passes to satisfy matriculation requirements, if so he knows that he need concentrate only on his 'A' level subjects and that he is asqualified as anyone at this stage in the game. Secondly his performance at 'O' level gives him a general indication of his academic potential representing the only large scale attempt he has made at passing external examinations. He won't get a similar opportunity until the 'A' level mocks or 'A' level exams themselves. His school examinations taken whilst in the lower sixth seem unimportant.

By December 'O' levels have retreated in the rankings and appear in eighth place. This movement continues during the rest of the year with the result that after December 'O' level performance is considered to be of decreasing importance.

"If you've got good 'O' levels you know that you've passed the first hurdle and don't have to get involved in resits. Without this distraction you can concentrate on 'A' levels."

"'O' levels are quite importance bacuse they tell you whether you've passed the general entrance requirements."

"If you do well at 'O' level you think you'll probably do well at 'A' level"

"After a time 'O' levels seem much less important than they did because all sorts of other things are going on."

Friends at school are highly rated throughout the year. Essentially their role seems to be to provide the support needed to endure the task of gaining entry to University, it is essentially a supportive rather than initiating role. However one must be clear what is meant by friends at school. Just as there was evidence of a division between those sixth formers entering employment and those not so there is a similar situation seen from the other side when examining the friends of University entrants. The friends heeded are those seeking a similar activity, primarily those hoping to enter University.

"It's hard work slogging away to get good 'A' levels that might get you into University and you take notice and get support from others in your form trying to do exactly the same."

"Friends don't tell you anything new - they just add to what you already believe."

"My friends were helpful in one important respect. They found me a language degree I could do without having two languages at 'O' level and that made me choose University when I had almost thought of changing my mind and going to a Poly where this difficulty didn't arise."

"Most of the sixth form want to go to University and it's them you take notice of or discuss progress with or compare notes with, not the others who aren't interested."

Fathers figure prominently during the year and mothers are quite highly rated. This combination represents a general push to University based upon a general conception that it's the best thing to aim at. There were few cases of parents being able to provide specific information about Universities but they were able to exert a level of encouragement which was not associated with Polytechnic or College of Education. An encouragement that was based on the societal definition of University being the ultimate goal that was discussed in an earlier chapter.

Morris (1969) noted that the fathers and mothers of University applicants had had significantly more full-time education than the parents of the training college applicants. Indeed in this study some parents were able to offer quite specific advice to their children as a result of their own experiences.

"My father went to University and certainly encouraged me to do the same. He told me the places to apply and those to avoid."

A more typical comment was:

"Parents support you by assuming that you'll go to University because you've stayed at school and when you show interest

they seem pleased to have a son or daughter interested. My parents said that University was a wise investment and they would support me all they could."

The direct influence of parents on University entrants seems relatively small when compared with other factors operating during the final school year. Nevertheless the degree of support which the respondent believed his parents gave to his plans for University was important in a number of contexts. For many respondents, this was largely a consequence of their own decisions: they had commented that their parents played no part in initiating an interest in University but once plans were under way the parents agreed to support whatever the son or daughter thought best. Whether it was a cause of their decision or not, perceived support was important. It reinforced the sixth former's own determination by providing both encouragement and legitimation at those moments when the sixth former doubted the wisdom of the course of action he was undertaking.

Form teachers and head teachers are seen as part of the general influence exerted by the school for sixth formers to aim at University. Their informative role is often more limited than that of the subject specialists but they nevertheless exert an important supportive influence. Some head teachers apparently interviewed all the sixth form to ascertain their plans after school and others, by reference to the achievements of old pupils, let it be known that University was a highly approved goal. One head teacher ran a detailed course showing the merits of certain Universities against others and the tactics to be adopted when applying and at the interview. Interestingly enough no such course was offered for Polytechnics, Colleges of Education or employment which supports the idea of school loyalty and ambition being directed to the Universities.

Form teachers offered snips of information or, in tutorial groups, helped to stress the value of a University education. As one respondent put it.

"It's only when you're near to leaving school that you realise what a concerted but subtle campaign exists to sell University to you and try to persuade you to join the race. You get it in different forms from nearly all the teachers you come into contact with as soon as you get into the sixth."

A not insignificant influence are friends already at University who confirm that the work and effort in the sixth were worth it and give the sort of inside information which can only be gained from someone with direct contact with a University. The following extracts illustrate this role.

"I know some people at University who encouraged me to apply when I talked to them about it. They were able to tell me what was involved once you got in, how much work you had to do and how difficult it was."

"One piece of really useful advice I got from a friend was to apply to do an honours course and not a joint course at her University because it was easier to get in. So I did that and I did get in."

By February two important influences enter the picture. In second place appear trial 'A' level examinations which are considered to be more influential in the choice of University than all factors except main subject teachers. Their importance lies in the direct information they feed into the process which relates directly to perceived likelihood of

entry. Just as 'O' level results provided a clue that performance at 'A' level was likely to be good or not so, performance in the trial examinations provides up to date information about likely grades of pass. This is extremely important to University candidates for passes alone are insufficient when offers of places are made in terms of passes at certain grades at 'A' level according to subjects taken and degree course applied for. This is the last source of information about likely performance at 'A' level that candidates will receive before taking the examinations proper. They thus provide an important confirmation or otherwise that the path undertaken is appropriate.

"Mocks are more important to people applying to University than those going to college or just hoping to get a job because you know that you've got to have certain grades to get into University and just failing is as bad as failing completely."

"You receive offers of places throughout the year you know what you have to get but you don't really know what you're going to get. Mock exams are the only thing during your sixth form course that give you any real clues."

"Good mock results show you that you can make University with just a little more effort for a little longer."

The second new factor is the University interview which is ranked as the fourth most powerful influence on University choice. The persistence of interviews for University applicants is sometimes puzzling. It has long been argued that they are of little value in predicting ability to carry out University work. They involve

considerable time and effort on the part of both interviewer and sixth former and their discriminatory value among University applicants seems insufficient to compensate for this.

Nevertheless selection interviews appear to have a number of consequences which may be relevant to an understanding of their survival. They may provide information for interviewer and sixth former alike. The sixth former who applies to a distant University may have no opportunity to gain even a fleeting first hand impression of it, unless he is called for an interview. The interview offers an alternative to the prospectus for judging a particular institution or course. Similarly the interviewer has the opportunity to erase misunderstandings and to widen his sources of information about the candidate.

The interview may have symbolic significance in personalising the selection process. It identifies the University's representatives as real persons, rather than relying on impersonal statuses, all of which affirm for the candidate the University's interest in him as a person, rather than as a candidate with a set of desirable characteristics.

The University interview is not an initiator of the process of University choice but rather like the College of Education interview is more confirmatory than innovative. For many sixth formers the interview provides direct evidence of the make up, both physical and education of University, which before had come from the words and writings of others.

Certain interviewers gave conditional offers verbally at the time which fed very important evidence into the process of choice. For

some, grades asked for came as a fearful blow but the vast majority knew full well what to expect and seemed relieved to have the offer stated face to face.

At this point in time the process of choosing a University seems to have run its course for in February the coefficient of correlation between projected choice and actual choice of University reaches its highest point $+0.71$ and declines $+0.68$ in June. It is in the field of University choice that the smallest amount of fluctuation in correlation occurs between projected choice and ultimate decision. At the beginning of the upper sixth year a figure of $+0.63$ was obtained showing that the actual pattern of choice had been considerably shaped for University entrants before the final school year - this argument does not apply as forceably to those who eventually chose Polytechnic, College of Education or employment.

As has been shown above there are important factors at work during the final school year which make important contributions to the process of University choice. It is equally true to say that a considerable measure of selection has already shaped this process before the sixth form is ever reached. The wealth of data pointing to the effects of social class, streaming, the attitude of parents and teachers, the quality of primary school attended and the system of secondary organisation adopted, all suggest how the path leading to the choice of University may have gained its shape.

Many sixth formers did not change their plans during the summer holidays. Data gathered from the mail questionnaire sent out after the publication of 'A' level results showed that 76% of the sample actually undertook the activity they had predicted in June just before they left school. Movement that occurred concerned University and some Polytechnic aspirants who did not achieve the 'A' level grades required of them. University hopefuls turned unanimously towards Polytechnic, and Polytechnic hopefuls now looked mainly to employment. Of course for the latter group University was out of the question because of poor 'A' level results, it was too late to apply to a College of Education and hence employment was an obvious alternative. Those sixth formers who entered further education or returned to school were not drawn from any particular group but all had poor 'A'

level results which frustrated previous ambitions. All those sixth formers who changed choice of activity during the school holidays indicated that poor 'A' level results were the cause of that change and no other single reasons were mentioned.

The findings were consistent with the view that each type of choice may be made gradually and revised over time. For a comprehensive analysis of the total process the following variables at least would be needed; the personal interests and values of the respondent, his educational performance, his educational plans and predicted performance, his perceived attributes of various occupational avenues available to him, and his perception of the conventional links between particular jobs and the educational system.

In the primary school occupational plans are usually a reflection of personal interests and values. Early choices are apt to mirror personal interests such as looking after dolls or playing with cars, fantasies about glamorous occupations and immediate observability. School achievement, the need for advanced education and social standing of the job are probably of minor importance. The 11+ represents the first open intervention although streaming on social class lines within primary schools and parental influence have already begun to play their part. After several years in secondary school most pupils have largely determined the general social level at which they will enter the job market. Within the general level, values are an important influence modified by educational performance within the secondary school and by outside factors and reach a stable position by the time the sixth form is reached. At the same time the conventional links between education and particular institutions or occupations are beginning to become clear as more information is fed into the process.

Choice is then likely to become a process of elimination as educational choices based on values and achievements reduce the range of activities that would be appropriate as perception of opportunities begins to crystallise. Surprises or disappointments in performance may open up new opportunities or impose new limitations on choice.

The process of choice is somewhat uneven and is determined by the number, variety and frequency of contributory factors. Changes in choice could occur as new potent influences are introduced or equally, harden as cumulative support is built up by bodies of factors acting unidirectionally.

The relationship between educational and occupational goals is therefore complex and the relevant factors may not intervene at one point only, but may be influential sporadically or continually. The sequence in which they appear is by no means fixed and no single pattern is followed by all sixth formers. Some had clearly undergone a process that had produced a clear value commitment and near certain belief that they would be able to gain access to the most attractive institution. Others had less certain commitments both at the beginning and at the end of the year, and choice oscillated between at least two activities. In the upper sixth one sees in general either the conclusion of a process that has been in operation for a number of years, or one may see the introduction of innovatory factors that trigger an important new set of interests giving shape and direction to a previously incomplete process. Whatever the ultimate shape

of the process, prediction of choice of activity became more accurate as value scores, institution perception scores and scores on perceived likelihood of entry increased and became consistent with each other.

This chapter has therefore examined the patterns of choice leading to the selection of four possible activities for sixth formers. Differences in these processes have been highlighted and have been shown to be shaped within a sixth form context by information flow deriving from the activities of various agencies which have been designated as factors. Each pattern therefore is the result of a process comprised of factors feeding information that acts directly on a system of independent variables which when consistent with each other produce choice from a range of alternatives.

C H A P T E R V I I I

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSIONS

Earlier chapters have provided us with some understanding of sixth form educational and occupational choice. They did so by showing how three theoretical frameworks could be combined in a longitudinal study and provide data that could be used to both express and predict choice. Seven hypotheses were set down and were tested in the ensuing fieldwork. This final chapter will re-examine those hypotheses.

Hypotheses 1.

That choice from a range of alternatives is the end product of a process that varies in length.

Within the sixth form context this was seen to be substantiated. Those sixth formers who ultimately went to university had made, in many cases, this decision before entering the upper sixth; for at the beginning of the final school year there was a significant positive correlation between projected choice of university and actual choice. The coefficient of correlation increased between September and December, reaching its peak in February and declining slightly but not significantly in June. It is clear from the high coefficient of correlation obtained throughout the year that the decision to go to university, taken earlier in the school career, was in many cases to be realised.

On the other hand the process of choosing a polytechnic is slower to get under way. An insignificant number of those who selected a polytechnic in September actually went to one when they left school. By December however a large increase had occurred in the coefficient of correlation between projected polytechnic choice and actual choice, and this figure continued to rise throughout the year. In other words whereas university entrants seemed to have made an early decision about university and largely stuck to it, those who went to a polytechnic experienced a process that

It was a process which began late and gained momentum quite quickly - a momentum which was sustained throughout the rest of the year as was indicated in the continued increase in coefficient of correlation between projected and actual choice of a polytechnic.

The process of choosing a college of education has a velocity that lies somewhere between the polytechnic and university pattern. It begins earlier than the polytechnic process but has taken a less definite form than the university pattern in September. Although the process of choosing a college of education is under way at the beginning of the year the degree of correlation between projected and actual choice of college in September suggests that decisions have not firmly crystallised at this time. By December, however, there is a highly significant relationship between projected and actual choice of college of education which reaches its peak in February, tailing off slightly in June as did the university pattern. Thus it seems that the process of choosing a college of education is generally complete mid-way through the year as was the process of choosing a university. These two patterns differ from the polytechnic pattern in that the latter continues to develop during the year and does not reach its peak until June.

The decision to select employment of some sort rather than higher education again seems to have been taken quite early in many cases. There is a significant coefficient of correlation between projected and actual choice of employment in September which becomes highly significant in December reaching a peak in February and falling off in June although remaining still highly significant.

Thus the process of choosing a university was well under way in September whereas the processes of selecting employment and college of education

were beginning to take shape but had not yet been completed. On the other hand the process of choosing a polytechnic was hardly under way, there being no significant relationship between projected and actual choice.

By December, college, employment and particularly polytechnic processes were well under way reaching stages of development that the process of university choice had attained in September. In all cases except the polytechnic, peak figures of coefficient of correlation were reached in February indicating that these processes were nearing completion, and a highly significant relationship between projected and actual choice remained for the rest of the year. Polytechnic choice however, continued to develop reaching its high point in June, all of which confirms that the process of choosing from a range of alternatives varies in length as hypothesis one postulated.

Hypothesis 2

That the process of choice consists of interaction of individuals with factors of socialisation that produce a flow of information.

Since this study is concerned with the patterns of choice exhibited by sixth formers, it considered only those factors of socialisation that could be empirically demonstrated to be operational in the sixth form context. Thirty-eight factors were considered drawn from three areas, the school itself and its immediate contacts, the home, and from wider society. These factors played a part in the perceptual development of respondents both in terms of the development of individual values and in the creation of perceptions of the alternatives available.

Information was gained from careers teachers, careers conventions, careers lessons and from careers literature but this was deemed less important than the information gained from teachers, friends at school and examination successes. University and college prospectuses, visits and interviews continued to provide information and friends who had already entered higher education or employment contributed an important part. Parents in general played a more important part than did siblings who in turn contributed to information flow more than did the mass media. But information flow has to be seen in the context in which it occurs and the use that is made of it by different sub populations in the sixth form. We therefore turn to hypothesis three.

Hypothesis 3

That interaction and information flow is instrumental in the development of values.

Three value clusters (see appendix 6) were identified in two pieces of empirical research. These value clusters were called academic, instrumental and careerist. Respondents were divided in September into one of these categories on the basis of replies to a questionnaire and less than 2% moved between categories during the subsequent year. Indeed, value commitments strengthened throughout the year as certain factors exerted their influence.

Of course these three value commitments did not suddenly develop and take shape in one year. Early factors which were not measured in this study had undoubtedly played their part. However our data was able to demonstrate that certain factors were still at work and playing a part in the continuing development of values in the sixth form.

There was no obvious relationship between value commitments and any one cluster of factors as identified by respondents. The relationship was rather a situation specific association. Academics were seen to be more influenced by their subject teachers at school in the development of values than were instrumentals or careerists. Within the academic category the more successful in terms of examination success in school are the group most influenced by the factor of school examinations. As a group academics were shown to be influenced by main subject teachers, by examination results and by friends at college and university. These factors played a continuing part in the development of an academic value commitment during the upper sixth form year and tend to be confirmatory rather than innovatory, adding support to a process of value commitment that has begun earlier in school.

Two factors were shown to play important parts in the development of instrumentality in the sixth form. Fathers were seen as on-going influences continuing to exert an ethos of worldly awareness and 'getting ahead'. The other factor which clearly may operate over a long period of time but which was also effective in the sixth form context, was the mass media which was seen to support an instrumental commitment.

The pattern of influences on careerist values is far from clear. Although teachers, peer groups, parents and examination successes play important parts it is not clear how they combine to produce a careerist orientation rather than any other. Clearly part of this hinges on what the individual extracts from the stimulus provided by the factor and how he combines it into his own definition of the situation and his perception of reality. This is a problem for the sociology of knowledge with which our data cannot deal.

Nevertheless sufficient evidence was produced to support the hypothesis that these are factors which interact with individuals in the sixth form and provide a flow of information that plays a part in the continuing development of values.

Hypothesis 4

That interaction and information flow produce a perception of the attributes of available alternatives.

Four alternatives were under consideration (1) entry to university (2) entry to polytechnic (3) entry to college of education and (4) direct entry to employment. Few global perceptions were found although university was seen as an academic institution concentrating on scholarly excellence and manned by those with a high level of expertise. The other side of this particular coin was employment which was seen as emphatically non-academic. Appendix 7 shows the mean perception scores of each alternative held by the total sample during the year. Clearly there are differences in perceptions not only between institutions but also in the relative position of these alternatives as the school year progresses.

There is a significant increase in academic instrumental and careerist perceptions of polytechnic during this time as information about these institutions is fed into the perceptual process. There is no significant change in the academic and instrumental perceptions held of college of education but a significant increase in careerist perception. As for employment, the academic and careerist perceptions held in September do not significantly change during the year but employment is increasingly seen as more instrumental as the year progresses. University receives higher scores on perception throughout the year, scores which on all but one

dimension significantly increase. Thus there are changes in the perceptions of each alternative with the passing of time.

This idea of change and differential perception can be supported by comparing the relative position of each alternative in the academic, instrumental and careerist dimensions in turn.

In September the alternative with the highest academic perception is university followed by college of education, polytechnic and finally by employment and this remains the case until February when polytechnic takes second place from college of education with employment seen as the least academic. These relative positions remain unaltered for the rest of the school year. Thus relative academic perception has to a large extent stabilized by September and it is only the increased perceived academic nature of polytechnic which alters the relative positions of these alternatives on the academic dimensions during the year.

If we examine the perceived instrumental attributes of these alternatives we find rather more movement in relative positions. Thus in September university is seen to have the most instrumental characteristics followed by employment, college of education and finally by polytechnic. By December the significant increase in instrumental perception of polytechnic has begun to take shape and polytechnic moves to third place relegating college of education to the bottom of the list where it remains for the rest of the year. No change in relative positions occurs in February but by June polytechnic has the highest instrumental score, leaping over similar scores for university and employment. Thus by the end of the school year considerable change has occurred in the instrumental perception of polytechnic which leads to a change in relative positions.

In the careerist dimension there are also changes. In September employment was seen as the most careerist alternative followed in second place by university, in third place by college of education and finally by polytechnic. By December however college of education has taken over at the top followed by employment, university and polytechnic. This position remains unchanged in February but by the end of the year polytechnic has jumped from bottom to top place followed by college of education, employment and finally by university. Again therefore we see changes in the relative perceptions held of each alternative.

These findings support that part of the hypothesis that suggests that different perceptions of alternatives will develop but we must turn again to the factors indicated by respondents if we are to understand how these perceptions develop.

Chapter 6 indicated a group of factors that were particularly important here. The prospectus provided some indication of the various orientations of different institutions of higher education as did teachers and friends at school. Friends already at college, university, polytechnic or at work also fed in information about these alternatives which was incorporated into a perceptual framework. The college or university interview was also shown to provide stimuli that in some cases initiated a new perception, and in others confirmed an already developing one. Thus interaction with factors and the ensuing stimuli or flow of information produce a perception of the attributes of available alternatives.

Hypothesis 5

That interaction and information flow produce a perception of the likelihood of access to those alternatives.

A perception of likelihood of access to post 'A' level alternatives largely hinges on expected examination results. Three of the four alternatives admit candidates on the basis of passes at G.C.E. 'O' and/or 'A' level. On the one hand information about requirements is not difficult to obtain as our data showed, for the prospectus almost invariably explicitly states minimum entrance requirements for different subject areas at university, college of education and polytechnic. However, minimum requirements are just that, and offers no guarantee of a place, what is more important is the grade of pass. Our data shows that sixth formers are well aware of this principle and are able to estimate their own chances of attaining the current going rate of grades.

How do they arrive at these estimates of what is required and their own chances of reaching the appropriate standard? Information about specific requirements comes from teachers, from peers at school as offers of places come in, from direct offers to candidates and from friends who have already entered higher education. Visits and careers talks play some part but are less influential according to respondents than those factors mentioned previously.

The sixth former is able to estimate his own chances of success by using his performance at 'O' level which provides him with some indication of his ability to perform in the examination situation, but this factor is less important to respondents than are teachers who provide feedback on work through their comments and marks. The trial 'A' level examinations in February also feed in information about current performance in written examinations which is taken as an indication of likely performance in the 'A' level examinations to be held in June. Thus the sixth form context contains a number of factors that operate to produce a perception of

likelihood of access to alternative courses of action.

Hypothesis 6

That interaction produces a sufficient range and depth of information to facilitate discrimination between alternatives.

This hypothesis was supported in the discussion of hypotheses 4 and 5.

Appendix 7 shows that differences in perception of alternatives exist and that these perceptions undergo change as factors exert their influences. In no sense can individuals be said to have accurate perceptions, for clearly the world can be viewed from a multiplicity of standpoints. Indeed in the sixth form context accurate perceptions of the characteristics of alternatives are not necessary since the individual builds up his own perceptual map of what is available, of its characteristics and of its accessibility, and it is this map that becomes the framework on which his choice is based. The map contains references to some facets of objective reality especially when the individual evaluates the accessibility of alternatives. This he does on the basis of information about himself and about the alternatives which contained in the process of sixth form interaction. Thus in the final analysis it is the individual's own map which is ultimately of crucial importance and, as the hypothesis suggests, these maps may vary from individual to individual.

Hypothesis 7

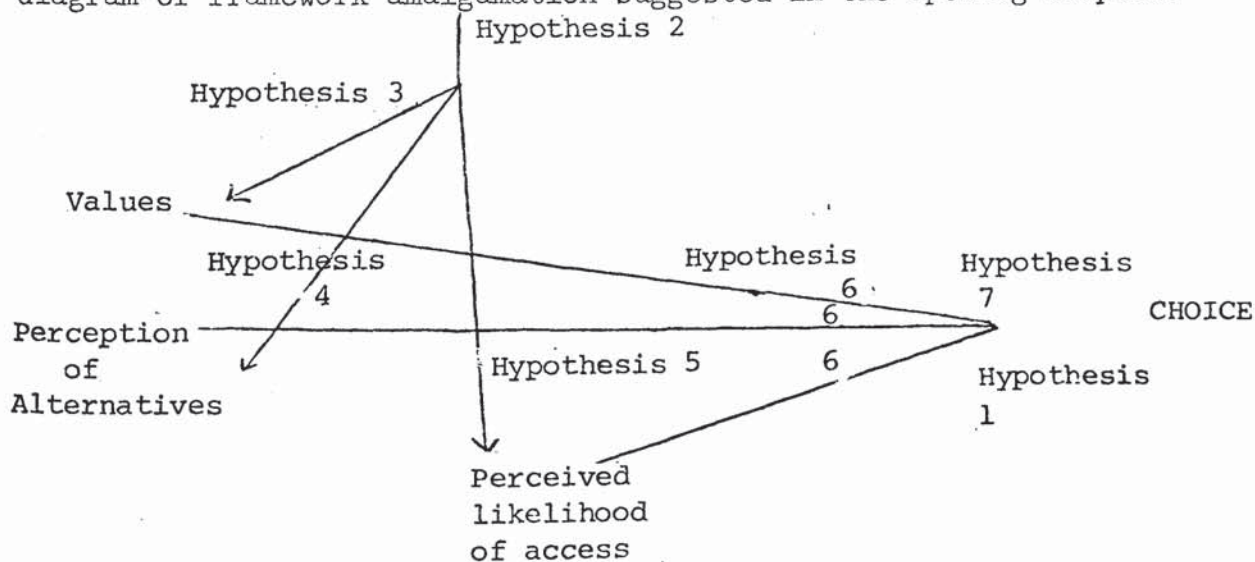
That individuals will tend to choose that alternative which is seen to embody characteristics that satisfy and support value commitments and is seen to be accessible.

This hypothesis illustrates the very essence of the rationality framework. Support for it came from the 1971 test of the framework but later fieldwork

in 1973 suggested that the hypothesis holds good under certain conditions but is more difficult to support in other circumstances.

In the sixth form context choice of post 'A' level alternative is made on the basis of consistency between three independent variables, but implicit here is the fact that there exists a mechanism to initiate this movement towards consistency. Part of the mechanism is information flow. Thus at the beginning of the school year choice of university, college of education or employment could be predicted by examining this level of consistency, but such an examination was less helpful in predicting choice of polytechnic at this time. This was because few stimuli had arisen to give rise to a perception of a polytechnic. As the year progressed so did the ability to predict choice in all four spheres. As information was fed into each individual's perceptual map leading to decision making in the way suggested in the hypothesis. Therefore the rationality framework can provide hypotheses that help us to predict individual choice but other frameworks are needed to enable us to understand why a particular decision was made.

The hypotheses examined in this thesis can now be built into the original diagram of framework amalgamation suggested in the opening chapter.

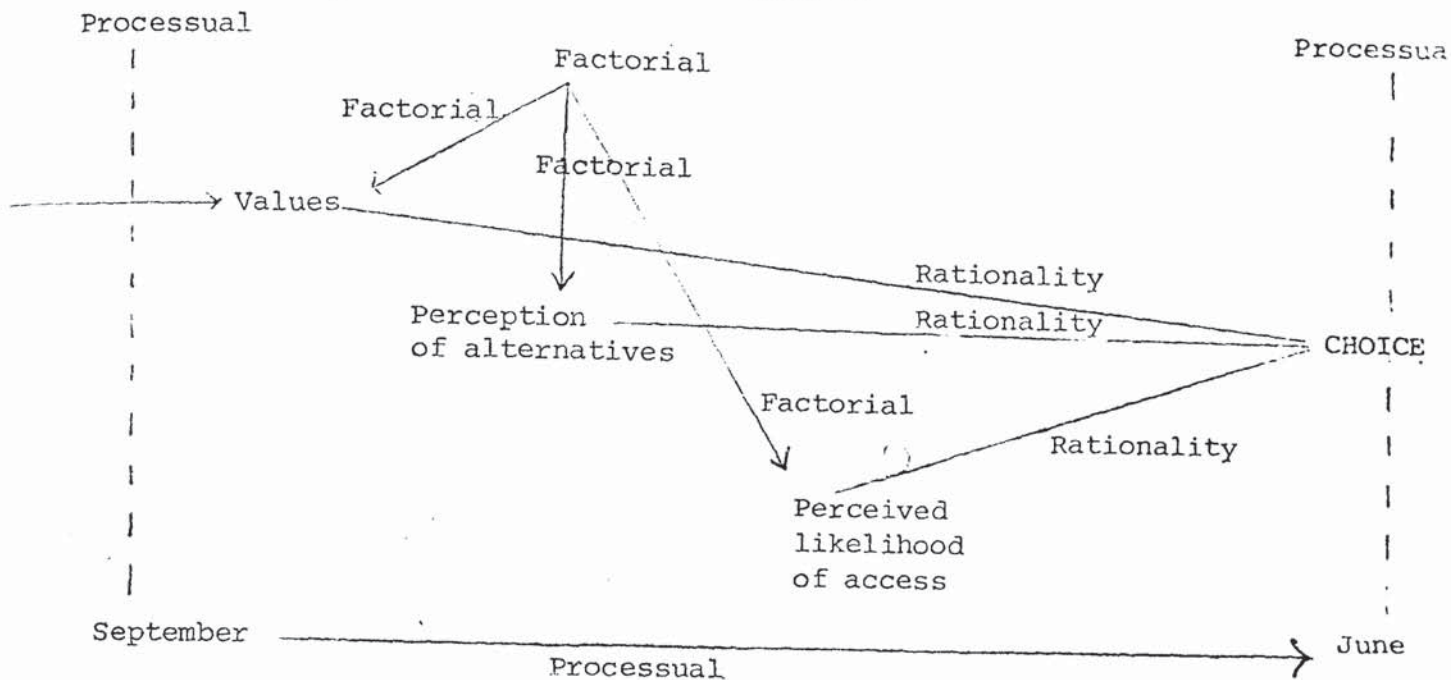


Hypotheses 2 suggests the general incidence of information flow arising from the existence of a number of factors. Hypothesis 3 takes up the relationship between those factors and the development of value commitments. In this study values were seen to be largely well developed by the upper sixth and tended to crystallise during the school year rather than change directions. Therefore many of the factors contained in hypothesis 2 had already operated before the time span under consideration in this study. However, examples were given of value support occurring at this time.

Hypothesis 4 showed how perception of the nature and of the general attributes of alternatives built up. It highlights those factors which were prominent in this area and among which were the institutions themselves, the school and the peer group. Hypothesis 5 indicated how perceived likelihood of access played a part in the developments of choice and particularly how factors interacted with the individual to give him an estimate in this dimension. Particularly important in this area were subject teachers, previous and current examination results, peers and the institutions themselves.

Hypothesis⁶ suggests that the individual's ability to discriminate between alternatives will now lead him to narrow down his choice as he identifies those alternatives which are consistent with his values and which are also likely to be available to him. Once this part of the process is complete hypothesis 7 is reached when choice of one alternative is made. But of course that choice may be made early in the year or at the last minute, according to the specific ways in which hypotheses 2 to 6 have operated and it is here then that hypothesis 1 appears to tell us that this process of choosing between alternatives may vary in length from individual to individual

These hypotheses were derived from an amalgamation of three frameworks which can be represented in a similar diagram.



The rationality framework takes values, perception of alternatives and perceived likelihood of access as given and suggests that choice will depend on the level of consistency between these variables. The higher the level of consistency the easier will be the task of predicting choice. This framework shows the relationship between the individual's estimate of himself in terms of values, and of the world around him in terms of his perception of its characteristics. The actual link between the definition of self and environment lies in his perceived likelihood of access to those alternatives seen to be available, for here the individual relates his own attributes to those desired in the context of each alternative. One limitation of this framework is that it produces a still frame picture of the relationship between variables at only one point in time. Further 'photographs' only serve to pinpoint the existence of movements in the relative positions of these variables and do little to explain the reasons for those movements.

An important part in all of this is played by factors that initiate the dialogue between self and society. The factorial framework therefore introduces us to the agents involved in this and therefore offers an explanation for the development of consistency suggested in the rationality framework. The factors that are identified in this way may play a variety of parts by acting as inducers of consistency, by acting as checks on such developments, or by encouraging a realignment on the basis of new evidence which any one factor may provide.

But when does this evidence appear and why is it influential at one point in time rather than at another? Answers to these kinds of questions can be gained by using a processual framework which builds in an important element, the time dimension. The empirical part of this study has considered only one aspect of the overall process of decision making and has restricted itself to the sixth form. In this context it has indicated how choice develops, whilst at the same time clearing the way for similar studies which might explain individual choice from a separate but similar processual standpoint. Such periods as the early years in secondary education, early experiences in industry, or the experience of higher education could usefully be treated in this way. The processual framework like the rationality and factorial perspectives contributes to our knowledge of occupational and educational choice. But how do these three frameworks help each other when combined together?

The short answer is that they provide a more coherent whole from which to operate. The factorial framework helps to give a clearer picture of the rationality dimension by relating elements of the individual's experiences (factors) to measurable outcomes (occupational and educational choice).

The specific part played by a range of factors in the development of consistency can usefully be examined in this way and hence we begin to understand why an individual came to select alternative A rather than alternative B.

The factorial framework in turn benefits from an anchorage to time for in this way the nature of one factor may usefully be compared with that of another. For example some factors may exert a steady, concerted, unidirectional influence whilst others may make a brief but crucial appearance that has important repercussions on the shape and direction of decision making. If these factors are seen in a processual context then they may be identified both in terms of their characteristics and in terms of their role in a particular sequence of events. As such we begin to understand which are the independent and which are the dependent variables when we examine factors in a processual framework.

An amalgamation of frameworks therefore generates hypotheses that can be framed and measured in such a way as to allow both prediction and understanding of choices made from a range of alternatives. The rationality framework suggests that the individual comes to relate his definition of himself, in terms of his values, to his view of the world from his location in the social structure. This he does by relating his values to his perception of those alternatives seen to be available both in terms of other characteristics and their ease of access. The factorial framework indicates the nature of the factors that are associated with this dialogue between the individual and the social structure and the processual framework places these factors into a time context thereby giving a boundary in which factorial and rationality frameworks may operate. This combination therefore furnishes us with a coherent base on which to develop our understanding of educational and occupational choice.

	Completely Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Completely Disagree
11. I have a job in mind and 'A' levels will help me to get that sort of job.					
12. I gain status by being in the sixth and taking 'A' levels.					
13. I enjoy studying subjects in depth.					
14. I feel academically closer to the staff now that I'm doing 'A' level.					
15. 'A' levels will help me to broaden my outlook and horizons.					
16. The sixth form will help me to further my chosen occupation.					

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALE ADMINISTERED FOR
EACH OF FOUR INSTITUTIONS

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Will lead to a specific career. | 1. Will not lead to a specific career. |
| 2. Will lead to a job commanding respect | 2. Will not lead to a job commanding respect |
| 3. Will lead to a job which will give me a good salary in the future | 3. Will lead to a job which will not give me a good salary in the future. |
| 4. Will lead to high academic qualifications | 4. Will not lead to high academic qualifications. |
| 5. Will lead to high status in the community | 5. Will not lead to high status in the community. |
| 6. Will give me high status whilst a student or training. | 6. Will not give me high status whilst a student or training. |
| 7. Will lead to a deeper knowledge of my subject | 7. Will not lead to a deeper knowledge of my subject. |
| 8. Will lead to a well paid job. | 8. Will not lead to a well paid job. |
| 9. Will give me much free time to study on my own initiative | 9. Will not give me much free time to study on my own initiative. |
| 10. Will help me to get a job I want. | 10. Will not help me to get a job I want. |
| 11. Will bring me into contact with people who can help me further my career | 11. Will not bring me into contact with people who can help me in my career! |
| 12. Has good career prospects | 12. Does not have good career prospects |
| 13. Will help me to broaden my horizon and outlook. | 13. Will not help me to broaden my horizons and outlook. |
| 14. It is necessary for my career progress. | 14. It is not necessary for my career progress. |
| 15. Will lead to qualifications giving me a good salary during my career | 15. Will not lead to qualifications giving me a good salary during my career. |
| 16. Will make me intellectually more capable | 16. Will not make me intellectually more capable. |
| 17. Will give me a theoretical education | 17. Will give me a practical education. |
| 18. Will allow me to make a decision about my career | 18. Will not allow me to make a decision about my career. |
| 19. Will require good 'A' levels to obtain entry | 19. Will not require good 'A' Levels to obtain entry. |

APPENDIX THREE

1. Will you write down what is your most important reason for taking 'A' levels.
2. From the following list tick your first choice activity for next year:
 - (a) entry to employment
 - (b) going to a Polytechnic
 - (c) going to University
 - (d) going to a College of Education.
3. Can you tell me when you chose this approximately?
4. Write down one reason why you chose it.
5. Would you say you were more committed to your choice than you were since I last saw you, less committed, about the same, or had changed your mind completely?
6. Has your first choice activity changed since I last saw you?
 - (b) If it has changed could you tell me why?
7. What influence would you say that the following have had so far in helping you to arrive at a decision about what you want to do when you leave school?
8. What would you say you like about school now that you're in the sixth form?
9. Can you tell me what you dislike most about school now?

A great Quite a Some Very No
 influence large influ- little influence
 influence ence influence at all

	A great influence	Quite a large influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
1. Talks with careers teachers					
2. Careers conventions arranged by the school					
3. Careers lessons or group talks by careers teachers					
4. Literature provided by careers teachers					
5. Visits to local employers arranged by school					
6. Form teachers					
7. Main subject teachers					
8. Head teacher					
9. Friends at school					
10. Exam. results at O level and CSE in 4th or 5th years					
11. Exam. results at O level during 6th form (resits)					

A great influence	Quite a large influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
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12. Sixth form internal examination results
13. Careers conventions organised by the Y.E.S.
14. Private talks with Youth Employment Officer.
15. Talks at school by reps. of prospective employers
16. Literature from prospective employers.
17. Prospectuses of
 - (a) Universities
 - (b) colleges
 - (c) Polytechnics
18. Visits by reps of
 - (a) Universities
 - (b) colleges
 - (c) Polytechnics
 to school
19. (a) Visits to colleges
(b) Visits to Polytechnics
20. Visits to Universities.
21. (a) Interviews at colleges and
(b) Polytechnics
22. Interviews at Universities
23. Interviews by prospective employers
24. Radio and T.V. programmes
25. Press advertisements or articles
26. Periods spent working in organisations, holiday jobs etc.
27. Friends already at work.

	A great influence	Quite a large influence	Some influence	Very little influence	No influence at all
--	-------------------	-------------------------	----------------	-----------------------	---------------------

- | | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 28. | (a) Friends at college | | | | |
| | (b) Polytechnic | | | | |
| | (c) University | | | | |
| 29. | Father | | | | |
| 30. | Mother | | | | |
| 31. | Parents' friends | | | | |
| 32. | Brothers and sisters | | | | |

APPENDIX FOUR

Questionnaire completed during summer vacation.

I should like to thank you for your help during the past year. In order to complete the picture, I wonder if you would answer the following questions as fully as you can. Please do this only when you have reached a definite decision about your activities for next year.

- (1) What have you decided to do in September?
- (2) How exactly did you arrive at this decision?
- (3) Tell me please about the people, events and activities that played the most important part in helping you to reach this decision.

APPENDIX FIVE ITDM ANALYSIS

Correlation of scores on items with total scores.

Section 1 Commitment to Educational values

Correlation of scores on all variables with total scores.

(a) Variable 1 = 0.982	7 = 0.884	12 = 0.846
2 = 0.930	8 = 0.901	13 = 0.974
3 = 0.992	9 = 0.836	14 = 0.844
4 = 0.860	10 = 0.873	15 = 0.878
5 = 0.941	11 = 0.912	16 = 0.942
6 = 0.985		

(b) Academic items

Variable 1 = 0.996	13 = 0.961
5 = 0.972	14 = 0.874
6 = 0.819	15 = 0.837
10 = 0.976	

(c) Instrumental items

Variable 2 = 0.986	9 = 0.990
3 = 0.961	12 = 0.960
7 = 0.963	

(d) Careerist items

Variable 4 = 0.922	11 = 0.910
8 = 0.947	16 = 0.936

Section 2 Perception of University

(a) Correlation of scores on all variables with total scores.

Variable 1 = 0.836	11 = 0.989
2 = 0.763	12 = 0.774
3 = 0.917	13 = 0.904
4 = 0.892	14 = 0.794
5 = 0.771	15 = 0.864
6 = 0.785	16 = 0.878
7 = 0.830	17 = 0.894
8 = 0.997	18 = 0.837
9 = 0.980	19 = 0.899
10 = 0.965	

(b) Academic items

Variable 4 = 0.926	17 = 0.935
7 = 0.958	19 = 0.943
9 = 0.979	
13 = 0.924	
16 = 0.994	

(c) Instrumental items

Variable 2 = 0.909	6 = 0.834
3 = 0.914	8 = 0.855
5 = 0.921	15 = 0.876

(d) Careerist items

Variable 1 = 0.861	12 = 0.891
10 = 0.933	14 = 0.972
11 = 0.942	18 = 0.923

Section 3 Perception of Employment

(a) Correlation of scores on all variables with total scores.

Variable 1 = 0.804	8 = 0.556	14 = 0.826
2 = 0.966	9 = 0.717	15 = 0.913
3 = 0.919	10 = 0.939	16 = 0.874
4 = 0.818	11 = 0.665	17 = 0.797
5 = 0.662	12 = 0.836	18 = 0.884
6 = 0.705	13 = 0.878	19 = 0.932
7 = 0.818		

(b) Academic items

Variable 4 = 0.890	16 = 0.843
7 = 0.736	17 = 0.743
9 = 0.658	19 = 0.855
13 = 0.751	

(c) Instrumental items

Variable 2 = 0.766
3 = 0.959
5 = 0.849
6 = 0.970
8 = 0.896
15 = 0.964

(d) Careerist items

Variable 1 = 0.816	12 = 0.870
10 = 0.774	14 = 0.877
11 = 0.976	18 = 0.751

Section 4 Perception of Polytechnic

(a) Correlation of scores on all variables with total scores.

Variable 1 = 0.863	8 = 0.875	14 = 0.852
2 = 0.779	9 = 0.921	15 = 0.876
3 = 0.763	10 = 0.892	16 = 0.893
4 = 0.871	11 = 0.884	17 = 0.866
5 = 0.940	12 = 0.786	18 = 0.941
6 = 0.849	13 = 0.953	19 = 0.906
7 = 0.970		

(b) Academic items

Variable 4 = 0.978	16 = 0.925
7 = 0.767	17 = 0.766
9 = 0.904	19 = 0.798
13 = 0.971	

(c) Instrumental items

Variable 2 = 0.926	6 = 0.840
3 = 0.911	8 = 0.844
5 = 0.943	15 = 0.397

(d) Careerist items

Variable 1 = 0.824
10 = 0.907
11 = 0.965
12 = 0.904
14 = 0.978
18 = 0.945

Section 5 Perception of College of Education

(a) Correlation of scores on all items with total scores.

Variable 1 = 0.777	8 = 0.856	14 = 0.783
2 = 0.869	9 = 0.927	15 = 0.852
3 = 0.863	10 = 0.813	16 = 0.886
4 = 0.929	11 = 0.903	17 = 0.874
5 = 0.945	12 = 0.686	18 = 0.942
6 = 0.799	13 = 0.776	19 = 0.761
7 = 0.783		

(b) Academic items

Variable 4 = 0.985	16 = 0.759
7 = 0.875	17 = 0.925
9 = 0.966	19 = 0.931
13 = 0.984	

(c) Instrumental items

Variable 2 = 0.691	6 = 0.818
3 = 0.909	8 = 0.978
5 = 0.963	15 = 0.917

(d) Careerist items

Variable 1 = 0.673
10 = 0.617
11 = 0.984
12 = 0.870
14 = 0.886
18 = 0.922

T scores of items in the questionnaireSection 1 Commitment to educational values

(a) Scores for each item against total scores.

Variable	1t = 3.76	7t = 3.67	12t = 3.94
	2t = 3.12	8t = 2.82	13t = 2.87
	3t = 3.84	9t = 3.12	14t = 2.50
	4t = 2.74	10t = 3.41	15t = 3.77
	5t = 3.41	11t = 3.62	16t = 3.52
	6t = 4.04		

(b) Academic items against total score on academic items.

Variable	1t = 4.2	13t = 2.71
	5t = 3.9	14t = 3.59
	6t = 2.85	15t = 3.61
	10t = 3.9	

(c) Instrumental items against total score on instrumental items

Variable	2t = 4.25	9t = 3.92
	3t = 4.16	12t = 3.73
	7t = 3.84	

(d) Careerist items against total score on careerist items.

Variable	4t = 4.73	11t = 4.22
	8t = 5.41	16t = 4.46

Section 2 Perception of University

(a) Scores for each item against total scores

Variable	1t = 3.2	8t = 2.25	14t = 2.61
	2t = 2.65	9t = 3.89	15t = 2.87
	3t = 3.15	10t = 3.6	16t = 3.31
	4t = 4.71	11t = 4.1	17t = 3.40
	5t = 3.82	12t = 2.16	18t = 2.26
	6t = 4.21	13t = 2.32	19t = 4.07
	7t = 2.07		

(b) Academic items against total score on academic items.

Variable	4t = 4.6	16t = 6.12
	7t = 5.12	17t = 5.94
	9t = 3.27	19t = 4.62
	15t = 4.26	

(c) Instrumental items against total score on instrumental items

Variable	2t = 4.6	6t = 4.26
	3t = 4.15	8t = 3.92
	5t = 3.9	15t = 4.34

(d) Careerist items against total score on careerist items.

Variable	1t = 4.51	14t = 3.28
	10t = 3.67	18t = 3.17
	11t = 3.16	
	12t = 2.94	

Section 3 Perception of Employment

(a) Score for each items against total score

1t = 2.07	7t = 3.1	13t = 3.96
2t = 4.52	8t = 2.86	14t = 2.98
3t = 3.1	9t = 3.71	15t = 2.74
4t = 2.72	10t = 3.98	16t = 3.46
5t = 2.98	11t = 2.07	17t = 3.78
6t = 3.07	12t = 4.19	18t = 3.04
		19t = 4.24

(b) Academic items against total scores on academic items.

Variable	4 t = 4.66	17 t = 4.21
	7 t = 5.38	19 t = 4.35
	9 t = 6.17	
	13 t = 3.08	
	16 t = 2.37	

(c) Instrumental items against total scores on instrumental items.

Variable	2 t = 5.46	6 t = 3.77
	3 t = 4.06	8 t = 4.77
	5 t = 5.72	15 t = 5.25

(d) Careerist items against total scores on careerist items.

Variance	1 t = 3.16	12 t = 2.72
	10 t = 5.92	14 t = 3.77
	11 t = 3.66	18 t = 4.45

Section 4 Perception of Polytechnic

(a) Score for each item against total score

Variable	1 t = 4.96	8 t = 3.29	15 t = 3.04
	2 t = 2.66	9 t = 3.26	16 t = 2.54
	3 t = 2.76	10 t = 4.21	17 t = 2.37
	4 t = 2.51	11 t = 3.61	18 t = 2.96
	5 t = 3.19	12 t = 2.86	19 t = 4.53
	6 t = 2.66	13 t = 3.47	
	7 t = 5.26	14 t = 3.32	

(b) Academic items against total score on academic items.

Variable	4 t = 4.84	16 t = 2.92
	7 t = 5.36	17 t = 4.56
	9 t = 6.16	19 t = 3.85
	13 t = 4.31	

(c) Instrumental items against total score on instrumental items.

Variable	2 t = 4.30	6 t = 4.27
	3 t = 6.9	8 t = 4.94
	5 t = 4.32	15 t = 4.41

(d) Careerist items with total scores on careerist items.

Variable	1 t = 6.1
	10 t = 5.32
	11 t = 4.13
	12 t = 3.68
	14 t = 4.15
	18 t = 4.66

Section 5 Perception of College of Education

(a) Score for each item against total score.

Variable 1 t = 4.95	8 t = 2.99	15 t = 3.14
2 t = 2.36	9 t = 2.62	16 t = 3.82
3 t = 2.12	10 t = 3.9	17 t = 2.71
4 t = 3.17	11 t = 5.12	18 t = 2.46
5 t = 2.77	12 t = 3.18	19 t = 2.32
6 t = 3.62	13 t = 2.54	
7 t = 3.59	14 t = 2.91	

(b) Academic items with total score on academic items

Variable 4 t = 4.26	16 t = 5.73
7 t = 4.39	17 t = 4.51
9 t = 3.88	19 t = 4.37
13 t = 4.42	

(c) Instrumental items with total score on instrumental items

Variable 2 t = 3.06	6 t = 5.66
3 t = 4.97	8 t = 5.61
5 t = 3.86	15 t = 4.99

(d) Careerist items with total score on careerist items

Variable 1 t = 4.066
10 t = 5.39
11 t = 3.62
12 t = 5.81
14 t = 3.29
18 t = 4.57

Appendix 6. Correlation Matrix and Factor Analysis of items contained in scale of values.

September

Correlation Matrix

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	1.00															
2	-.14	1.00														
3	-.30	+.74	1.00													
4	-.45	-.60	-.40	1.00												
5	+.68	-.23	-.30	-.74	1.00											
6	+.77	-.09	-.27	-.43	+.72	1.00										
7	-.47	+.75	+.78	-.29	+.59	-.43	1.00									
8	-.40	-.49	-.40	+.74	-.28	-.35	-.30	1.00								
9	-.38	+.69	+.69	-.30	-.46	-.37	+.80	-.40	1.00							
10	+.70	-.23	-.27	-.40	+.68	+.78	-.48	-.34	-.44	1.00						
11	-.37	-.59	-.39	+.78	-.22	-.40	-.33	+.74	-.40	-.38	1.00					
12	-.35	+.73	+.67	-.40	-.49	-.45	+.73	-.37	+.77	-.45	-.35	1.00				
13	+.77	-.13	-.24	-.48	+.69	+.88	-.41	-.45	-.28	+.71	-.42	-.34	1.00			
14	+.73	-.00	-.21	-.48	+.57	+.71	-.29	-.39	-.16	+.70	-.54	-.28	+.66	1.00		
15	+.65	-.06	-.10	-.46	+.70	+.78	-.39	-.39	-.39	+.83	-.43	-.36	+.73	+.65	1.00	
16	-.41	-.50	-.37	+.68	-.31	-.39	-.17	+.63	-.17	-.43	+.73	-.20	-.37	-.43	-.55	1.00

Factor Matrix

Item	Factor 1.	Factor 2
1.	+.85	+.02
2.	-.19	+.87
3.	-.32	+.75
4.	-.46	-.76
5.	+.80	-.12
6.	+.90	+.02
7.	-.55	+.73
8.	-.40	-.72
9.	-.46	+.73
10.	+.88	-.01
11.	-.32	-.78
12.	-.48	+.72
13.	+.86	+.07
14.	+.78	+.16
15.	+.86	+.10
16.	-.46	-.62

This suggests that there is a major split between academic values & instrumental - generalist & specific instrumental

<u>Item</u>	<u>Communality</u>
1	.73
2	.79
3	.67
4	.80
5	.66
6	.82
7	.84
8	.68
9	.74
10	.77
11	.80
12	.75
13	.75
14	.63
15	.75
16	.61

Percentage of Variance

Factor 1	43.8
2	33.5

DecemberCorrelation Matrix

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11	13	14	15	16
1	1.00															
2	-.25	1.00														
3	-.33	+.78	1.00													
4	-.51	+.46	-.38	1.00												
5	+.75	-.26	-.31	-.38	1.00											
6	+.77	-.31	-.37	-.40	+.73	1.00										
7	-.46	+.76	+.81	-.27	-.52	-.47	1.00									
8	-.48	-.39	-.37	+.81	-.43	-.34	-.28	1.00								
9	-.38	+.78	+.74	-.34	-.40	-.48	+.80	-.38	1.00							
10	+.76	-.28	-.31	-.47	+.77	+.78	-.46	-.48	-.38	1.00						
11	-.47	-.43	-.32	+.80	-.40	-.49	-.26	+.84	-.34	-.51	1.00					
12	-.36	+.76	+.74	-.39	-.40	-.50	+.77	-.34	+.81	-.41	-.29	1.00				
13	+.78	-.33	-.35	-.44	+.74	+.89	-.47	-.44	-.42	+.78	-.46	-.45	1.00			
14	+.77	-.22	-.33	-.46	+.66	+.77	-.36	-.39	-.31	+.75	-.51	-.34	+.72	1.00		
15	+.71	-.23	-.21	-.47	+.76	+.80	-.41	-.42	-.42	+.80	-.47	-.34	+.77	+.72	1.00	
16	-.43	-.42	-.41	+.78	-.39	-.33	-.23	+.76	-.27	-.44	+.78	-.31	-.35	-.38	-.51	1.00

Item Factor Matrix

	<u>Factor 1.</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>
1	+.87	+.09
2	-.37	+.79
3	-.42	+.75
4	-.45	-.79
5	+.84	+.03
6	+.90	-.01
7	-.57	+.69
8	-.44	-.77
9	-.51	+.73
10	+.89	-.08
11	-.48	-.77
12	-.50	+.72
13	+.90	+.02
14	+.82	+.09
15	+.86	+.11
15	-.42	-.73

<u>Item</u>	Communality
1	.77
2	.76
3	.74
4	.84
5	.71
6	.81
7	.80
8	.79
9	.80
10	.81
11	.82
12	.79
13	.81
14	.68
15	.75
16	.71

Percentage of Variance

Factor	1	47.2
	2	33.5

FebruaryCorrelation Matrix

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	1.00															
2	-.41	1.00														
3	-.36	+.85	1.00													
4	-.58	-.29	-.37	1.00												
5	+.85	-.28	-.32	-.56	1.00											
6	+.77	-.64	-.53	-.35	+.75	1.00										
7	-.44	+.79	+.87	-.26	-.42	-.54	1.00									
8	-.58	-.28	-.35	+.90	-.62	-.34	-.25	1.00								
9	-.38	+.90	+.82	-.39	-.32	-.62	+.80	-.36	1.00							
10	+.85	-.36	-.37	-.58	+.89	+.79	-.44	-.64	-.31	1.00						
11	-.64	-.18	-.24	+.85	-.68	-.42	-.16	+.95	-.26	-.70	1.00					
12	-.38	+.85	+.84	-.38	-.28	-.57	+.82	-.31	+.85	-.35	-.23	1.00				
13	+.81	-.62	-.49	-.40	+.83	+.91	-.55	-.44	-.58	+.86	-.51	-.57	1.00			
14	+.82	-.57	-.51	-.45	+.80	+.85	-.48	-.40	-.52	+.83	-.51	-.44	+.82	1.00		
15	+.80	-.48	-.36	-.47	+.84	+.83	-.43	-.48	-.45	+.76	-.56	-.32	+.85	+.81	1.00	
16	-.45	-.33	-.45	+.90	-.50	-.26	-.30	+.89	-.40	-.45	+.86	-.45	-.33	-.31	-.46	1.00

Factor Matrix

Item	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>
1	+.89	+.16
2	-.60	+.70
3	-.53	+.74
4	-.46	-.82
5	+.88	+.22
6	+.91	-.10
7	-.58	+.65
8	-.49	-.83
9	-.56	+.76
10	+.91	+.20
11	-.57	-.75
12	-.53	+.74
13	+.95	-.04
14	+.90	-.00
15	+.88	+.10
16	-.37	-.84

<u>Item</u>	<u>Communality</u>
1	.83
2	.86
3	.84
4	.89
5	.84
6	.84
7	.76
8	.93
9	.89
10	.87
11	.90
12	.84
13	.90
14	.82
15	.79
16	.85

Percentage of Variance

Factor 1	52.8
2	34.7

JuneCorrelation Matrix

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.00															
-.42	1.00														
-.37	+.86	1.00													
-.56	-.30	-.38	1.00												
+.86	-.29	-.32	-.57	1.00											
+.78	-.64	-.54	-.35	+.76	1.00										
-.43	+.80	+.88	-.27	-.42	-.54	1.00									
-.59	-.29	+.36	+.91	-.63	-.34	-.25	1.00								
-.39	+.91	+.83	-.40	-.33	-.63	+.80	-.37	1.00							
+.86	-.37	-.38	-.58	+.90	+.80	-.44	-.65	-.32	1.00						
-.65	-.19	-.25	+.86	-.69	-.43	-.16	+.96	-.27	-.71	1.00					
-.39	+.86	+.85	-.39	-.28	-.58	+.83	-.32	+.86	-.35	-.24	1.00				
+.82	-.63	-.50	-.40	+.83	+.92	-.55	-.44	-.59	+.86	-.52	-.56	1.00			
+.83	-.58	-.52	-.46	+.81	+.86	-.49	-.40	-.54	+.84	-.52	-.44	+.83	1.00		
+.80	-.49	-.37	-.48	+.84	+.83	-.44	-.48	-.46	+.76	-.56	-.33	+.86	+.83	1.00	
-.46	-.34	-.46	+.91	-.51	-.27	-.31	+.89	-.41	-.42	+.87	-.45	-.33	-.32	-.47	1.00

Factor Matrix

<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>
+.90	+.17
-.62	+.72
-.54	+.75
-.47	-.83
+.89	+.22
+.92	-.10
-.59	+.66
-.49	-.84
-.57	+.77
+.92	+.22
-.58	-.76
-.54	+.75
+.95	-.05
+.91	-.01
+.89	+.11
-.38	-.85

<u>Item</u>	<u>Communality</u>
1	.84
2	.87
3	.86
4	.91
5	.85
6	.86
7	.78
8	.94
9	.90
10	.88
11	.92
12	.84
13	.91
14	.83
15	.80
16	.85

	<u>Percentage of Variance</u>
Factor 1	53.4
2	35.2

Mean perception of Institutions by total sample
(7 point scale)

(A)	<u>Polytechnic</u>	September	December	February	June
1.	Academic Perception	2.17	2.85	3.34	4.9
2.	Instrumental Perception	2.11	2.92	3.73	5.23
3.	Careerist Perception	1.37	2.46	3.29	5.02

Analysis of variance. 1, 2 and 3 significant at 0.01 level.

(B)	<u>College of Education</u>	September	December	February	June
1.	Academic Perception	3.39	3.37	3.32	3.28
2.	Instrumental Perception	2.90	2.80	2.77	2.73
3.	Careerist Perception	3.44	3.75	4.08	4.24

Analysis of variance. 1 and 2 not significant. 3 significant at 0.05 level

(C)	<u>Employment</u>	September	December	February	June
1.	Academic Perception	1.75	1.92	1.88	1.84
2.	Instrumental Perception	4.02	4.31	4.27	4.22
3.	Careerist Perception	3.68	3.69	3.76	3.72

Analysis of variance. 1 and 3 not significant. 2 significant at 0.05 level

(D)	<u>University</u>	September	December	February	June
1.	Academic Perception	5.24	5.38	5.47	5.81
2.	Instrumental Perception	4.63	4.72	4.88	4.82
3.	Careerist Perception	3.51	3.38	3.41	3.43

Analysis of variance. 1 significant at 0.01 level
2 significant at 0.05 level.

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