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I should like to thank John Eggleston and David Godwin for suggesting the possibility of a reader on women’s education and for their help and encouragement while I was writing and revising this work. I wish to acknowledge the assistance and contacts provided by the Sexual Divisions Study Group and the Education Study Group of the British Sociological Association, many of the contributions to this volume would not have existed. In addition, four of the chapters in the collection (Llewellyn, Harding, Griffiths and Chisholm/Woodward) were originally given as papers at a weekend seminar on ‘Women, Education and Research’, organized by the British Educational Research Association at the University of Loughborough in April 1978, although they have subsequently been revised for publication. Two of the organ-
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Women, work and schooling
The relevance of gender

Rosemary Deem

It seems not unfair to say of the British system of schooling that differences between the education of females and the education of males have long been recognized as existing, but that it has not been realized until comparatively recently that such differences in the educational experiences of women and men may be seen as problematic because they may give rise to contrasting educational achievements between the sexes and prepare each sex for a quite different style of life. The relationship between gender, education and work in capitalist societies is, of course, as Wolpe has pointed out, much more complex than this, involving many factors whose analysis lies outside the scope of this volume. But what the collection of views presented here attempts to do is to show how, in a variety of educational settings and establishments but also in the context of entry to the labour market, the category of gender, which may be defined as "the psychological and cultural definitions of the dimensions "masculine" and "feminine"", is made relevant in the education of women, is influential in structuring their actions, beliefs, values and statuses, and provides them with a set of contradictions about their role in society.

What the research evidence documented here demonstrates only too clearly is that despite the passage in 1975 of a Sex Discrimination Act prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sex in many areas of education and public life, and notwithstanding the many changes which have occurred in the openness of access to education and in the position and status of women, girls and women in education are still seriously disadvantaged and discriminated against in relation to boys and men. This is not to say that men may not also be disadvantaged in schooling, particularly if they are of working-class origin: however, the educational experiences of the majority of men are likely to be superior, both while at school and in terms of the consequences of those experiences, to those of most women. Because most of the women discussed in this collection are based on research about women in education, it seems worth while at this juncture to raise what is one of the most hotly debated issues in contemporary feminist circles: the nature of the relationship between research, theorizing, and feminist practice intended to bring about changes in the position of women. There are a number
Introduction of different perspectives which may be brought to bear on this issue, but there are three in particular which merit further attention.

The first is the argument that although research and theorizing may have a part to play, what really counts is the development of policy statements and strategies for change, and that unless the latter stage is accomplished by the same individuals who undertake the research and theorizing, then the exercise of finding out and developing theories about the situation of women is a waste of time. Such a view is clearly held by Byrne, who argues in a review of "Women and Schooling" that:

The book is strongest in its analysis of sociological interpretations of the implications of different socialisation processes for boys and girls. Factually sound, it provides a useful introduction to the field... does not, however, appear to lead to any clear development of new perspectives... The book seems in fact aimed predominantly at the student. But the claim that knowledge and explanation of an existing situation is of no importance unless accompanied by policy suggestions is, of course, difficult to refute, and a limited number of policy ideas are given in the book. Such a view, however, is likely to lead to an impasse for replacement of counter-strategies... The book seems in fact aimed predominantly at the student.

The book seems in fact aimed predominantly at the student. But the claim that knowledge and explanation of an existing situation is of no importance unless accompanied by policy suggestions is, of course, difficult to refute, and a limited number of policy ideas are given in the book. Such a view, however, is likely to lead to an impasse for replacement of counter-strategies...

A second view on the relationship between research, theory and feminist practice is the postulation that it is essential for all research to be theoretically informed. A strong case for this position is constructed by Eco and M. (4)

And certainly it cannot be denied that presentation of research findings in an unstructured manner, without reference to theories and explanations which transcend the limitations of a small-scale project or analysis, is tantamount to providing a set of tools without specifying the task for which they are to be utilized. However, the question of theoretical coherence in feminist work has raised problems which are not confined to the need for a clear theoretical foundation for research, nor to the objection that the presentation of research findings is often an exercise in "philosophical" or "theoretical" speculations which are not accessible to a wide audience, or whether it is only intended for a small number of individuals who already possess the expertise and conceptual apparatus required to appreciate complex theories of identity. Theoretical speculations may be desirable either politically, in terms of developing a "party line," or from the standpoint of an academic discipline concerned with validating its own particular area of interest. However, it may be perceived as undesirable because it can serve to mystify and obscure issues rather than clarify them, and hence limit severely the degree of accessibility which a piece of work possesses.

What this volume tries to achieve is some kind of middle way between these two extremes; that is, to present research findings in a way which does not deny access to those who are not trained in a particular academic discipline, but which is only intended for a small number of individuals who already possess the expertise and conceptual apparatus required to appreciate complex theories of identity. Theoretical speculations may be desirable either politically, in terms of developing a "party line," or from the standpoint of an academic discipline concerned with validating its own particular area of interest. However, it may be perceived as undesirable because it can serve to mystify and obscure issues rather than clarify them, and hence limit severely the degree of accessibility which a piece of work possesses.
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In addition, the separate accounts themselves need to be judged in terms of whether they represent feminist research. It is important to recognize that research is not automatically feminist because it is about women. Indeed, the use of certain kinds of research techniques and methodologies may actually conceal or prevent the observation of vital data. And because one of the major aims of feminist research must be, as Maynard has noted, to make women 'visible', not only the methodology but also the interpretation of research data must be sensitive to this objective.

Further, as Spender contends (1978, p.11), 'It is not just "visi-

bility" that is required for females within the feminist per-
spective; it is new models of the female and of the male -
and new and more appropriate ways for formulating these models and theories.' The research presented in this volume has not all necessarily been conducted from a feminist perspective in the first place, although much of it undoubtedly has been, but all the chapters emphasize the need for awareness of issues and problems which are particularly important to women. The research presented in this volume has not all necessarily been conducted from a feminist perspective in the first place, although much of it undoubtedly has been, but all the chapters emphasize the need for awareness of issues and problems which are particularly important to women. In so doing, the accounts lay themselves open to claims that they are too subjectivist, a charge which has been leveled by Wolpe at a number of existing analyses examining the position and experiences of women in education. Wolpe argues that where the focus of attention is the individual in the educational system, rather than the complex of structures which give rise to the experiences of individuals, although such research is deceptively subjectivist, in fact it is usually not subjectivist at all. Subjectivist research can consist mainly in identifying a relationship of causes and effects within a system which remains fundamentally unexplained, and fails to account for the existence of inequality in the conditions which give rise to inequalities. Furthermore, while subjectivist analyses give an account of how the allocation of status may be transferred, subjectivist analyses do not give an account of how women’s orientations to their role in the social structure, which at the same time explaining these roles in terms of their distinct orientation, is any way Wolpe’s criticism is so impor-
tant was, particularly in view of the number of places of work where women are still concentrated in relatively low-paid, relatively unskilled, and relatively low-status jobs.

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tant one, particularly in view of the number of places of work where women are still concentrated in relatively low-paid, relatively unskilled, and relatively low-status jobs.

In the emphasis that Byrne has argued (1978, p.15) that "My deepest concern is with girls whose alternative to staying at home for 40 years is not the professions... it is low pay... the typewriter, the unskilled labour market, short-term employment. The cause: a different, often inferior education" without recognizing that the inferior education received by many girls is only one aspect of their subordination to men, a subordination based on the dominance of patriarchal relations, the exploitation mode of production, the division of social and mental division of labour, and the family, rather than on any deficiencies in girls’ ability. If these other aspects are not taken into account, it is like registering to make which schemes or particular communities
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and their experiences within the educational system, which looks at processes of interaction between girls and their teachers, which examine the progress of individual women through the labour market, in other words if her criticisms can be extended to any work which does not as an integral part of that work offer any kind of structural analysis, then a defence of such subjectivism is necessary. Subjectivist research not only achieves the objective of making women 'visible', but is also able to convey something of the qualitative experiences and contradictory demands which women are likely to meet, whether those stem from the curriculum, the 'hidden' curriculum, gender categorizations, ideologies, the process of knowledge transmission, or from any other source. Although research of this kind does not necessarily make explicit connections between what happens, for example, in schools, and what occurs in the labour market, nevertheless it prepares the way for perceiving how and where there are disjunctures between what the school prepares girls for and what they actually find in the real world of the labour market. It does so, of course, allow us to see the importance of political struggles both inside and outside the educational system about what is legitimate in schooling and what counts as valid knowledge, or about the rationale underlying the education of girls and women's roles in the real world of the labour market. It does not, of course, afford us to see the importance of political struggles both inside and outside the educational system about what is legitimate in schooling and what counts as valid knowledge, or about the rationale underlying the education of girls and women's roles in the real world of the labour market.

In addition, subjectivist research alerts us to the all-pervasive nature of patriarchy and patriarchal relations, because it is able to show how these two phenomena work. For whilst it is true that patriarchal relations have produced certain productive forms and their labour processes are very relevant to an understanding of the way in which women are schooled for their work (whether paid or unpaid) it is also necessary to see these processes in the context of patriarchy. (9) Otherwise it is only the women, rather than the patriarchal relations that are exploited by capitalist economies. (10) This is not to say that women are not exploited either. It is simply that their exploitation is part of a larger system of exploitation, and that system is not just the product of capitalist economies, but also the product of patriarchy. (11) Subjectivist research does not usually help us to understand patriarchy in a theoretical way, of course, but that need not diminish the importance of research of this nature. As Frankenberg has argued 'If I seem to be suggesting an essentially subjective approach I will accept the charge providing I am allowed to assert that objectivity comes from living through and then transcending the subjective.' (12) Thus, if we take as a starting point Habermas's definition of patriarchy as 'first, the control of women's fertility and sexuality in monogamous marriage, second, the economic subordination of women through the sexual division of labour (and property)' (13) then subjective research can help us to see and feel the patriarchy as perpetuated, even if that research alone...
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Does not help us to analyze the exact mechanisms whereby patriarchy is reproduced and maintained.

MacDonald's chapter does indeed endeavour to put into a coherent theoretical framework the more empirical chapters which follow hers. She argues that many of the existing theories of schooling fail to realize the importance of the sexual division of labour within education, and also or underplay the impact of that division of labour in shaping the relationships which exist between the family, schooling and labour processes. Concentrating on theories of social and cultural reproduction, MacDonald is able to examine the work of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, and Bernstein, both to show the shortcomings of these theories in terms of their preoccupation with the social and cultural reproduction of class, and also to demonstrate how these theories may be adapted to take into account and grapple more fully such issues, along the empirical material presented in subsequent papers. She stresses the importance of, and points the way towards developing, a theory of education which does not simply rely on the work of the same theoretical frameworks of social and cultural reproduction, but which is able to recognize the hierarchical relationships of a sexual division of labour in both the processes of reproduction and within the labour processes.

Clarricoates, in her study of four primary schools in northern England, offers evidence which suggests that the way in which the gender code is transmitted and patriarchal relationships reproduced vary from one establishment to another. These processes of constructing definitions of femininity and masculinity must be understood as a very complex one, drawing on the sexual division of labour which exists in the community around a given school, as well as on the beliefs and ideologies held by parents, children and teachers. For example, in Dockside, where a strong male culture emphasizing the importance of manual labour exists (even though, alongside this, there is a high degree of employment of married women outside the home, segregated between the sexes during the day, and the presence of married women as teachers, which is stronger than in Applegate, a predominantly middle-class area where few married women are employed outside the home but where mental labour is of far more importance than manual labour), the process of constructing definitions of femininity and masculinity is more likely to be well-understood. In the rural area of Linton Bray, the importance of a rigid sexual division of labour, based on the heavy manual work required of agricultural work, is apparent in the schooling of both boys and girls, even though the girls themselves are frequently expected to "help out" with agricultural work. However, the emphasis is placed on the agricultural work itself rather than on the sexual division of labour. Llewellyn's examination of two single-sex girls' schools is able to perform a similar function for the second school. Her work not...
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only provides us with a detailed ethnography of two schools, but is
also able to relate what happens in the groups of girls she studied
to the female sub-cultures which envelop them whilst out of school. Just as MacDonald points out that theories of cultural
and social reproduction have often ignored or glossed over gender,
so Llewellyn notes that much ethnographic research on schools has
either concentrated only on boys or else assumed that gender was
merely a factor of lesser importance. Although Llewellyn's work focuses on single-sex schools (which, Shaw argues in Chapter 5,
may provide an education for girls which places less emphasis on gender-stereotyping than does mixed schooling), she shows how, because of the influence of their lives and experiences outside school, girls' and women's experiences are struc-
tured in response to male definitions. Llewellyn shows how differ-
ent groups of girls operate with different stereotypes of feminity
and a variety of attitudes of gender-appropriate behavior, yet all of
these demonstrate the critical relevance of the category of
gender to the experiences of girls both inside and outside school.
Teachers, instead of rejecting or trying to change the monotonous
future faced by most of their pupils on entry to the labor
market and in marriage, accept the legitimacy of the sexual
division of labor, and expect not academic success but only some
minimal level of skill acquisition and "decent" behavior from most
of their pupils, although aware that many may not even achieve
such levels.

The parallels between these expectations and those of the primary
school teachers in Clarricote's study are clear. Female pupils, on the
other hand, could use their gender identity as a means of escap-
ing from the need to be academically successful, by retreating
into what they see as the greater fulfillment provided by mar-
domestically, a very different form of "resistance" from that
found amongst working-class male youths.(14) This is so despite the
fact that many adolescent girls, through contact with older sisters
or by constant observation of the lives of their own mothers, are
aware that domestic labor and marriage are not as Utopian as the
magazines that they read tend to suggest they
are.(15)

Fuller's work on a group of West Indian girls in a mixed compre-
hensive school shows how gender and ethnicity may overlap and
doubly disadvantage those concerned, even though an awareness of
such disadvantages may lead to strong resistance of the implications
of gender and ethnic labels for the public economy. As we have
seen, some girls are able to escape the expectations of others and
are able to be independent. Fuller demonstrates how existing research on ethnic
schooling and its effects on schooling tells us little about the consequences for such
members when they happen to be girls. And indeed compared with the girls studied by Llewellyn, the West
Indian girls in Fuller's researches show a much greater awareness of the contradictions and difficulties they are likely to experience both
because of their race and because of their sex. Unlike their male
West Indian peers, they do not retreat into cultures such as Rasta-
fashionism as a means by which to achieve a psychological "return"
to their homeland, but concentrate rather on their education
(although not school itself) very seriously, as their only route to
success in the labor market, where their race and sex would
otherwise handicap them considerably. On the other hand, their behavioral and conduct in school is distinctly from their academic work. This is also evident in the research conducted by the primary and secondary school teachers monitored by Llewellyn and Clarricoates. Thus, Fuller is also able to expose the fallacy perpetuated in much earlier educational research that academic achievement is necessarily correlated with compliance of a number of cultural rules and accepted standards of classroom behavior.

Shaw’s article on the value of single-sex schooling as opposed to mixed schooling raises as a controversial issue in education something which most educationalists have long since ceased to see as problematic: that is, is mixed schooling really as advantageous as research and argument have led us to believe? Shaw’s conclusion is that, for girls at least, the outcome of the debate over mixed versus single-sex schooling has been manifestly resolved in favor of mixed schooling. The argument that single-sex schools are seen to control the social advantages of mixed schooling (ed in much the same way that these are assumed to exist in any sex-segregated subculture in lower social class sectors) is most frequently held up as a rationale for the maintenance of single-sex schooling. This argument is often weighted by the academic disadvantage, and by the processes of gender stereotyping which cause girls to be seen by boys as a kind of negative reference group which enhances their own competitive lack of academic success, because at least they are ‘better than girls’; and which, in turn, underpins the argument that they will in any case be getting married and hence have little need for academic qualifications. Llewellyn’s paper demonstrates that such assumptions may also operate in single-sex schools too, but the evidence advanced by Shaw indicates that the processes of gender-stereotyping may operate less stringently in single-sex schools than in mixed ones. Furthermore, as Shaw notes, in single-sex schools girls are at least likely to be taught for a majority of their subjects by women, thus removing beliefs prevalent in mixed schools that subjects taught by men and taken by boys are unattainable by girls.

The question of a sexual division of labour which operates between divisions of knowledge and which serves to reinforce other beliefs and practices about gender-appropriate subjects for boys and girls, is taken up also by Weiner in her analysis of girls and mathematics, and by Harding in an exploration of the differential performances by the sexes in conventional Nuffield 'O' level and Nuffield science examinations. Weiner surveys current research on sex differences in mathematical performance and assesses the validity of explanations purporting to explain these in terms of genetic factors, cognitive differences, differential socialization experiences, pupil attitudes and schooling practices. The nature of the evidence is such that it is difficult to reach clear-cut conclusions; but in any case, as Weiner argues, even if we are not at present able to present the means reasons for girls’ comparative lack of success in mathematics, we can at least search for strategies which can help to overcome those factors and difficulties which do exist. The material presented in this volume indicates that the reactions of teachers, and of female pupils, to subjects which girls find difficult are often the reverse
of making positive strategies to remedy these difficulties; that is, a desire for conditions for girls in schools that will make it possible for them to develop the same level of high performance in science as is required of boys. This indicates that such performance is unnecessary to those who will spend their lives in unskilled jobs, in carrying out domestic tasks and in caring for children. However, researchers not only show that what is true of the way many schools teach, or fail to teach, mathematics to girls is also true of much science education, but also alert us to the importance of examining methods of teaching particular areas of knowledge and the modes of assessment which are utilized to test pupils' retention and understanding of areas of knowledge. Learning theories and assessment techniques have tended to be treated as components of the educational process which are gender-neutral, whereas Harding points out that this may be a misconception. Educational innovations such as Nuffield science may well have a different effect on the education of girls than they have on the education of boys, as these may be more suited to the skills and interests of boys students. Learning theories and assessment techniques already taking place in the teaching of girls. As MacDonald says in Chapter 1, it is important "to develop an analysis of women's education which relates the form and content of schooling to women's position in society."

The careful exploration of the processes of gender and class reproduction in schooling is not itself sufficient unless we also consider the impact of these processes of reproduction on the labour market, on the family and on other agents of the lives of women. Keil's study of the processes by which young school-leavers learn about the job opportunities available to them suggests that these processes also have a major impact on the education of girls, despite the absence of " overt sexism" there is "an impression of employers working in a familiar market recruiting to well-established categories of work which had long been recognized as appropriate for men or women."

Similarities in the ways in which boys and girls sought work were found to contrast sharply with their eventual placement in the occupational structure. And here it is insufficient to consider the notion of a dual labour market, which, as Beechey reminds us, is a rather simplistic way of understanding what happens to women in the labour market. The examination of differentials is of fundamental importance in understanding the positions of women in the labour force, the family and the sexual division of labour which they encompass. It is also necessary to remind ourselves that class differences operate on both the female and male sides of the labour market as they do in its male equivalent. Furthermore, as Ashton and Maguire's work shows, local labour markets are by no means similar in their characteristics to any national comparison, and it is therefore necessary to examine particular local markets. Diversity in women's employment categories of work which had long been recognized as appropriate for men or women.
consider what happens to women on entry to the labour market. Newton’s work on the Engineering Industry Training Board’s scheme to train girls as engineering technicians illustrates just how difficult it may be for girls, for schools and for employers to overcome many of the constraints operating on the employment of women in an area of work traditionally carried out by men, and where the motivation for a switch to the encouragement of female labour is not, as it has been in clerical work during this century, a change in technology and the nature of the work, but rather the impact of legislation on sex discrimination and of a more generalized awareness of the disadvantaged situation of women in the labour market. However, important though such schemes may be, we should remember that they cannot provide more than a token entry of women into male jobs, and that they do not fundamentally alter either the sexual division of labour or the system of patriarchal relationships which exist in capitalist economies. Female engineering technicians are, by virtue of their schooling and socialization experiences, and by virtue of their assimilation of the gender-code, as well as because of the structures of male/female dominance operating in our society, still likely to experience constraints on their jobs and employment careers which are not faced by men in the same field of work. Ashton and Maguire illustrate particularly well the limitations of such developments in altering established patterns of employment for male and female, especially in local labour markets where traditional areas of employment for either sex are in decline or where the units of employment are small. They also point out something which does not apply to male workers (although in their case age may play a part): the situation whereby female school-leavers compete with older married women for jobs which are seen as men’s jobs. It is clear that legislation on sex discrimination can alter the distribution of employment by age in male/female terms, and have the effects of the sexual division of labour on women of all ages. Married women, because of their domestic responsibilities, provide both a more flexible (in terms of willingness to work part-time, or for short periods) and also a more stable work force (they are not likely to leave to get married or have children as they have already acquired these statuses and responsibilities) than female school-leavers, but school-leavers may be cheaper to employ and have more relevant skills or qualifications, especially in the public sector. Many women have never either been offered the choice, or even been considered, for work of this type. If they are given opportunities to continue their education beyond school level, hence, as far as it can be called a choice, when the outcomes are largely not only extrinsically but also intrinsically determined, such women have been faced with the seductive of unnecessary, boring paid work or the combination of both. But, as Griffiths shows us, for some such women the establishment of the Open University has provided an opportunity to alter the economic and offered to full-time student to do degree-level work even without the presumption of formal university entrance requirements. Griffiths examines the variety of backgrounds from which female Open University students come, and considers the reasons which have motivated them to embark upon their courses. On the whole, those reasons are far from instrumental. Women students at the Open University tend to
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congregate in those subject areas where most female students in higher education are found: arts and the social sciences; and their lack of confidence is displayed by their tendency to register for fewer courses than male students. However, their academic performance in all subjects is equal or even superior, indicating that "they are doing better than men in all faculties," as Griffiths remarks. Clearly their performance in the Open University, as Griffiths notes, is affected by their domestic situations, or by their occupation of typical areas of female employment, as well as by the stereotype concerning the gender roles, to a way that the performance of male students is not. But, as Griffiths says, for those women who can overcome, at least partially, the effects of such constraints, their courses may provide an enormous change in their lives, their outlook and their positions.

The situation of women in more conventional forms of higher education presents a rather different picture, as Rendel's analysis of women academics during the period 1912 to 1976 demonstrates. The representation of women as teachers over this period has shown scarcely any improvement at all. Some may regard this situation of women academics as an elitist one, irrelevant to the interests of the majority of women, but it can equally well be argued that since universities play such an important role in structuring the curriculum of secondary schools, in allocating priority to areas of research and in evaluating areas of knowledge as of high or low status, then if women are under-represented there, it has a significant impact on what happens to and what educational experiences are offered to, women in the remainder of the educational system. Furthermore, the small number of women academics illustrates the notions of most universities and in preparing their students for employment in the type of employment that is in demand in society. Yet the lives and careers of women academics are hindered by exactly the same kinds of factor relating to their status as women in a patriarchal society, as are the lives of their less "fortunate" sisters.

Higher education may mean that women who have access to it enter the labour market at a different level and with higher qualifications than other women, but the chapter by Chisholm and Woodward points out in a summary of some of the findings emerging from their study of what happened to a group of university students who graduated in 1960, such women do not after graduation share the same experiences or fortunes as their male peers. Graduate women, as much as non-graduate women, tend to move, if not initially then quite quickly, into areas of employment traditionally occupied by females, notably in education and the public sector of employment, rather than into industry and commerce, where women did obtain employment outside the female "ghettos," they were often forced to retreat back into those domains by processes of discrimination, by processes of stereotyping, and by processes of selection. woodland argues that it is important to admit that such factors were at work. Chisholm and Wood-ward argue that the causes of graduate women may be affected more by processes of discrimination in the field of employment, by perceptions of lack of ability and confidence, than by their marriage and their family commitments. Yet another kind of resorption, the sexual division of labour and the structure of patriarchal relations still shape the processes which affect
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the progress of women graduates, even if as individuals those factors seem to be of less importance than for non-graduate women. By way of concluding this introduction to the volume, it seems important to reiterate what was emphasized at the beginning: that although we must not fall into the trap of seeing a simple connection between what happens in the schooling of women and what happens to women thereafter, it is clear from almost all the chapters in this book that the creation, maintenance and reproduction of gender categories, of class, of the sexual division of labour, of the relations of patriarchy, plays a significant part in the maintenance of the subordinate position of women in our society, whether in paid work, public life or the family. Equally, it is evident that this situation cannot be radically altered without a significant change taking place in the mode of production, in class relationships, in the structure of male-female dominance relations, as well as in schooling itself. Until those changes occur, gender will continue to play a crucial role in the schooling of women and their preparation for work.

NOTES

2 Deem (1978) and Byrne (1978) both give more detailed accounts of how women are disadvantaged and discriminated against in schooling.
4 Kuhn and Wolpe (1978).
5 This is mainly achieved in Chapter 1 by MacDonald.
8 See Willis (1977) and Hall and Jefferson (1976) for accounts of the ways in which male youth cultures and strategies of resistance develop.
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15 See McRobbie and Ginger (1976).
16 The theory of a dual labour market is discussed by Drinnon and Meira (1976).
17 See Boczek (1978).
18 The changing labour process and labour force of clerical work is considered by Braverman (1975).
19 Myers (1979) makes this point.
Within a capitalist mode of production, patriarchal relations which are characterized by male-female hierarchy and dominance assume specific historical forms, at the economic, the political and ideological levels. Even though patriarchal forms of control existed prior to the advent of capitalism, the economic and social subordination of women has, nevertheless, become an integral element of the capitalist social formation. This is not to assume that they constitute an essential ingredient, necessary for the survival of that system, but rather to recognize them as integral to the social formation principles. In the capitalist economy, patriarchal relations have a specific material base in, for example, the separation of the family from the production process, in the economic dependence of women on men. In this chapter, therefore, I shall attempt to develop an analysis of women's education which relates the form and substance of schooling to women's position in such societies. The emphasis will be upon the way in which schooling produces both classed and sexed subjects, who are to take their place in a social division of labour structured by the dual, yet often contradictory, forces of class and gender relations.

Despite the diversity of material and forms of analysis now available for the study of women's education, some of which are represented in this volume, there is one consistent overriding concern. The essential unity of purpose in this research is the establishment of the sociology of women's education on the academic agenda. The pressure which this research exerts upon existing accounts of schooling takes the form of demanding recognition for the ways in which schooling constructs, modifies and transmits specific definitions of gender and gender relations to each new generation, within and across class boundaries. The challenge inherent in these analyses is to reassess current explanations of schooling, which have glossed over or ignored the existence of the sexual division of labour within the school and its impact in determining the relations between the family, schooling and the labour processes.

It is my intention in this chapter to reassess two major bodies of theory, to investigate their limitations, and to suggest how they may be reformulated in the light of new evidence. I shall...
concentrate on what have been called the theories of social reproduction and those of cultural reproduction of the class structure. I shall be concerned with the work of separate authors: (1) Althusser; (2) Bowles and Gintis; (3) Bernstein. Within the second, the work of Bernstein with the aim of using these theories as the basis for an explanatory model of the forms of women's education within societies which are both capitalist and patriarchal.

In the work of Althusser and Bowles and Gintis, one finds the initial premise, that education plays a central, if not critical, role in the reproduction of a capitalist mode of production. Althusser emphasizes the central role played by education as the place where the bourgeoisie socializes the young into the values and beliefs needed to maintain the system. According to Althusser, education is essential for the maintenance of the capitalist system and its values. He argues that education plays a key role in the reproduction of the social relations of production.

In the analysis of the reproduction of productive forces, Althusser points to the fact that if any social formation is to reproduce itself, it must ensure not merely that its labour force is available in sufficient numbers (through biological reproduction and immigration), but also that it must be diversified, adequately skilled and competent to work within a given social structure. Historically the reproduction of the work force was provided by 'on the job' training and apprenticeship schemes. Under capitalism, however, outside institutions, such as the educational system, increasingly have taken over the task of providing workers with basic skills and competences necessary for work. The educational system plays a crucial role in the reproduction of the class structure. In analysing the labour force found within the US economy, Bowles and Gintis recognize, under capitalism, the tendencies for the labour market to segment, and point out the segregation of the primary and secondary labour markets. The primary segment they locate predominantly in the corporate and state sectors, where jobs are characterized by relatively high wages, job security and opportunities for promotion. In the secondary labour market, there are relatively low wages, little opportunity for promotion, and little chance of advancement. Within this labour market are to be found the most oppressed groups, which I shall be high among the most oppressed groups, which in the USA are blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, native Americans, women, the elderly, youth and other minority groups (my emphasis, Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p. 67).
By classifying women as yet another minority group, Bowles and Gintis fail to analyse labour market segmentation as one of the most significant features of the integration of the sexual division of labour and in particular of patriarchal power structures within the very nature of the capitalist formation. They thus gloss over the presence of a sex-segregated labour force within and across the binary division of primary and secondary labour markets. Particularly in the USA there is a process of ‘ghettoization’ of the female labour force in the secondary labour market.(4)

Further, there exists a sexual division of labour within each segment, where women are typically employed in jobs that have subsequently been defined as ‘stereotypically feminine’ occupations, whether it is because of their assumed manual dexterity (e.g., textiles), their domestic interests (food preparation, health care, sex work, etc.), or their vocation in providing personal services (teaching, social work, etc.). What characterized women’s location both within and between these different labour markets is their inferior position with regard to wages, training prospects and promotion. Although Bowles and Gintis recognize that capitalism has adapted and utilized pre-existing ‘social prejudices’ such as racism and sexism, they neglect to give any material basis to what in their analysis appear to be exogenous ideological factors. Any theory of education which seeks to account for the form of schooling in terms of the mode of production of the work force, I would argue, must recognize the structure of male-female dominance relations as integral and not subsidiary organizing principles of the work process.

Within this framework, it is essential that we recognize the pattern of specifically female employment as different from that of men. The two major advantages she identifies relate to the dual location of women within the family and the production process. First, when all members of a household’s family are employed, the value of labour power is lowered as the costs of reproduction (e.g., nurturance, household and health care) are spread over all members of the population. Second, the value of female labour is less than that of men since women have less training, and are not expected to pay the full costs of the household, as it can be assumed that they will be supported by their menfolk. Women are not expected to bear the costs of their own reproduction therefore employers may pay less than the true value of female labour, since women are defined as subsidiary workers, financially dependent on men within a patriarchal family.
The hiring of female labour, while it has its advantages, also poses dilemmas for capital, especially in the employment of married women workers. The greater the use of married women in wage labour, the more threatened is the effective performance of their work as domestic labourers within the family. The separation of waged from domestic labour, of production from consumption, of the economy from family life is not merely a facet of the development of capitalism but also constitutes one of the elements of the process of reproduction of that system. Women's services within the family as wife, mother, servant, therapist, etc. are critical aspects of the reproduction of the labour force. The tension therefore exists within capitalism in maintaining an appropriate balance between the need for certain types of labour power on the one hand, and on the other, the continued functioning of the patriarchal nuclear family, which services and reproduces the labour force outside the production system.

Any account of the relationship between schooling and the structure of the labour force must therefore take into account the differing positions of women and men within the social formation. It must furthermore take heed of the advice (Coulson et al., 1975, p.49) that the central feature of women's position under capitalism is not their role simply as domestic workers, but rather the fact that they are both domestic and wage labourers. It is this dual and contradictory role that imparts a specific dynamic to their situation.

It is important to recognize the existence of class differences operating within the female labour force, which determines not merely the sort of jobs which women are likely to find themselves in, but also their relation to the means of production and the way they reproduce the labour force. Within the working class, women workers bear the same relation to the means of production as working-class men, since they own only their own labour power to sell on the labour market. At the other extreme, women within the capitalist class might well have a different relationship to the means of production, since their fathers and husbands own capital directly. Women within the family of capital, although they may be indirectly beneficiaries and not wage workers, are not owners of their own labour power to sell in the market. They may either be wage workers, owning a share of the capital in the firm, or be managers of the firm. They may own a share of the capital, be shareholders, or be employees. They are still represented in very small numbers in the structures of management and control. For the majority of these women, the relation to the means of production is one of indirect ownership and control. In the professional middle classes, while the men are likely to become the ideologists or the managers of capital, the women, located primarily in the 'caring' professions, may be a major source of what Bernstein (1977d) called the 'agents of symbolic control', presenting the 'soft' face of capitalism in the welfare and educational agencies. It is important, therefore, to recognize the difference between the forms of women's education found in the private and state schools, and further to realise the forms within which our society's
labour but also to their future class position. What Bowles and Gintis have tended to assume is that, within the
differential forms of schooling catering for different sectors of the wage labour force, such women experience
in the same tradition of political economy, is more careful about assuming similarities, even though he does not attempt an analysis of the
differences.
Carter (1976, p.180), in the same tradition of political economy, is more careful about assuming similarities, even
though he does not attempt an analysis of the differences. He notes that women experience a very similar form of schooling to that received by
men, and this is true to a large extent. Women are not socially assigned to different forms of schooling on the basis of sex,
and the form of schooling they receive is not determined by the occupational roles they are expected to play. Carter
(1976, p.180) notes that women are not socially assigned to different forms of schooling on the basis of sex,
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For the middle classes, school experience is different but no less contradictory. The overt ideology of equal opportunity and equality between the sexes, although realized by the equal range of curriculum options made available to both sexes and the expressed liberalism of the teachers, may well run counter to the hidden curriculum of the school, which perpetuates the ideology of femininity as synonymous with wife and mother. Even where the school is geared more towards careers, the assumption can often be identified in teachers' attitudes and their guidance on choice of school subjects, that these careers are best found in typically "feminine" professions, such as medicine, education, social work, etc. Ironically too, these girls may well receive sufficient academic qualifications which later come into conflict with their concept of marital life. Particularly within the professional middle classes, one finds a strong belief in motherhood as a professional full-time job which requires the mother to be at home with her children, responsible for the rearing of the class culture by her domestic pedagogic work, and capable of responding to the demands made upon her by the schools. (8)

In the case of working-class girls, the ideology of sex differences, and the naturalness of the sexual division of labour between work and home, is often overt, with only minimal recognition of the necessity for or the desirability of these girls to take up paid employment apart from their domestic work. In contrast, middle-class girls may often be encouraged to aspire to a career, even where they are aware that they will have to leave home and family for the duration of their college education. In both cases, the ideology of femininity and the acceptance of the sexual division of labour act as a filter for the continued presence of women in certain types of labour with specific expectations and attitudes to work.

If we turn now to the reproduction of the social relations of production (i.e., the class relations operating within the structuring of the labour process), we find the kernel of Althusser's and Bowles and Gintis's analyses of schooling. Both see the reproduction of the social relations found in the production process as the central function and determining force in the shape of schooling within capitalism. For Althusser, the educational system is the dominant ideological state apparatus which processes each school population in accordance with, and in preparation for, the class structure and class power relations. The process is one of selective socialization where groups of children, on the basis of their class origins, are given different types and amounts of education through which they acquire certain types of knowledge and know-how as well as particular ideological predispositions. Theoretically these acquisitions allow them to cope with and adapt to the work relations and authority structures in specific locations in their production process. Some children will thus be prepared for their future role as the exploited, with an apolitical, national, ethnic or civic consciousness. Others will learn how to give orders and enforce obedience, in preparation of their future role as agents of
exploitation (employers, managers or agents of repression: police, army). The third major category will acquire the ability to manipu-
late ideologies and forms of consciousness. Within the seemingly
neutral context of the school, "the relations of production in a
capitalist social formation, i.e., the relations of exploited to
exploited, are largely reproduced", by a "massive" inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class
(Althusser, 1971).

In this rudimentary framework, Althusser concentrates upon class
domination with no mention of the ways in which patriarchal ideology
is transmitted in the school, mediating and contextualizing the
ruling ideology of class domination within the structures of sexual
oppression. A question he forgets to ask is: are women ever incul-
cated with the ideology suited for the agents of exploitation or
repression? If any ideology is most likely to be acquired by women,
it is that of the exploited, with relatively few trained to become
professional ideologists.

In the work of Bowles and Gintis (1976), the reproduction of the
social relations of production occurs through structural and proc-
tional processes. The most fundamental form of socialization,
rather than being ideological, is one of experience of the social relations and authority structures of
schooling which mirror those to be found in future work places. In
understanding what they call the "correspondence principle", they
identify a structural homology between the authority structures in
the workplace and the school, which reproduce the authority structures and forms of control
characteristic of class relations (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p.131):

Specifically, the social relationships of education - the rela-
tionships between administrators and teachers, teachers and
students, students and students, and students and their work -
replicate the hierarchical divisions of income. Hierarchical
relations are reflected in the vertical authority lines from
administrators to teachers to students. Alienated labour is
reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her educa-
tion, the alienation of the student from the curriculum content,
and the motivation of school work through a system of grades and
other external rewards rather than the student's integration with
either the process (learning) or the outcome (knowledge) of the
educational "production process".

Beyond this aggregate level, Bowles and Gintis point to the
different forms of education and internal organization of schools,
which prepare children for different levels within the occupational
structure. Whilst the lowest levels are likely to emphasize rule-
following and close supervision, the middle and higher levels of
education provide greater space for initiative, moving from dis-

cipline and direct control to more independent activity. These
levels are to be found not merely in the various tiers of the
educational system but also within streamed subjects. The implica-
tions of these structures are the attunement of each generation to
the behavioural norms required by the levels of the capitalist pro-
duction process; notes of self presentation, self image and social class
identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy" (ibid).
In this analysis of schooling, there is little recognition of the potential correspondence between patriarchal authority structures and the hierarchy of male over female within the social relations of the school and of the work processes. This might be due to the fact that Bowles and Gintis define sexual inequality and prejudices as external to the operation of capitalism. They point out that the "smooth control over the work process requires that socially acceptable power relationships be respected" (p.98). They suppose, but do not develop the point, that a strong case could be made that the form and strength of both racism and sexism are closely related to the particular historical development of class relations in the USA and Europe. Furthermore, they do not analyze the ways in which sexual power relations have become integral features of capitalist work structures. The control of women workers by male managers, for example, may be found mirrored in the sexual hierarchy of the school’s division of labour, with a male headteacher and inspectors and a large female teaching force. Within the fragmentation of knowledge, one can also find the stratification of knowledge reproducing the hierarchy of male over female with particular school subjects and disciplines classified as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ (Harding, Chapter 7 and Weiner, Chapter 6), which contribute to the acceptance of students of the sexual divisions within the labour force. In the classroom, the authority of the teacher may also be affected by sex. In the primary school, the teacher’s authority is more likely to be similar to that of the mother (i.e. personalized), while at the university level the model is one of paternal authority, based upon status and position. This sexual division of labour in school knowledge and amongst the teaching staff is perhaps one of the ways in which women become attuned to the dual forms of control found within their specific work locations. For example, within an office the form of control between male bosses and their female secretaries is likely to contain elements of paternalism. In industry, as Gee found (Gee, 1978): The sexual division of labour underpinned by the patriarchal structure of the family and the division of labour in detail, brought together under factory discipline and management, means for women a dual form of control in the workplace. The implication of this dual form of control within the work place is that women are expected to be both docile to management and docile to men. Such a tension in obedience and submission can be seen in the educational system, which urgently needs to be examined by those engaged in research. This has relevance beyond the sphere of education, by also to the definition of femininity, as the research on the hidden curriculum of schooling has shown. Further, socialization into both class and gender identity is also found within the family, where, as Bowles and Gintis (1976, p.144) point out: Despite the tremendous structural disparity between family and economy - one which is never really overcome in capitalist
Chapter 1

society - there is a significant correspondence between the authority relationships in capitalist production and family life. The male-dominated family, with its characteristically age-graded patterns of power and privilege, replicates many aspects of the hierarchy of production in the firm. Interestingly here, they notice the existence of patriarchy as one potential element in the authority structures of production. While they have not accounted for the ways in which schooling may reproduce, at an ideological and structural level, the sexual division of labour, they do analyse very briefly the role of the family in this context. (p.144)

First, wives and mothers themselves normally embrace their self-concepts as household workers. They then pass these on to their children through the differential sex-typing of boys and girls within the family. Second, and perhaps more important, children tend to develop self-concepts based on the sexual divisions which they observe around them. Howe familiar which are gendered at the level of the family are then reproduced through the institutional and cultural context of schooling. Typing when the male parent is temporarily involved in household tasks and childcare. To view the family as a sexual as well as biological reproduction unit cannot but reflect its division of labour as a production unit. This sex typing, unless countered by other social forces, then facilitates the submission of the next generation of women to their inferior status in the wage labour system and lends its alternative - child rearing and domesticity - an aura of inevitability, if not desirability.

It would appear that if we are to understand the ways in which women are prepared to take their assigned place within capitalism in the family and in the labour force, we need to investigate the processes of gender construction in both the family and education. As David has argued, it is time to look at the family-education couple as the dual determining agencies of reproduction of sexual divisions within the social formation. For Bernstein, his work on the theory of cultural reproduction and specifically to the work of Basil Bernstein, who analyses education in terms of the contribution it makes to the cultural reproduction of the class structure. This work emphasises the importance of the culture of the curriculum and the social and economic origin of the teacher. Bernstein also introduces the concept of symbolic property (language, cultural tastes, manners) and educational property in the form of certificates and diplomas. Although Bernstein does not specifically address the question of gender differentiation within schooling, his theory makes available conceptual tools which can be usefully employed in the analysis of gender relations in schooling. According to Bernstein (1977b, p.85):

"Educational knowledge is a major regulator of the structure of experience. From this point of view, one can ask: how are forms of experience, identity and relation evoked, maintained and..."
changed by the formal transmission of educational knowledge and sensitivities?

In investigating this question, Bernstein concentrates upon the ways in which schooling reproduces the social order through the reconstitution of pupils by age, sex and social class. This categorization lies embedded in the structuring of knowledge and also in the form of pedagogy, the spatial organization of the school and the evaluation criteria. The two critical features of school experience are to be found in the form of classification (the construction and maintenance of boundaries between different categories, their internalization and externalization) and framing (the form and degree of control within pedagogic relations, between teacher and child).

Using this theoretical framework, it is possible to investigate the ways in which schooling transmits a specific gender code whereby individuals’ gender identity and gender roles are constructed under the school’s classification system. The boundaries between the appropriate activities, admissions, and expectations of future work for the sexes are maintained, and the relations and hierarchies between the two are determined by such a gender code.

In traditional schools one may find a strong boundary between the definitions of masculinity and femininity, which will be reinforced by the application of this principle to the spatial organization of the school, school uniforms, classroom activities and curriculum subjects. This may lead to the maintenance of certain relationships where the framing is strong. The child’s behavior will be evaluated according to sex-appropriate criteria (e.g., “that is quite good for a girl,” “little girls don’t do that”). In this type of school, the teacher in the classroom is most likely to operate in terms of a gender order of a ‘good pupil’, their separation of ability and educational success, and their role of different expectations. Even when the gender code may not be overt, the classification of gender roles was strong and weak girls was evident in schools serving industrial or agricultural communities where a strong division of labor in the home and in the work environment was observed. In schools serving either the suburban middle classes or the semi-skilled or skilled occupational groups on a council estate, the classification of children by gender was weakened in the spatial arrangements and types of education which girls and boys received. It was assumed to be found within the classroom, despite the ideology of equal opportunity. While gender may not have been the major organizing principle of the school structure, it was still present in the form of the classification and the enforcement of gender roles. In these cases, gender roles were characterized by weak classifications (i.e., equality between the sexes) and weak framing (freedom to negotiate the definitions of gender). Given that a strong sexual division of labor exists within capitalism, it is not surprising that the dominant gender code of schooling in Britain is that of strong classification, which reproduces the power relations of male-female
hierarchy, and strong framing, where teachers play a large part in determining gender definitions and content. Within this dominant code, gender roles are ascribed in ways that echo the ideologies of the dominant ideology which may attempt to weaken gender roles.

The dominant code can be "interrupted" (14) by single-sex schools in which, without the presence of one sex, the gender boundaries are blurred and the form of gender control weakened, as Shaw (Chapter 5) has shown. Nevertheless, children within this type of schooling will still acquire the principles of gender classification by the very existence of a division of schools based upon sex difference. Once such pupils have reached higher education, they will be confronted with the academic sexual division of labour (Rendel, Chapter 11) and the realities, after graduating, of the labour market and career prospects (Chisholm and Woodward, Chapter 12).

The constraints which limit the possibility of weakening gender classifications and patriarchal structures are manifold, especially since they are, as has been previously argued, integral elements of the capitalist mode of production. That is not to say that reforms are not possible. One starting point must certainly be the breaking down of gender roles within the family and the patterns of child-rearing. As Bernstein (1977, p. 129-30) argues:

"To the extent that the infant/primary school fails to utilize age and sex as allocating categories, either for the acquisition and progression of competencies or for the allocation of pupils to groups and spaces, the school is weakening the function of these categories in the family and the community. In particular, such restructuring is likely to affect the mother's domestic pedagogic work. This process could be accomplished by a series of educational reforms including the re-education of parents, the ending and pausing of infections, the altering of classroom norms and school rules, and the availability of all curricula options for both populations of school children."

Yet it is certainly that these reforms would make an impact upon sexual socialization, especially in terms of gender identity. Framing and the ideology of gender roles is not smooth, unproblematic process. The setting up and transmission of sex stereotypes as a form of social control does not necessarily only take individuals become what the stereotype demands. As fuller has shown in her contribution to this volume (Chapter 4), West Indian black girls strive for academic achievement and resist the stereotypes of 'blackness' and 'femininity'. Operating a delicate balance between resistance and acceptance of school norms, they walk a tightrope between conformity to school discipline and conformity to the racial and sexual stereotypes.

In the case of white working-class girls and boys, the mediation of class and gender categorization takes different form. As willis (1977) has shown in his research into the behavior and attitudes of working-class boys, these 'lads' operate a masculinity against school norms of docile, conforming and diligent pupils. By labeling such pupils as effeminate and 'cissies', the 'lads' affirm their pugnacious and physical masculinity in an anti-school culture.
They thus confirm their respect for their masculine identity, derived from their families and peer group, and see its fulfilment in hard, physically demanding manual jobs. According to Willis, the 'lads' therefore invert the mental-manual hierarchy to match the male-female hierarchy. As he describes it, (p.148):

This important inversion, however, is not achieved within the proper logic of capitalist production. Nor is it produced in the concrete articulation of the site of social classes of two structures which in capitalism can only be separated in abstraction and whose forms have now become part of it. These are patriarchy and the distinction between mental and manual labor. The form of the articulation is of the cross-valorization and association of the two key terms in the two sets of structures. The polarization of the two structures becomes crossed. Mental labor is associated with the social superiority of masculinity, and mental labor with the social inferiority of femininity. In particular manual labor is imbued with a masculine tone and nature which renders it positively expressive of more than its intrinsic focus in work.

Mandy Llewellyn (Chapter 3), on the other hand, together with other researchers such as McRobbie (1978) and Sharpe (1976), reveals that the definitions of femininity can act as both a prison and an escape route for working-class girls. Because they are female, their academic failure is legitimated, their success treated as unusual luck or a result of over-diligent, hence 'boring' effort. Femininity as constructed within the school does not encourage achievement or ambition in the student world; rather it directs the girls to external goals of being good female companions to men. In this sense it runs counter to the prevailing ideology of education, which stresses academic achievement, intelligence and material success in later life. On the other hand, the concept of femininity can provide working-class girls with the weapons with which to fight a class-determined education when the realities of working-class life are recognized. Thus, the girls seek emotional and personal fulfillment in domestic life and motherhood, the girls can turn away from the frustrations of school life and meaningless employment. They themselves judge academic success as insufficient but rather as 'excessive' on the assumption that 'femininity' does not find husbands or lovers and therefore will not do so unless. The effect, unlike that of the result of the school, is to lead to the development of a different, separate hierarchy of productive over domestic labor, although they leave unchallenged the hierarchy of male over female. School resistance is individualized, unlike that of the working-class boys, yet it also derives from peer group culture and families' (particularly the mothers') definitions of femininity.

Paradoxically, then, while the school may not succeed in transmitting gender definitions which can merge easily with prescribed class identities, pupils may still acquire gender identities which prepare them indirectly for their future class position. In conclusion, what I have attempted to show is that the theories of cultural and social reproduction, despite their limitations, still raise interesting questions for the
sociology of women’s education. By looking specifically at the educational experiences of women, we are forced to modify any simple ‘correspondence’ theory of the relations between schooling and work. The contradictory nature of women’s position in society, rather than being resolved through schooling, is more likely to be accentuated; and, if women are prepared for certain types of waged labour, it is often only indirectly. Furthermore, we need to ask the question, what relation, if any, does the ‘gender code’ of schooling have to the patriarchal relations in domestic life and in the production process? We also need to find out more about the forms of resistance to, and negotiation of, definitions of gender through class cultures and peer groups inside and outside the school.

Finally, while there is much more research required before we can say we understand women’s education, this work should not preclude any of the very necessary programmes for breaking down sexual discrimination in our education system.

REFERENCES

1 Althusser (1971).
4 See, for example, Halsey (1979); and for Britain see Barron and Doeringer (1973); Wilge (1976); Halsey and Mayors in Chapter 9 of this volume.
5 Halsey (1979).
6 This area has been subject to a certain amount of controversy, for good summaries of this see Halsey and Main (1977) and Fee (1976).
8 For an analysis of middle-class women’s relation to ‘progressive’ primary schooling and the contradictions this poses for them, see Bernstein (1977) and Chamboredon and Prevo (1975).
9 The distinction between personalized and positional authority is derived from Bernstein (1976).
10 Gee (1978).
11 For a good summary of this research see Halsey (1979).
12 David (1978).
13 See specifically Bernstein (1977).
14 This concept, derived from Bernstein’s analysis of ‘progressive’ primary schooling, is defined as a change in the form of transmission and reproduction of the dominant code.
15 For further analysis of the theories of cultural and social reproduction, see McDonald (1977).
The importance of being Ernest... 

Emma... Tom... Jane

The perception and categorization of gender conformity and gender deviation in primary schools

Katherine Clarricoates

Present-day research on primary schools in England has usually dealt with the descriptive field (e.g., curricular materials, inequalities of staff ratio by sex, subject specialism) rather than the analytical, although there have been some analyses of teachers' expectations. I should like to concentrate in this particular instance upon the constructs of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' within primary schools. In all four schools I observed, 'masculine' and 'feminine' are seen as innate characteristics of normal proper behaviour. But contradictions emerge. Just as there is a ubiquitous inconsistency of sex-role attributes accorded to males and females in varying cultures, (2) so what is considered normal in some schools is abnormal in others. Differing patterns of sex-role socialization are by no means a new concept in feminist scholarship. Pauline Marks, in her paper on femininity in the classroom discussed the class-specific notions of femininity which underpin the existing educational model (1976, p.180):

It is fascinating to discover that their [girls'] 'femininity', that supposedly biological and absolute characteristic, is dependent on the viewpoint of the observer; different social origins and intellectual abilities alter the meaning of 'femininity', which is thus not a fixed concept in educational thinking.

Belotti, in her book 'Little Girls' also states (1975, p.126):

Those who have had the opportunity to make comparisons because they have taught in schools encompassing different social groupings, admit that this [masculinity and femininity] phenomenon is much more pronounced in village or small-town schools where masculine and feminine stereotypes are more rigidly differentiated.

Although I agree in principle with Belotti's hypothesis, I question her generalization. To begin with, the situation is more complex than she suggests and her contrasts (village and small-town schools) are oversimplified. I hope to show that, despite the variations in sex-role stereotypes, it is not that some schools are
less authoritarian or discriminatory to girls; rather the pattern,
not the degree, of socialization changes to accommodate so-called
'liberal' attitudes to women. This could be defined as a 'divide
and rule' philosophy. Sue Sharpe points out that the values and
attitudes of sex differentiation do not develop in an arbitrary way,
but are influenced by the nature of the economic structure of a
society and 'the division of labour that has been developed around
women'.

My research is based on eighteen months' observation in four
totally different primary schools, encompassing diverse social
groups (for the purpose of this report individuals and schools will
be given fictitious names in order to retain anonymity).

A A traditional working-class school of Dock Side, set in the
heart of an urban area and fishing port, due for demolition and
usually termed 'a northern industrial slum'.

B A modern suburban 'rural' middle-class school of Applegate,
opened eleven years ago to meet the needs of an expanding
population due to development of what Pahl called 'the rural
fringe' (Pahl, 1965).

C A council estate school of Long Estate which is an early
example of the new, spacious primary school built in the
early 1960s. It serves children of parents who have been
re-housed from the old decaying urban areas, situated five to
six miles outside the city centre.

D A very small rural primary school in the village of Linton
Bray in an agricultural area. House-types vary from the
country stone cottage and farmhouse to the row of newly
developed ranch-style bungalows of the 1970s. Although the
basic economics of the community are no longer totally
agrarian (lorry drivers, workers in light industry, garage
mechanics, etc.) nevertheless family farms dominate the
area.

The social class distinctions among the four schools are both
observable and unseen. One can easily enumerate the school differ-
ences between the four settings: classrooms are arranged either as
informal workshops or pedagogic 'absorption tanks'; and to classify
one school simply as 'progressive' or 'traditional' is an over-
simplification. One has only to think of the old wooden desks,
scored by years of graffiti, and the Victorian architecture of the
old schools compared with the plastic, new wood and tile flooring
of the new suburban schools, to provide the visual class differ-
ences. Research has shown that social class can handicap children
from early in their lives, for it is influential in such areas as
streaming, helpful parents, and teachers' expectations. The
neighbourhood and the subculture are all variables which have
come under scrutiny and have been shown to be factors affecting a
child's school career. Spatially all the schools are geared to a
set pattern of movement, whether in open plan or traditional rigid
structures, for children are behind desks, in lines, in queues, and
always in the position of having to accept educational authority.
This somewhat bewildering variety of organised spatial practices and social arrangements reveals the desire to subdue and segregate elements of the community, and to impose on children and young people certain roles and keep assumptions - and results - discrete.

It was through the recognition of divisions set up by the schools and the teachers (and in turn accepted by the children) that the polarization between the sexes was revealed. As stated before, difficulties and problems were so interwoven that it did emerge revealing significant differences in gender deviation and gender conformity. By studying the appropriate behaviour required from each of the sexes within each school, I was able to make some judgments about the value structure of ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ within these communities. I believe that models presented to the children, with their demarcation between masculine and feminine, are based on ecological factors which pertain to that school, i.e., the value structure of the school in relation to the community values.

The urban traditional school revealed behaviour which was considered typical of the two sexes; however, this was also observed in the suburban area of the city. The interactions between stereotyped and the children’s learning and development experienced within the community, took place in all the elements of a male culture (this is not to say that middle-class communities do not), consisting of norms interpreted through a masculine-feminine polarization. The school is one of the institutions that characterise the authoritarian elements of traditional urban-middle-class life (1973, p.195). A rigid conformity existed in social relations, with a preoccupation towards fixed masculine qualities of strength, toughness, dominance and bravery. Women were seen in direct contrast; submissive, weak, with ‘their place’ emphatically in the home. There does, however, appear to be a contradiction here, for there was a large number of women who were employed.

Segregation begins in the street outside, and one must assume that girls and boys have been socialized within families which express a sharply defined sexual division of labor, so that the children learn from an early age to steer clear of each other. Boys are aware of what is expected of them and avoid ‘feminine’ things at all cost; social deviance of any form in a pervasive working-class community is likely to meet firm resistance and be finally suppressed. Girls will make their way to school in separate groups from their brothers, and through this process the stereotypes are solidified and reinforced. It is a land of working men’s clubs, or ‘men only’ bars where landlords encourage sex segregation. To be seen too often with women would undermine a man’s ‘maleness’. The young males join their fathers at this form of social club, with women invited only on specific days. School does not offer any alternatives. Separation begins in early infancy with separate playgroups, separate toilets, separate lunchrooms. The child is a model of a reminder of Victorian sexuality, and suggests that if boys and girls come together they somehow become immoral. Uniformly to
sex-role is strictly adhered to, whilst deviation is rigidly avoided. The school, like its surroundings, is impoverished of grass, space and playing fields; the high walls bordering it are covered in graffiti announcing the ever-youthful optimism of the local football team (this despite its struggles in the lower half of the Third Division). Above the doorway are those ominously familiar letters: BOYS.

Appropriate gender behaviour is expressed in all aspects of school life. High academic achievement is neither highly valued nor expected; at best it is only hoped for by the teachers. For girls it is expected that they follow the traditional line of 'doing well anyway' as part of their conformity to institutional expectations; in fact their 'achievement' is seen as part of the 'feminine' stereotype. When asked who tended to get the best results, the teachers' most common reaction was to explain it in sex differentiated terms:

'Oh the girls, naturally; you can always rely on them to do their work properly.'

'The girls ask the right questions simply because it's expected of them.'

'Absolutely; the girls, but I think it's more to do with wanting to please rather than being intelligent.'

But the general expectations for these children were revealed in the following way:

'There isn't much opportunity around here for these kids anyway.'

'Change and opportunity hardly filter down here...parents want their sons to follow the traditional jobs like fishing.'

'To be realistic and when you think of the jobs and what 90 per cent of these children are going to do, you know, I'm very glad I've got the intelligence not to have to do that kind of job.'

'I think of the kind of life and the job that they're going to have just by having these parents.'

'I can't actually change the system; most of these kids will finish up in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs.'

Academic norms among the children can easily be distinguished when observing and listening to them:

'Girls always try to answer the questions first.'

'Yeah, they think they're a bunch of cleverclogs.'
"We sit quiet, we don't have to do anything 'cos the girls will answer the teachers' questions.'

"Boys always make a noise and try to stop you working.... I like doing sums.... I got three stars today.'

"They don't do their writing properly like we do.'

"See that girl there, Wendy Hagan....she's the best in the class.'

"Tables by rote, and regurgitative 'singing' in order to memorize knowledge, were the order of the day. Girls were eager to 'succeed' in this one sphere that was allowed them, but even then they were not given the credit for creative potential. The other side of this double bind was the way in which the academic expectations of the teachers, both overt and covert, were articulated. The practice of generally pitting girls and boys against each other in a game of general knowledge girls and boys were constantly pitted against each other. If the girls won there was a loud triumphant uproar. The girls formed quite fanatical and our general knowledge girls. If the boys won, there was a loud triumphant uproar. The girls formed quite fanatical and our general knowledge girls. It would win if it wasn't for Ian,' stated Debbie, pointing at him. The academic expectations of the teachers towards this social group were reflections of a belief in the stereotypical qualities.

"Physical aggression was much more accepted in this school than in others:"

"It comes from home.'

"They've no idea of discipline in the home.'

"We have a lot of 'humdingers' in this school; mind you, I blame it on the parents.'

"You can't expect anything better from these kids, coming from an area like this.'

But they did expect girls to set a good example in behavior, and in fact they thought they got such behavior, though this could well be a product of their own perceptions which dichotomize the behavior of girls and the same activity may be evaluated differently according to the sex of the actor:"

"Girls are better behaved, boys are louder.'

"Boys are the ideal of what males ought to be.'

"Boys are the ideal of what males ought to be.'

"Boys are more aggressive, whilst the girls are typically feminine.'

"Boys are more aggressive, whilst the girls are typically feminine.'

"Boys are usually more aggressive, and in thinking about it the same is the same in the equal world.... We are animals basically.'
This was despite the fact that the girls were as verbally aggressive (particularly in terms of swearing) as the boys. When asked what lay behind these differences, most teachers agreed it was 'conditioning' or 'socialization' within the family, and there was general recognition that parents' expectations were different for girls and boys. But this did not prevent these same teachers from going right back into the classroom and reinforcing the sex-role stereotypes by their expectations and selection of different standards of behaviour between the sexes. Instead of trying to eradicate the previous condi-

Craig, a five-year-old, spent a good deal of his time in haras-

sing his classmates. He took a great delight in breaking up their games, humilitating any helpless child who happened near him with Marino, but was a cleared source of irritation to the
teachers. When his class had settled down to a game of marbles,

- and all this within the confines of the class and to the

non-reaction of the teacher. On the other hand, Sarah was prone
to outbursts of temper, either screaming or letting loose a

barrage of insults at her offender. I was present at a time

when she let fly a quantity of paint at Lynsey, who promptly

burst into tears. Sarah's behaviour was met with severe rebuke

by the teacher: 'Little girls do not do that,' amongst other things; and thereafter she was nicknamed the

'paint-dauber'.

The teacher then proceeded to justify her own behaviour by saying

that Sarah was a problem child; for example, annoying her class-
mates.

And yet in this particular instance there was no real distinction

between the girls' or the boys' behaviour. It can be seen that

there is a subtle interaction between the teachers' observations

and the teachers' beliefs.

Applegate reflected the space, green fields and high aspirations

that Dock Side lacked. It was representative of middle-class,

prosperous parents with young children, searching for the 'rural'

family life: the new 'rural-urban fringe'.(10) According to O'Neill,

the middle-class stereotype of femininity is bound up with

occupational status and social

prestige.(11) Still implicit in
middle-class ideology, however, is the belief that it is preferable for a wife not to work, and that the aspiring husband should be able to earn enough to support his whole family. Most of the children I talked to told me their Mums ‘did not work’ but stayed at home. Pahl states that the middle classes have high aspirations for their children’s education since 82 per cent (against 15 per cent of the working class) wanted their children to stay on until 18 or over. To the working class, extra schooling was seen as a training of some sort, whereas the middle class saw it as a means of hiding their children to go to university. The veil of egalitarianism between the sexes is soon lifted when one scrutinizes the values and norms of such a community. Pahl also recognized the significant theme that emerged from his research into the middle-class ‘commuter villages’: parents tended to discriminate in favour of their sons in regard to university education when they had to pay for it, with the consequence that the education of daughters could well be made to suffer. Justification for this lay in the belief that daughters are not clever enough to study for a degree. (12)

Male domination can also be revealed through social relations. Babchuk and Bates, in their paper on The Primary Relations of Middle Class Couples (subtitled A Study in Male Dominance), showed that a large number of wives’ ‘best friends’ were first met through husbands, revealing that husbands had the greater influence in initiating friendships. Babchuk and Bates further emphasized the role of the husband in the household, stating that ‘men are the centre of the couple’ and that he is ‘the dominant force in shaping the life of the family’. This is perhaps best illustrated in the case of the middle-class ‘commuter village’, where husbands often moved from town to town when promotion had been achieved. (13) Frequent moves can increase the isolation of middle-class wives. ‘Men Only’ bars and working men’s clubs are replaced by a round of golf with the ‘chaps’ and ‘business lunches’.

Applegate primary school reflected the value structure of high aspirations and academic achievement: ‘Most of these children are capable of going to university.’ ‘We have a very high standard educationally…if you compare it with an urban working-class school.’ The high academic goal was projected to the children:

‘If you work hard now, chances are you’ll get to university without any trouble.’

Whilst at Dock Side girls were taught ‘dates’ and ‘things’, in Applegate core learning was almost nonexistent, and the emphasis was on relationships and processes in most subjects. Boys were taught ‘dates’ and ‘things’ in the same way as girls, but they were expected to excel intellectually. Applegate schools placed a high value on academic achievement, even though girls usually
had the highest marks in all subjects right throughout primary school... I was browsing through some poetry displayed on a class-
room wall. Pointing to a specific poem she told me: "That's Peter
Jenkinson's; he's the brightest in our class," a statement of fact
not said with surprise or envy - just relayed as a piece of informa-
tion. The teacher informed me:
"In the whole year group generally maybe that the boys are more cap-
able of learning."
"Boys are interested in everything and are prepared to take
things seriously."
"They tend to ask the deeper questions, while girls tend to be
more superficial about subjects."
"Although girls tend to be good at most things, in the end you
find it's going to be a boy who's your most brilliant pupil."
The teachers' perception of creativity was underscored by their
beliefs in sex-roles. They saw the boys as having much more imag-
ination, and having the real ability.
In this school a high standard of hygiene and dress was expected
from both sexes, but particularly from the girls. There was also a
verbal double standard, with teachers censuring girls more severely
than boys for using impure language:
"When Emma fought to retain a prized book from the school
library her self-control faltered and she emitted verbal abuse
at the boy who had endeavoured to take it. "Give me that book
back, you rotten, lousy... I'll have you expelled!" said Emma.
The boy didn't say anything, just stood at the back until you decide to improve your language." Emma
does so, and the boy gets away with his rudeness.
Aggressive behaviour in general was discouraged in Applegate
but, again, more actively for girls than for boys. The teachers
stressed that aggressive behaviour was unacceptable, that there
were no real innate personality differences between the sexes, and
all stressed that in no way did they treat them any differently,
even of course on an individual basis. They were emphatic that
the children were not treated differently. The discrepancy between
their stated behaviour and my observations is apparent, for why
else would they actively discourage aggressive behaviour more often
in girls:
"It's not nice to see a young girl fighting."
"You would expect it from boys, although I myself wouldn't con-
done it, rather than you would expect it from girls."
"I expect a high standard of behaviour from my girls and
fighting and swearing is totally inexcusable."
The children in Applegate were steered to the norms of hard work,
self-denial and academic achievement with their steady rewards of good prospects, university education and economic competition.

This was an explicitly a part of organization as Applegated as Dock Side. It did not seem so important to keep the two sexes apart, perhaps because other social forces were in operation to do it for the school. It was evident that there seemed to be no serious conflict that was apparent in the way in which was evident in the urban traditional school.

Paul. a six-year-old, does not need a reason to play with or be in the presence of girls. He consistently makes his company and enjoys being involved in what is usually referred to as 'feminine' play. He is not inhibited by his own perceptions of his behavior as they do. He also understands the ultimate insults which boys direct against each other expressed in feminine gender terms like 'sissy' or 'puffy'. Paul's status within the class is indeed quite good, his company being sought by both girls and boys. In Dock Side a boy like Paul would have been shunned, especially by the girls, who tend to deride 'feminist' boys.

Boys who got involved in the Wendy House and were 'caught in the act' took measures to reduce the likelihood of ridicule and maltreatment by excusing to comply with appropriate gender behavior:

Two boys are happily playing in the Wendy House. Edward is setting the table whilst Tom is ironing. The teacher comes forward. 'What's going on?' Edward looks at Tom, both look sheepish. 'Batman and Robin', states Edward, 'it's Batman-like game'. The teacher smiles and moves away.

In order to cloak any behavior that might be met with derision by their classmates, they falsified their activity, giving it a 'masculine' name. It was significant that this so-called flexibility was much phased out in the older classes of junior pupils where sex-segregation became once more an internal feature of organization within the school. But it was a less dogmatically expressed division than within Dock Side.

Even in Applegated the young children faced many limitations as to what was acceptable gender behavior and 'deviants' were soon made aware of this. The peer group's attempt to control and ridicule a deviant can be very powerful:

Andy approached me wearing a long, tatty gold lamé dress, a woollen beret pulled down over his ears, and carrying an old handbag. It was obvious he had been in the 'dressing-up' corner. He stumbled towards me, 'I'm a policeman' he declared (I don't know what the sociological implications of this are.) During our ensuing conversation another boy dashed past and yelled 'sissy'. Andy was slightly confused and asked his friend, 'What is a sissy?' 'Someone who dresses up in women's clothes,' came the reply. He hurriedly removed the now offensive clothing and retreated to the other side of the classroom with a hostile look in my direction. One can easily assume he will never don 'women's clothing' again.

The teacher, in allowing the incident to pass without a reaction, informed the class that it was acceptable for Andy to be
'checked' for his deviant behavior. Just as the teacher's interaction with the children (or a particular child) could be perceived as enticing the child to engage or not engage in certain behavior, so her non-interaction would be construed in a similar fashion.

In my observations of Long Estate primary school the routines of discipline, dress and language were again gender-differentiated. The school caters for the children of parents who have been rehoused from the area around Dock Side. To a certain extent a break comes in the close family ties and, according to O'Neill, there is less pressure to conform to the sharp demarcation between male and female. The inhabitants 'question the existing norms of polarization of masculine/feminine'. (14) MacDonald tended to help more in the home, a thing hitherto unheard of in the Dock Side district; thus it is inevitable to define what is new family values: how women are socially, maternally and culturally valued. The inhabitants, in particular, the way they deal with the meaning of family roles or equal relationships in the home. "Though there did not seem 'male-only' here, and there was a decline in some of the practices observed in Dock Side, this did not necessarily mean a decrease in male dominance but rather a change in pattern.

Long Estate school did reflect change: the school, with a female headteacher, did not on first sight reflect the obsession need to keep the two sexes apart. This was partly due to the fact that the architecture was not spatially organized in such a rigid design as Dock Side. But this did not necessarily preclude the existence of categories of gender deviation and gender conformity. The discouragement of participatory activity between girls and boys was a constant factor. The pattern did vary - in certain aspects it was more contrived than in Applegate and less so than in Dock Side. Long Estate's conditioned response to sex-role stereotypes was revealed in particular with regard to Michael, a seven-year-old boy who was the center of his teachers and to the contempt of his peer group, loved to play with dolls. He liked to bake, and constantly sought the company of girls, despite their insults. He was constantly admonished by his teacher 'to try to behave properly'. But to no avail.

During a conversation in the staffroom about his particular behavior:

'Ah, yes,' said one teacher, 'bionic woman.'

'Don't be unkind,' laughed another.

A well-meaning teacher added, 'His brother is really a nice little boy, and quite normal.'

'Perhaps when he grows up he'll get straightened out.'

This behavior is similar to what was accepted in Applegate. Michael is excluded from his peer group, loved to play with dolls. He liked to bake, and constantly sought the company of girls, despite their insults. He was constantly admonished by his teacher "to try to behave properly".
"What do you mean?" I asked. 

"He's ever so "catty", he bites and scratches and pulls hair," Michael's mother replied. "I think it's his way of expressing himself."

Michael's deviant behaviour is obviously very "bad" for him. He is publicly called "bionic woman" and many attempts are made to "guide" him away from his deviancy.

Ms T... reads Michael's 'diary' for the morning: 'On Saturday I helped my Mum bake a cake and I made a dress for my doll.' The teacher despairs: 'Couldn't you play football or something?' Taking the doll he is clutching away from him she offers him an 'Action Man' [same toy, different label]. Michael stares at her as if she's gone quite mad and moves over to the other side of the classroom.

"I'm merely trying to protect him from the rest of the class; you know children can be so cruel," the teacher informs me.

Because it is conveyed to the class that Michael's behavior is deviant, he is in the target of much bullying by some girls and most boys. The headteacher, a kind and progressive woman, remarks that Michael is confused between masculine and feminine roles and she suspects that he has "feminine genes". If he is not "cured" by the time he leaves school, she suggested to me, then the only solution to his "problem" is that he enter the "world" of the arts, drama or music, where "that kind of behaviour" is much more acceptable.

The obvious implication in this is that deviant behaviour is caused by some personality disorder, i.e. a biological malfunction. It is not that Michael is being attacked personally, but rather his behaviour - his identification with the inferior sex, female.

I'd like to focus on the small rural school in Linton Bray, where, as in most agricultural areas, the tendency is towards an enclosed existence, traditional and hierarchical. Here the sexual division of labour is pronounced, partly because farming is considered a man's job and the only occupation for a woman is to be a farmer's wife. Indeed, the children's attitudes to sex-roles were entrenched due to the limited occupations within the village itself.

The school itself was very small and hence there was little need for lining up or queuing (although this sometimes happened), a practice which usually allows for the physical segregation of the sexes. The lack of segregation required that all pupils had to walk on the same side of the road, for example, which was the only alternative way to travel to Market Harborough some five miles distant to obtain any other job.

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qualities’ assigned to the social categories of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. The school in no way questioned these assumptions, and by not questioning it automatically provided implicit approval for such stereotypes. The illogicality of such views is obvious when you realize that in the country girls are expected to help with the rough and dirty work of the farm:

“When I go home I change into my wellies and help with the chickens. ’” (Debbie)

“I help my Dad bring in the cows and then I “muck out” with the other helpers.” (Linda)

“There’s not much else to do in the village so on evenings I generally help out on the farm like my brothers and sisters do.” (Jenny)

Academic norms are not high, and most of these kids have never even heard of university:

“Most of these children have only been as far as Market Mathton.”

“Their horizon is very narrow, limited within the village.”

And the school does nothing to widen this horizon. According to times gender a less-than girl in a rural school has a triple chance of resource deprivation[16]. In all the schools the constant exercise of separating the sexes and the differentiation of girls and boys and, whether intended or not, it serves to inculcate rivalry and antagonism between them.

“Why don’t you boys do as you’re told; you don’t find the girls behaving like that.”

“Let’s have a game of general knowledge: boys against girls.”

When asked why they segregated the girls from the boys most teachers tended to reply with stock answers, which in reality did not even address the question:

“Well, it’s easier to mark off girls from boys.”

“It’s a common division, isn’t it?”

“I’d get confused if they were mixed...you know, if another form of division was used.”

“Well, it’s the easiest...with children they know which are boys and which are girls.”

These statements are from the very teachers who constantly told me that they...
‘Don’t treat girls differently from boys.’
‘I treat them all the same.’

“They’ll play with each other and not realize they are a girl or a boy.”

In all the schools even the punishment system works against any solidarity between the sexes. The slipper or cane is mainly used on boys for ‘serious’ misdemeanours, (although it is said more often in working-class schools), whilst girls are sent to the senior female teacher for a “good talking-to,” or given some other form of institutional punishment, like being made to stay in at play-times:

“Girls never get the slipper.”
“Boys are naughtier than us; they get the slipper from “Sir”.”

“I always get away with more things than we.”
“Boys are always put up to trouble.”

In the working-class schools the boys used to brag about how many times they’ve “had the slipper” for it is a sign of being tough. The girls do not share this norm:

“Boys are naughtier than us: they get the slipper from “Sir”.”
“They’re silly, they show off about getting the slipper.”

The teachers rationalize this demarcation by stating:

“Girls are not as bad as boys.”
“It’s not quite right somehow to give girls the slipper or the cane.”

“I would give a swift kick up the boy’s backside more than I would a girl’s.” (male teacher)

“I suppose in the whole I’m stricter with the boys than with the girls.”

“A lot of trouble comes from the boys than the girls.”

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“The teachers enumerate this demarcation by stating:}
By providing such ready, stereotyped lists, the teachers betray their own habit of classifying children according to their sex. Any girl who is "aggressive" or "independent" and any boy who is "effeminate" or "sensitive" are the exceptions, the so-called deviants. The children must change, for there seems little chance of the teachers' stereotypes changing when presented with contradictions.

The girls' internalization of the beliefs that boys are superior whilst they are inferior manifested itself when I talked to both girls and boys about their hopes and aspirations for the future. Girls actually believed that boys were naturally ordained with a profusion of masculine esoteric skills such as being able to drive a car, tractor or helicopter: significantly boys revealed a pattern of oppression already in their young lives, against girls:

**Applegate**:
Jennifer informed me her father was a helicopter pilot. 
"Would you like to be one?" I asked. 
"Oh no. Women would fall out of a helicopter whereas men wouldn't - they're stronger."
"But don't men fall out?"
"No, they hang on better than women."

**Damián**
Informed me his father was a doctor. He wanted to be a scientist. I asked him: 
"Don't you think women should be able to do the same jobs?"
"No, I don't think too many women should be scientists as they might get hurt."
"What do you mean?"
"Well women are more likely to touch things they're not supposed to."

**Linton**
"A woman wouldn't be able to drive a tractor; it is too heavy for her."
(Mark) 
"A man would work on a farm but a girl cannot work on a farm; she is not strong enough."
(Laura) 
"I would not let my Mum drive a tractor; she would get it dirty and break it." (Chris) 
"Women drive the tractor and trailer too fast." (Samantha)
"A woman can't be a farmer, she can't drive a tractor," said Sean.

"Men can't either; like everybody else they have to learn," I replied.

"Yes, but it would take much longer to teach women to learn," they asserted. They felt simply accepted that if a job was categorized as masculine it was not appropriate for women to do it. This is the key idea to understand the way that they see the division of labour on Dock Side. It is not arbitrary, irrational, or meant to be oppressive. It is the reality of the situation, and it is very convincing to these kids. It is their version of reality, and it is the way they think about the world, especially as it relates to work and work opportunities.

Irrational they may be, but to these kids these reasons are concrete. They had simply accepted that if a job was categorized as men's work it was obviously not right for a girl to do it. It was tragic to recognize the realism within Dock Side, when asked about their future:

'I suppose I'll work at Birdseye like my Mum and get home in time to see my kids leave school.' (Stephanie, 8 years old)

Stereotypes are not only different for each sex, but also vary according to class, and the symbolic separation between girls and boys is manifested in varying ways. Each woman appears to be strong, self-sufficient, or sensitive, they immediately display the particular norm defining what it is to be a man. The two key points of this chapter are that 'femininity' varies, and does so according to the area in which the school is situated (occupational structure); and that, despite such variations, the subordination of women is always maintained.

Most women are pressured towards the feminine role; there is little alternative. For working-class girls this will be forced upon them, as well as because they are not encouraged towards extending their education. The community values and school expectations work against them. Patriarchy imposes more limitations upon their future lives as working-class women. Expected to marry and have children, they are forced into the domestic sphere. The redundancy of the paid labour market and difficulties in integrating work and home, with the long hours of overtime and the rigid school schedule which exercise constraints and control over their time. For them there is no question of altering the male-centered norms and values. They are forced into the family role, and they are condemned to the domestic burden.

NOTES

1 See Frazier and Sadker (1973); Lobban (1978); Weinreich (1978).

2 See Mead (1935).

This research is from a larger project funded by the SSRC.

According to the United Kingdom’s assessment of rateable value, women in this seaport area have long been encouraged to work outside the home. See Bell (1968), especially his work on ‘spiralists’.


Byrne (1973).

I should like to thank my research supervisor Colin Craighead, Dale Spender and the Editor for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.
I want to consider initially in this chapter the ways in which existing empirical studies and theoretical formulations in relation to education and youth systematically neglect gender and render it invisible both as a category and a determining force in structuring social reality.

The implications of this neglect and invisibility of women are twofold. First, we don't actually know what girls do either at school or outside it. We haven't got any ethnographies of girls at school in the Hargreaves/Lacey mould, (1) or any small-scale studies to sit alongside Will's 'lads' (2) which consider the meaning of adolescent girls' participation in present-day youth culture is virtually non-existent. (3) They are just not there in the literature, or if they do appear it is through male eyes as 'birds', 'scrubbers' or 'hangers-on'. (4) However, this is not simply a pity because, second, it also means that the theoretical insights generated by such work are sociologically inadequate when the entire school as adolescent population is being considered. Gender - 'the fact that they are boys' - is assumed self-explanatory and unproblematic but it is in effect something that needs to be understood. Only then would sociologists be able to understand why it is that gender is a social product and that it is given different meanings across-culturally and historically.

Because these studies have not considered the significance of gender when it is explored, the explanations for actions and behaviour offered are at best partial and at worst inadequate and misleading.

Although there are crucial explanations for this systematic neglect of gender within sociology and the sociology of education, developments in sociology since the 1970s should have made us more critically aware of existing assumptions and perspectives so that we question what counted for legitimate knowledge.

Study girls at school
The implications of confusion

Mandy Llewellyn
Also, face-to-face relations have been raised to levels of new consciousness in the research and literature through the various interpretative perspectives,(7) which should give scope to recognize the gender of the actor engaged in constructing his or her own reality. Yet the fruits of much labour are disappointing. For example, the spate of classroom interaction studies have focused on pupil as pupil and teacher as teacher: neutralized and neutered categories which can only be fully understood in relation to pupil and teacher also as girl/boy/woman/man; working class/middle class; black/white; young/old.(8)

Marxist perspectives in education (9) have necessarily broken down formerly rigid boundaries between school and the outside world, particularly the labour market. Yet these have too often neglected to recognize the instability of women due to their primary positioning in the home and the domestic labour market, which is essentially subordinated to the labour market.(10) Consequently, it is often hived off as something which is either only about women or something that only female sociologists are concerned with.

Recognizing the sociological significance of gender thus involves being critically aware of the gaps and inadequacies of the existing analyses; but we also need to suggest ways in which gender does operate within educational processes and structures.

I want now to explore some of these ideas in relation to my own research, which consisted of an intensive participant observation study of 230 girls at two urban single-sex schools: a grammar and a secondary modern.

Initially, in the summer of 1975, I selected this focus and style of research for two main reasons. First, as a sociologist and a teacher I was interested in school processes, and the relationship between what formally goes on at school and the crucial informal levels of the 'hidden curriculum'. I wanted to understand the dynamics of pupils' friendship groups and the polarization between academically orientated pro-school pupils and the anti-school sub-cultures. Second, I was rather naively concerned with the lack of studies on girls, either in school or in the youth culture literature.

I thus gained access to two girls' schools: an unstreamed grammar which selected pupils from all areas of the city, including a pre-dominantly white working-class post-war council housing estate from which the secondary modern school of my choice drew its girls. The two schools were a mere hockey pitch away from each other, and there seemed a certain amount of hostility between them, suggested by contemporary reports in the local newspaper whereby both schools had opposed recent plans concerning comprehensive reorganization into one community college. Thus there seemed plenty of scope for sociological inquiry both within and between the two institutions.
I was aware of the class-based nature of this division within the educational system, although obviously unsure of the specific dynamics. As the focus of my study was to be the adolescent girl as ‘successful’ or ‘failing’ pupil, I wanted to enter the field as ‘one of the girls’. This proved to be considerably more problematic than I could have ever envisaged. Despite the difficulties, which unfortunately I have no space to describe or analyse, I persevered and attended the two institutions throughout the girls’ fourth and fifth years at school. I spent five days a week (two or three days at each) for the entire school year, September 1975 to July 1976, and two or three days a week regularly throughout the subsequent academic year. The girls firm quick fags in the lavatories, inter-form hockey tournaments, and being humiliated in French lessons for only getting three out of twenty for my test. Although the girls were aware that I was undertaking some sort of project on girls in school, I spent so much time with them that they tended to forget this, and they did not relate their personal contact with me to me trying to find out and question them about aspects of their lives. Throughout the two years I maintained this contact with the entire range of girls both from the various cliques of friends in the three grammar school forms and the seven streamed classes of the secondary modern. I spent two or three days a week to access the entire range of activities available to and engaged in by the girls: from reading magazines, listening to records and chatting in bedrooms; to evangelical church services and coffee evenings; and hanging around the streets of the estate, and the occasional fair.

Obviously I collected a vast amount of data. Primarily this was in the form of daily journal notes and recordings of informal conversations and interviews with girls and teachers. I also collected detailed diaries for a week from all the girls and two questionnaires: a lengthy one at the end of the fourth year, and one at the end of the fifth year. Unlike many of the ideas I outlined at the beginning of this article, once I had entered the field I encountered a mass of problems and dilemmas, some of them generally related to this style of research, others more specifically concerned with the focus of my study. These latter involved the difficulties of gaining some sort of purchase on the problematic, fiercely excluding spheres inhabited by adolescent girls, and of overcoming the social and cultural codes employed by the mass of potential data surrounding them. But I felt particularly confused by the actions and behaviour of the girls around me. How could I understand their relations with each other, with their teachers, the relationship of school-based activities and behaviour to the wider social context of estate life, suburbia, and the home and family setting? Partly this is explained by the complexity of social reality. But more importantly I would argue that it was because I was unconsciously trying to understand what was going on around me in relation to existing concepts and frameworks. I was always talking to the girls in terms of boys, and so was I, due to what they were based upon. Being with my girls at school and making youth culture, and a subject of gender in a sociologically
significant dimension of analysis. Whilst there is nothing inher-
ently unsociological about selecting an area of interest to research,
the assumptions and implications of this process do need to be
clearly stated and understood. However, the fact and significance
of the focus of these studies being boys, not merely pupils or
adolescents, and lads, not simply working-class adolescents hanging
around the streets, has been lost — considered too obvious to be
worth mentioning. Because it was empirically unproblematic, it was
not theoretically acknowledged or conceptualized in terms of what
gender centrally plays in structuring everyday experiences as well as
life chances.

In studying girls you cannot get away so easily with neglecting
gender, because you are forced to acknowledge that what happens to
girls is determined within certain boundaries by the very fact of
being girls, and not only by their being pupils or working class or
academically successful. These latter dimensions are

Thus I would argue that there are always distinct ‘female’ and
‘male’ experiences of any situation, as well as shared levels of
meaning through being working class or successful within the class-
room. Furthermore, it is not simply a matter of charting the
‘female’ side of the picture or combining it with what we already
know about boys, because it is necessary to understand and concep-
tualize the whole. This involves complex articulations between
male and female experiences of gender and other cross-cutting dim-
ensions of class, race and age. Crucially, girls’ and women’s
experiences are structured in response to male definitions, and
therefore data relating to the peculiar inscrutability of females can
only be explored if this broader social question is tackled.

So, for the remainder of this article I would like to indicate
some of the more specific mechanisms of my fieldwork in relation to
friendship groupings amongst the girls, and suggest ways in which
gender should be explicitly incorporated into the analysis of
these processes. During the process of observing, participating and
trying to understand the informal groupings amongst the entire range of girls,
many significant facts and patterns emerged which needed explana-
tions. From these I want to discuss four observed illustrations of
how gender affected the girls’ friendship groupings. These are:

1. The inflexible nature of these groupings;
2. The stereotyped images which arose between groups;
3. The individual isolation of the non-
   exam secondary modern girls;
4. The contradictory pressures exerted on the girls, as illustrated by the paradoxical position of Sandy.

First, the groupings of girls tended to be fairly static or
exclusive, irrespective of the formal organization of the school;
i.e., whether it was rigidly streamed or not. It seemed that the
criteria for friendship groupings were not determined entirely or
even very significantly by academic and school-based factors.

However, the organizational divisions obviously shaped the daily
experiences of the girls, and maintained boundaries organising the girls, such as between
the three streamed forms of the grammar school, and the exam-


exam classes of the secondary modern. This distance enabled certain stereotypes to be developed and perpetuated. The nature of these images relates not simply to the school context which produced them. To the top exam stream of the secondary modern the non-exam streams were 'thick', 'daft', 'dillons', and also 'gangish', 'loud-mouthed': 'You wouldn't catch us clomping round the place like them.' 'Eh - you hear the language on 'em.' 'Eh-up, the way they stick together - it ain't natural, yelling at lads across park...' Likewise the non-exam girls perceived the top stream girls as 'clever', 'snotty', 'keenos', 'stuck up', but also: 'Exams won't get them nowhere, they'll be out with their prams next year - if anyone'll have 'em.' 'You seen the way they dress - wouldn't be seen dead like that.' "That never ever mix with a lad." As the various stereotypical images employ series of gender and class perceptions, so was it out of the main participant dimension - albeit a very complex one - on which the girls judged themselves, each other and their teachers (male and female) the extent to which they conformed to certain internalized - from birth onwards - notions of appropriate gender behavior and characteristics. It was not the only criterion by which the girls judged the people around them which simultaneously informed and defined the way they behaved towards females and males in social situations; but it was a crucial, much glossed over and invisible dimension, essentially as it was so well internalized and personified. The following conversation indicates the range of criteria employed by a group of top-stream girls as they discuss Diane:

This girl had been placed in the top stream on her arrival at the school in the second year, but by the end of the third year she had been demoted to a non-exam stream.

M.L. I didn't realize Diane Snail used to be in your form?

Debra Yes, it was awful. Fomper [Deputy Headmistress] must have been stupid to put her in with us. She was useless, do you remember? She couldn't do the work, she asked dumb questions, and just sat there - well, you know what she's like.

M.L. Well, yes, but what was she like when she first came?

Debra The same - she just didn't fit in - we were the best form, still are, and we didn't want Snail spoiling that - she was no good, she smelt.

M.L. Oh come on, she doesn't smell that much.

Lesley Look at the way she dresses, Mandy.... Those horrible old jumpers all orange and what'sit - purple - and skirts nearly down to her ankles or above her knees. Reckon her Mum goes round the jumble sales - or the neighbours give her their left-overs, or maybe Diane just finds them when she's walking round the streets!

M.L. Oh - maybe her family ain't got much money for clothes. Besides, I wouldn't go out looking like that. I'd never do it - but you can manage with what you've got. She could wash her clothes and iron 'em....
Debbie And her head’s a mess - it sticks out all over the place... and her face - when she comes to school with all her makeup on - oh, it’s horrible - all blue and her skin’s all blotchy.

Lesley Yer - and she can pluck her eyebrows. That don’t cost nowt.

Debra Trouble is she’s too stupid to realize what she looks like.

Debbie No wonder all the lads run away from her.

Lesley Have you seen her... she goes over the boys’ field and waits for ‘em - she has to up to them and ask ‘em out! (Laughter.)

Debbie Yer... and pay for ‘em! (More laughter.)

Thus Diane was truly ostracized, because she was ‘failing’ and ‘discredited’ on every dimension that was important to these girls:

1) In relation to school, Diane was (a) an academically ‘failing’ pupil, and also (b) a ‘non-conforming’ to the norms of that classroom pupil. (2) As an adolescent, she didn’t conform to the precise teen-scene fashion norms as regards dress, hair-style, use of make-up. (3) All the girls were working class, yet intra-class differences are also crucial referents, and Diane and her family were seen as rough, inadequate in relation to the norms of working-class respectability. (4) She was also seen as a ‘bad girl’, in that she was perceived to be a leader in a small group of non-conforming girls, and an active participant in the taking the lead in various social activities. (5) It is important to realize that Diane was not accepted with open arms by the non-exam girls in the fourth year, as an outcast from the top streams. She was further rejected and ostracized by these girls, and even though she was an obliging scapegoat to pass the time more interestingly, she was ultimately rejected and ostracized by them.

A further area of confusion, which emerged after prolonged contact with all the girls, was that, despite the perceptions of the top streams of the secondary modern school towards the non-exam groups, there was very little contact, friendship or solidarity between the non-exam girls, even though to outsiders (other girls, teachers) this group was consistently perceived to be rebellious and non-conformist, and friendship and loyalty links were virtually non-existent. This was manifested very clearly in the spatial arrangements of lessons, where girls sat apart, separated from the frenetic seating arrangements of the grammar school girls. As a result of this expression (5) the girls’ reactions to their lessons and teachers were either individualized and personalized - daydreaming, filling in and passing notes, writing initials on desks and books or invisible - they ‘skived’ off school. These patterns of behavior were interesting compare with the anti-school model of groups of boys! challenging en masse the teacher’s authority.

The different social and personal realities available to
adolescent girls, the lack of power they had to define themselves and the situations around them, and the inadequacies of existing (male) explanations, were well illustrated by one girl, Sandy. In many conventional ways, Sandy was the high-status girl of the low streams at the secondary modern. Everyone knew her, her sisters had preceded her through the school, she was one of the school’s personalities. She was considered a problem by the staff, a trouble-maker, coming from a difficult home background. Further, her parents didn’t support the school’s attempts to contain her, so within the classroom Sandy had considerable power to define proceedings.

Yet she was very isolated both at school and outside it, unlike her male counterpart who would have enjoyed approval with an adoring group of lads in tow. Outside of the classroom - where Sandy’s actions constituted light relief and amusement - the other girls didn’t have to go along with Sandy’s definition of situations and appropriate behaviors: because they were not the dominant forms, of which a crucial component is gender-specific. Thus Sandy was left with little control over what was seen as acceptable feminine behavior. For example, by initiating contact with lads and being publicly sexually explicit when she yelled at them. As such, she was a threat to the rest of the girls and the lads in the challenge she represented to their widely held expectations of what constituted ‘feminine’ status, a goal which they would all strive for, irrespective of class and educational performance. Thus there was very much a feeling amongst them that they had the last laugh. As two girls commented to me as we watched Sandy striding ahead across the park:

Gill Look at ‘er, yelling at them lads. She thinks she knows it all... silly cow - what a mouth on it.
Ann Don’t make no difference, though... you should hear her talk and more besides... don’t get her nowhere. (Laughter.)

Similar ideas were reproduced by those in power and authority. Crucial messages were transmitted to the listening audience of girls as well as Sandy in the below incidents:

‘Just calm down, Sandy; with a temper like yours, my girl, you’ll be lucky if you get a husband... and if you do, you won’t keep him if you treat him the way you do your teachers. Come on, Sandy, don’t give me that. You’re a bit over the top. Just calm down... just because they’re after you at school, that doesn’t mean you should be after them. You’ve got to calm down...’ (Senior master placating Sandy after a classroom flare-up)

‘Come on, Sandy, in you come, don’t want to talk about your family’s “business” in the corridor. Come on, stop picking on the others... but because they behave sensibly and act like young ladies...’ (He puts his arm round her shoulder.) ‘I don’t know - I would have thought you’d want to settle down, you’re too old for fighting now. Look at the mess your...’
hair and clothes are in. The least you could do is to try and look nice, even if you can’t behave nicely. . . .

Come on, let’s see how things are going at home . . . (Educational Welfare Officer talking to Sandy prior to informal ‘chat’)

The ‘tone’ of the teacher and welfare officer are different, and to understand the two situations fully more needs to be explored in terms of the class-based nature of the interaction between teacher and pupil and between officer and ‘client’, within the context of an estate secondary school. However, in such considerations the gender dimension is often neglected, or taken for granted and rendered invisible, and yet these are important ‘moments’ in the transmission of appropriate feminine ideologies. And this is much more central to the process of schooling than is recognized. As one concerned and distressed senior mistress confided to me:

‘I wouldn’t mind, really . . . to be honest, I can understand the girls kicking their heels against the lessons. They’re bored, the teachers don’t bother, and it won’t bring them better jobs . . . whatever we say . . . but none of these girls – handy – the language she uses . . . I’ve no kind of life as such, no, it’s just I don’t know . . . I mean if I go into any of the houses I can’t see how even settling down and making a lifetime here . . . I don’t mean she should only be a wife and mother . . . but she won’t get anywhere as she is . . . we haven’t given her a chance . . . We’ve failed . . .’

The school had ‘failed’, not simply at the formal, but crucially subordinated, level of providing basic skills and qualifications, but also at the informal, hidden, dominant level of transmitting ideologies of appropriate values and behaviour to the adolescent working-class girl. Within the context of this chapter, I have only been able to draw briefly and rather sketchily upon my own research data. I hope that enough has been explored to indicate how the implications of confusion in empirical studies of girls at school, or out of school, are not simply the product of muddled thinking, but are rather demonstrating that we need to understand the complexity of how gender shapes social reality, as well as studies of it. Feminist perspectives in all these areas are central to the task. (18)

NOTES

1 Throughout the 1960s and 1970s there have been numerous studies of boys at school, their academic performance, involvement in and commitment to school, friendship groupings, etc. Probably the most interesting are Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970). For a detailed summary of such research see Banks (1979).

2 Willis (1977).

3 As Mungham and Pearson (1976) comment, ‘There is an appalling neglect in the considerable literature on alienation of young men and girls. Youth culture is held to be synonymous with male youth culture.’ Nevertheless they still entitle their edited collection of articles Working Class Youth Culture.

4 This is briefly and very interestingly discussed by McRobbie .
and Garber (1976). It may well be that this is how adolescent girls are seen by their male counterparts, but that is no defence for the male researcher to reproduce those views uncritically, thus making them implicitly his own.

This is an important area for feminist sociologists to tackle, and the literature is growing. See, for example, the introductory chapter in Oakley (1976); Fuller (1978); Lightfoot (1975). A novel theoretical framework is provided by the work of Bourdieu (1973), who emphasized the social origins of cultural capital. See also the work of Bernstein (1977), and Bourdieu (1973), Sharp and Green (1976), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Willis (1977), although the first two are not, strictly speaking, Marxist. While there is some scope within these writings for understanding the 'special' position of girls and women in the educational process, this is never specifically addressed.

An important contribution within a Marxist feminist framework has been made by Wolpe (1977). These ranged from coping with vexed teachers' responses to my uninvited presence as one of the girls, to dilemmas concerning how far I should take involvement at adolescent parties. This crucial aspect of any research on girls has been well noted by McRobbie and Garber (1976). The failure of much research to overcome these difficulties or appreciate them is illustrated by Furlong's (1976) work on interaction in the classroom. In his own research he stresses the fluidity of pupils' interaction patterns and rightly asserts that existing analyses have failed to grapple with these complexities and have not given sufficient credibility to participants' own accounts of behaviour. Yet he himself seems to have accepted into his analysis the crucial factors that the 'pupils' he studied were girls and West Indian. He thus cannot adequately account for the complexity of behaviour he observed and recorded.

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to York with a small group of the grammar school girls. We had spent days chatting, within the safety of an all-girls-together classroom, about what we were going to wear, what we were going to do there, and which sights to see. Yet from the minute we arrived and started walking about – a group of six or seven young females – we were followed and chatted up and even touched by groups of lads; and we spent the entire day running down streets, getting into coffee bars to get away, keeping a lookout in the shops and cathedral to see if they followed us in. My entire ‘female’ perspective recollection of York is of eyes lowered at pavements and steps, and shops where we pretended to separate and look at souvenirs.

15 This point is discussed in the introduction to articles written by the Women’s Study Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978.

16 These criteria, polarized in terms of successful/failing pupil; conforming/non-conforming pupil; girlish/adolescent; respectable/rough; ‘good’/‘bad’ girl, are crucial in understanding the ways in which the entire range of girls judged themselves and their peers. Although polarized, the various dimensions are significantly identifiable as separate strands.

17 Here I would want to suggest that the significance being attached to solidarity between girls and the notion of best friend by McRobbie (1978) is idealizing and oversimplifying the complex reality of social relations between girls. Not all girls are very involved and well-sufficient with their female friends and others are not – all for important and explicable reasons. The specific group of girls I am discussing here were involved in an important transition phase: school had ceased to have much meaning to them, they looked towards the adult world of work and social relations, and they were disdainful of the childish antics of the girls who hung around together; they had moved on to ‘better’ company – men.

18 This chapter is based on a paper originally given at the BERA Seminar on ‘Women, Education and Research’, 14-16 April 1978.
Black girls in a London comprehensive school

Mary Fuller

In the areas of housing, the law, employment, education and welfare, black people and women continue to be disadvantaged in comparison with men and whites. The facts of racial and sexual disadvantage in Britain mean that, whatever their social class, black women and girls are in a doubly subordinate position within the social formation.

With regard to education, those people in Britain writing about academic aspirations and achievement of pupils have compared black and white pupils, and made similar comparisons between females and males. At the time when I began my research (in 1975) I was unable to find any instance of work which attempted to analyse simultaneously the bearing which pupils’ sex and race might have in this area. With the single exception of Driver (1977), writing about the academic achievements of black pupils continues to treat them as a sexually undifferentiated group (see, for example, Little, 1978). Other writers, working in the conservationist sub-culture and deviancy tradition, and concerned to document and analyse the experiential lives of adolescents, have been equally limited in their focus. Their efforts have been almost exclusively concentrated on white sub-cultures, with Sharpe (1976) being a notable exception — and the balance being heavily loaded male (and white) adolescent experiences and cultural expressions. In other words, not only does this tradition in sociology treat the world of adolescence as essentially male, but it also considers adolescents to be racially undifferentiated.

What seemed to be clear was that black pupils were under-achieving academically, (1) and that black youth (and some parents) were increasingly disaffected from schooling (Dondy, 1974). It seemed equally clear from the studies by Maggs (1967) and Marini (1969) that this was so for both boys and girls. The ‘delinquent’ sub-cultures among white boys were related to the pupils’ social class. To the extent that race and social class, disaffection from school and relatively poor scholastic performance were connected.

The fact that most writers were of the view that it was difficult to know what black girls came into this schema, if one assumed the primacy of social class and/or social category in developing an
anti-school stance, black girls could be straightforwardly accom-
mmodated, since there would be little difference between them and
their male peers. But the fact of being female might alter this
picture - by virtue of their sex girls are in a particular subordi-
inate position. There are no a priori reasons for assuming a
quarant important for either sex or race in this respect, and no
certain guidelines as to the extent of an interaction between the
two. From logic and guesswork only, the fact of being female
could have rather different implications for black girls' sub-
cultural response to schooling. Given an additive model of educa-
tion, it would seem that black girls would be essentially like
their male peers, only more so i.e., even more disaffected than
similar male pupils. On the other hand, and in line with the
common view that females as a group are more conformist, less
likely to rebel and generally less 'troublesome' in the school
context (Levy, 1972), black girls could be expected to demonstrate
similar but less strongly manifested alienation from school. This
is not something to be decided by logic rather it is an empirical
question, though not, as already informed, one which has actually
been answered.

In this chapter I shall describe a small group of black girls
(of West Indian parentage, though mostly themselves of British
birth) who formed a discernible sub-culture in the comprehensive
school in which I carried out research during 1975 and 1976. As
part of a much larger study (2) involving male and female pupils
from Indo-Pakistani, West Indian and white British family back-
grounds I spent two terms in the school in daily participation and
observation of pupils' school lives. At that time and subsequently,
observational material was supplemented by interviews, question-
naires and the analysis of various school documents. The larger
project aimed to examine in what ways pupils' and teachers'
sex-structured their position within the school as well as the ways in
which teachers' and pupils' actions with each other were struc-
tured by their respective notions of gender (i.e. masculinities/
femininities). Hence the work took place in a mixed school. To con-
front adequately the question 'How much does sex matter in school?'
some additional and equally important referent is required, so
that inferences about sexual differentiation may be subject to
alternative explanation.(3) For this reason the school selected
was multi-racial, and the possibility of social class and race as
alternative or additional explanations for differentiation during
schooling was taken into account. Although the study is concerned
largely because in the ordinary way a study based on only eight
people could hardly expect to be taken as a serious contribution
to the sociological literature; although in our present state of
ignorance concerning black girls and schooling, such considera-
tions might be waived.

As I shall go on to argue, the existence and specific defining
features of this sub-culture of black girls call into question some
of our present assumptions and thinking, not only about black
pupils but also about the development of school-based sub-cultures.
The school was a boroughally-comprehensive in the north London
borough of Brent, and the students, in their final year of compul-
sory schooling, were aged 15 to 16 years. The fifth year was
divided into two parallel bands, one containing 128 pupils who
followed a mixed curriculum of practical/vocational subjects with
some more academic ones, and who would be expected to take some
'O' level or CSE exams; the other band (the one with which I worked)
containing 142 pupils following a more thoroughgoing academic
curriculum, with the expectation that they would take a rather
larger number of 'O' level and CSE exams than those in the pre-
vious band.

13 The academic band contained significantly fewer girls than boys
in the reverse proportion in the practical band. There were
fewer West Indian girls in the academic than the practical band,
as one took sides of white British and Asian girls. Although there
were at least more boys in the academic than the practical band,
a reverse proportion, and almost equal numbers of West Indian boys
and girls, the sex ratio was in line with that found within the school as
a whole (Coard, 1971; Troyna, 1976), and it is clear that the situ-
ation with regard to West Indian boys, but not with respect to
girls, confirms the view that West Indian pupils are found in dis-
proportionate numbers in the lower streams (or equivalent groupings)
within school.

14 Within the fifth year nearly a quarter of pupils was of West
Indian parentage, a further one in four were of Indo-Pakistani
parentage, and just over half were white and British-born, with
very few other white Europeans. Within the academic band
the majority of West Indian pupils was British-born, whereas the
majority of Asian students was immigrant, with by far the majority
of them being of East African rather than Indian sub-continental
birth.

TEE GIRLS
Five of the eight girls were British-born, three having migrated
to Britain from Jamaica, two when aged 3, and one when aged 11.
One of the British-born girls had spent four years in the West
Indies as a small child (aged 2 to 6). She lived in a transpor-
tation worker's home and was the only girl in the sub-culture
without a brother or sister living with them, and in most cases considerably
more than two. The mothers of six of the girls were permanently
employed outside the home in full-time jobs, one girl's mother had
a permanent part-time job, and in one case the mother took sea-
sonal jobs according to availability. All six fathers were
normally in permanent full-time jobs. The girls came from pre-
dominantly manual working-class homes (with two having a
father in a manual but a mother in a non-manual job; one girl had
both parents in non-manual employment).

Although the sub-culture comprised girls in the same age group
attending the same school, it was important to recognize that in
the sub-culture members of the sub-culture engaged in activities
differently than those engaged by the class. Two aspects of the
sub-culture were the most striking, and will be dealt with in turn:
The first was a sense of being a sub-group within a group...
sense of its structure and values it is necessary to look outside the school, to the situation of black minorities in Britain generally and also to the situation of women in comparison with men. The girls consciously drew on these when elucidating themselves and the other girls in their group. In particular they drew on their knowledge and experience of the West Indies.

WEST INDIAN ROOTS

Most of the black students whom I interviewed had themselves visited the West Indies in the relatively recent past; all were related in some way to others who had visited, and were in other ways kept apprised of life in the West Indies. In large part it was their awareness of these familiar roots and the inferences which they drew concerning themselves as females in that society which underlay and provided the basis both for the existence of the sub-culture and for an understanding of its values and particular style. The other part is contributed by the girls' interpretation of the fact of their female sex in British society.

From what they had themselves observed and gleaned from others' accounts the girls had constructed a picture of a physically demanding and financially unrewarding life for women in the West Indies, in comparison with which their present and future lives in Britain seemed favourable.

Women back home were really meticulous. They had to be. They had to go out and fetch water, come back and do their washing and it was really dirty because they don't have washing machines. And they had to get down and really scrub. Then after that they had really old fashioned irons and had to burn coal to do it, plus you've got to starch it, then wet it again and iron it. And the men just expect them to do that. So, I mean, they can't be really careful what they do.' (Monica)

Foner (1976) suggests that older immigrant women whom she interviewed in London shared this perception. The girls drew a comparison between the life-styles of women and men in the Caribbean, typifying that of men as pleasanter and less arduous, even though male unemployment was high. Boys, during interview, also indicated that they believed this to be the case.

One very important ramification of this picture was that the girls did not easily envisage a future for themselves in the West Indies; on the contrary their awareness of their West Indian roots led them to believe that they would be better off in Britain. On the other hand a return to the homeland (by which was meant the West Indies) featured prominently in the boys' thoughts about the future, sentiments which were frequently given coherence by their understanding of Rastafarianism. Within the fifth year at Torville only boys displayed some of the externalia of Rastafarianism - the wearing of woolly hats in orange, green and black, modified 'locks', etc. - and had adopted its rhetoric. It may be that because the option of returning was less (psychologically) available to the girls that they found a Rasta identity that much more difficult to contemplate.

It should not be inferred from this that the girls dissociated
themselves from their Caribbean origins or wanted to be anything other than black. None of the girls indicated in any way that she
wanted to be anything else than black. Indeed they were proud to be black. For example, Janice, having explicitly defined herself as 'pure
black' on several occasions in the interview, returned to the theme of blacks who 'go on as if they are a white person', who are the
opposite of 'pure black'. She also suggested that '...if a black person comes over to us, we accept them as a black'.
This positive acceptance of themselves as black echoes Ladner's (1971) findings in relation to Afro-American female adolescents.
As was the case with many of the Asian and white girls interviewed, the black girls expressed considerable resentment towards their
families because of what they saw as discrimination in favour of boys within the family. The basis of their argument was that
domestic tasks were unfairly allocated, so that the main burden of the shopping, child-minding, laundry and cooking fell on the shoulders of the girls in the family. Boys were not expected to contribute to these domestic
tasks, whereas the girls were expected to undertake a considerable amount of work. This resulted in a kind of absorption of considerable elements of the girls' time out of
school. The girls confirmed that they were not expected to help and only rarely undertook such 'womanish' work.
They girls in Driver's (1977) study were also undertaking quite onerous domestic commitments. In his discussion of conflict with
parents he seems to suggest that relations between girls and their
parents are relatively harmonious despite these demands made on the girls. At any rate he does not mention conflicts except in
the context of boys and parents. Among the girls at Torville this was the most frequently mentioned topic of arguments with parents,
and it was patently a source of considerable friction between
the girls and their parents as well as between girls and their
brothers.
In many cases this resentment extended to boys in general. And yet at the same time the discrepancy in the demands made on girls and boys seemed to provide one of the bases of the girls' greater
confidence in their ability. They were inclined to interpret the
boys' behaviour as evidence of inability to do even simple things, as signifying 'childishness', 'laziness', and so on. This
interpretation seemed all the more plausible to them since it echoed the division of competence, as they perceived it, between their
parents.
"My dad helps around the house, he only helps with the good
tasks - he never does the washing up... he's not very
practically, my mum doesn't really approve of him when he's
doing his decorating. My mum did the back room actually
because my dad did it in this paint and my mum didn't like it
so... she's quite independent really. She's a lot better than
my dad at things - he's good at the theory, but not on practical
things.'
Though they might envy the boys' greater freedom from domestic
chores and freedom of movement the girls nevertheless expressed no
desire to be boys, other than in 'idle talk'.

The girls were aware of racial discrimination, reminding
incidents involving themselves and people whom they knew, and were conscious that such discrimination would probably continue. They were also aware from a number of sources of the high levels of unemployment locally and nationally which had double implications for them as young blacks. They had, as already described, experi-
sioned when they themselves interpreted so lass favourable treat-
mant because of their sex. The conjunction of all these - their positive identity as black but knowledge of racial discrimination in Britain, their positive identity as female but belief that both in Britain and the Caribbean women were often accorded less than
their due status - meant that the girls were angry at the fore-
skimming of opnions available to them as blacks and as women. Such a conjunction made them despair, but quite the reverse was the case. The working-
class girls, White and Brockington (1978, p. 111) also note that 'Anger and frustration, consolidated and supported, is not wasted but the source of action'. The girls' form of action and the import of their stance within school need to be understood as strategies for trying to effect some control over their present and future lives.

FEATURES OF THE SUB-CULTURE
The sub-culture emerged from the girls' positive acceptance of the fact of being both black and female. Its particular flavour was a critical rejection of the meanings with which those categorizations are common endowed. Their consequent anger and frustration, unlike that of their black male peers, was not turned against themselves or translated into an automatic general dislike of whites or the opposite sex. Rather their feelings and understandings gave particular meanings to achievement through the acquisition of educational qualifications.

The girls were all strongly committed to achievement through the job market (cf. Ladner, 1971; Slaughter, 19721, being marked out from the other girls not so much by the type of jobs to which they were aspire as by the firmness with which they held their future job ambitions, and by their certainty that they would want to be employed whatever their future domestic circumstances might be:

'I want a proper job first and some kind of skill so that if I do get married and have children I can go back to it; don't want just relying on him for money, 'cause I've got to look after myself.' (Michelle) and Monica's view of herself is very similar in this respect:

'I should go out to work because, really, if I don't start learning to get on with it, I maybe will just have to leave home, get married and depend on the husband and I don't want that at all...the picture of myself is an active one, always doing something. Maybe I'll be a housewife or something like that, but I always picture myself working.'
They were also strong believers in the value of education and educational qualifications as a necessary preparation for the 'good' jobs which they hoped to obtain. They took such a belief for granted. They were confident of their ability to achieve the academic qualifications which they were aiming for, both in the short term (i.e. 'O' level and/or CSE) and in the longer term ('A' level and/or a variety of examinations to be taken at college, polytechnic or university). Their optimism extended to their wider life-chances. Conscious of actual incidents of racial discrimination and the possibility of discrimination against them because of their colour and sex, and aware of the high levels of unemployment locally and nationally, the girls nevertheless believed that in the job market there was much that they could do to forestall ending up in low level, dead-end jobs, or finding themselves unemployed on leaving school. They spoke of this in terms of being 'ambitious', but equally, ensuring that whatever ambitions they had were not deflected. As will be clear, acquisition of academic qualifications was an integral part of this sense of control over their future. But what was less immediately obvious was the underlying relationship of academic qualifications to the girls' sense of self-worth. In a very real sense they perceived the obtaining of academic qualifications as a public statement of something which they already knew about themselves but which they were also certain was given insufficient public recognition: that they were capable, intelligent, and the equal of boys.

'I think people treat you more when you're a boy; they say you're more reliable, you're more trustworthy, because my dad always says that, he says you can take a boy and show him a trade, but you can take a girl and the next minute their heads are all filled up with boys, that she just doesn't want to know. So I'm going to show him, you see.' (Beverley)

That is, their sense of self-worth did not derive from the acquisition of academic qualifications nor, in the future, from obtaining a 'good' job; rather their pursuit of these ends was given meaning by their existing knowledge of their own worth and their understanding that this was often denied. During interviews most of the girls said they thought boys considered themselves superior to girls, an idea which they viewed with amused disbelief or scepticism.

'Most West Indian boys definitely aren't going to let a woman dominate them or tell them what to do, they firmly believe that they're the boss and she has to do everything.... They just have this thing that they are the superior ones and women are inferior. This equality business - I don't think that it would ever work in the West Indies, don't think they'd accept it, might here. And I don't think the West Indian boys growing up here, I don't think they've come to accept it either because they always talk about it as a load of rubbish anyway, because as far as they're concerned they're superior and they're not going to be equal with a woman, or anything like that.' (Christa)

The written word does not readily convey the tone in which Christa...
spoke, but what was clear was that she, together with most of the other girls, did not take it as self-evident that males were superior or deserved to be taken more seriously than herself. To this point in their careers the girls’ confidence appeared well-founded; they had passed a greater number of ‘O’ level and CSE exams, and at rather higher grades than had the black boys. The black girls achieved a mean of 12.8 passes at this grade level compared to 11.5 for the black boys, the black girls being second only to Asian boys in performance in ‘O’ level and CSE.

Similarly, while all the girls had remained in full-time education for at least one year beyond the statutory school-leaving age, only two of the black boys had done so. Where girls had left school or college to take up employment, all mentioned that they were also continuing their education by day release or block release schemes or by attending college in the evenings; only one boy mentioned that he was continuing his education in any way.

So far the picture drawn seems to be that of the girls as archetypal ‘good’ pupils - well in public examinations - but this was far from the truth in most other aspects of their lives in school. While other girls who were similarly pro-education, the black girls were not pro-school. That is to say, their intolerance of the daily routines and their criticisms of much that went on inside the school were marked. They shared with some other pupils a view of school as ‘boring’, ‘trivial’ and ‘childish’, and yet at the same time were markedly different from these same pupils in that they had high aspirations and a high degree of academic success. Despite their critical view of school, the black girls did not define it as ‘irrelevant’ (as did other pupils who found school boring, etc.), because of the particular importance which they attached to academic achievement. Quine (1974) discusses a similar orientation among the boys in his study of two Midland comprehensive schools.

Most high aspirers and achievers in the school were concerned to demonstrate their seriousness of purpose to teachers and other pupils by certain kinds of classroom behaviour: punctuality, a modicum of attention to lesson content, and a ‘respectful’ (by no means always deferential) attitude towards teachers, in addition to actually doing the work set. Whether they actively courted a good reputation in other ways or not, such pupils tended to be seen as ‘good’ pupils, whatever the reputation of their teachers or other pupils. The reverse of this behaviour was taken by both teachers and pupils to indicate a lack of interest in school and was associated with a reputation as a ‘bad’ pupil.

The black girls conformed to the stereotypes of the good pupil only in so far as they worked conscientiously at the schoolwork set, and in addition to actually doing the work set. Whether they actively courted a good reputation in other ways or not, such pupils tended to be marked by both teachers and pupils as conforming to a lack of interest in school and was associated with a reputation as a ‘bad’ pupil.
them part. The following examples drawn from field notes represent incidents which occurred with some frequency; qualitatively similar actions happened in other situations. Incidents were being discussed, for example, when a teacher was doing homework for another subject) on the pretext that the girls were not listening or not working, yet when questioned by the teacher they could show that they had, in fact, taken in what had been said or had actually completed the work assigned; arriving technically late for a lesson but actually seconds before the teacher, who could see their late arrival; handing in work when it suited them rather than immediately it was asked for; complying with a teacher’s request somewhat sloppily and with a show of complete incomprehension, and so on. Studying delinquent pupils (some of them black) in an American high school, Werthman (1963) describes somewhat similar behaviour. Neither meek and passive nor yet aggressive, and obviously confrontationist in their stance towards teachers, the girls were something of a puzzle to some of their peers and teachers.

Three themes emerged in their discussions of the stance they adopted within school. First, to be seen as a ‘good’ pupil, i.e., showing too much eagerness in class, appearing to take school too seriously, risked the discovery of their academic and job ambitions and consequently invited ridicule and possibly more from those peers with whom the girls most frequently compared themselves — black boys.

‘I’ve always got my head in a book. I don’t think they [boys in school] like it because they are always commenting on it and they say “You won’t get anywhere”, and sometimes I think they don’t want me to learn or something like that, you know, but I spoke to my mum about it, and she said I shouldn’t listen and I should keep working hard.’ (Marcia)

In this way their classroom behaviour may be seen as a conscious smoke-screen to confuse others and enable the girls to retain the friendship of their peer group without giving up their aspirations.

Second, to be viewed by teachers as a ‘good’ pupil was inconsistent with the girls’ own view of themselves. ‘Good’ pupils were boring, were unable to have ‘fun’, and were in other respects ‘immature’. To behave in class like them would invite comparison with people from whom the girls expressly distanced themselves.

Third, the girls believed that other highly aspiring pupils placed too great an emphasis on teachers’ opinions in relation to pupil-teacher relationships. In so far as public examinations were marked by people who did not know the candidates personally, pupils could expect to pass exams on the quality of their work rather than on the quality of their relationship with the teachers who taught them. Only a few other pupils discussed pupil-teacher relationships in this way.
The black girls’ behaviour within the classroom is, I suggest, intimately connected with their positive identity as black and female. It seems reasonable to suppose that in coming to a sense of their own worth the girls had learnt to rely on their own rather than others’ opinion of them. Their weighing up of the potential relevance and importance of teachers was part of a more general stance towards change. The girls were relatively sophisticated in judging the potential relevance and importance of teachers’ opinions, but their weighing up of the potential relevance and importance of examinations and qualifications, for example, so that one could say they adopted a somewhat ‘strategic’ position in relation to other people, including whites generally and white authority in school specifically.

This sense that one had also been in their social relationships with other pupils. The girls appeared to trust peer relationships as a source of essentially individuated acknowledgments more than the context in which the girls were treated. The girls came together as a result of each of them trying to cope with the difficulties of proving their own worth. This was to be understood through the expectation of praise and support from their peers, and the belief that they were close to others in their pursuit of academic qualifications, for example, so that one could say they adopted a somewhat ‘strategic’ position in relation to other people, including whites generally and white authority in school specifically.

Unlike pupils in other ‘academic’ sub-cultures described in the literature (e.g., Hargreaves, 1967), the girls did not confine their friendship choices only to other academically inclined pupils. They showed a fluidity of friendship choices among other black but ‘non-academic’ girls in the school. This indicates, I suggest, that the girls had discovered or learned that they had little in common with other pupils (white or Asian) who, like them, had high aspirations. That the black girls in the academic band at Torville made their choices of friends from among both academic and non-academic black girls is partly due to the relatively small numbers. The girls’ choice of friends does also underline the central importance of both their sex and ethnicity in the girls’ identity.
words, the teacher is admired not because she is a teacher or because she is white, nor even despite these factors, but only because she has succeeded in the job market. In this respect the teacher's sex is the salient point.

In reply to my question 'What is it about Miss G that you admire?' Beverley replied:

'Because she's a careers woman. She succeeded in life at a time when women were expected to sit around ... she rebelled against that, and she got what she wanted, got her own car, got her own flat, completely independent, paid where she lives when she lives. She's got two one money, you know, she's well paid. And now she's succeeded and got what she wants out of life, she's getting married - everything has kind of worked out for her. She can be very serious and hard-working but at the same time she can be good fun, you see.'

What is also clear is that this particular teacher is a living demonstration that success and femininity can be reconciled, and that success and solemnity are not synonymous. No matter that the girl's perception of the 'olden days' may be inaccurate and the difficulties to be overcome exaggerated, the teacher's example is taken to heart since struggle and resourcefulness (Ladner, 1971) are important aspects of the girls' ideas about themselves. As the following incident illustrates, the girls' persistence is already well-developed:

'When I first went for the job, I was very crafty when I wrote the letter. I put that I was a student and they thought I was coming from university, and I did it in perfectly good English so they wouldn't think that it was a foreign person. And then when I went and they actually saw that I was coloured I think they were a bit shocked, so they kept stalling and said come back tomorrow. They said the person isn't in, can you come back next week, and I wouldn't give in. Every time they said come back I'd go back and I'd go back. My dad was backing me all the way and in the end I got through.' (Christa)

This kind of persistence is much admired and is a source of considerable pride:

'Michelle and I are the same really, we have this thing to succeed, determined, you know. If anything gets in the way we kick it out the way and get on.' (Annette)

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In trying to describe and understand the sub-culture of black girls in a particular school it has been necessary to make frequent comparisons with other people in and outside Torville school itself. There are two reasons for this. First, as is common in the development of an in-group identity, the girls saw themselves as a separate group by comparing themselves with other blacks (Rosenberg and Simmons, 1972) and contrasting themselves with others. Second, very few features of the sub-culture in itself were unique to the girls. For example, the configuration of values, attitudes, behaviour and self-perceptions did much more to define itself distinct from other pupils in that year.
Because this sub-culture of West Indian girls contrasts with the general picture of West Indian disaffection from school and low attainment, it would be helpful to know just how prevalent or typical such a sub-culture is of West Indian pupils generally. The majority of writers do not differentiate between boys and girls, and from internal evidence it would appear that much of the work has been based on males, with perhaps the implicit assumption that whatever is established for males is more or less an accurate representation of the whole group. Because of this lack of differentiation or failure to specify the sex-class of those being studied, it is not possible to give an accurate estimate of the typicality of the sub-culture described of black pupils in general. For very similar reasons, that in the literature on adolescence, schooling, and sub-cultures very little specific attention has been paid to girls in general (as contrasted with boys, among others), it is not possible to gauge just how frequently such a sub-culture may be found among girls. However, Lambart's account of her work in a girls' grammar school is particularly instructive, since her description of the Sisterhood (a group of third-year pupils) suggests a very similar conjunction of academic attainment and non-conformity to the rules, regulations and routines of school (Lambart, 1976, pp.157-9):

They had a sense of fun bordering often on mischief; and they were careful of the 'respect' they have to teachers... despite... it's deviance, the Sisterhood existed as a focus for girls with more than average ability.

The relationship between academic performance and behaviour within school of the black girls at Torville and Lambart's Sisterhood contrasts with that described for boys by Hargreaves (1967) and Willis (1977). I would argue that this calls into question the necessary equation of academic attainment and success with conformity, an equation which the work of Werthman (1963), Holt (1964) and Jackson (1966) in any case indicates is not universal.

A radical analysis of schools and schooling points to an underlying ethnocentrism and middle-class bias in the structure, organization and curriculum of all schools. As Reynolds (1976) points out, this leads to viewing schools as a battleground of opposing values and ideas between the school and the community, in which pupils demonstrate their resistance to alien and oppressive race and class values by refusing to conform. It becomes only too easy to assume that academic success and achievement are synonymous with subscribing (conforming) to these values, and to see school failure as necessarily indicative of rejection of these same values. Apart from the fact that neither Reynolds nor Quine (1974) could find evidence of such polarized stances in the schools they studied, conformity and defiance within the schools are highly
global, but are situation-specific (Werthman, 1963; Parsons, 1978). Moreover, if further research confirms the disjunction between academic orientation and within-school behaviour, noted by Lambart (1976) and in the present study of Torville school, it may be that the pro-education pro-school connection and its polar opposite (anti-education, anti-school) emerge as somewhat specific rather than universal tendencies - specific to boys (and perhaps only a proportion of these) and/or more typical of particular types of school.

In this chapter I have described a group of black girls whose acute awareness of their double subordination as women and black was accompanied by a refusal to accept the 'facts' of subordination for themselves. As a strategy for present and future survival the girls had adopted a programme of 'going it alone' in which those aspects of schooling to do with acquiring qualifications had an important part. No more tolerant of the 'irrelevant' aspects of schooling (e.g., the daily routines) than their black male peers, the girls were in some ways a good deal more effectively independent of adult authority than my other group of pupils (male or female) in the school.

Wilkinson (1975, p.305) argues that black youth are unlike their white counterparts not only with respect to placement in the social structure and their definitions of the dynamics of inter-racial relations, but also with respect to the type of attitudinal orientation which emerges from their cultural experiences. They are different in the collective symbolism and self-oriented definitions of who they are and what they wish to become. For they still must contend with social issues that never confront white youth.

Miles and Phizacklea (1977, p.495) elaborate this theme, arguing that 'it is the unique experience of blacks of racial exclusion that is the essence of black ethnicity'. As I hope has been demonstrated in this chapter, when racial exclusion is overlaid and combined with sexual exclusion, it becomes necessary to begin to recognize that black ethnicity may take different forms and point to differing strategies for females and males.

NOTES


2 See Fuller (1978).

3 The same argument would apply whether the main focus were social class or racial category. In other words, analysis of sexual differentiation is not a special case, but the use of constant comparison is desirable in most research.

4 The classic text here is Rowntree and Gardner (1968).

5 The research on which this chapter is based was carried out while I was employed at the Social Science Research Council Research Unit on Ethnic Relations. This chapter does not...
represent the views of SSRC, nor does it necessarily reflect
views of the members of the unit. I should like to record
my thanks to Annie Phizacklea for comments on an earlier
draft of this chapter, and to Sarah Pegg who typed
the manuscript.
Chapter 5

Education and the individual
Schooling for girls, or mixed schooling – a mixed blessing?

Jennifer Shaw

In a society where most children of either sex attend the same schools an exclusive discussion of girls’ education could seem a little bizarre. Implicitly, at least, all such discussion is tied to standards set by current levels of boys’ achievements, and this chapter is no exception. Explicitly, it is particularly concerned with the social conditions of girls’ schooling within re-organised comprehensive schools.

Concern with arrangements that may encourage or hinder equal opportunities for self-fulfilment or development inevitably leads towards a consideration of comprehensive planning and comprehensive schools. By now most local authorities in England and Wales have submitted plans for the re-organisation of their schools along com-

prehensive lines, and also implemented them either partially or fully. Some may doubt whether several are really committed to the spirit of comprehensive education, and if so we have a situation in which the public schools may be encouraged by their Association to join the ranks of those who implement it, those who work within it and those who oppose it, all as a policy to implement a major strategic to secure better educational opportunities for the socially disadvantaged.

Researchers have not been slow to follow the re-organisation of comprehensive schools, and have come to the conclusion that there may be sections of a school system that fails to live up to the promise of comprehensive education, or to point out what a flawed ideal comprehensive education is. A variety of brands, right and left, are expressed in the numerous criticisms that can be cited, and much of what I have to say could be taken as adding to the argument against comprehensive education.

It is my intention to carp at the relative failures of comprehensive education to solve administrative or social problems. When I want to carp at the relative failure of comprehensive education to solve administrative or social problems. What I want to carp at is the pattern of relative failure of girls, which has been continued and even enhanced by comprehensive education.
harmful for girls. Clearly co-education was only a secondary aim of the campaign. If much thought was given to the subject, it was assumed to be progressive and hence quite compatible with comprehensive education. In most areas the programme went unchallenged, although some campaigns to save certain grammar schools were inevitably also campaigns to save single-sex schools. Bradford was one notable exception. For there the Muslim community objected to the loss of all girls' schools, and in spite of the rhetoric of respect for cultural and community integrity, the authority ignored the organized opposition to its plans and went ahead with changing the schools. Because of the ethnic implications it is difficult to know whether this instance was typical of local education authorities' response to local pressure opposing that form of educational provision. Similarly, it is hard to assess whether any part of the drive behind opposition to comprehensive education derived also from a recognition of its secondary policy of co-education.

Opposition to women aspereing the power and privileges held by men is a common enough theme in everyday life. On the simplest of theoretical assumptions, when education is deemed or designed to change the social composition of those in power (for example, by creating avenues to certain elite sectors) then the opposition will be manifest within education. The history of girls' education is largely the history of straightforward opposition to women getting access to these sectors (for example, the establishment of schools set up expressly to provide for those girls who were excluded from the foundations reserved for boys). Opposition remains, though often in less blatant forms. It is most overt in higher and private education where women have come closest to taking over positions of power. It is important in this respect to understand that the opposition voiced in those sectors to, say, the continuation of all-female colleges stems from exactly the same attitude as opposition to the absence of women to the all-male colleges did in a previous era. Interpreting both forms of opposition as essentially identical is not as contradictory as it may seem, for both are responses to the threat that women might, through some particular means, take over some of the advantages reserved for and enjoyed by men.

In the earlier stages of education the associated processes of separation and subordination took even more general and less specific forms. A good many of these have been documented, and illustrations include the invidious sex-role stereotyping in many school textbooks, highly traditional 'vocational' guidance, and the manipulation of curriculum choices so that it is hard to avoid taking sex-typed subjects. Although it would be possible, I do not want to continue the catalogue of all the beastly things that are done to girls just because they are female. Rather I hope to show how informal processes of division survive and have a pernicious effect under the supposedly more liberal setting of mixed schools.

In principle, the position of girls' education should have improved as a result of reorganization. There had always been more single-sex grammar schools for boys than for girls, so if these schools were to be incorporated into the pool of educational
resources open to all secondary school children, girls should not have suffered as a result of mixed comprehensive schooling. Yet ways to avoid equalizing opportunities have been found. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) had a paradoxical effect, for in permitting the continued existence of single-sex schools it allowed more than one local authority to refuse to make a girls’ school co-educational in the grounds that it would cost too much to bring it up to the standards required for the education of boys by building the necessary workshops.

At a general level the exact re-ordering of educational opportunity that goes with mixed schooling is somehow hard to assess. Enthusiasm for some form of more egalitarian education has led both to more comprehensive schools and to a preference for seeing the results in a particular way. Hence, the crude indicators of performance now used to attempt to outline how the performance of girls in mixed schools compared to that of girls in single-sex schools must be taken with a large pinch of salt and subject to the same criticisms as the indicators used in single-sex schools.

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Schools are classified in the DES publication 'Statistics of Education' according to type; i.e., comprehensive, grammar etc., but not according to whether they are mixed or single-sex. The latter form of classification makes it impossible to assess the relative educational performance of girls in either type of school. The crude indicators of performance now used to attempt to outline how the performance of girls in mixed schools compared to that of girls in single-sex schools must be taken with a large pinch of salt and subject to the same criticisms as the indicators used in single-sex schools.

Great care has to be taken in comparing the performance of pupils, of both sexes, in either mixed or single-sex schools, because of the reasons just given. After all it would not be surprising if girls in a co-educational ex-secondary modern school in an authority which bought places at the local independent school did less well than those in a girls’ school in the same authority than girls who went to an independent school. However, research by R. Dale (2) into the overall merits and demerits of single-sex or co-educational schooling, and research by M.B. Ormerod into subject choice in both types of school, casts some doubt on the assumption that educating boys and girls under the same roof is the same as giving them equal educational opportunity. The first is grounded in the study of girls’ achievement in single-sex and co-educational schools, and research by M.B. Ormerod into subject choice in both types of school. The second is given...
in the 1975 report by HM Inspectorate on ‘Curricular Differences for Boys and Girls in Mixed and Single-sex Schools’. (4) The third is the accumulated evidence of differences in performance of girls and boys seen in terms of examinations passed, or entry into higher and further education.

I shall concentrate on the implications of the first two areas, which both reverse the greater subject and social polarization of boys and girls in mixed schools. This observation, which has been confirmed by virtually all the research in the field, runs directly counter to most of the beliefs and assumptions supporting co-educational schools. In fact, Dale, the most prolific and prominent writer on the subject, argues that it is a sign of improved social adjustment or maturity. He concedes that whilst boys’ academic performance is improved in co-educational schools that of girls deteriorates. In defence of this outcome he rightly points that schooling is not only about success in examinations, but also social learning. Yet this particular social learning is a sexist programme in the extreme. Not only are a ‘better adjustment’ and a more ‘mature’ attitude to members of the opposite sex seen to be a fair exchange for girls’ academic achievements, but those measures themselves embody a commitment to and reinforcement of the most traditional and limiting sex-roles. The acceptable trade-off is to be a greater education for girls in favor of ‘happier’ marriages for both sexes and even more sex-role stereotyping.

In choosing not to focus the argument centrally on either comparative pass rates in examinations or entry into higher education I run the risk of appearing to have insufficient grounds for concern for girls’ education. There are reasons for this decision. First, good summaries of patterns of educational inequalities exist both in official publications such as ‘Social Trends’ (5) (see, for example, the introductory articles in 1974 as well as the detailed statistics) and in easily accessible articles such as Tessa Blackstone’s chapter in ‘The Rights and Wrongs of Women’, edited by J. Mitchell and A. Oakley. (6) Second, by concentrating on the more successful section of the school population we can miss out all those who leave school without any qualifications at all (in 1975 over 122,000 boys and girls left school without even attempting GCSE or CSE examinations).

Third, there is a temptation to focus on the respective pass rates to believe that if the differential is decreasing, as it is, then the discrepancies will wholly disappear. Such a view is not only unrealistically optimistic; it is also based on a refusal to see those social processes which serve to block the gain or consolidation of advantage by girls and women. After all, it is precisely those social processes that are the focus of this analysis. It is short-sighted to believe that trends will simply continue unimpeded by those processes that ensure that whilst boys may seem to gain in a zero-sum game, girls lose as boys they achieve the same number of ‘O’ level passes as boys. It is also the case that ‘O’ levels are becoming increasingly irrelevant to public exams. It is short-sighted
to be content with improved pass rates at GCE and SPEC level in the light of knowledge that girls still end up in the worst paid, least secure and least interesting jobs available.

The HMIs reported that girls were less likely to choose a science subject if they attended a mixed school than they would if they went to a single-sex girls’ school, even though in a mixed school they are generally more likely to be offered science. They went on to show that any correlation between the sex of the pupil and the popularity of a subject was markedly greater in mixed than in single-sex schools. The full significance of these, and Ormerod’s findings are to be seen in the light of Celia Phillips’s work, which showed that the child who took science had a greater chance of remaining within formal education than the arts specialist at every level of achieving.(7) To some extent this is a result of successive governments’ attempts to encourage science education and hence discriminate in favour of it, and those who take it. A further point needs to be made concerning those girls who do take some science. They are more likely to choose hybrid combinations of subjects rather than ‘pure’ packages of science. Though they study some science, usually biology, they may be prevented from following certain careers in science because they lack the supporting subjects of chemistry, physics or mathematics.

Further consequences of these processes can be seen in the firmly segregated labour market and in the use by employers and trade unions of the threat that women might ‘take men’s jobs’. Manipulation of such fears would not be possible unless they were widely regarded as reasonable, a situation supported by the Equal Opportunities Commission’s dictum that differentiation is not necessarily discriminatory although it quite clearly constitutes the preconditions for it. Furthermore, whilst I have no doubt that overall the sexual division of labour precedes divisions of knowledge along the lines of gender in an individual’s life, it is division within the knowledge made available that largely determines one’s place within the structure of society.

So far I have argued that the policy of comprehensive co-education has produced the possibly unanticipated consequence of greater differentiation and segregation between girls and boys and, to the extent that this is seen as a failure one could conclude that it merely amplified the dangers of attempting progressive reform within a fundamentally unprogressive society. Alternatively, if the DES was thought to be persuadable, that pressure should be mounted to retain single-sex schooling as a significant part of the British school system. However, adopting solutions such as these would merely reinforce the social bases of division and separation and is as likely to enfeeble as remedy the situation. Judith Okely, in a perceptive though largely autobiographical account of a girls’ boarding school, illustrates well the point that it is the ideological interdependence between the identities of girls and boys that is important, and that this process can be managed as well by single-sex institutions as by mixed ones.(8) For these reasons it is important to stress that it is the mechanisms of polarization that are important and not the fact of polarization itself. So, while boys and girls may occupy the same physical space it would be wrong to assume that they thereby occupy the same social
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children are to believe their success. They have to be able to recognize themselves in the processes of selection and examination, and do this by being able to identify those who are not as successful. As a group, boys have an advantage over girls simply because their success is more public, more applauded, and leads on to a future which more obviously rewards that success. A similar process is repeated at the individual level, for there too male success stands out more than that of girls. It seems that when boys and girls who follow the same subjects are tested in any way they tend to divide the scores into one for boys and one for girls. Plausibly, if boys compare themselves only with other boys then they are less disheartened if the only person to do better is a girl. The thirteen-year-old boy who brought this to my attention made it clear that the girls in the class simply compared with the boys. The girl who did better was editorialized, and then he mentioned a girl's name. Impressionistic though this is, it leads one to ask when the effect on girls is if they are tacitly accepted as a baseline or benchmark of misfortune? Are they more likely to undervalue their own achievements or see that as true? If they treat them not as 'luck' then they will be less likely to expect them to be repeated or to use them as a basis for planning ahead, which might explain the puzzle of why so many girls drop their best subjects.

Clearly this is an area that urgently demands further research, research which might re-interpret and link Keys and Ormerod's (11) suggestion that the close correlation of sex with subject choice was a function of girls choosing their subjects according to perceived easiness, unlike boys, who were less affected by such criteria. Compare this with Lomax's (12) surprising finding that in an ultra-disadvantaged context the most disadvantaged girls had the least negative self-images, whilst, conversely, the girls who were in fact relatively advantaged thought the worst of themselves; and Deaux's results, where temporary and unstable factors such as luck were consistently applied to women's successes, whilst these were invoked by men only to explain their failures. (13) At best girls and boys live in adjacent, not shared social worlds. Where children sit and who they play with is but one expression of this. There are others which are both more deforming and harder to identify. Boys do not like being called a cissy or being compared to girls in any way, indeed the fewest about women's successes, whilst these were invoked by men only to explain their failures.

Notes

1. Chapter 5

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Weaker children are the most exposed. Commonly this means present children, but in our culture it also includes girls. Ann Whitehead’s work has shown that sexual innuendo is the common basis of a large number of jokes in our culture (as in many others). These jokes depend upon several assumptions, including the innate sensibility of women, the sexual prowess of men, and the willingness of the audience to affirm these principles by laughing. At the level these assumptions operate, the distinction between boys and girls is made by fixed and shared beliefs that people joke about are usually of a lower status than those who make the jokes. At another level the observation that girls, as a category, are laughable and become more so as they get nearer, especially sexually, may go some way towards explaining the increasing polarization and ‘voluntary’ segregation of girls from boys that characterizes the later years of schooling. As boys of the same age are facing themselves into their futures by adopting styles and manners of the shop floor, girls similarly have little option but to withdraw from the danger zones where their presence simply invites abuse.

Support for co-education is central to the liberal tradition which has characterized most thinking about educational reform, and turns on a particular version of liberal pluralism. Differences are recognized and supported; indeed, varying is seen as a positive good, and the creation of an arena in which all of its forms are present is thought to lead to the best of all possible worlds. At another level we should note that we are perhaps more likely to be critical of this view if we are women. The achievements of the most advantaged are expected with the valuation good and even seen as a condition of interest or disadvantage. For my purpose this is a common but better demonstrated than in the case of the opposed interests of girl and boy pupils or better expressed than by the work of R. Dale. It has been my intention to show that strong social pressures and opposition to girls sharing the advantages of education lie behind the apparently voluntary subject specialization that occurs between girls and boys and is most marked in co-educational settings. These are operated by boy pupils as much as by teachers, by the curriculum, or by the organizational features of the schools, and they are possible because the values and attitudes expressed are endorsed on a mass scale by the culture in which we live. I have concentrated on fairly obvious methods of constructing and managing competition between the sexes, but the central point remains that mixed schools are essentially boys’ schools in so far as they are dominated by boys’ interests. Education is one of the few areas where the possibility of positive discrimination has been raised if not actually implemented. Inevitably the parents of boys will feel that such a move is at their child’s expense, but so may also be the parents of daughters, as the boys they will not wish to prejudice their sons’ chances over those of their daughters. There might be a price to be paid, but it seems just as likely that the parents of boys who are not givenSummary eventually to
change one of its girls' schools into a mixed school. Unfortunately, the very suggestion of a return to single-sex schooling is met with resistance, and many educationalists are not eager to adopt such a policy. Many received their own education in such schools and claim that it was a demoralizing and depressing experience. Women so educated often assert that they saw in it an opportunity, and achieved their development, not to mention their academic success, and that they are now glad that they were educated in such an environment. Of course, they derive from the fact that the individuals concerned had been made to feel uncomfortable by being in the centre of conflicting pressures and not simply from belonging to a single-sex institution. From one side came all the usual pressures on a girl to be feminine and focus her future on romance, marriage and men, yet from their school they also got encouragement to disregard that for the time being and concentrate on academic matters. It is no wonder they felt uneasy, the apparent risks were large, apprenticeship and their self-labels, the bluestocking. No boy is ever asked to choose his identity in such a way and we should not ask girls to do so. In particular, the criticism of single-sex schools that they delay the process of 'coming to terms with the opposite sex' is misconceived. This arises from their strength, not their weakness, when the terms are so unequal.

Two final points need to be made to counter the view that approving of a return to single-sex schooling is necessarily regressive and politically reactionary, or that the burden of this chapter is primarily to promote such a return to single-sex schools rather than to question the liberal assumption underlying co-education. First, schools run by women for women can provide a model of educational excellence to be adopted more widely, and need not be put down and parodied. Institutions where women hold positions of authority and responsibility can provide an alternative model to the more common one where such positions are the preserve of men. Eileen Byrne, amongst others, has shown that mixed schools actually reduce the chances of women teachers holding senior and powerful positions. Without insisting on any mechanistic notion of modelling or reproduction of the self, to have in one's repertoire the experience of an organization run well by women can constitute a resource to be used as girls and boys grow up, when such a possibility is increasingly undermined or made to seem ridiculous. Furthermore, instead of being frightened at drawing the conclusion that single-sex schooling is desirable, the educational experience that single-sex schooling is desirable, the educational experience that girls and boys are given an opportunity to become who they are, to develop their own potential, and to pursue their own interests. The schooling provided under such a programme would not be the same as in the single-sex schools set up in a different era, nor would it necessarily be any better or worse. The schooling provided under such a programme would not be the same as in the single-sex schools set up in a different era, nor would it necessarily be any better or worse. The schooling provided under such a programme would not be the same as in the single-sex schools set up in a different era, nor would it necessarily be any better or worse.
arguments for it have most usually come from the right: there is so little reason why this should be so. For parents concerned with sexual inequality within education and convinced that single-sex schooling would be best for their daughters, there is only one way of getting it, and that is to buy it from the private sector if they can afford it. For those who also care about other forms of inequality other than gender and are in practice being asked to rank their commitment to the eradication of class or sex-based inequality, such a choice is not necessary in this manner and it should be remembered that gender-linked disadvantage is unlike other forms of inequality in education (such as that based on race or class, which get progressively worse throughout the period of formal schooling), for girls in primary education have a marked lead over boys. It is at the secondary level that their fortunes suffer a sharp reversal. I have attempted to understand this by looking closely at some of the social conditions of secondary schools and would urge that, if whatever benefits we might think education confers are to be more equally distributed than at present, then the policy of co-education must be seriously questioned.

References
Chapter 6
Sex differences in mathematical performance
A review of research and possible action

Gaby Weiner

A great deal has been written and spoken in recent years on the apparent decline in standards of numeracy and literacy among this country's schoolchildren. Working parties have been set up within local authorities; the DES has set into motion a comprehensive monitoring system for the curriculum, which includes mathematics; and employers have commented on the poor performance of school-leavers in computation and spelling.

By now most people have begun to look at the performance and achievements of girls and women as a distinct group within the educational process, rather than as an invisible minority. Research has suggested that there are distinct sex differences in performance, conceptual development and attitude across a whole range of subject areas throughout the school life of boys and girls. (1)

This chapter is not concerned with the standards issue raised as so far as the mathematical performance of boys and girls was selected as an important topic of interest in the now defunct 'Great Debate' on education. It is a matter of examining research findings on sex differences in mathematics, attributing cause and effect where possible, and then suggesting what consequences these findings might have for future action. If areas of serious under-achievement of girls are disclosed and remedial action quickly taken, this eventually may have profound effects on national standards.

Performance in any curricular area is dependent on a number of interrelating factors. When we consider the performance of girls and boys in mathematics regardless of age or stage of schooling, we find that there are four important spheres of influence:

(a) Cognitive factors: the extent to which genetic/biological features affect mathematical performance.

(b) Socialization patterns: this includes pre- or extra-school activities, child-rearing patterns, the persuasion powers of the media and advertising, and peer group expectations.

(c) Impact of schooling: though not too much is known about the way in which any sex bias in curriculum areas or in textbooks and reading schemes influences the true ability of girls and boys in mathematics.

(d) Home-background: typically includes a number of factors such as parental interest, expectations and reading ability.

Many researchers believe that it is the interaction of these four factors which are most influential in determining sex differences in performance.
children, increasing literature on sexism in schools suggests that the organization and expectation involved in classroom life is a crucial contributor to the perceptions and attitudes of pupils and consequently their performance.

Pupil attitude towards mathematics.

**FIGURE 6.1 The major influences on pupil performance in mathematics**

**COGNITIVE FACTORS**

It is unnecessary here to consider the nature-nurture controversy concerning academic performance in all but the briefest way, since the literature on the subject is wide-ranging and comprehensive. Essentially sex differences arise from the presence of a Y sex chromosome possessed by male but absent in female human beings. Long before birth this chromosome delivers a message which organizes male development and sexes the brain. In the absence of a Y the foetus develops according to the female pattern. The extent to which biological maleness or femaleness affects certain skills and abilities and the degree to which they are modified by broad socialization and environment have not yet been resolved. Measures of conceptual development and academic attainment have been inconclusive in all but the most general of terms. Summarizing research into sex differences in mathematical ability:

(a) Girls (and women) perform better on average than boys (and men) on verbal, clerical and arithmetical tasks. Girls on average are more advanced verbally.

(b) Boys (and men) perform better on average than girls (and women) on spatial mechanical and visual tasks. Boys on average are more advanced spatially.

(c) On all of the tests the overlap is very large. For instance, in certain vocabulary tests given to school-leavers in 1973, the girls scored higher than the boys overall yet 45-50 per cent of the boys scored higher than the girls.

(d) There is evidence that certain observed sex differences in ability may be a function of masculinity/femininity concept; i.e., adherence to sex appropriate roles, rather than of gender.

When we consider specifically sex differences in mathematical ability, we find a similar pattern to the previous for general ability. However sex differences have certain differences provide, but
also documented educational 'myths'. They found the following variations established:

(a) Boys excel in mathematical ability, though not until adolescence. Beginning at 12 and 13, boys' ability in maths increases faster than girls'.

(b) Boys excel in visual-spatial ability. This is found consistently in adolescence and adulthood but not earlier.

In their very comprehensive review of the current literature they refuted the 'myths' that girls are more accomplished at rote learning and simple repetitive tasks and are less achievement-oriented; or that boys are superior at tasks requiring higher-level cognitive processes and are more analytic.4

There are two conflicting views on how these findings should be interpreted. It has been argued that sex differences in performance reflect the influence of social sanctions and rewards rather than genuine ability, and therefore are just indicators or inequalities in social status and provision. If educational equality is to be a meaningful precept, educational weaknesses need to be strengthened rather than ignored or exacerbated. An alternative view is that since academic inequalities derive from biological dissimilarities between the sexes, girls and boys ought to be treated differently to fit their essential complementary roles in society. Whatever interpretation is adopted, all would agree that bald statements of what certain children are able or not able to do give insufficient information for a full explanation of why these differences occur.

SOCIALIZATION PATTERNS

Child-rearing patterns and pre-school activities

From their earliest years children's ideas about appropriate roles and behaviour have been influenced by the actions and attitudes of their parents and other adults in their environment. Many facets of pre- and extra-school experience combine to form in children concepts of mothering, fathering, sex-appropriate behaviour, manliness and womanliness. These pressures are so pervasive that toys and activity preferences of children according to sex is significantly evident as early as the age of four years,5 and increases increasingly as children move into adolescence. Similarly, Sears found that four-year-old girls chose stereotyped feminine activities and four-year-old boys typically masculine.6 These may be purely imitative actions, as it has been argued that at this age children do not have a well-developed notion of sex-constancy; i.e., at this age children still think that the sex of an individual can change if dress and hairstyle are changed.7

Maccoby and Jacklin come to the conclusion that there is a remarkable degree of uniformity in the socialization experiences of the sexes.8 In so far as differences do emerge, boys appear to experience greater pressure against engaging in sex-inappropriate behavior. Boys receive more attention, more punishment and also more praise.
not while parents do if they find boys more interesting and more situation-appropriate than girls. Both these points have important implications for the relationships between teachers and their pupils.

There are several alternative yet perhaps interrelated hypotheses to explain how children acquire sex roles. Imitation is the most favoured explanation; i.e., little girls copy their mothers and little boys their fathers. This does not entirely explain why, for instance, the play of little girls is so dominated by domestic and nurturing activities when many of their mothers go out to work, drive cars, and so on. It has been suggested that boys experience a more complicated socialization process since they have to change from their initial contact and earliest model, their mother, in order to adhere to the required male role, whereas girls' sex-typing is much simpler. This early need to change may be the reason why, in later years, boys appear to be less afraid of change and challenge than girls.

ADVERTISING, MEDIA, AND PEER-GROUP INFLUENCE

As girls approach adolescence extra-familial influences increasingly assume importance. The television and magazines directed at the teenage group introduce new stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, often very different from the safe parental image so far experienced. They are both instructive and encouraging.

'They [the pop magazines] are written in special teenage language, which encourages young people to become part of the popular teenage culture,' yet 'the magazines support, confirm and perpetuate the restricted lives and ideas of the typical reader: the 15-year-old girl school-leaver who is engaged, perhaps by 16 or 17, married at 20'.

Alderson's reviewers of the magazines mentioned by Schore enthused about romantic love in much the same way as many of the currently popular teenage songs. However, in the last few years popular musicians such as Julie Covington and Tom Robinson have provided a critique of social patterns and taboos in their music. Their continuing popularity may indicate that teenage stereotypes are indeed changing.

Members of the women's movement and other radical groups have long criticized the advertising industry for its general stereotypical portrayal of the average consumer. Consistently individuals are depicted as members of a nuclear family, having extremely modest aspirations, e.g., for men to be entirely bewitched by a particular brand of beer, or for women to spend most of their time trying to get the kitchen floor cleaner than that of the neighbours. When advertisements show girls helping their mother with the washing up whilst their brothers play football with their father, and then they include such statements as 'because girls dream about being a ballerina, Mattel makes Dancerina...a pink concoction in a silken blouse and ruffled tutu' and 'because boys were born to build and learn, Mattel makes Tod'l (a set of building...
their parents that girls ought to spend their leisure time either fantasizing about being ballerinas or undertaking housekeeping tasks, whereas boys ought to build, Jesus and so on.

Complaints about the more pernicious of these advertisements have had little impact on the creators of these advertisements, who argue that they are doing what is natural for their audience. It is not unusual, for instance, to see a picture of a white, prosperous, consumer-orientated family as the backdrop to advertisements for a product. Clearly when girls and boys are initiated into society, this is not done on an individual basis but through a filter of prescriptions of sex-appropriate behaviour and aspirations.

Several years ago an attempt was made, in a survey of 190 housewives in Texas, to detect types of housewife in terms of their response to commercial products. Responses were statistically analysed to produce clusters of items. The authors named the main cluster as 'homemakers' since the preferred items were all of a domestic nature. Three smaller clusters were described as matriarchs, variety girls, and cinderellas. Clearly when girls and boys are initiated into society, this is not done on an individual basis but through a filter of prescriptions of sex-appropriate behaviour and aspirations.

Whilst it is only possible to hazard a guess at the extent to which the patterns of socialization which have been mentioned persuade girls that mathematics is "unfeminine" or that they should withdraw from "difficult" subjects, it must be accepted that in general typical boys' play (e.g., construction, physical games) engages boys in more intense mechanical and spatial experiences than does typical girls' play (e.g., playing with dolls, chatting to friends).

IMPACT OF SCHOOLING

So far I have looked at sex differences in academic performance and in socialization patterns, in isolation from the schooling process. Since mathematics owes much of its significance to the fact that for most people, their first contact with maths takes place at school, where it is given high priority, the impact of the schools on boys and girls should be recognized as an important element in the analysis of mathematical attainments.

There is evidence that mathematics is regarded by pupils of all ages both primary and secondary (and by teachers) as a subject at which boys excel. However, since Maccoby and Jacklin found few sex differences in mathematical performance before adolescence, (13) why are boys higher than girls at this stage and why do teachers particularly at the primary stage, give equal marks to boys and girls? Why is it that, though girls are just as good at maths as boys at primary level, boys like maths more than girls and are more often chosen as it as a favourite subject? It could be that boys may choose maths because it is difficult, and girls may choose it purely for the same reason. (14) For an explanation for this to be found in
patterns of schooling? Do teachers treat girls and boys in different ways?

It can be shown that schools encourage sex-stereotyping thereby conditioning girls to reject perceived ‘male’ subjects or to shy away from challenging experiences. Connections must then be made between the impact of school and the reasons why girls reject mathematics (and science).

School structure and organization

It has been established that schools use sex categories for ease of organization. In a study of London primary schools, Lobban found that the sexes were segregated in many ways, for purely organizational reasons. For instance, girls and boys were listed separately in the register; they were separated when lining up to go in and out of school; for games in the classroom and games outside the classroom. Boys, in general smaller and lighter than girls before adolescence, were expected to carry heavy PE equipment, whereas girls were given flowers, teas and displays to arrange. (15)

Up to the age of seven years children are taught almost exclusively by women and between seven and eleven years women teachers predominate, although the headteacher and teacher responsible for science are likely to be men. (16) At secondary level the balance between male and female teachers is more even although more men in authority and only 5 per cent of headteachers of mixed comprehensives are women. All the support staff except the caretaker are likely to be women, e.g., the dinner ladies, ancillary staff and office staff. It is possible that the school organization so described affects girls and boys in terms of both what they feel able to tackle and also their future career expectations.

The curriculum

Whilst it is difficult to expose and remove sexism in the social structure and organization of the school (often described as the ‘hidden’ curriculum), the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) should have removed sex discrimination in official curricular areas. Before the Act the differentiated primary curriculum resulted in girls being cooking, sewing and metalwork whilst boys were in woodwork, drawing, painting and model making. In secondary schools girls did ‘home economics’, biology and homecrafts whilst boys followed courses in physics, chemistry, woodwork and metalwork. Also there was discrimination in the allocation of resources to girls’ single-sex schools compared with boys, particularly in the case of science laboratories. (17)

The Sex Discrimination legislation has not been in operation long enough in Britain to allow its effects to be monitored. Within the next twelve years we will be interesting to note whether the primary and secondary practices of assigning subjects and resources to the sexes set will have been thoroughly eliminated.
Chapter 6

Pupil-teacher interaction

The interaction between teachers and their pupils is bound to be a powerful determinant of pupil self-concept and confidence. Studies of teachers' attitudes to the sexes and to sex roles in the USA show that teachers endorse traditional attitudes. At preschool and primary levels, teachers value female and male pupils equally, but describe their typical behavior as being different. A recent English study of primary teachers supports the hypothesis that girls and boys are perceived as having different personalities by these teachers. 'The primary teachers saw girls as being more sensible, obedient, cooperative, quiet, mature, bright, likeable... whereas boys were more excitable, talkative, needed more supervision and attention.'(20) It has also been observed by other researchers that girls and boys were valued and treated differently in the classroom, with boys more often being praised and encouraged, while girls were more often being criticized. 

A recent English study of primary teachers supports the hypothesis that girls and boys are perceived as being different by their teachers: 'the primary teachers saw girls as being more sensible, obedient, hard-working, cooperative, quiet, mature, bright, likeable... whereas boys were more excitable, talkative, needed more supervision and attention.'(21) It has also been observed by other researchers that girls and boys were valued and treated differently in the classroom, with boys more often being praised and encouraged, while girls were more often being criticized. 

Curriculum materials

The analysis of curriculum materials has figured prominently in the discussion on the extent of sexist practices in schools. Sexism in reading schemes and young children's books has been well documented. In her seminal analysis of English reading schemes, Lobban found that these schemes rigidly divided the sphere of people's activities into masculine and feminine compartments, that the number of male options depicted far exceeded the female ones, that there were twice as many heroes as heroines, and that parents were always portrayed in conventional roles.(22) Secondary text-books have also been found to be biased, with books for girls focused most exclusively on dating and romance, and a pattern of neglect of women appearing in science and history books.(23) As far as I am aware, there has been little comprehensive
analysis of mathematics textbooks in this country. In an analysis of 24 mathematics textbooks reported in 1977 in the USA Kepner and Koehn (30) found that:

Males and females were seldom treated equally in illustrations and problems in these texts. The number of males identified was greater than the number of females in twenty of the twenty-four texts examined. Males participated in a greater variety of activities and occupations than females. Typically females were shown either as passive, nurturing mothers, housewives, or teachers in the classroom. Males were involved in activities like construction, business, and the like. When specific mathematicians were identified these individuals were exclusively male.

A small survey of popular British primary mathematics texts has disclosed a similar pattern of sexism, which we observed in America. Female characters were portrayed in roles such as those of a housewife, mother, grandmother, the nurse, and the teacher. It is difficult to estimate the impact of sexist textbooks on the attitude and performance of girls in mathematics. However, the attitude of many girls toward mathematics is conditioned primarily as a male activity and therefore not for girls.

SEX DIFFERENCES IN STUDIES TOWARDS MATHEMATICS

Research into sex differences in pupil attitude towards mathematics has been sparse, fragmentary and therefore difficult to analyze. Additional problems to analysis have been caused by the differential ages of the respondents. In her review of research on attitudes towards mathematics, Pinnock reported data, though studies of attitudes that included sex as a variable have produced no consistent pattern to show that one sex has more positive feelings towards mathematics than the other. These have shown that measures of anxiety and scores are better predictors of mathematics learning for girls than boys. (32)

In a survey in North Carolina of 1,104 students in grades 2 to 12 by Sechler and Murray (33), 97% percent of the researchers, that in regards to liking the subject, mathematics was the only subject which exhibited no sex differences. My own research findings in English primary schools indicate that the situation is different in this country. Another survey in the same town (34) found unexpected differences relating to student attitudes towards mathematics failure:

Most students gave lack of effort as the reason for receiving a poor grade in every subject. However, when it came to maths, 50% of the females gave lack of ability as the basic reason for their poor grades. This is probably related to the belief that girls' ability to learn and use mathematics is essential in order to progress and if skills displayed were anxiety and less confidence than boys in their mathematical ability. Thus it is likely that they are going to have less progress in areas where they are more confident.

Fennema (35) found that research consistently indicated through the number of studies that girls feel inadequate
when faced with a variety of mathematical situations. Is it not reasonable to conclude that because girls feel inadequate in mathematics, they will avoid mathematics whenever possible? Learners become more skilful in what they practise. It is reasonable to think that girls' mathematical attainment suffers because they may avoid practising mathematical skills.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this review of research on sex differences in mathematical performance, I have suggested that there are four major areas of influence; i.e., cognitive factors, socialization experiences, the impact of schooling, and pupil attitudes towards mathematics. As it is difficult to quantify the extent to which any one of these factors modifies the expectation, attitude and ability of girls and boys in mathematics, as in all attempts to explain human behaviour, there are a great many variables to consider and causal links to be made. There is no single answer to why sex differences in mathematical performance occur. It is counter-productive to reports on the under-achievement in mathematics of girls or to offer reasons for its existence, unless this in turn leads to positive action.

I suggest that the following paragraph accurately describes the situation of many girls within the schooling process, and that teachers are not able or do not wish to halt a familiar female developmental pattern: (36)

Some primary school children, usually girls, show indications of anxiety and an extreme desire to conform and please. Often this is a dangerous strategy as it involves the masking of true feelings. It has been suggested that these strategies that hide a lack of understanding of basic concepts (the fact that girls are answer and less likely to cause trouble in the classroom may contribute to their lack of understanding - author's insert). Later in school life, as understanding rather than automatic response becomes of greater importance, they begin to fail. Certain strategies of action have been suggested, and guidelines produced to alter this situation. In a pamphlet entitled 'Ten Quick Ways to Analyse Children’s Books for Racism and Sexism' (37) it is suggested that teachers (and parents) should carry out an evaluation on children’s literature in an effort to prevent exposure to racist and sexist attitudes.

1. Check the illustrations for stereotypes, tokenism, who is doing what, i.e. making the active doers and females the inactive observers?
2. Check the story line for the role of women.
3. Look at the life-styles.
4. Weigh the relationships between people.
5. Note the heroes and heroines.
6. Consider the effects on a child’s self-image.
7. Consider the author’s or illustrator’s background.
8. Check the author's perspective.
9. Watch for loaded words.
10. Look at the copyright date; was it written before people became aware of sexism?
Specifically related to girls and mathematics, it has been argued that by using the following guidelines, teachers can combat the decision of many girls to withdraw from or reject mathematics at an early age.

(a) Maths and science teachers should give special encouragement to girls.
(b) Maths and science problems should be drawn from all aspects of culture, not just male ones.
(c) Information should be disseminated encouraging girls to go into maths and engineering.
(d) The spirit of enquiry should be encouraged, especially in girls, who should not be left to get on quietly in the corner.

To go back to the first page of this chapter: if by following guidelines such as those given by CDC, the maths attainment of girls is so improved that it helps to raise the standard of mathematic talent in the nation's children as a whole, this will be a 'pay-off' which only the most prejudiced anti-feminist can afford to ignore.

NOTES

See Hutt (1972); Maccoby and Jacklin (1974).
4 Maccoby and Jacklin (1974).
5 Ibid.
7 Berry, L.R. in Berry (1966).
8 Maccoby and Jacklin (1974).
9 Ibid.
10 Alderson (1960).
11 Denno (1971).
12 Eccles (1971).
13 Maccoby and Jacklin (1974).
14 Unpublished, uncolluded research.
15 Loban (1976).
16 Department of Education and Science (1975). Education Survey II.
17 Kyper (1976).
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Maccoby and Jacklin (1975).
26 Unpublished and Freeman (1965).
29 Ibid.
31 Unpublished, uncolluded research.
33 Ernest (1976).
34 Dornbusch (1974).
36 Curriculum Development Centre (1975).
38 Curriculum Development Centre (1975).
Chapter 7

Sex differences in performance in science examinations

Jan Harding

Comment on the small number of women, relative to men, working within science and technology is now commonplace. The origins of this pattern may be complex, but the pattern is irrevocably established at option-choice time in our secondary schools.

THE PRESENT POSITION

A DES survey,(2) published in 1975, indicated that whereas nearly 50 per cent of boys studied physics in the fourth and fifth forms, only 11 per cent of girls did so. In biology the pattern was reversed, with more than 50 per cent of girls, but only 27 per cent of boys studying it.

Statistics of 16-plus examination entry (3) show that this behaviour is relatively stable, with steady increases in entries for science subjects, by both boys and girls, over the years since 1964. The most rapid increase is in boys' biology entries which now, each year, exceed those in chemistry in both the 'O' and 'A' level. Although the percentage increases in girls' physics entries have been greater than those in girls' chemistry, the ratio of boy:girl entries has remained high: of the order of 4:1 at 'O' level and 8:1 at CSE. Since 1974 the entries for girls in physics have tended to level off, while those for boys continue to increase. The ratio of boy:girl entries in physics is of the order of 8:1 at 'O' level and 16:1 at A level. The ratio for chemistry along these lines (and CSE) have remained high.

Explanations

Conventional wisdom has laid blame for inadequacies in girls' science education at the door of girls' schools, with their assumed poorer level of provision of laboratories, equipment and staffing. Mrs Renee Short argued in the House of Commons (5) that all would be well when mixed schools replaced single-sex schools.
But the DES survey (6) revealed that girls who were offered physics in years 4 and 5 were one and a half times more likely to choose it if they were educated in a girls' school rather than in a mixed school.

Other explanations involve differential interests and abilities. But the former, too, seem to be contextually related. Guest's work (7) showed that boys' and girls' attitudes to physics, similar at the age of 11, became polarized in the mixed schools; and for the girls, in particular, there for physics was not closely related to their choice of subject at all.

What of abilities? Alison Kelly (8) has revised studies of intellectual abilities and their relationship to performance in science. She discussed sex differences in tests of numerical and mechanical skills, with the girls showing a tendency to be more variable. This, she suggested, could be a possible source of differential success in science. She points out, however, that these explanations as to the reasons for the sex imbalance in the number of students taking science, and if differences in spatial ability were the sole cause of the imbalance, then there should be two women for every three men.

Teachers' opinions

Science teachers' perceptions of pupils' abilities may be significantly related to their performance in schools. The attitudes of teachers towards boys' and girls' performance in science and, indeed, claimed that girls were among their ablest pupils; but others mentioned greater problems experienced by girls, especially when using 'the Nuffield approach' or enquiry-based methods in learning science.

Entry and percentage pass data for the three years 1971-3 appeared to support the latter group of teachers, for whereas the boys showed considerably higher proportions passed in Nuffield 'O' level sciences as compared to girls, both sexes showed superior performance, in terms of percentage passes, in Nuffield Chemistry. There were proportionately fewer girls in the Nuffield groups than in national entries, but no further data on the nature of these groups were available. This may imply that the high pass rates in Nuffield 'O' level sciences for boys and girls were not matched by similar entries for girls.
a more conventional course at the time (1974). For reasons relating to the administration of the Sheffield examinations, the Board was defined as above, throughout this period. Although one Board only was, for geographical comparability, this Board was identified, in each subject, as that administering the ‘conven-
tional’ examination.

Within total populations of candidates, defined as above, a disproportionate, stratified, systematic sample was drawn, for each examination, to give about 1,000 individuals within 10 categories, identified by sex of candidate, intake of school (whether single-sex or mixed) and selectivity (whether the school was identified by the DES as grammar, comprehensive or direct grant or independent). Initially, comparisons of percentage passes and mean marks for separate papers were made within each examination and, for the former, between Nuffield and conventional examinations for each subject.

Percentage pass analysis

No overall differences between percentage passes for boys and girls were found in any of the six examinations. However, further analyses of the performance of sub-groups showed interesting trends and some significant differences. Most notable was the variability in the percentage passes of groups of girls. In the range of values obtained for boys was greater than for girls in each examination. For example, in Nuffield biology, the range for girls was 10 percentiles, compared with 23 percentiles for boys. The variability of the percentage passes of groups of boys was generally greater than that of groups of girls. For example, for boys the range was 10 percentiles, whereas for girls the figure was 5 percentiles. In only one of the examinations did the range for boys exceed 20 percentiles, while for girls the figure fell below 30 percentiles in only one.

Hypotheses were generated and tested for support or refutation; differences of less than 5 percentiles were discounted as showing ‘little difference’. For each hypothesis twelve sub-group compar-
isons were available from the six examinations. The hypotheses are numbered and stated below, and a summary of the outcomes of testing them is shown in Table 7.1.

Hypotheses generated from data

1 Boys from mixed schools gain higher percentage passes than do girls from these schools when comparisons are made within grammar and comprehensive categories separately.
2 Girls from single-sex schools gain higher percentage passes than do boys from boys’ schools when comparisons are made within grammar and comprehensive categories separately.
3 Boys in grammar schools gain higher percentage passes than do girls in grammar schools when comparisons are made within single-sex and mixed schools separately.
4 Boys in comprehensive schools gain higher percentage passes than do girls in comprehensive schools when comparisons are made within single-sex and mixed schools separately.
5 Boys in boys’ schools gain higher percentage passes than do
Boys in mixed schools when comparisons are made within grammar and comprehensive schools separately.

6 Girls in girls' schools gain higher percentage passes than do girls in mixed schools when comparisons are made within grammar and comprehensive schools separately.

7 Boys in grammar schools gain higher percentage passes than do boys in comprehensive schools when comparisons are made within single-sex and mixed schools separately.

8 Girls in grammar schools gain higher percentage passes than do girls in comprehensive schools when comparisons are made within single-sex and mixed schools separately.

| TABLE 7.1 Outcomes of hypotheses testing on sex differences in science exams |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Comparisons     | Hypothesis      | Outcome of comparisons |
| Mixed schools   | B > G           | Supported         |
| Single-sex schools | G > B         | Refuted           |
| Grammar schools | B > G          | Supported         |
| Comprehensive schools | B > G     | Supported         |
| Boys            | SS > M          | Supported         |
| Girls           | SS > M          | Supported         |
| Boys            | Gr > C          | Supported         |
| Girls           | Gr > C          | Supported         |

B = boys, G = girls, S = single sex, M = mixed, Gr = grammar, C = comprehensive, DGI = direct grant + independent

Hypotheses 7 and 8 were anticipated, and were assumed to be largely dependent on the stage of secondary reorganization reached in the early 1970s. As the effect operated in the same direction within most examinations, it was assumed to have little direct bearing on this research and the comparisons were not pursued further.
Comparisons of Nuffield and conventional examinations within separate subjects

Percentage passes for corresponding groups of boys and girls were compared for the Nuffield and more conventional course examinations in each subject.

No clear pattern of direction of differences was obtained; and, because the number of schools providing the Nuffield samples was relatively small, any generalizations must be treated with caution. Boys showed more variation as whole groups, obtaining a higher percentage pass in Nuffield chemistry than in conventional chemistry (p < .05), but a lower percentage pass in Nuffield physics than in conventional physics (p < .001). These differences held also for the boys in mixed schools. The variation for girls showed the same pattern, with no differences between the two examinations.

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Comparisons within separate parts of each examination

Each of the six examinations used in this study contained more than one part. Although no significant differences between the sexes were apparent in percentage pass, some differences were found in mean scores obtained by boys and girls in parts of some of the examinations.

The papers included, broadly, three types of item: multiple choice (the two biology examinations contained none of these); structured questions (sections containing questions consisting of several parts were included in this category); and essay-type questions (only conventional biology included questions of this type).

All the physics and chemistry examinations included a separate multiple choice paper or section, two of them including as many as 70 items. In all but conventional chemistry, sex differences appeared. In Nuffield chemistry, the boys, overall, obtained a higher mean mark than did the girls (p < .001) and this was maintained in the mixed schools, but at a lower significance level (p < .01). The boys again performed better as a group in Nuffield physics (p < .001), but this disappeared in the mixed schools where the girls were more successful (p < .001), although for girls as a group there was no significant difference.

In the three Nuffield examinations and conventional chemistry the structured parts showed no sex differences. In both Nuffield biology papers the differences for girls in the percentage pass obtained were accidental and not significant. In conventional biology, girls were more successful than boys (p < .01).

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In the three Nuffield examinations and conventional chemistry the structured parts showed no sex differences. In both Nuffield biology papers the differences for girls in the percentage pass obtained were accidental and not significant. In conventional biology, girls were more successful than boys (p < .01).
The boys did better than the girls in conventional biology, both overall and in mixed schools (p < .001). In the conventional physics, mixed schools samples, the boys were also more successful than the girls (p < .01), who did better if they came from girls', rather than mixed, schools.

These differences raise all kinds of questions. First, how reliable are they? Ferguson (13) has shown similar outcomes to have occurred when the London University, GCE 'O' level biology format changed to include a multiple-choice paper with an extended answer paper: the boys scored higher scores in the former, while girls did better in the latter.

The boys' lesser achievements in extended answer questions may be explained by language differences. Although more girls than boys opt for GCE 'O' level English language examinations, the girls achieve percentage passes around 10 percentiles higher than the boys, but we have no means of knowing whether it is the same inadequacies that result in some of marks in written English as in written science answers.

The extension of multiple-choice assessment techniques, which require neither the facility of comprehension of concepts, should lend up to question the skills required for successful performance in them. Do they favor the logical thinker or those who can argue from restricted data? Do they penalize the divergent thinker or those more aware of possible contextual dependence of outcomes? Are they a better assessment of 'intelligence'? Or do they penalize a lack of material a disadvantage? Do learning styles developed in school affect performance? Because assessment plays a crucial role in creating feedback to the learner and in determining future life chances, it is essential that we understand what skills they assess and their possible bias.

The greater equality in performance of girls compared with boys in mixed schools in the Nuffield physics and chemistry examinations does not support teachers' perceptions that girls are less able than boys to cope with this type of course; and in the study reported by Wood and Ferguson, (14) the girls were markedly more successful than the boys in Nuffield chemistry. That these studies do not display a lesser success of girls in mixed schools suggests some factor or factors (e.g., in the course, the schools, or the teachers) may be responsible and merits further investigation.

**DISCUSSION**

No support for the overall superiority of performance of boys over girls in science, emerged from this study, in the design of which equal populations of boys and girls were included from different types of school. The reasons for the differences found within sub-groups are discussed below and their possible significance assessed.

The direct grant and independent samples (DGI)

For two of the Nuffield examinations no DGI group was included, so the number of schools entering pupils for the examination through
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The Board chosen was too small to provide a viable sample. Hence
the DGI groups were excluded from all main analyses.

But, where they occurred, the DGI girls were outstandingly
successful, obtaining passes of around 80 per cent or more. This
is not true of the boys in the equivalent schools. There were,
however, fewer boys' DGI schools, in the original populations of
candidates, than girls' DGI schools. The regions of these schools,
however, were not known to have been equal; moreover, it was known that
many boys' public schools entered candidates through the Oxford and
Cambridge Joint Examinations. Would such bias influence the
data? It appears, therefore, that the samples of DGI boys were
deficient in some of the ablest candidates in these schools as a whole.

Although comparisons with the boys may not be justified, the
performance of the girls remains. It may reflect a school policy
of entering only those girls who were likely to pass; but even so,
the entries per school were comparable with, and even exceeded,
those of the maintained grammar schools, which were often larger
in size.

Single sex and mixed schools

Dale's classical work (15) reports on studies of the relative
success in examinations of boys and girls. All were carried out
in grammar schools, and the only studies attempted since the
introduction of the General Certificate of Education in 1950 were
located in Northern Ireland, where the administration of schools
and of the public examination system differs considerably from
that in England and Wales.

Dale claims that:

The general pattern established over a period of some 45 years,
with very large numbers of schools and of pupils, and in many
and different parts of the country... shows that the co-
educai i onal boys are slightly superior to those boys in boys'
schools... and girls in girls' schools are approximately equal
to the co-ed girls.

In several of the cases cited the girls' schools pupils were sig-
ificantly more successful than girls from mixed schools, especi-
ally in the physical sciences. In these studies the girls in
the latter schools were handicapped in two of the studies by
age, social class and the number of subjects they studied for
examination. It must be assumed that differentials in these charac-
teristics continue to apply to girls in the different types of school.
The only recent work to throw light on
this,(16) found that, when
ability was controlled, girls entering for a larger number of
subjects gained the higher percentage of passes in them, thus
refuting Dale's assumption and suggesting an aspiration effect on
performance.

The research reported in this chapter weakly supports Dale's
findings for boys (hypothesis 51, but reinforces that girls from
mixed schools are more successful in science than those from
mixed schools (in spite of the possibly higher level of selection
in terms of ability, in the physical sciences, of the latest:}
Where boys and girls were educated together, the boys tended to be more successful than the girls; when educated separately there was some support for girls' greater success. In comprehensive schools there was a tendency for boys to gain higher percentage passes, while there was no evidence of the overall superiority of either sex in grammar schools (Dale's populations). It appears that girls' scoring success may be at a disadvantage in mixed schools. Therefore, those mixed comprehensive schools in which girls perform well in the sciences, and do so in relatively large numbers, are of particular interest.

Objectives for girls' education

Lavigeur (17) has drawn attention to two conflicting ideologies of girls' education: one, that they should receive an education equal to that of their brothers; and the other, that each sex should be educated to fill the role they assume in society, which, for the girl, is that of homemaker, wife and mother. The former was expressed in the curriculum of the early grammar schools established for girls in the late 19th century (although Delamont [18] argues that even these schools did not escape pressures to educate their pupils to be "ladies"), while the latter was most succinctly expounded by Newsom (19) in the context of secondary modern schools.

Many of the women teachers in the grammar schools of the Twentieth century were themselves educated in these early schools and would be found in greater numbers in girls' schools. Thus the expectations for the girls in the grammar schools (both single-sex and mixed) came from professionals, middle-class homes, where parents would be more likely to support their aspirations. On the other hand, the male and female sex roles, very clearly defined in working-class cultures, found reinforcement in the secondary modern school. When schools are reorganized to become larger, mixed and comprehensive, the objectives of teachers, and the messages conveyed to the girls, become pluralistic; but as 70 per cent of all pupils are the average and less able, about whom Newsom wrote, the relevant ideology of homemaker, wife and mother role is likely to predominate for girls and lead to lower academic aspirations.

Girls' choice of, and performance in, science

In any discussion of girls' achievement in science two factors must be recognized: one, that school subjects (as well as adult occupations) carry a sex bias in terms of the relative numbers of males and females who are involved in them (and this has been shown above to be more extreme in mixed schools). Physical
scientists, both teachers and those made visible in the media, are more likely to be men than women; physics textbooks contain many more references to males than to females, and the type of example chosen for discussion is more likely to refer to a traditionally masculine interest than to a feminine one.

The other factor is the vocational role that the sciences have assumed in the school curriculum. In spite of the cultural claims made for science education, the physical sciences have been chosen largely by pupils who wish to use them in future occupations and not by others. There is a sense, also, in which biology (including, as it does, the working of the human body and aspects of hygiene and nutrition) has vocational relevance for girls, preparing them for the home-based role.

A common view in our society is that employment outside the home is indispensable for men, but not for women, who work merely to supplement the family income, or for ‘pin-money’. From research carried out in the USA, Douvan and Adelson (21) claim that the job he will do serves both to make sense of present experience for the boy and to integrate his developing personality as he moves through adolescence; for the girl, the job merely fills in between school and marriage; the integrating principle she uses is a developing femininity, emphasizing the person she is becoming, rather than what she will do (22).

Bearing these factors in mind, one can argue that there are at least two dimensions influencing girls' choice of the sciences and possibly their achievement in them. These are the distribution of school subjects or occupations along a masculine/feminine dimension, and commitment to work outside the home. The first may be conceptualized from the relative numbers of boys and girls choosing different subjects; the second may be conceptualized, if it is more difficult to measure. Its importance, in the argument that follows, is in the increased motivation to succeed that commitment to work confers.

Theoretically, the two dimensions may be placed at right angles to define four cells, as shown in Figure 7.1. Individuals may then be placed within one of these combinations of the two variables, and their involvement in the type of activities.

![Figure 7.1 Dimensions relating to the choice of science subjects](image-url)
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Cell A will be populated by those who pursue 'feminine' activities (i.e., those which traditionally have been undertaken by women), with low career expectations. These will be largely women.

Cell B will be populated by those who pursue 'feminine' activities, but with higher career expectations. These may be females following careers in teaching, nursing or other paramedical fields, or by males who are at the top of their fields in, say, haute-couture, haute-cuisine, music, dance and, more recently, in nursing. Cell B is acceptable for females if the career has caring or service characteristics, but acceptable for males if they assume leadership roles within the activity.

Cell C contains those working in male-dominated fields (largely males). A female in this cell must be prepared to defy convention along both dimensions, and we ask a girl to strive for excellence even if she chooses to study physics.

Cell D provides no acceptable location for the male, as he would be opting out of work or lacking in ambition. It may contain girls who have chosen to study, say, physics because they like it or are good at it, but then are uncertain how to use it. Being conscious of the need to assume a caring or service role, girls may decide to teach and therefore move to Cell B, as physics teaching is a more acceptable female occupation than practising physics in some other form.

Although what a girl learns in the home and absorbs in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways from her contacts with the media and the structure of society may contribute strongly to determining her position on the two dimensions, this chapter argues that the research reported above suggests that schools are powerful mediators of expectation during the crucial years of adolescence. Their influence is felt through careers advice, the presentation of options, and in many unrecognized ways in classroom interaction. The grammar schools, in which Dale and this research detected only small disadvantages for girls, are rapidly being replaced largely by mixed comprehensives, within which a lesser expectation of girls may prevail and in which, as this research suggests, girls are under-achieving relative to boys.

The distribution of girls, within a school, in cells A, B, C, and D may be a measure of the degree to which a school succeeds in enabling girls to avoid a constraining conformity to stereotypes of female behaviour. Because the physical sciences carry a masculine image, the way girls behave within them may be regarded as an indicator of how that school processes its girls.

CONCLUSIONS

The under-achievement of women in science-related careers at all levels, but especially in the more technological fields, has its roots in the school, where few girls obtain the relevant qualifications and where many acquire sex-stereotyped attitudes to achievement. Because the physical sciences carry a masculine image, the way girls behave within them may be regarded as an indicator of how that school processes its girls.

Although what a girl learns in the home and absorbs in many subtle and not-so-subtle ways from her contacts with the media and the structure of society may contribute strongly to determining her position on the two dimensions, this chapter argues that the research reported above suggests that schools are powerful mediators of expectation during the crucial years of adolescence. Their influence is felt through careers advice, the presentation of options, and in many unrecognized ways in classroom interaction. The grammar schools, in which Dale and this research detected only small disadvantages for girls, are rapidly being replaced largely by mixed comprehensives, within which a lesser expectation of girls may prevail and in which, as this research suggests, girls are under-achieving relative to boys.

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selective groups of girls in scientific fields (i.e., those in mixed schools) appear to be the least successful when compared with corresponding groups of boys and other girls. There is evidence also that relative success of boys and girls in examinations may be influenced by the modes of assessment used: multiple-choice items favouring boys and essay-type items favouring girls. Because of the increasing importance of success in public assessments, we need greater understanding of the skills boys and girls bring to their responses to different types of assessment items, and how these relate to performance in real-life situations.

Although special attention to the content and presentation of science lessons may be needed, it is suggested that further research should be carried out into the ways girls' expectations and performance are shaped overall in the mixed comprehensive school, the most common school of the future.

NOTES

1 This chapter has been adapted from a paper read at the BERA Seminar, "Women, Education and Research", at Loughborough University, 14-16 April 1979.
3 HM Inspectorate (1977).
4 'The Times', 22 January 1975, p.4.
5 See note 1, above.
6 Kelly (1978).
7 Rosemary and Jacqueline (1968).
8 Curriculum Diffusion Research Project, supported by SERC (1971-4) and based at the Centre for Science Education, Chelsea College, University of London, under the direction of Professor P.J. Kelly. See Harding (1975).
9 Andrade (1975).
10 Girls and Science Education Project', supported by the Nuffield Foundation and based at Chelsea College, 1974-5, under the supervision of Dr J. Harding.
12 Douvan and Adelson (1966). The influence that a prospective job has for a boy may be lessened at a time of heavy unemployment for the young school-leaver. R.E. Pahl ('New Society', 2 November 1978) has suggested that the girl may view work (often unskilled and part-time) as an escape from the isolation of the home, while the boy seeks personal satisfaction in the rewards of family life.
Any review of academic research about the social organization of non-industrial societies will provide examples of well-documented fieldwork where the relevance of sexual ascription, particularly in relation to the division of labour, is recognized and analysed. In contrast, far from being an established theme in academic research in industrial societies, the relevance of sex in the division of labour has been relatively neglected. Until recently, researchers were content to use all-male samples in their studies of workers, and either to ignore female workers or to assume that their experiences were, in every way, similar to those of males. Reappraisals have been prompted by challenges from the women’s movement, combined with contributions from economists and sociologists concerned to analyse the relevance of ethnicity in the social processes which govern entry into work and experiences in the labour market.

The mid-1970s may be characterized as a period which saw the publication of a wide range of new material which debated and demonstrated the ways in which an understanding of the pattern of sexual ascription continues to be relevant to understanding social relationships both within the family and in the wider social structure. Attention was drawn to the ways in which the assumptions and expectations which structure family relationships are reinforced by experiences of schooling and work, and the social positions of employers and employees. In Britain, for example, girls are offered different subject choices within the curriculum and take up the less "powerful" subjects; their early standard of achievement compared with boys declines to the point where a smaller proportion achieve "A" levels in GCE examinations; once in the labour market they are less likely to enter skilled work, and they have less frequent access to day-release from employment. An important feature of this differential structuring of educational and occupational opportunity by sex is the articulation of assumptions and expectations about women’s family relationships with employers’ perspectives on the recruitment and selection of their workers. This results in strategies for recruitment, selection, training and promotion which rest upon the conventional wisdom that women have, or will have, two roles, domestic and occupational, and...
that they will give priority to the domestic.(7) As a consequence, it is "natural" to assume that women, whether married or unmarried, are not seriously committed to the labour market and need only be regarded as temporary or实习生 workers who may be working part-time rather than full-time work and who may, as likely as not, be relegated to the secondary sector of the labour market with lower pay and poorer conditions of service when compared with their male counterparts. In most a woman's situation is already subjects to the opportunities for advancement. With the sexual division of labour, of women's work has been so constrained.(7)

One of the most interesting aspects of this literature is the suggestion that the assumptions about women's roles and their lack of commitment to the labour market have persisted in the face of readily accessible and well-publicized demographic data about the reduction in family size, the decreasing amount of time spent caring for dependent children, and the data about the actual incidence of women's employment, particularly the increasing rates of employment of married women.(10)

The contradiction between changes in the pattern of women's involvement in the labour market and the lack of change in the conventional wisdoms about it, raise many questions about the possible heuristics to change, not only in employers' perspectives but also in the perspectives of others concerned with making or supporting decisions about women's work. In this chapter it is hoped to identify some of the issues which need to be considered in the analysis of continuities and potential changes which structure women's "place" in the labour force. To do this the chapter draws upon two recent British research programmes. Neither was specifically designed to explore these issues in a systematic way; but the emphasis of the first, the Leicestershire project,(11) on established routes for entry into work and typical experiences in the work situation, and the emphasis of the second, the EITB project,(12) on an experimental programme to train girls as technicians in the engineering industry, provide useful and relevant comparisons which it is hoped will provide a basis for further discussion. In the account of each project attention has been drawn to employers' and employees' perspectives on the transition from school, recruitment and selection, and experiences at work, in an attempt to indicate the extent to which they throw light on the ease with which conventional frameworks are accepted and the difficulties involved in challenging them.

FOCUS ON CONTINUITIES: THE LEICESTERSHIRE PROJECT

The Leicestershire research project, completed at the end of 1976, was undertaken in response to the initiative of the Working Party on Education and Industry, which was established by the county's Education Committee in the early 1960s. The Working Party was concerned to co-ordinate the knowledge available about education and industry and the relationship between them, and to provide for the collection of new data. The main objective of the research project was to gather information about the pattern of...
induction practices in the kinds of work organizations entered by young people in the county and to record their experiences of them.

The sample of work organizations was drawn from a total of 93 organizations, representing both the public sector (10 sites) and the private sector (83 sites), including 19 in professional services such as banking, insurance, and building societies and 64 in a wide range of commercial and industrial categories. In each of the 93 work organizations the member of management responsible for the recruitment of school-leavers was interviewed, and interviews were also carried out with young workers who had entered that work organization during the preceding year. A total of 307 young workers (151 females, 156 males) were interviewed. The members of management were asked about recruitment, selection, and induction policies and practices; the young workers were interviewed about their recollections of knowledge and expectations about work before starting work as well as their experiences since starting work.

As a consequence of the emphasis on the range and variety of the normal pattern of employment in Leicestershire, the research material may be used to point up the characteristics of typical experiences and to draw attention to continuities in the process of entering work. In addition, although the research was not designed to analyse sex differences, comparisons between the data from males and females may be used to highlight any differences listed with sex.

Views on the transition: young workers

When asked to recollect their views about work before actually starting work, the Leicestershire sample were no different from respondents in other research surveys in looking forward to entering work. Fewer than one in ten looked forward to nothing about work, the others had a range of reasons: 'being a worker', 'meeting people', 'earning money', 'the job itself' and, inevitably, there were some (20 per cent) who looked forward to work as a means of getting away from school. The pattern of replies between the sexes was very similar; the most significant difference was that 16 per cent of the males, compared with 8 per cent of the females, looked forward to going to work as an opportunity for meeting people. Going to work was recollected as such a positive step that almost one third said that they had no worries or concerns about the move. Where there were worries, the highest proportion (about 20 per cent) were focused on whether they could do the job.
Chapter 8

The sample was also asked for their opinions as to whether the last year at school was a useful preparation for work, and the replies confirmed an impression in much of the literature that entering work relates to home experience rather than school, in that about 60 per cent of males and females expressed a negative view. Nonetheless, they were prepared to suggest ways in which schools should help to prepare young people for work with recommendations for more visits or experience of employment, more visits to schools of people from various employment situations, and more time for careers advice.

Entry into the labour market: recruitment and selection

Many studies, particularly those which concentrate on the individual characteristics of the job seeker, tend to overlook the fact that the demand for labour remains relatively stable in the short term, both in terms of the numbers recruited and the types of personnel desired. The variety of employment available in Leicester-Shire and the general prosperity of the area has normally guaranteed that the demand for labour will be high, and that the great majority of school-leavers will find themselves in employment within a relatively brief period after leaving school. The interviews took place against this background but during a period when the market was less buoyant and when the first delays in finding work were being reported. During the survey, those responsible for recruiting school-leavers maintained that they were continuing conventional policies about the numbers recruited and the skills needed. Their calculations were based on previous experience and the organization's manpower development policies, although many acknowledged that their current market position gave them more choice in selection than previously.

Although some members of management were careful to emphasize that they would consider male and female recruits for particular jobs, there was a normative acceptance of a conventional view of work for men and work for women. Typically, the members of management would mention that they were seeking 'suitably qualified lads to take up apprenticeships' or 'a young girl to work in the office'. The likelihood of sex being mentioned was also related to the emphasis placed on formal qualifications: the more important they were considered, the more likely were employers to be recruiting 'people with at least four GCEs at "O" level'. It is interesting to note that, apart from employers in the public sector, the relative ease of recruitment did not express itself in demands for increased formal qualifications. Employers appeared to prefer the established means of selection but with a greater number from whom to select. Where formal qualifications were not emphasized, 'suitability' often meant a series of ascriptive characteristics relating to appearance and/or attitude, with the most apparent and general willingness to be helpful being particularly emphasized in typically 'woman's work', such as that of shop assistants and office workers. Linked to the appearance to set the 'characteristic sample' was the link in the minds of both employer and job seeker to the skill level as well as to the sex of the recruit. As
well as the emphasis on the "presentable" female worker with the potential to project a "secretarial image", there are some types of semiskilled work where for male and female recruits the demand is for "a bit of intelligence - not much in our trade! plus punctuality and a willingness to learn".

The ways in which vacancies were made known to potential recruits varied. Newspaper advertisements were a frequently mentioned "valuable way" of recruiting, particularly for semiskilled workers, both manual and non-manual. Contact with schools and the careers service were also useful ways of recruiting. Family contacts were rarely used to recruit to semiskilled work but were used relatively often to recruit to apprenticeships.

While there is no direct evidence of overt sexism, there is an impression of employers working in a familiar market recruiting to well-established categories of work which had long been represented as appropriate for men or women. When there was "open" recruitment, it was in the bureaucracies of local and central government, and the emphasis on formal educational qualifications rather than traditional managerial practice which could be used to distinguish between potential recruits. Only one work organization, in the professional services category, maintained a "double standard" by recruiting both sexes according to the same formal qualifications and allowing local managers to make the job offer to females but insisting that head office confirmation of offers made to male applicants.

In contrast with employers, young people have little or no direct experience on which to draw when entering work, but move into the labour market within a framework already structured by the pattern of "job horizons" indicated by their families, information acquired at school, and knowledge about employers' requirements for specific jobs in relation to their own formal qualifications achieved at school. In the sample of young people interviewed at work approximately 80 per cent held some academic qualifications by the time they left school. The overall pattern was similar for males and females, though a slightly higher proportion of females had no formal qualifications and a lower proportion had left school with GCEs at 'A' level. The pattern of job seeking complemented the pattern set out by the employers: the acknowledged importance of newspaper advertisements, school and careers service contacts, and, in some circumstances, family connections. Unprompted visits to firms by young people were much more common than in the case of employers, reflecting the importance of obtaining a job in order to obtain semi-skilled manual work. These similarities between young men and women in their approach to work persisted in their recollections of their reasons for wanting the job which they held at the time of interview, which such as "the type of work", "the training offered", or "the prospects", appeared independent of the sex of the respondent.

Such similarities, however, provide a marked contrast with the actual placement of males and females in the occupational structure. Table 8.1 indicates the differing skill profiles by sex. Comparing all skill categories, the highest percentage of males (36 per cent) appears in the skilled manual category, i.e. apprenticeships, whereas the highest single percentage of females (40 per cent)
appears in the non-manual trainee category. Overall there is a similar distribution of males and females between the public and private sectors. In the public sector there is a similar distribution of non-manual services and industrial and commercial sectors, but these are employed in different capacities: females are distributed into less equally between manual and non-manual work, whereas almost two thirds of males are to be found in manual work. The pattern of jobs entered throws some light on the structure of the local labour market: semi-skilled or trainee work for the majority, with more opportunities for males than for females to enter jobs in the highest skill categories of both manual and non-manual work. Thus, similarities in comments about entry into work conceal important differences in allocation to work. Although the data do not support any simple version of dual labour market analysis with females excluded from the primary sector, the pattern in this local labour market follows the characteristic pattern of the concentration of females in those jobs which offer the least opportunity for access to high levels of skill.

**Experiences at work**

The positive approach to entering the labour market described above seemed to be reinforced by the sometimes bewildering and tiring first days at work. Different job categories were associated with differing networks of relationships which provided information about the work situation in different ways. About half the sample (rather more than half the females and less than half the males) were provided with a formal programme of induction, the provision of a programme being virtually guaranteed for those entering the public sector and likely in large-scale organizations in the private sector. Except for the public sector, where males and females received identical induction programmes, an analysis of the wide variety of programmes demonstrates that, for females, induction
programmes tended to be shorter than those for males (for example, 49 per cent of females compared with 23 per cent of males were given programmes which lasted a day or less, and a higher proportion of males compared with females 25 per cent compared with 11 per cent were given induction programmes which were indistinguishable from the first stages of training).

However, it is important to note that a lack of a formal induction programme was no bar to acquiring a wide range of knowledge about the work situation. Other established workers and other new workers figure strongly as informal sources of information, and both sexes indicated the importance of the work group as a means of establishing means of interpreting new situations and finding the appropriate responses and activities in the work situation. At this level, the major differences are not between the sexes but between the public sector and the rest: many workers in the private sector agreed that they were 'told all they wanted to know when they wanted to know', whereas in the public sector there was a more likely to be dissatisfaction with the amount and content of information given. It seems a reasonable hypothesis that it is the informal network of work relationships which provides the information which is most salient to "settling in" relatively quickly.

These networks of established workers are characteristic of certain kinds of work for both males and females. However, the longer-term consequences differ for each sex. At the end of several months on work, there are already marked differences in the replies to the question: "What do you like most about working here?" When analysed by sex, comments were distributed into four main categories (and combinations of these): people; job; contract (i.e., relating to hours, pay, holidays, etc.); and environment (i.e., relating to work conditions in terms of light, cleanliness, space, etc.). Almost one third of the females commented favourably about the people (compared with 16 per cent of the males), with the next most frequent category being the people-job combination (26 per cent). People, combined with some other comment, appeared in 67 per cent of the replies. The job alone accounted for 20 per cent of replies.

When replying to questions about what was liked least about the job, females were as likely as males to mention job issues, less likely to mention people, and more likely to mention environment characteristics. The pattern of relationships at work or the characteristics of the jobs undertaken or some combination of the two appear to be generating differences in the response to work relatively early. Interestingly, however, the emphasis on people as the most liked feature of work does not appear to influence replies to questions about the most important things which young people ought to be told when they first come to work. The emphasis on the importance of information about the job itself is overwhelming, from males and females and, indeed, from management.
Chapter 8

Views on the transition: management

Although members of management were not asked in any systematic way about sex differences in the rate of "settling in" to work, several volunteered comments to the effect that girls adapted to the work environment more quickly, appeared less conscious of and embarrassed about status differences, and generally became more adult more quickly. Certainly within a year of starting work, at the point when the interviews took place, females were readier than males to reflect on their experiences and comment on the ways in which going to work had changed their lives. Almost half the Females compared with a quarter of the males made some comment which indicated that they felt they had achieved greater maturity, and they often emphasized some aspect of personal development such as a growth in confidence or less shyness in social relationships. Similar proportions of males and females, over one third, emphasized that the main change had been in other people's assessments of their status, particularly in terms of being treated as an "equal" or as an "adult".

Summary

The general impression which emerges from the features of the Leicestershire project emphasized here is of a local labour market which operated relatively smoothly along traditional lines. Management had clear ideas about the kinds of young people they wished to recruit and young people had sufficient guidance from the careers service, families and friends to be able to negotiate the appropriate procedures, formal and informal, for obtaining jobs. The generally traditional nature of recruitment and of the kinds of jobs available had different meanings in terms of the sector of the job market applied for and entered, and the pattern of jobs held at the time of interview followed traditional lines. This is not to suggest that there is no opportunity for females to enter skilled work or that change would occur in such a labour market; it is to suggest that change is more likely in the public sector or where meritocratic constraints rather than sexual ascriptions predominate, or that changes will come relatively slowly in that there is no direct confrontation of the conventional division of labour.

FOCUS ON CHANGE: THE EITB PROJECT

Background of the research

In 1976 the Engineering Industry Training Board (EITB) began an experimental programme to train girls as technicians in two geographical areas, the West Midlands and Surrey. The training initiative was designed to meet the problem of the increasing shortage of well qualified applicants to engineering at technician level, and to begin to address the sex ratio in a strongly male-dominated industry. Because women hold approximately 2 per cent of engineering jobs at technician level and above, the need for a radical change in the sex ratio was apparent. In each of the years 1976, 1977, and 1978 the EITB has awarded
two-year scholarships to between 45 and 50 girls, and has sponsored them in their first two years of technician training. The programme, while generally successful, has raised a variety of issues concerning the recruitment and employment of women in a non-traditional field.

The findings presented below represent preliminary results from a larger programme of research which has been funded by the EITB and the Social Science Research Council. The evidence on entrants to engineering is taken from individual interviews with 90 girls who began training under EITB sponsorship in 1977 and 1978, and 45 boys who began similar company-sponsored training in 1977. Information on commitment to engineering and plans for the future is based largely on comments made by 20 girls who were interviewed towards the end of their second year of training. The speculations on company policies towards women are based on interviews and informal conversations with employers who have been involved with the EITB girls' training.

The school context

One of the unexpected problems in recruiting girls for engineering was the opposition of many schools to the idea. In the first year of the programme a surprising number of schools refused to allow members of the training board to give careers talks to girls. Some headteachers responded to the scheme as 'preposterous', feeling that engineering was entirely unsuitable for girls.(13) Individual interviews with girls who joined the EITB programme reveal that many of them had difficulty in taking courses that would be useful for engineering. Over half (53 per cent) of the girls who began training in 1977 or 1978 reported that they had wanted to take technical subjects, such as woodwork or technical drawing, but had been unable to do so. Either the school did not allow them to do these subjects, they were treated less favourably than the boys, or the facilities were not available. Lack of appropriate courses was a particular problem in single-sex schools, which had the additional disadvantage of not having the resources to offer a wide range of courses.

Most of the schools attended by the girls appeared to have very definite categorizations of 'girls' subjects' and 'boys' subjects', closely linked with notions of 'girls' jobs' and 'boys' jobs'. In the 1978 group of girls who came from mixed schools, 58 per cent described having careers lessons in which girls and boys were sometimes or always separated. This practice was justified by the idea that certain jobs were of interest only to members of one sex. Although girls were frequently dissatisfied with the careers advice they received, they were most likely to hear about the EITB programme from these sources (see Table 8.2).

Although girls were frequently dissatisfied with the careers advice they received at school or from the Careers Advisory Service, they were more likely to hear about the EITB programme from these sources (see Table 8.2). They were compared with a group of boys training at the same level in engineering; 51 per cent of the girls but only 31 per cent of the boys heard about their job through their school or the Careers Advisory Service. Girls
and boys were equally likely to hear about jobs in engineering through advertisements in the newspaper or on the radio, with these sources accounting for approximately one-third of each group. Boys more frequently found jobs through parents, friends and other ‘contacts’ in the community; these sources of information were reported by 27 per cent of the boys but only 9 per cent of the girls.

Table 8.2 Sources of information about jobs and courses: comparisons of boys and girls in engineering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Boys in engineering</th>
<th>Girls in engineering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 45</td>
<td>N = 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper or radio**</td>
<td>14 (31%)</td>
<td>3 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers teachers from school or the Careers Advisory Service*</td>
<td>14 (31%)</td>
<td>10 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends, parents, ‘contacts’, etc.**</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
<td>9 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self, i.e. wrote or phoned for information</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A College of Further Education</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differences between the groups significant (p < .001, $x^2$ test)
** Differences between the groups significant (p < .001, $x^2$ test)

Parents did not usually suggest engineering as a career for their daughters, but most girls reported that their parents were supportive of their choice. Fathers who were in engineering were somewhat more likely to approve of engineering for their daughters than were mothers, and many girls described having become closer and having much more in common with their fathers since beginning the EITB course. The experience of the EITB in recruiting girls for the course suggests that parents are more liberal and willing to consider unconventional roles for their daughters than are schools. (14)

The reactions of the girls’ classmates to the girls’ choice of engineering were mixed. Many of the girls who made the decision during their final year of school reported that their friends (both male and female) reacted with astonishment and disbelief. A typical comment was: ‘Once they got over the shock they were very good about it.’ Several girls in their second year of training felt that their friends were envious of their jobs and their career prospects. Many girls encountered expressions of scepticism from both male and female colleagues who were closer to their age and had no doubt that they were not as serious. On the other hand, many of the girls wrote about the need for girls to provide a convincing demonstration of their knowledge.
Selection and entry into work

Since schools and parents did not usually consider engineering as a career choice for girls, it is interesting to note that 18 per cent of the girls beginning the EITB course in 1978 had made a definite commitment to engineering before or during their third year in secondary school. These girls had chosen their subjects for examination with engineering in mind. Another 48 per cent of the girls reported thinking seriously about engineering during their last two years in school, but 34 per cent of the girls admitted that they had not really considered engineering until they heard about the course. Many of the girls making a late decision mentioned that they hadn’t known that the field was open to women.

When asked their reasons for choosing engineering, most girls identified the training and career opportunities that it offered. Many girls said they wanted to be in a field that made use of their scientific interests but that was also practical. Some girls were not initially attracted to engineering, but they wanted to do something different and because they found the traditional female options - secretarial work, shop work and nursing - unappealing. A problem faced by many of the girls and the panel who selected them for the course was the girls' lack of knowledge of what engineering entailed. Girls who had not done technical subjects at school were often unfamiliar with tools and machinery on the shop floor. Although they had attended an 'open day', when they had been shown around a factory or a training centre, some girls were uncertain about what they would be doing and whether they would like it.

The members of EITB staff who have been involved in selecting girls for the course have found that the selection procedures used for boys were inappropriate for girls. The norms for standard batteries of tests for engineering apprentices have been developed for males, and their relevance for females is unknown. In interviewing boys, employers and training staff frequently ask questions about engineering-related hobbies. Since few girls have such hobbies, these questions are rarely useful. The selection panel is forced to rely on girls' formal qualifications and their assessment of motivation. They look for girls who are keen and who seem likely to 'stick the course'. Although girls are not required to have family in engineering, some members of selection panels regard this as a 'plus factor', feeling that these girls are likely to know more about engineering and be more realistic about the training required.

Many of the girls in their second year of training describe a process of growing commitment to engineering. 'I didn't really know what it was all about, but now I can't imagine doing anything else,' commented one girl. The need to defend her choice constantly and to prove her capability served to reinforce her dedication to engineering. Other girls talk about their growing interest in a particular aspect of engineering and their pride in products produced by the company providing their training.

When asked about their plans for the future, most of the girls on the EITB programme mention that they would like to marry and have children. A majority of these girls plan to have at least five
years off work to take care of young children and then hope to return to engineering. Many women had complained of ambition frustrated by the decision to leave the field temporarily.

Statements with personal affinities in several engineering firms suggest that the girls are probably over-optimistic. Although some companies have made special arrangements to re-train women whom they regarded as outstanding employees, none of those sampled had received specific re-training courses for men or women who had taken time out from engineering. If the numbers of women in the field increase and there continue to be shortages of appropriately qualified men, employers may find it necessary to make provisions for women and their children. As the present time, young women's chances for re-entry depend largely on market forces and the needs and circumstances of individual employer and employee.

DISCUSSION

The comparisons and contrasts provided by the two studies raise a number of issues both about the processes of allocation to work and the problems of social change.

The contrast between the experiences of those following well-established procedures compared with those making 'unusual' choices is considerable. Where perspectives on employment are narrowed to those parts of the labour market considered appropriate by both potential workers and potential employers, young people quickly learn the 'rules of the game'. It is only in times of relatively high unemployment that the transition from full-time education to full-time employment proves difficult, and even then it is because jobs are found that are below the appropriate skill level or status level rather than vacancies are closed. Where an 'unusual' choice is made new procedures must be established and explanations given at each stage. The new 'rules of the game' have to be discovered. The recruitment of females as technicians in the engineering industry provides a sharp challenge to male dominance in manual work and in skilled work and thus confronts both the ideologies and structures of the traditional division of labour.

The number of people involved in any reappraisal of the conventional allocation to work is considerable: parents, teachers, employers, supervisors, workmates. Each group has to be confronted with the unusual choice and persuaded that it is 'worth' the change in attitude, procedures, behaviour. This contrasts with the relatively straightforward and smooth transition for those who can rely on the support of parents, work friends and supervisors to 'settle in'. For them the social pressures are to conform to existing patterns of work speed, punctuality, social relationships; their right to be there is not under debate.

Linked with the point above is the general point that what appears to be a decision about job choice at a particular moment in time is revealed as a continuous process of affirming one's position in the labour market, either as an acceptable and supported member of an appropriate group, or as a person determined to follow an unusual path.
guiding personnel selection, authority relationships, and relationship with fellow workers. The extent to which formal educational qualification may modify the relevance of sex is yet to be fully explored.

As a consequence of social processes which structure entry into work and subsequent experience, social change is not easy to implement. Even in the context of 'liberal' legislation, conventional/traditional procedures predominate because they reinforce employers' recruitment strategies. They 'attract' others workers and, to a considerable extent, confirm the views of young people, their parents and their teachers about what is appropriate work.

In addition, it will be clear that mere investment of resources does not necessarily resolve problems. The sponsorship of change, the impact on the status of other workers and employers' long-term commitment also have to be taken into account.

Both the Leicestershire and EITB projects suggest that pragmatism is an important strategy in young people's choice of work and in employers' selection of workers. Decisions on both sides are taken in the light of immediate factors and the implications of such decisions (e.g., the desire of many young women to return to work after child care) are rarely explored. The current pattern of training for skills is relatively rigid, involving entry soon after the statutory school-leaving age. It offers few opportunities for those who wish to begin training after 17, or for those who wish to change their field of work. Yet, if microprocessors bring about the dramatic technological changes that are predicted, (15) training opportunities and occupational structures for men and women will need to be revised. A massive redistribution of labour will involve new patterns of training and re-training for skills which are, as yet, unplanned.

NOTES

1 Lewis (1976).
3 Doeringer and Piore (1971).
4 Dow (1976).
5 Byrne (1978).
7 Myrdal and Klein (1968).
8 Barron and Norris (1976).
9 Myrdal and Klein (1968).
11 The Leicestershire Project was financed by the Leicestershire Working Party on Education and Industry and by the Training Services Agency of the Manpower Services Commission and carried out by J.A. Eldridge, J. Kelly and E.T. Keil of the Department of Social Sciences of Loughborough University. A concise report, 'Becoming a Worker' was published in 1976.
12 The research on the Engineering Industry Training Board programme was supported by a Social Science Research Council Programme Grant to G.M. Stephenson and by an EITB research grant to G.M. Stephenson and P.D. Newton. A final report on
the work will be published by the EITB in 1981.

15 Barron and Oarrow (1979).
Chapter 9

Young women in the labour market
Stability and change

David Ashton and M. Maguire

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the structure of job opportunities that face women in general and young women in particular. In recent years there have been a number of changes that have affected the distribution of women in the labour force. In addition there have been very significant changes in the participation of women in the labour force. Against this general background we will attempt to examine some of the factors that determine the distribution of opportunities for women at the local level.

In recent years there has been a substantial shift in the distribution of occupations between the three sectors of the economy: primary, secondary, and service. This is part of a longer-term process of change that is characteristic of the more advanced industrial societies of the West, in which employment in the primary sector and industry declines while the service sector expands. In Britain this decline of employment prospects in the manufacturing sector has been more dramatic than in many other European societies; but what is of particular significance here is the effect on the structure of opportunities for women.

In 1965, 3.14% of women in employment were employed in manufacturing industry, and within ten years this has fallen to 2.5% per cent. The expansion of jobs for women has been more dramatic than in many other European societies, but what is of particular significance here is the effect on the structure of opportunities for women.

The last three decades have also witnessed a major change in the social composition of the female labour force, caused by the decline of marriage. In the 3.1% per cent it has fallen to 27.2 per cent. The overall effect of these changes, as Table 9.1 illustrates, led Britain to create a situation in which almost three-quarters of the women at work are to be found in the service sector. This is a dramatic change from the working lives of the previous generation, in which the majority of women were in the service sector.

Women in Britain have one of the highest activity rates in the European Economic Community, although there is reason to believe that it could increase still
TABLE 9.1 Sector breakdown of the labour force, 1965-75 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Great Britain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mining, quarrying</strong></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manufacture</strong></td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Electricity, gas, water</strong></td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Construction</strong></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry, Total</strong></td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wholesale, retail, hotels, restaurants</strong></td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport, communication</strong></td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance, insurance</strong></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community, social, personal</strong></td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service, Total</strong></td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 9.2 Economic activity rates by sex, 1951-76

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married females</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-married females</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>50.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Further, one of the reasons for the decline in the activity rate for the non-married is that more young women are staying on at school and delaying their entry into the labour market. The implication of all this for young female school-leavers is that they may face stiff competition from married women when they enter the labour market. On the national level, the type of manual jobs that women tend to be concentrated in are catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal services, which account for 57.8 per cent of female manual workers, and painting, assembling, testing and packing in manufacturing, which account for 18.2 per cent. In non-manual work 55.2 per cent are to be found in professional, plumbing and social work.

The distribution of employment opportunities for females is closely linked to the industrial and occupational sector. If it can be established that employment opportunities for females are located largely in a limited range of industrial and occupational sectors, it follows that there will be considerable regional and local differences in these opportunities, dependent upon the characteristics of local labour markets. This is highlighted by the variations in industrial and occupational structure in the three labour markets we are analysing in our current research project.

The research project

If it can be established that employment opportunities for females are located largely in a limited range of industrial and occupational sectors, it follows that there will be considerable regional and local differences in these opportunities. The distribution of employment opportunities for the sexes in the three labour markets we are analysing in our current research project is also closely linked to the industrial and occupational sector. If it can be established that employment opportunities for females are located largely in a limited range of industrial and occupational sectors, it follows that there will be considerable regional and local differences in these opportunities. The distribution of employment opportunities for the sexes in the three labour markets we are analysing in our current research project is also closely linked to the industrial and occupational sector.
Figure 3.1 Employment opportunities for women in three local labour markets

clothing- and footwear industries in local labour market A account for 16.8 per cent of all employment and 24.5 per cent of female employment, whereas the figures for local labour market B are 3.6 per cent and 7.2 per cent, and for local labour market C, 0.8 per cent and 1.4 per cent. The distributive trades account for 30 per cent of female employment in B, but for only 15.4 per cent in A, and 16.9 per cent in C. In C, with its predominance of white-collar employment, proportionately more females are employed in professional and scientific services, compared with 15.8 per cent in A and 21.3 per cent in B. These differences indicate the effect which the industrial structure of the local labour market can have on employment opportunities for women.

The analysis in this account is based on the preliminary findings of the research project, derived from 120 interviews with employers. Of these 80 were conducted in local labour market A, and consist of a representative sample of employers by size of establishment in the food, engineering, textiles, clothing and footwear and metal manufacture industries, supplemented by additional interviews with employers in distributive and public administration. The remainder are drawn from a variety of industrial orders and are predominantly from local labour market B.

MALE AND FEMALE WORK

Just what determines the distribution of occupations between the sexes? When asking individual employers whether they would consider females for such jobs as engineer, knitter and warehouseman, we are frequently given the answer that these are 'traditionally' male jobs. Similarly, when we ask why it is that only women are recruited into the making-up side of the knitting industry, packing in the food processing industry, typing and secretarial work in administration and sales work in certain retail organisations, the responses is sometimes struck that the duties should be so naive as to ask such a question; or alternatively surprise, because that kind of question is not often asked. In either case the answer one frequently receives is that these are 'traditionally' women's jobs or jobs that are more suited to women. However, many of these jobs have not always been the exclusive preserve of women, neither have all the 'traditionally' male jobs always been the exclusive preserve of men.

During the nineteenth century, women and children were extensively employed in heavy and dirty work in mining and the manufacture of iron, some of which required considerable physical strength such as that involved in filling the iron furnaces and pulling coal trucks. It was the morality of the Victorian aristocracy as embodied in the Factories Act that forced women out of these and other jobs in manufacturing. The conditions under which women may sell their labour are still subject to the control of the state through the Factories Act and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, and an exemption has to be obtained from the authorities before they can work shifts. The fact that women are not allowed to work shifts is still given as a reason by some employers for not employing them. It should be pointed out that many employers do
obtain exemptions from some of the provisions of the Act, especi-
ally when employing women for repetitive work in process produc-
tion.

In the service sector, many of the jobs that are now predomin-
antly filled by women in sales and clerical work were traditionally
male occupations. In both of these areas, which have expanded
substantially in this century, women have probably displaced men
in traditional roles, with the result that women's wages have
fallen relative to men's. This has led to the lower cost of female labour
that became available once these occupations were rationalized
within the context of modern bureaucratic organizations. Office work,
for example, became routine and specialized. In addition, the growth
of adult literacy means that employers can more easily select
women from larger pools of applicants. Despite this, the growing
prevalence of women within their ranks. This trend has been
observed in the retail and distribution trades. Thus, while the
picture we present here may appear static as we investigate it at
one point in time, it is merely a snapshot of a broader series of
changes that have taken place in the distribution of occupational
opportunities.

It is against this background of longer-term changes that the
following comments from employers need to be viewed. Generally
speaking, they will not consider employing women when the job
makes heavy physical demands on the employee; perhaps this
reflects the extent to which the morality embodied in the early Factory Acts
has become generalized and accepted as a self-evident truth.

Another similar reason for excluding women from consideration
for certain jobs is employers' belief that women would not be able to
cope with the rowdiness, crudeness and language of the
shop floor; this is often expressed in terms of the social norms
within which the work is located. Where the employer's belief is
stronger, women are rarely considered for these positions. It is also
true that in some cases we have not come across a number of smaller
employers in the engineering industry that employ small numbers of
women in what are predominantly male work groups. In these cases
the women are recruited as they provide low-cost labour for repetitive
assembly work. In such circumstances a great deal depends on the
attitude of the individual employer.

In some work female labour is preferred to the total exclusion
of males. The larger employers have frequently remarked to us that
women are far better at coping with boring, repetitive assembly
work. Women are more patient and have fewer physical
limitations. It is this belief that has underpinned the preference
for female labour in the engineering industry. Here again employers
are aware of the cost advantage of female labour, but maintain that
it is not just the cost

A similar belief is used to explain the preferences for female
labour in the textile industry: namely, that women are far better
at jobs that require dexterity, turning out neat work at high
speeds. Few male employers are likely to see the cost advantage
of female labour, but maintain that it is not just the cost
that makes women preferable as employees. We are not aware of any research that would either confirm or dispute the validity of these beliefs, although we are conscious of the fact that they are widely held among employers.

One further advantage that many employers perceive in female labour is its flexibility. This is particularly the case in certain types of office work and in the labour-intensive, but seasonal, trades such as textiles, where extensive part-time labour is employed. By definition, part-time work is flexible, for it can be expanded or adjusted within those limitations to meet the requirements of the employer. For example, if there is an increase in orders, part-time workers may be persuaded to work a few more hours per week, and extra homeworkers may be recruited.

In the managerial, professional and administrative occupations it is very difficult to generalize about employers' beliefs concerning the suitability of female as opposed to male labour. Apart from the obvious case of nursing, where it is generally regarded as a female profession, the situation varies enormously. In the public services, such as local government, the health service and education authority, it appears that women are more likely to compete on equal terms with men, at least at the point of entry. In private industry we have some evidence that men are preferred for managerial positions because of the old belief that women between the ages of 25 and 40 are likely to leave the job for the purpose of child-rearing. For example, in a large electronics firm there were 58 male managers and no females.

This belief has been reinforced in some cases by the maternity provision included in the Employment Protection Act. For new employers are obliged to keep jobs open for women while on maternity leave. Some employers believe that women are reluctant to seek full-time employment, or to keep the line moving with one person absent, it is much more difficult to find a suitable replacement for someone in a key managerial position where the disruption caused is likely to be that much greater. Here again we must express caution, as some organizations in the private sector do employ women in managerial positions, especially in retail and distribution and service functions in the manufacturing firms, such as personnel, sales and buying. Obviously this belief about the possibility of women taking pregnancy leave does affect the opportunities that are open to them in the private sector and, one suspects, in the higher echelons of the public sector.

These are some of the reasons that employers advance for either excluding or preferring female labour: the demand side of the equation. As our research is concerned primarily with the provision of opportunities we can only offer some tentative suggestions about the supply side. One is that, as married women frequently place their domestic responsibilities above their commitment to work, their orientation to work tends to differ from that of many men and non-married females. They seek work that will fit in with their commitments, often preferring part-time work. For similar reasons many women are less instrumental in their attitudes towards male and female colleagues, placing greater importance on the significance of friendships formed at work. In addition, notions of femininity acquired during the primary socialization of the young person tend
to steer young girls away from certain types of factory, in the same way that notions of masculinity function to steer young males away from certain types of office work.

In this respect we have some tentative evidence to suggest that there may be more opportunities for girls to enter the engineering trades than are reflected in the actual numbers employed. Many of the larger firms have individual young women in their craft and technician training programmes and are willing to take more. One of the reasons the number remains small is that few young women apply. As an alternative to office work or nursing it does not appear to be very attractive. The fact that girls are now entering these traditional male preserves does indicate that there has been some shift in attitudes towards women's employment but not yet sufficiently to counteract the influence of tradition and the economic circumstances of the young person. We have not yet had any sign of a comparable shift in attitudes among the smaller employers.

We have discussed some of the factors that determine the structure of opportunities for women. For the young female school-leaver employment opportunities are further restricted by two additional factors: age restrictions on entry and, more importantly, competition from married women. The age restrictions on entry may be a product of the requirements of the Factories Act, and the provisions of time incorporated into the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act that prevent young women under 18 working nights, or the stipulation that a driving licence is necessary for the job. In practice it means that, over a young person in 18 a new range of opportunities opens up, yet even these opportunities may still be restricted in situations where the young person faces the competition of married women.

In general employers tend to believe that married women are more mature, responsible as employees, and, given a choice, may opt for married women; young school-leavers, they believe, are more likely to be irregular in their attendance and more likely to quit the job. When the job requires the company to make a substantial investment in training this belief may be further reinforced. The company may be afraid that a school-leaver who takes a year to be trained may only stay with them for a short time before starting her own family or moving to another job. In such a case their investment in the training would be costly. Yet even these opportunities may still be restricted in situations where the young person faces the competition of married women.

We have also discussed some of the factors that determine the structure of opportunities for men. For the young male school-leaver employment opportunities are further restricted by two additional factors: age restrictions on entry and, more importantly, competition from married men. The age restrictions on entry may be a product of the requirements of the Factories Act, and the provisions of time incorporated into the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act that prevent young men under 18 working nights, or the stipulation that a driving licence is necessary for the job. In practice it means that, over a young person in 18 a new range of opportunities opens up, yet even these opportunities may still be restricted in situations where the young person faces the competition of married men.

In general employers tend to believe that married men are more stable and reliable as employees, and, given a choice, may opt for married men; young school-leavers, they believe, are more likely to be irregular in their attendance and more likely to quit the job. When the job requires the company to make a substantial investment in training this belief may be further reinforced. The company may be afraid that a school-leaver who takes a year to be trained may only stay with them for a short time before starting his own family or moving to another job. In such a case their investment in the training would be costly. Yet even these opportunities may still be restricted in situations where the young person faces the competition of married men.

One other belief that functions to restrict opportunities for young women is that concerning the morality of employing them in part-time work. A number of employers refuse to consider young people for part-time work on the grounds that it is wrong to recruit them for such work when they should be entering full-time employment. It must also be said that many of these same employers employ non-school leavers of part-time status for a number of years. Once again, it must be stressed that not all employers hold this belief, but it does play a part in restricting employment opportunities for young female school-leavers.
Chapter 9

Training

It has been established that, among school-leavers, a great many more boys than girls enter employment involving some lengthy planned training period. (7) This is certainly borne out by the early findings of our research.

On the clerical side, for secretarial and typing jobs employers expect new recruits to have a certain amount of the appropriate skills before they take them on. Typists may be recruited straight from school if they have achieved a reasonable standard of typing at school. For more advanced jobs requiring shorthand and secretarial skills, however, applicants will have undertaken college courses or similar training. In order to reduce the element of risk involved in engaging new personnel for clerical posts by using a private employment agency to recruit girls as temporary workers, and then offering permanent positions to any who are considered satisfactory. To offset they are using temporary employment as a screening device, involving no commitment to further training.

Employers have found that only a very few organizations, notably in the public sector, which have purchased girl school-leavers as supernumerary office juniors to be trained in various clerical skills. Our feeling is that this practice has declined, due to increased employment costs.

While girls entering clerical jobs are expected to possess certain skills, many employers, mainly larger ones, are prepared to give them day release to gain skills at college, in addition to their own firm-specific on-the-job training. It is often claimed that only half of those to whom this facility is offered ever take advantage of it. This is perhaps not surprising when it is recognized that a noticeable lack of commitment to the scheme can be reflected in poor attendance. For this reason, employers are inclined to stipulate that before they are prepared to fund the cost for any further training, in terms of payment of college fees and time off work, they must have evidence of commitment on the part of the employee. Thus they are prepared to offer day-release provision after the employee has spent a year studying in her own time, at evening classes.

It was interesting to find that one of the largest employers of female clerical workers in the public sector undertook no training whatsoever, but was content to 'buy in' experienced labour, relying on its favourable salary levels and structure to attract sufficient suitably qualified candidates. Finally, it should be noted that we did come across isolated instances of firms undertaking craft or technical apprenticeships in the engineering and printing industries, but the only industry we discovered undertaking any concerted training of school-leavers was in the food-processing, textile and footwear industries. The demand is for machinists and packers.
In the textile industry the larger firms have their own training schools, where the girls are paid a training rate until such time as they are able to earn more through piecework on production. Girls are expected to be able to ‘hold their own’ on production after about six weeks, but employers find that there are difficulties, not in the transition from school to work but in the transition from the training school to the production section. Apparently girls are often content to continue working for the training rate, as this still represents a considerable increase in their weekly spending power. Many smaller firms in the textile industry, the training period is of about the same length, but the content is not as planned, and training usually consists of ‘sitting with Nellie’. Some smaller firms form training groups, which offer similar training at local colleges to that carried out within employers’ own training schools. The training lasts six weeks, but girls are taught a variety of skills and are therefore more versatile than those trained in specialist operations within firms.

Similarly, in the footwear industry the larger firms have their own training schools for young girls entering machining occupations but, apart from that, training is given on the job or occasionally through day release. Once again, employers are reluctant to allow day release because of the cost and the poor attendance by young people. Overall, training for girls in manual occupations is of very short duration.

CHANGES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

At the local level it is difficult to establish with any precision the extent to which the changes that are taking place nationally are extending the opportunities for young female school-leavers. The decline in the number of opportunities for females in manufacturing varies in its impact from one local labour market to another. The changes work for young families and the effects of legislation appear to have a more uniform impact at the local level, although there may still be some variation. The decline in manufacturing has been in textile, footwear and clothing, and engineering industries that have traditionally supplied a large number of semi-skilled, career-less opportunities for young women. The loss of these jobs will mean that such opportunities will not be available in the future.

In the other hand, the expansion of service sector jobs that took place in the health service, local government and education is likely to have a more uniform impact at the local level, except for commercial and central government offices that are more variable in their regional location. We have not discovered any instance in which legislation has had any dramatic impact on broadening the scope of opportunities for women, for the pressures at work maintaining the existing pattern of opportunities appear to be very strong. Certainly we have little evidence of any marked change in employers’ attitudes in this respect. Where the legislation may have made an impact is in raising the employers’ consciousness about the possibility of
employing women in traditional male occupations. This is particu-
larly the case in the large firms with a personnel department, in
which the members tend to be fully aware of the implications of
legislation and may even create a pressure for change within the
organization. In the smaller firms that do not have a separate
personnel function the employers are not necessarily as fully
informed about the contents or implications of legislation. Con-
sequently it is larger, more prestigious firms that have been the
first to introduce young female school-leavers into traditionally
male occupations such as engineering.

Among the smaller employers, legislation has as yet raised
the question of employing women in male jobs. For example, one
employer in the printing trade spoke of the possibility of training
young female school-leavers as typesetters for the future. In this
job, she saw, the young woman would be involved in a skilled
manual job that was essentially clerical in nature, and the skills
required were more appropriate for women. In the construction
industry there is a belief that young women would not be able to
cope with the physical demands that the construction
trades make on apprentices. These examples illustrate some
of the success and the limitation of legislation in influencing
attitudes, although it is often the case that the unions as well
as the employers have to change their attitudes. In general we
expect that changes in opportunities for women are more likely
to take place first in those areas where labour is scarce. However,
in such areas there is less need for the young women to create
pressure for change through applying for 'male' jobs, as there are
substantial alternative opportunities.

So far in this discussion we have focused on the changes that
are taking place at the point of entry to the organization; but in
order to provide a more adequate analysis of the structure of
opportunities it is also necessary to examine the workings of the
internal labour market. The following two case studies of 'pro-
gressive' organizations provide an insight into the impact of the
forces for 'stability' and 'change' on the structure of opportun-
ities that face young women once they enter work.

Both organizations had recently introduced changes in the
organization of work, and both provided an opportunity to compare
the progress of young males and young females within the firm.
They are also alike in that they recruit predominantly female
labour, firm A in manufacture and firm B in the service sector.
Firm A recruited school-leavers and married women for semi-
skilled careerless manual work, and male workers for skilled
maintenance work, machine minding and management. It had recently
rationalized its wage payment system, which meant that it had a
uniform system of grading all wages; on the basis of this it was
possible to compare the progress of all employees. The fact that
it did have a uniform system of grading meant that elements of
career progression had been introduced into what had hitherto been
semi-skilled careerless occupations. The number of steps was
limited to four, but nevertheless they provided a clearly defined
hierarchy up which the unqualified female school-leaver could move. The
firm had an active personnel department which, together with
the skilled, had introduced the grading system and was fully aware
of the implications of legislation in the field of employment and equal opportunities.

The young women are located primarily in the middle and lower grades, two and three, with older longer-service women employed in jobs in the higher grades and as supervisors and chargehands. There is a relatively high turnover of female employees, typical for the industry and one that the firm regards as necessary to maintain the flexibility of the labour force as a whole. Fewer women are employed in the lowest grade in the job hierarchy. The number of school-leavers they recruit is constrained by a certain amount of constraint arising from the shift system operated at this establishment, so the firm does not like to use young women in the night shift. By their early twenties a number of women employees are in the second grade.

Firm B, in the service sector, is concerned primarily with clerical and administrative work and also employs predominantly female labour. It operates a complex wage grading system that provides a career progression of five or six steps from trainee to junior management. Once again, there is an active personnel department in which the members are fully conversant with recent legislation. The firm is concerned to introduce career structures that provide a degree of internal promotion, which, together with the grading system, has been used to introduce an alternative career structure into what had previously been routine clerical work with few prospects. As for the distribution of male and female labour, the ratio of young women to men is about 8:1, although in this case the males are not in separate departments but competing directly with females. Although they are distributed throughout all the grades they tend to move rapidly through them, and form 50 per cent of the younger employees in more senior positions at the fourth point on the scale.

What these two firms illustrate vividly is the potential flexibility that management or employers have in the way in which they structure work, for both introduced career structures into 'women's' jobs with which they are not usually associated. In the case of firm B, when this happened they also changed their recruitment policy and started to take large numbers of unqualified school-leavers in preference to married women, who were difficult to attract locally.

The other point they illustrate is the limit to which changes in the legal system have been able to produce changes in the distribution of opportunities. There are still jobs that are perceived as being associated more with one sex or the other, and this of course is difficult to attract locally.

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Similarly, the differences in the rates of job advancement between males and females may be partly a reflection of the different orientations to work of the unqualified female school-leavers as opposed to that of the more highly qualified male leavers.
CONCLUSION

It must be emphasized that the findings on which much of this chapter are based are preliminary and tentative. They have been taken from the responses of a sample of employers biased towards one particular local labour market and to the manufacturing side of industry. We would also readily admit that, in approaching the whole question of employment opportunities, there are additional factors at work which have not been covered. However, we believe that we have provided some indication of the limits to change in the structure of occupations. There does not appear to be any appreciable broadening of scope of employment opportunities for women. In terms of legislation, some employers have cited the Factories Act, and the Health and Safety at Work Act, as imposing restrictions on the employment of women for shift work and of young people for working with certain machinery. Others have expressed a reluctance to employ women because of the maternity rights provisions of the Employment Protection Act. There continues to be widespread acceptance of differentiations between men's and women's work. This is partly attributable to established and traditional attitudes and perceptions adopted by employers. From our interviews this is especially significant in jobs at managerial level.

Lack of representation in certain occupations does not necessarily stem from employer resistance. Some of it can be traced back to the socialization process, which creates a gender identity whereby girls do not consider attempting to enter traditionally male occupations. This self-exemption results in some employers complaining that they do not get any young girls applying for jobs such as craft or technician apprenticeships. It remains true that the actual employment opportunities available will largely be determined by the economic, industrial and occupational structure of the local labour market. (8)

NOTES

1 The general pattern of change from primary to secondary to tertiary occupations is well established. For a recent debate over the determination and significance of the change see Payne (1977), and G Love (1976).
2 The figures are drawn from the Equal Opportunities Commission, Second Annual Report, 1977. For a more detailed discussion see Pettman (1979).
3 Many of the reasons that managers give for excluding women from manual work and managerial occupations have been thoroughly documented in Hunt (1975).
4 For a discussion of some of the differences between men and women in their perceptions of work see Beynon and Blackburn (1972).
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7 See Pettman (1977), and also Mackie and Patullo (1977), p.97.
8 We wish to acknowledge the inestimable help of Gill Wallis in
preparation of material that has been used as a basis for this chapter. The project referred to throughout is funded by
the Department of Employment.
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with describing the contribution that the Open University is making to higher educational opportunities for women in this country. It assumes that this is a significant contribution, with illustration from University statistics and survey findings. It further, though, by outlining the background against which these statistics are to be assessed, the critical nature of the development and the differential opportunities of men and women in post-school education.

EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES: ROLE EXPECTATIONS

The current stereotypes of girls' and boys' and also women's and men's roles in society do little to encourage aspirations for high educational achievement in girls. The male stereotype is 'instrumental, active, skilled, technically competent, directive and exploitative', while the female stereotype is 'expressive, passive, decorative, manipulative, non combative, non competent outside domestic and nurturing situations' (Weinreich, 1978, p.201). These stereotypes are continually reinforced; for example, through dress and toys. Comics and books portray the role of the girl as helping her mother with cooking and cleaning, while the boy is encouraged to organize and play, and to have an active, energetic pursuit. The media also present women in such a way that "femininity", presents and presents themselves have outcomes of "femininity" which affect the treatment and expectations of girl pupils" (Marks, 1976, p.197).

One of the key elements in women's lives is that of roles and mother. Jobs are of secondary importance, and important careers, especially those which cannot readily be seen as an extension of the wife-mother role (such as careers in science, engineering and management) are seen as being exceptional, even aberrant. Fewer "women's jobs", and the status society gives to 'women's jobs', conclude that they are generally low. Further, women are seen as suitable for a life in which one's role is that of wife and mother. Jobs are of secondary importance, and important careers, especially those which cannot readily be seen as an extension of the wife-mother role (such as careers in science, engineering and management) are seen as being exceptional, even aberrant. Fewer "women's jobs", and the status society gives to 'women's jobs', conclude that they are generally low. Further, women are seen as suitable for a life in which one's role is that of wife and mother.
EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES: SCHOOL AS A PREPARATION FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Schools are involved in the process of ‘role conditioning’ (Byrne, 1975a), and, moreover, in a way that tends to put girls wanting to go on to further and higher education at a disadvantage compared with boys. This involvement is at two levels: the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The former deals with the overt selection of subjects taught and general activities within schools. The latter is concerned with the covert way in which teachers have different attitudes towards and different expectations of certain groups of children and, in turn, affect the expectations and aspirations of the children themselves.1

Glenys Lobban (1978) looks specifically at the effects of the official and hidden curricula as they relate to children of different sex. In terms of the official curriculum she argues that secondary schools are more effective than primary schools in segregating boys and girls into different study areas. At the secondary level boys are encouraged to work at such subjects as maths, ‘hard’ science and mechanics, while girls traditionally study the arts, and, as a gesture towards a science subject, biology. This segregation also extends to vocational subjects like woodwork and metalwork for boys, with the girls studying domestic science and needlework. An example of overt discrimination was noted by Byrne in her study of attitudes and practices in 88 secondary schools in England. She found that, when there was insufficient laboratory space to serve all students wishing to take science, in all but four cases the laboratory space available was used by the boys while the girls had to make do with converted classrooms in which there was a minimal amount of scientific equipment.2

Lobban suggests that messages about which is ‘correct’ behaviour for the sexes are being communicated via the content of textbooks, the teacher’s interactions and prohibitions, and the pupils’ observations of female and male teachers and the way they are expected to act. This, Lobban maintains, is leading to a kind of ‘gender-based or sex-linked behavior’ that is learnt through the unofficial curriculum. Lobban further argues that teachers communicate to children different standards for boys and girls, so much so that boys continue to strive for success while girls lose confidence in their own ability and exhibit ‘fear of success’.3 Another message conveyed through the unofficial curriculum is mentioned by Wolfe (1977), who was looking at the disproportionate number of positions of responsibility held by men over women. She noted that in schools with 20 per cent or more female members of staff in the basic grades there was a marked increase in the number of women being appointed to headship positions, but that in those with less than 20 per cent female staff there was a very low number of women in such positions.4

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Schools are involved in the process of ‘role conditioning’ (Byrne, 1975a), and, moreover, in a way that tends to put girls wanting to go on to further and higher education at a disadvantage compared with boys. This involvement is at two levels: the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The former deals with the overt selection of subjects taught and general activities within schools. The latter is concerned with the covert way in which teachers have different attitudes towards and different expectations of certain groups of children and, in turn, affect the expectations and aspirations of the children themselves.1

Glenys Lobban (1978) looks specifically at the effects of the official and hidden curricula as they relate to children of different sex. In terms of the official curriculum she argues that secondary schools are more effective than primary schools in segregating boys and girls into different study areas. At the secondary level boys are encouraged to work at such subjects as maths, ‘hard’ science and mechanics, while girls traditionally study the arts, and, as a gesture towards a science subject, biology. This segregation also extends to vocational subjects like woodwork and metalwork for boys, with the girls studying domestic science and needlework. An example of overt discrimination was noted by Byrne in her study of attitudes and practices in 88 secondary schools in England. She found that, when there was insufficient laboratory space to serve all students wishing to take science, in all but four cases the laboratory space available was used by the boys while the girls had to make do with converted classrooms in which there was a minimal amount of scientific equipment.2

Lobban suggests that messages about which is ‘correct’ behaviour for the sexes are being communicated via the content of textbooks, the teacher’s interactions and prohibitions, and the pupils’ observations of female and male teachers and the way they are expected to act. This, Lobban maintains, is leading to a kind of ‘gender-based or sex-linked behavior’ that is learnt through the unofficial curriculum. Lobban further argues that teachers communicate to children different standards for boys and girls, so much so that boys continue to strive for success while girls lose confidence in their own ability and exhibit ‘fear of success’.3 Another message conveyed through the unofficial curriculum is mentioned by Wolfe (1977), who was looking at the disproportionate number of positions of responsibility held by men over women. She noted that in schools with 20 per cent or more female members of staff in the basic grades there was a marked increase in the number of women being appointed to headship positions, but that in those with less than 20 per cent female staff there was a very low number of women in such positions.4

EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES: SCHOOL AS A PREPARATION FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Schools are involved in the process of ‘role conditioning’ (Byrne, 1975a), and, moreover, in a way that tends to put girls wanting to go on to further and higher education at a disadvantage compared with boys. This involvement is at two levels: the official curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The former deals with the overt selection of subjects taught and general activities within schools. The latter is concerned with the covert way in which teachers have different attitudes towards and different expectations of certain groups of children and, in turn, affect the expectations and aspirations of the children themselves.1

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and authority occupied by men in schools: “this pyramidal staffing teaches the teacher and the female students to limit their aspirations: there is no room at the top for women” (Walum, 1977, p. 57).

Attention is given to boys’ careers and their destiny as breadwinners, while Byrne (1975) argues that for girls there is an implicit assumption that they will ultimately follow the occupation of wife and mother to the exclusion of any other.

The determination of educational futures is strongly bound up with results gained in national ‘O’ and ‘A’ level examinations. The qualifications with which girls leave school tell their own story. Taking the year 1975 as an example, DES statistics indicate that at ‘O’ level girls were meeting with considerable success. Rather more girls than boys took the examination and their results were just as good: only 7 per cent failed to gain any ‘O’ level compared with 9 per cent of boys. The proportions gaining passes in five or more subjects were almost equal. ‘A’ level results for the same year show that many girls are failing to realize their full potential whilst at school. Although girls took the examination in the same numbers as boys, and the ones who did so did just as well, the proportion gaining passes was much lower: only 45 per cent of girls gained ten or more ‘A’ levels and 31 per cent of boys gained up to ten or more subjects compared with 40 per cent of girls. Thus there is a difference in the chances of gaining a place in the most prestigious form of higher education. This is crucial because, as the above figures indicate, nearly half of the places in high-level courses are reserved for those with ‘A’ levels.

‘A’ level results for the same year show a further important difference between girls’ and boys’ school qualifications. Girls’ qualifications tend to be in the arts and languages rather than in science and other ‘hard’ subjects such as maths and economics. For example, 34 per cent of boys who left school in 1975 gained a pass in ‘A’ level physics compared with 9 per cent of the girls, while the figures for English ‘A’ levels were 21 per cent and 46 per cent respectively.

The concentration on arts subjects further restricts the possibilities that girls have for going on to university. Arts and social science courses, which girls tend to be qualified in, are oversubscribed, and only the girls with good ‘A’ levels have a high chance of being accepted. It also means that girls who are better qualified in mathematics, science, and economics are unable to utilize their abilities in science and maths as effectively as they could. Arguably qualified girls have a much better chance of higher education than those who are not as successful, who are likely to be qualified in science where less competition occurs for degree places.

In sum, the failure of girls to progress is a combination of subjective and objective factors in which expectations from the school and the family, peer-group pressure and, increasingly, all forms of the media play a part. Associations of success are different for the schooling of children of each sex, and clearly different routes through these formal lives are intimated throughout their schooling. The provision of girls to progress from school into
Further or higher education and successful careers will not be realized 'so long as decisions about their education are taken in the light of restrictive social definitions about their future role in society' (Blackstone, 1976, p.200).

WOMEN IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Full time

"In institutions of higher education, a girl's career is a downhill struggle, a denial of her potentialities. The system is one of progressively contracting opportunities" (Mitchell, 1971, p.133).

If they do go on further education at all, girls tend to be filtered into teacher education and non-advanced courses. Figures for 1974-5 demonstrate this clearly; women occupied only 11 per cent of university places and 31 per cent of those in further education (advanced courses), but took up 75 per cent of places in colleges of education. The domination of girls in colleges of education is probably related to their lack of 'A' levels and general expectations of a woman's career, such that 'girls are more likely to be found following the pattern of lower-status students in lower-status institutions' (Ward, 1976, p.206).

The implications of declining numbers of places and changes in policy concerning teacher education are serious. First, the closure of many colleges of education must obviously affect the majority group of students (i.e., girls), especially if, as suggested by Keith Scribbens, 'the signs are that the colleges which are to cease training are those which admitted more women in the past than the surviving colleges' (Scribbens, 1977, p.194). Apart from being the most popular among all girls, in the past teaching has been the only form of higher education in which girls could engage with qualifications of less than two 'A' levels. The very fact that teaching is to become a graduate profession is likely to exclude more girls than boys. Second, the replacement places in higher education are being made available mainly through the Diploma in Higher Education, a qualification with a two 'A' level entry requirement. At least in the short term this is likely to disadvantage girls, since it is a qualification with a low 'A' level score requirement. The third factor affecting girls' opportunities in higher education is the country's requirement for more graduates in science and technology, traditionally non-female areas, rather than in the arts and social sciences. These three factors could bring the education of girls to a crossroad of decision. The choice is either to continue in the traditional way and simply exclude more girls from higher education because of the 'lack of motivation', nurtured by school and the study of the wrong subjects, or to push for equal education for both sexes. Genuine availability of all school subjects, equal allocation of resources, and also positive encouragement of girls to take three 'A' levels would have been upon the union to girls of entering teaching or other degree programmes.

As well as the girls continuing to higher education, a large number took full-time non-advanced courses. It is of this group in particular that the breakdown of sex-related study topics persist...
DES statistics show that in 1975 an overwhelming proportion (91 per cent) of the places on nursing and secretarial courses were occupied by girls, who also accounted for 67 per cent of the courses in catering. Boys on the other hand occupied 67 per cent of the places on HNC/D courses and 65 per cent of those on ONC/D courses. The disparities go even further than can be explored here, extending even within subject areas. Sue Sharpe commented that "the main courses that girls are found in at further education colleges are business and commerce, which include a disproportionate amount of shorthand and typing", while for boys these same disciplines "are oriented towards management, and they don't learn the "feminine" skills of typing and shorthand" (Sharpe, 1976, p.180).

Part-time day release

The provision of part-time education for girls is something of a scarce resource. The picture overall is biased towards the education of boys rather than girls, so much so that of those receiving day release in 1975 82 per cent were boys and 18 per cent girls. In terms of different age-groups, girls form a larger proportion of the population receiving day release at 16 and 17 than they do amongst the 18- to 20-year-olds. For the younger girls, much of their day release is in the category of "miscellaneous services" which is likely to include small industrial concerns sending them to shorthand or typing classes one day a week.

A closer look at the employers releasing students for part-time study (DES, Statistics of Education) reveals that the main areas for girls are in the professional and scientific services (20 per cent) and in the public administration and defence (30 per cent). The area releasing most boys is that of manufacturing industries (43 per cent). Within the grouping there are 11 per cent of boys employed in mechanical engineering and 6 per cent in electrical engineering. In contrast with the generous treatment of boys, the manufacturing industries - the largest single sponsors of all release students (38 per cent) - sponsor only 19 per cent of the girl students.

The provision of day-release training had in the past to be won as a right by trade unions in industry. The majority of these opportunities are likely to continue to be available only for boys, bearing in mind that girls who release themselves tend to go into "unorganised" training, which is likely to be only briefly directed and not tending as with full-time education will have relatively few chances to gain further qualifications unless they are prepared to commit themselves socially and economically to the rigours of part-time study in the evenings and at weekends.

Evening classes

A variety of courses are offered on a part-time evening basis by polytechnics and other further education institutions. DES statistics for 1975 show that in that year 31.7% of people enrolled for courses were women. 37.7% for advanced certificates and 31.5% for advanced courses.
It comes as no surprise that women comprised only 15 per cent of those doing advanced work. However, they made up almost half (47 per cent) of the group registered for non-advanced work, and it is notable that 94 per cent of them were registered for 'O' and 'A' level courses compared with 80 per cent of men. Women comprised 56 per cent of those doing 'O' level courses and 59 per cent of those taking conspirable science 'A' level. Men, on the other hand, made up 84 per cent of those taking City and Guilds, and 85 per cent of those working towards a non-advanced professional qualification.

The statistics provide convincing evidence that women are interested in going on to post-school education; they volunteer for it in large numbers. Unfortunately, there are no statistics that throw light on their motivations, in particular how many are trying to make up for missed opportunities or lack of opportunities at school, perhaps with the aim of going on to more advanced studies, and how many are just doing it for fun.

The advanced courses that most part-time students (54,101) are taking are those leading to professional qualifications. Both men (66 per cent) and women (55 per cent) are doing these courses. However, women comprise only 13 per cent of all students taking this type of course. The areas in which women are best represented are nursing (28 per cent), teacher training (30 per cent), and college diplomas (38 per cent). Women comprise only 6 per cent of students doing these courses, compared with 6 per cent of men. This suggests that many women who did not go on to degree-level work on leaving school, or who did not get the qualifications to do so, are nevertheless interested in studying at a degree level.

The inference is supported by the fact that women are also becoming involved in full-time undergraduate studies at universities and other higher education institutions. In 1975 mature women students comprised 6 per cent of women in universities and 12 per cent of all those in polytechnics and maintained colleges. The proportion of women to men was 1:2:1 in universities, but there were more women than men in polytechnics and maintained colleges. The proportions were identical to those for mature men. It is interesting to note that the polytechnic sector, which has flexible entry requirements, is attracting so many mature students. Women and men with part-time degree courses offer, to some extent, the flexibility which is the outstanding characteristic of Open University studies.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

The Open University was set up to provide education at degree level for 'all those who, for any reason, have been or are being precluded from achieving their aim through an existing institution of higher education'. Impact of the financing committee to the Secretary of State for Education and Science, 1969. The first section of this chapter clearly illustrated that fewer women than men are involved in other forms of higher and further education, and that those who are do so mainly to take lower-status and non-advanced studies. It is safe to assume, therefore, that a very
large number of women fall into the category of potential OU students. The Open University deliberately broke away from the traditional 'A' level requirements of other institutions of higher education: there are no entry requirements other than that students be adults of 21 or over. Entry is on a 'first-come, first-served basis'. The number of new places offered each year is large - in the tens of thousands - and constantly able to take in large numbers of 'unqualified' students.

The University also sets out to give its students maximum choice in what they study and the pace at which they study. Its degree is a modular one, with the students choosing their own course combination and advancing the number of courses they wish to study in a given year.

The multi-media distance-learning system that has been devised paces students through each course, but allows them to fit their studies into their lives as they are best able. They can study the course materials in their own homes, at the times they wish, but have access to local tutors and to study centres. (10) The University has also developed a computerised system which under-takes degree-level studies in adult life. It has no educational prerequisites, as each of the major three 'A' levels does not count against them, and its flexible part-time study requirements (12 hours per week per full-credit course) allows all students to devise study timetables that fit in with their other duties and responsibilities.

Are women coming forward to take advantage of this new educational opportunity? University statistics indicate that they are. Initially, in 1970, women applied in relatively small numbers compared to men, but by 1977 were making up a quarter of the total applications - 23 per cent of 98,500 each year. The proportion of women applying for places has risen from 20 per cent in 1970 to 44 per cent of 1977 applicants. (15)

However, the women who are applying are not dramatically breaking away from these earlier combinations. They tend to apply for the traditional 'girls' subjects' like the arts and social sciences as opposed to 'boys' subjects', which are 'scientific and technical, involving mathematical problem-solving and analysis' (Sharpe, 1976, pp.147–8). In 1977, for example, 59 per cent of the applications for the arts foundation course and 46 per cent of those for the social science foundation course were made by women, though women comprised only 39 per cent of all foundation course applications. Nevertheless, significant minorities are taking the opportunity to study other subjects: 28 per cent of the applicants for science were women, and women comprised 20 per cent of those applying for mathematics. Looking at trends in applications over the period 1971 to 1977 it is encouraging that the proportion of women applying for science courses has been maintained and the number of women applicants has increased. Similarly, the proportion of women applicants for the mathematics course has risen from 11.7 per cent to 18.9 per cent, an increase of 7.2 per cent compared with the overall increase of 6.2 per cent.
THE 1977 STUDENTS

What kind of women are studying with the Open University? Where do they live? What age groups are they drawn from? What previous educational qualifications have they? How many are housewives and in what sorts of occupation are the working women involved? And how successful are these Open University students? The rest of this chapter will describe some of the characteristics and achievements of women who were studying with the Open University in 1977 to demonstrate the extent to which it is making a contribution to opportunities for women to participate in higher education at degree level.

In the description, attention will be focused on two groups of women (housewives and women in employment for over 20 hours a week), who are dealt with separately because their daily order of living is different. Ann Oakley points out in her book 'Housewife' that 'the housewife’s isolation emphasizes her difference from other workers. She lacks the sociability of a workgroup; informal associations of workers engaged on the same job are an important source of standards of performance in employment work’ (Oakley, 1976, p.8). It would seem likely that OU studies could provide the possibility of informal study groups and discussion groups which would lessen the isolation for housewife-students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 10.1</th>
<th>Finally registered students in 1977 by work and marital status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All finally registered</td>
<td>55,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes less than 1%


Table 10.1 gives an overall picture of the population under discussion in the rest of this chapter. As well as analysing students by their work status, their marital status is also presented. The composition in terms of marital status is not very different between men and women students, but marginally fewer of the women (69 per cent) are married than the men (76 per cent). Not surprisingly, a much higher proportion of women are housewives.
Chapter 10

Region of study

The University draws its students from over the whole of the United Kingdom, and tries to make special provision (e.g., telephone tutorials) for those who are in really remote areas away from study centres. Women in all 13 Open University regions are making use of the opportunity it offers. There are some regional differences.

The lower take-up of higher education by women in general is reflected by the fact that women represent 41 per cent of the OU population compared to 51 per cent of the UK population (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1978). Taking England and Wales as a group, the proportions of women in the OU and the UK are similarly related to their totals (41 per cent to 51 per cent). This is also true for Scotland (43 per cent to 52 per cent) but not for Northern Ireland, where OU women students represent a significantly smaller proportion (34 per cent) than their UK counterparts (51 per cent). Of all the women studying with the OU, the largest population is in the London region (15 per cent) which accounts for their high relation to all women in London: 47 per cent compared to 52 per cent.

This may, in part, be due to the nature of the OU system of allocating students to their regional centres: students are classified in terms of the study centre which they choose to attend. Some women students who work in London choose to go for their tutorials to a study centre near their work rather than one close to their home outside the region. The London region also stands out in ways that reflect the city's position as a large centre for employment, with special opportunities available there in certain types of employment. Of the women registered there 69 per cent are working women; it has the largest proportions in the professions and arts (16 per cent) and clerical and office occupational categories (20 per cent) and also the second largest proportion of single women (31 per cent). The highest proportions of housewives are found in East Anglia and in OU regions covering the south of England. The proportion of working women employed in the teaching area is fairly large in all regions, which is what one would expect, bearing in mind that "twice as many girls as boys go to colleges of education rather than to universities ... their reliance on teaching is increased by industry's reluctance to regard qualifications from colleges of education as anything other than a preparation for teaching" (Davies, 1975, p.133).

Age of the students

Women of all ages are registering for Open University degree level courses. In 1977 the distribution was as follows:

- 20 and below: 13
- 21-24 years: 9
- 25-29 years: 20
- 30-34 years: 20
- 35 and over: 13

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- 20 and below: 13
- 21-24 years: 9
- 25-29 years: 20
- 30-34 years: 20
- 35 and over: 13
135 Chapter 10

Studying in order 'to widen my knowledge' is a very widespread
motive: it was given spontaneously by 40 per cent of all women in
the first entry cohort of 1971, but was especially strong among
those aged 45 and over (51 per cent). 

Rather more women than men were in the youngest and oldest of
the above age-groups. Studying with the University is proving
particularly attractive to younger women in full-time employment:
36 per cent of working women students were 30 or under compared
with 29 per cent of their male counterparts and 26 per cent of
housewives. The 1971 survey showed that over a third of these
younger working women, a similar proportion to their male counter-
parts, were studying with the aim of gaining higher educational
qualifications. This aim was given by only one in four of house-
wives of the same age. Interestingly, much of the younger women's
attitude towards the University is related to their intention of
obtaining an advantage with regard to their job prospects. In terms of
an explicit aim of helping them in their job or changing their job.
This suggests that there is a great deal of unsatisfied demand for
higher education per se that is not being catered for by conventi-
tional universities, even though there has been an increase in
the proportion of women in universities from 26 per cent in 1965
to 33 per cent in 1975.

Housewives are taking up OU studies at a rather later age than
working women. The modal age group in 1977 was 31-35 years, with
28 per cent in this group. Over two-thirds of the housewives
were between 25 and 40.

These statistics suggest that many housewives are waiting until
their children are at school before commencing studying for a
degree. Their earlier priorities were full-time care of their
pre-school children and home. Hannah Gavron's study 'The Captive
Wife' showed quite clearly that mothers both from the working and
middle classes felt a pressure to stay at home and devote them-
themselves to their children; 'in both cases, however, the impression
given was that the return to work was to some extent an automatic
process' (Gavron, 1966, p.143).

They can now extend their horizons outside the home, and the
Open University allows them to do this while remaining home-based.
The University has enabled women to explore new ways of
expression, and to experience the feeling of being 'ourselves' as a reason for studying with the University.

The same survey also pointed to another motive. 31 per cent of
those aged under 45 were hoping their studies would help them to
change jobs. In contrast with younger housewives, 'convenience'
was the most important reason for studying with the aim of gaining
educational qualifications (13 per cent) mattered relatively
little for housewives aged 45 and over.

Finally on the subject of age, it is worth noting that in 1971
many more older students than younger were spontaneously mentioned
that 'no previous opportunity' as a reason for choosing to study with
the Open University. And the older women gave this reason more
often than the men (the figures being 28 per cent for housewives,
22 per cent for women in employment, and 16 per cent for men). The
fact that so many older women explicitly mentioned lack of oppor-
tunity in the past signifies the fact that the University has
opened up a totally new avenue for pursuing degree-level studies
for those who had no chance earlier in their lives.
Previous education

Housewives are starting off on their Open University degree studies with far less in the way of educational qualifications than working women, and the latter contrast sharply with men in the type of further education they have previously undertaken. It is interesting to look first at how housewives differ from other women in the student population.

Though fewer housewives (7 per cent) than men (9 per cent) had no educational qualifications at all, more had finished their education by the 'O' level/CSE/RSA stage: 37 per cent compared with 30 per cent. As many or 19 per cent of them had gained five or more 'O' levels than stopped their studies, while only 10 per cent of the men ended their education with a similar performance. As many as 19 per cent of housewives had gained five or more 'O' levels then failed to proceed past school qualifications compared with 10 per cent of men. The position is the same with respect to two or more 'A' levels: 20 per cent of housewives had failed to build on this achievement through post-school education compared with 10 per cent of men. Overall, 47 per cent of housewives had gained between five 'O' levels and two-plus 'A' levels but had not proceeded further. It is clear that many of the housewife students had done well at school but had not fulfilled their potential to continue studying.

In contrast with housewives, but more like men, the working women in the 1977 student population tended to have built on their school qualifications. Only 5 per cent had no formal educational qualifications at all. Compared with the men students, a slightly higher proportion (28 per cent) failed to proceed past school qualifications of five 'O' levels or more, but 59 per cent studied and succeeded at some level after leaving school compared with 57 per cent of the men. Predictably, bearing in mind the evidence of the first part of this chapter, the women and men had gone on to different types of education. Forty-three per cent of the working women had teaching certificates compared with 22 per cent of the men who were similarly qualified. The figures for ONC/OND/HNC/HND are reversed: 3 per cent compared with 21 per cent.

Housewives follow the same pattern as working women, in that a teachers' certificate is by far the most common type of post-school qualification gained (22 per cent). It is interesting also to note that as many as 10 per cent of the working women are taking the opportunity to upgrade their university diplomas to degree level.

The statistics point to two numerically large groups of women in the University: those for whom the University is providing a first taste of post-school education (leading to a post-graduate qualification) and those who have already undertaken post-school studies at degree level. A further important group is comprised of those with less than five 'O' levels. In 1977 there were just under 5,300 such women students. Though they represent a small proportion of all the women students in the University, they point to the fact that aspirations for degree-level studies are by no means restricted to those who have done well at school.
Sixty per cent of the women students in 1977 were working women, a majority (60 per cent) being married and a further 5 per cent divorced, separated or deceased. Thirty-eight per cent were housewives and 2 per cent were retired. Comparing men-women ratios in the Open University with those measured in the 1970 census, it seems that the female participation rate was higher in the University than in the country as a whole. Women comprised 60 per cent of the "housewife" and "retired" group in the University.

One group that is notably underrepresented in the OU is women employed in the sales and personal services area. They comprise 59 per cent of those in this type of employment in the general population, but only 16 per cent of such OU students. The position is a little better in the case of skilled trade and other manual workers: they comprise 5 per cent of workers in this category in the University compared to 7 per cent in the general population. The distribution of occupations amongst the women students in full-time employment shows that they fall into three main areas: education (47 per cent), clerical and office staff (22 per cent), and the professions and arts (19 per cent). Proportions in other occupations are small. Working men, in contrast, are spread more widely across the occupational groups. The best represented occupations are technicians and related workers (20 per cent) and professional and technical workers (17 per cent).

In terms of their marital status there is a greater bias towards employment in education among the married women in employment (50 per cent) than among the single working women (43 per cent). In other words, they are in an occupation where they have relatively long holidays, which makes more feasible the combining of study with looking after a home and family. Single women were no more spread out across the full occupational range than their married counterparts. However, a greater proportion of them were in the professions and arts: 24 per cent compared with 17 per cent in the married group.

The nature of the occupations included in this latter category give some clue as to why so many single women from it had decided to register for Open University studies. The category includes a wide range of occupations: medicine, medical social auxiliary working, social work of all kinds, librarianship, journalism, etc. Good school qualifications are a prerequisite, but there is also a diversity in the level of post-school education. Some, such as nursing, are filled by people who have had extensive training but not always a broad higher education. The fact that such men are in line of the University's aims of providing education for working people and professional women has been seen as the opportunity that the University offers. They can acquire a degree - a qualification that is higher than those previously held and one that has general currency rather than being a qualification (e.g., SFUi) that is recognized only within one profession - while continuing in full-time work.

Interestingly, the small group of 83 widowed and divorced women students in 1977 were working women, a majority (60 per cent) being married and a further 5 per cent divorced, separated or deceased. Thirty-eight per cent were housewives and 2 per cent were retired. Comparing men-women ratios in the Open University with those measured in the 1970 census, it seems that the female participation rate was higher in the University than in the country as a whole. Women comprised 60 per cent of the "housewife" and "retired" group in the University.
women who were in full-time employment contained a relatively high proportion of clerical and office workers. In per cent compared
with 25 per cent of working married women and 22 per cent of those
who were single. It may well be that they represent a group of
women who are turning to the University as a way of starting afresh
in a few months, developing new interests and a broader perspective
and at the same time acquiring a qualification. The latter may not
be the main reason for their studies but it could well allow them
to move into a more satisfying and better paid job.
At the beginning of this section it was reported that women in
occupations such as sales and personal services were not register-
ing in such large proportions as men. But to expect them to do so
would be over-idealistic; after all, they work in occupations
where there is not a career structure closely linked with educa-
tional qualifications. Nevertheless, in 1977 2,898 women in
clerical and office jobs and 314 in sales and services were finally
registered OU students. A further 626 women were employed as
technical personnel (e.g., laboratory workers and technicians),
who typically undertake occupation-specific training but have
successfully registered for study. Though they comprise only 18 per
cent of the women in the University, they are very important standard-bearers, indicating both
the fact that women in non-professional occupations are interested
in education for themselves and also that they too succeed at
degree level.

PERFORMANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY

Open University students can register for up to two credit equi-
valents (made up of whole or half credits) in any one academic
year. Women tend to be rather less ambitious, or perhaps more
realistic, than men in terms of the number they register for: 79
per cent of the women were registered for only one course in 1977,
while only 67 per cent of the men came into this category; 19 per
cent of men had registered for two half-credit courses - a rather
more demanding undertaking than a single whole-credit course
compared with 11 per cent of women. More men (14 per cent)
than women (11 per cent) had taken on courses adding up to one-and-a-
half or two credit equivalents, and committing a time commitment
of at least 20 hours' study a week.

One explanation for these sex differences may be that women are
rather lacking in confidence, doubting their own ability to do
degree-level courses. Women have less money available to finance
their studies than men, and are in employment and able to ask
employers to support their studies. Working women tend to get
lower salaries than men, and housewives may be dependent on
money saved from the housekeeping or a subsidy from their husband.
Many women just do not have uncommitted monies for private use.

Another important factor is time for study, particularly time
for summer school. For housewives and married women particularly,
the weekly study time requirement of 20 hours a week for
each whole-credit course may involve a legal agreement or sub-
stantial about the need for personal time for self-fulfilment and
Courses with a summer school component involve, of course, a further extension of the ‘private’ time that is required: women actually pass away, handing over to her husband or others the care of home and family.

Though the large numbers of women who are registered indicates that it is possible to find some time for study and some money to finance these studies, it may well be impossible or unrealistic to meet the commitments implied by studying for more courses in a given year.

### Table 10.2 Percentage of finally registered students gaining credits, by faculty and sex, 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>All Students</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Difference (women - men)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Studies</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How well are women performing in the University? The unequivocal answer is ‘very well’. Their success rates on the courses they finally register for are higher than men in all faculties, as Table 10.2 indicates.

Interestingly, the women who finally register for courses in all the traditionally male strongholds of science, technology and mathematics are doing particularly well relative to the men. It could be argued that these women were specially motivated or particularly committed, while some of the men taking courses in these faculties were not as concerned with proving they could pass the courses. But if this were so, we should find that men did especially well in arts, traditionally the faculty that women tend to apply for. We find, however, that women do better than men in this faculty too, 79 per cent of the women compared with 72 per cent of the men. Indeed, there are few courses at all in which men have a lower pass rate than women. One should not imply from this, however, that women are superior – to do so would be making invidious comparisons. Rather, women take on rather fewer courses and do rather better in those they register for.

The University’s first graduates, 898 in all, gained their degrees in 1972. By December 1977, 27,204 students had graduated, including over 9,000 women. As one would predict from the facts that fewer women can claim credit exemptions and that women tend to opt to undertake fewer courses in any one year, women tend to graduate more slowly than men. However, a higher proportion of women than men from each entry cohort are becoming graduates, as
McIntosh (1978) has pointed out. For example, by 1977 57 per cent of the first year's intake of women had graduated compared with 51 per cent of the men. Figures for 1972's students at that point were 45 per cent and 42 per cent respectively. The crossover point at which more women than men graduate is not reached, however, until students have been registered with the University for five years or so. The executive underline both the high degree of motivation among women students and the fact that so many women who had no chance of degree-level studies earlier have shown their ability to complete a highly exacting degree course. Graduates gain much more than a qualification, as a survey of students who graduated by December 1975 demonstrated. The vast majority report personal changes of the type normally attributed to full-time study at a conventional university. For example, being a mature student has often brought about a new sense of freedom, a new realisation of the potentialities of the mind, a more balanced and mature outlook, having new interests and new goals and also a new way of looking at things, a different perspective on life (Swift, 1979). Women tend to report these changes even more than men, and housewives more than women who work in full-time jobs. Now the University has proved so stimulating that a majority are keen to continue with some form of post-graduate work or training, and one in six have already begun such studies. Additionally, many graduates are finding their degrees of use in their work. Twenty-nine per cent of all the women and 30 per cent of the men in the survey reported having "developed a new career" as a consequence of their studies, and yet others expected to do so. (The figure for housewives was 16 per cent). Almost a third of the women graduates reported having already gained a promotion or having improved their promotion prospects. The experience of studying has outweighed, as reported earlier, that was not their main reason for studying.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
This chapter has outlined the achievements of women in the educational system in this country and the social and economic constraints on high achievement. It then went on to describe the number and characteristics of Open University women students and also their progress in the University. It is clear that the Open University is playing an increasingly large part in the provision of higher education for women in the UK. It has proved so stimulating that a majority are keen to continue with some form of post-graduate work or training, and one in six have already begun such studies. Many graduates are finding their degrees of use in their work. This has outweighed the majority's original reasons for studying.
new stimulation into their lives. It appears, too, to be stimul-
ating new ambitions: for example, in the educational area and the
occupation field. Already many women with Open University degrees
are proving that they can achieve one or both of these ambitions.
The effect of studying with the OU for many of the women gradu-
ates is succinctly expressed in this comment: "It has meant that I
have started to find myself as a person, and has opened up the
world". (13)

NOTES
1. See Fogarty et al. (1971).
4. See Morter (1976) for a discussion of girls' "fear of success".
5. At no other time is the role of husband and father ever con-
sidered an 'occupation' by boys, their teachers or their
families.
7. Ibid., vol. 3.
8. Ibid., vol. 3 and 5.
9. See McIntosh, Gidler and Swift (1978) for a fuller account of
the teaching system.
11. McIntosh et al. (1976).
12. An earlier draft of this chapter was given to the BERA Seminar,
"Women, Education and Research", University of Loughborough.
Field for their comments on earlier drafts of this chapter but
in particular to Betty Swift for all the time and effort she
has put into helping me to revise it. Finally I would like
to thank Margaret Marchant and Pam Berry for typing the numer-
cous drafts.
Chapter 11

How many women academics 1912-76?

Margherita Rendel

There is nothing new about women scholars. Hermione Grammatike, whose mummy rests at Girton College, Cambridge, was probably a woman of letters in Egypt in the first or second century AD (Stenton, 1957, pp.13-15). From the eighth to the eleventh centuries, women lectured in law and served as judges in Cordoba, Granada and Seville (Pettus, 1975, p.91). Throughout the Middle Ages, women studied and graduated from Italian universities; Novella D’Andrea was in 1335 well known as a professor of canon law, and Cassandra Felice was probably dean or professor of jurisprudence at Padua in the fifteenth century. Other women studied medicine and literature, and in Spanish, Venice and Paris universities, women lectured and wrote. Elena Lucrezia Piscopia Cornaro held a chair at the University of Padua in 1678 (Jex Blake v. Senatus of University of Edinburgh, XI Macph. 784 at 789).

These were exceptional women and their circumstances may have been unusually favourable. Isotta Nogarola’s experience in the fifteenth century is closer to that of modern women. A scholarly and learned humanist, Isotta was forced to retire from the cultivated, humanist and worldly society of Venice by false and luridly obscene accusations. She was driven by self-reproving apologies to self-deprecating apologies on account of her sex and to a choice between abandoning her literary studies or the satisfactions of friendship, comfort and sexuality. She chose her literary studies. She was once and forevermore as a scholar, but only after becoming an avertite ascetic. She was denied her own authenticity, her own personhood, and the satisfactions of a life of friendship, comfort and sexuality. King (1978: 811) concludes that this period was even more unhappy than the period when, living as a secular scholar, she was calumniated.

In Britain women were excluded from all universities until they were admitted to all scientific courses at the newly-created University of Durham College of Science in Newcastle in 1871. This reflected not intellectual inferiority in British women in
comparison with those of other countries, but, as Sophia, a Person of Quality, wrote in 1739 (p. 40):

If we are not seen in university chairs, it cannot be attributed to our want of capacity to fill them, but to that violence with which men support their unjust intrusion into our places; or, if not, at least to our greater modesty and less degree of ambition.

A woman was first appointed to an academic post in 1893 and to a chair in 1894 (Sommerkorn, 1967, p. 15). The proportion of women now is virtually the same as in the 1920s, and the proportion holding senior posts slightly more than doubled in twenty years, and of capacity is no explanation. The feminists, then, have explained that whatever the cause, it must lie more in the attitude of men and women themselves than in the external fact, because if they are not always well-dressed or as well-fed, or as well-behaved as men, the reason must be sought in the lack of opportunity for women to live as well as men.

A woman was first appointed to an academic post in 1893 and to a chair in 1894 (Sommerkorn, 1967, p. 15).

There are now some 38,000 university teachers in Great Britain. If half were women, there would be over 18,000 more women academics than there are 1.0% of the female population. Is it possible to justify spending time and effort on so few? Of course any group, however small, is entitled to have its rights considered. But university teachers as a whole constitute only 0.07 per cent of the total population, and it is not suggested that universities, higher education or university teachers are an unworthy topic. So the smallness of the numbers is not a reason for disregarding women academics. Furthermore, in addition to women's right to participate in an important profession, there are other reasons for studying the role of women in higher education. There is no space here to summarise them. First, if the nation and society has to live on its brains, then we cannot afford to ignore the brains in women's heads. Second, stereotyping has the effect of specializing men and women in different qualities. If both masculine and feminine qualities are valuable—and both supporters and opponents of sex-stereotyping claim they are—then both men and women are needed to bring these qualities to bear in teaching and research. These are both general reasons which also underlie those which follow.

Universities perform certain powerful functions in society. The democratization of society means allowing women their equal share in these functions. Third, then, universities act as licensing, selecting and gate-keeping institutions. They determine, directly through their own examinations and indirectly through parallel examinations such as ODA, and subordinate examinations such as OGB, who shall and who shall not be allowed to proceed to professional and most of the higher administrative and managerial posts. Fourth, in a broadly similar way, universities greatly control and influence what constitutes received and accepted knowledge, and on what topics research shall be undertaken. Influence is also exercised by individuals when writers as publishers' readers as well as in determining syllabuses and courses.
the educational system, through which all individuals pass, is largely subordinated to the control of universities and wholly subordinated to those who have directly or indirectly been licensed by universities. Thus, sixth, universities control directly or indirectly, much, though not all, of the ideological machinery of the state and of society.

Finally, seventh, it has been pointed out that 'where the women are, there power is not' (Novotny quoted by Stacey and Price); by finding where the women are missing, some clues may be afforded to the location of power in society.

At the end of the nineteenth century in England, the relevance of higher education to professions and occupations other than the church became apparent. In the last third of the century new university colleges were founded, the developing sciences required expensive laboratories, departments began to develop, and professors outside Oxford and Cambridge began to obtain a share in the government of their universities (Morrell, 1976, p.39; Moodie and Eustace, 1974, p.29). The academic profession emerged, and universities assumed their modern function as the producers of new knowledge and as the producers and reproducers of highly-trained workers who were increasingly to be employed rather than self-employed.

In spite of or, more likely, because of these changes, women managed to force their way into universities, although with much difficulty. As activities and occupations became professionalized as well as industrialized, women found themselves excluded from a majority of the professions and occupations; as a result, prostitution, a choice between lifelong dependency, low status or degradation, the professionalization of long-standing occupations, such as medicine, and the development of new professions as solicitors, engineers and teaching meant that women had to find other ways in which to earn a living, which was guarded directly or indirectly by the universities.

How did these women fare? The story of the admission of women to universities as students has been told elsewhere (1), and accounts of some of the more colourful incidents are included in it. What is perhaps more difficult is to tell the story of the admission of women to teaching, research or other work on the obtaining of degrees or academic posts out of their progress in these. One explanation of this is clear: there are no easily available statistics. The statistics of the University Grants Committee give some quite detailed analyses of the numbers of men and women students, home and overseas, by university, subject, financial assistance, degrees awarded and residence from 1919 onwards. The numbers of academic staff are given from 1923 onwards by grade and university but with no indication of sex or subject. In their Report for 1923-4 (p.21) the UGC wrote:

Finally, we may repeat what we said in our previous Report on the subject of women teachers. We would especially emphasize the importance of adequate status as well as emoluments for women teachers. The numbers as well as the status of women teachers are steadily increasing, and we believe that this development is generally regarded as satisfactory and successful. It is clearly of the first importance that women of the highest ability should be attracted to this work, and we think
that a more ample recognition of their claim is due from certain of the Authorities!

But the UGC did not ensure that it had the means to check whether the ‘Authorities’ were taking their advice. In spite of the omissions of the University Grants Committee and the lack of readily available sources, it is possible to establish approximately how many women held university posts at different periods, where they held them, in what subjects and at what levels. By the tedious process of counting the names of staff in the Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, and by using the results of such a count, and supports possible interpretations. The results show that the position of women academics has not changed much to last century. Indeed, in some universities, it seems to have deteriorated. The tables show the distribution of women in different subjects and at different levels, and in the numbers of women in different subjects. It is inferences to indicate the proportions of women in each subject as the only way of finding this information is by counting all the names. Therefore, the number of women in each subject was counted, but it is impracticable to indicate the proportion of women in each subject as the only way of finding the proportion of women in each subject is by counting all the names.

Several of the women at all periods were married, but it is impossible to tell how many. The academic profession as a whole, unlike schoolteaching, did not operate a marriage-bar in the interwar period, although it is possible that some universities may have done so. Blackstone and Fulton (1976) have shown that marriage cannot account for all the discrepancies between the salaries and ranks of men and women. They conclude that ‘sex discrimination is the villain’. However, a relatively high proportion of academic women do not marry. Williams et al. (1973, p.376) found that 80 per cent of the men but only 42 per cent of the women were married, and that of these women nearly one-third had no children.

I will discuss first the distribution of women between types of university, then the ranks they held, and finally the subjects they taught. It will be seen from Tables 11.1-11.4 that in all periods the number of women holding university posts at Oxford and Cambridge was far below the national average, whereas it was twice the national average at the young civic universities. Wales was also consistently above average and Scotland consistently below. However, Williams et al. in their survey undertaken in 1968 found that 15 per cent of these in Scottish universities were women (1973, p.25), which was substantially above the national average. London tended to have more women than the average, but women there were clearly helped by the presence of women’s colleges. The registration of the small number of women at Oxford and Cambridge lies in the long tradition of those two universities to admit women to membership or full membership. It is not clear why women did so well at the young civic universities and in Wales, but it is unlikely that personal choice by itself is the explanation. The young civic universities and the Welsh colleges had fewer things in common: they were small, new, and often in relatively small and out-of-the-way places. They would have been less attractive to candidates for university posts likely to succeed elsewhere. Until after the Second World War, the pay of
### Table 11.1

Numbers, ranks and types of universities of women academy, 1952-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Rels., etc.</th>
<th>% of women holding senior posts</th>
<th>% of women in all staff</th>
<th>Total women</th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>% of women in total staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All universities</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>3,135</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding Oxford</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>2,791</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old firms</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University colleges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, non-English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3,135</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No women held university posts at Oxford or Cambridge.

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, 1954.
### Table 11.2

Numbers, ranks and types of universities of women academics in Great Britain, 1921-2

| University                      | Profs | Dil. | % of women holding senior posts | L. | MC | Other | Total women | Total staff | % of women staff |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------------|----|    |       |             |             |                |
| All universities                | 13    | 14   | 9.9                             | 326| 36 | 190   | 6,037       | 9.7         |
| excluding Oxbridge             | 13    | 14   | 7.0                             | 325| 36 | 188   | 3,653       | 10.6        |
| Oxbridge                       | N/A   | N/A  | N/A                            | 1  | 1  | 2     | 304         | 0.5         |
| London                         | 6     | 1    | 24.1                           | 63 | 8  | 1     | 874         | 9.5         |
| Old Colleges                   | 2     | 3    | 2.4                            | 224| 26 | 145   | 1,488       | 9.8         |
| University colleges:           |       |      |                                 |    |    |       |             |             |                |
| Exeter, Reading, Nott'm, Southm |       |      |                                 | 49 | 6  | 53    | 244         | 21.7        |
| Wales                          | 2     | 4.4  |                                | 38 | 8  | 25    | 910         | 16.6        |
| Scotland                       | 68    | 63   |                                | 53 | 8  | 25    | 794         | 8.6         |

Source: Commonwealth Universities Handbook, 1922.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All universities</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>5,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excluding Oxbridge</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>4,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, 1931.
### TABLE 11.4 Numbers and ranks of academic women in Great Britain, 1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Profs</th>
<th>Rdrs</th>
<th>% women holding academic grades</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>AL/O</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total women</th>
<th>Total staff</th>
<th>% of women staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All universities</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>10,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excluding Oxbridge</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>9,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxbridge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>2,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old style</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>2,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University colleges, newest founding, <em>P</em>’s, Durham, and Young cities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales (incl. Lampeter)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1,977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No rank of Senior Lecturer at these universities.*

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, 1952.
university teachers, outside Oxford and Cambridge and including that of some professors, was low and was a matter of some concern to the University Grants Committee. Halsey and Trow (1971, p.153) show the proportion of academics holding senior posts (that is Senior Lecturer and above) for all universities except Oxford and Cambridge as being consistently around 30 per cent from 1910-11 to 1968-9. The UGC statistics show that the proportion of women academics holding senior posts in 1966-7 was 24 per cent, and as 21.5 per cent in 1975-6. Thus, it is only at London in 1950-1 that the proportion of women in senior posts corresponds at all to the national average. But at London the proportion of women holding senior posts was consistently above the national average for women. Table 11.5 gives the details.

### Table 11.5 Women academics at London and in Great Britain, 1912-51

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>London</th>
<th>All universities</th>
<th>% of women at London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbooks, 1914, 1922, 1931, 1951.

collages and the mixed colleges are considered separately, it becomes clear that the number of women holding senior posts as a proportion of the total number of senior staff was the same in the mixed colleges and slightly higher in the women’s colleges. However, as a proportion of all staff, senior women were 10 per cent in the women’s colleges compared with 5 per cent in the mixed colleges. Women’s colleges seem therefore to have been important in providing posts for academic women. It is as if men and women constituted two different populations for promotion and that in the mixed college only a fixed proportion, under 4 per cent, of all staff might be women. Such a theory is not supported by the figures, and it seems likely that about 10 per cent of staff could be women. It seems unlikely, however, that the existence of women’s colleges would lead to benefit from the existence of women’s colleges; however, comparable prospects for women did not exist at Oxford or Cambridge. Women’s colleges may have seemed attractive because that at London in 1950-1, the women were concentrated in the women’s colleges: 60 per cent of women staff were to be found in 9.1 per
cent of all the posts in the University of London (that is the pro-
portion of women in the women’s colleges and the proportion of
women’s colleges to the total number of colleges). In 1912, 15.3 per
cent of the posts in the women’s colleges and colleges were held by
women. This latter figure is a little better than for Oxford and Cambridge and a
little worse than that for Scotland.

By 1951 the proportion of women academics had risen slightly,
with the increase being attributable largely to the increase in the pro-
portion of women at London, Oxford and Cambridge. At London, women
constituted 15.3 per cent of the staff of the women’s colleges, and 30.3 per cent of the
staff of the mixed schools and colleges, excluding medical schools.
There were women in all institutions, including the very small
medical schools. The distribution of women in the University of
London continued to be better than that for Oxford and Cambridge, and a
little worse than that for Scotland.

By 1951 the proportion of women academics had risen slightly,
the increase being attributable largely to the increase in the pro-
portion of women at London, Oxford and Cambridge. At London, women
constituted 15.3 per cent of the staff of the women’s colleges, and 30.3 per cent of the
staff of the mixed schools and colleges, excluding medical schools.
There were women in all institutions, including the very small
medical schools. The distribution of women in the University of
London continued to be better than that for Oxford and Cambridge, and a
little worse than that for Scotland.

As regards rank, the proportion of women in senior posts did
not increase in two decades, but the distribution changed. Women’s
position improved at Oxford, Cambridge, Wales and the Scottish
universities, but deteriorated at London. It looks as though at
Oxford, Cambridge and Wales women already in the system were being
recognized, but that in England generally women’s opportunities
were not improving. After 1951 the proportions (both representa-
tion and distribution) of women in senior posts in Scotland con-
tinued to improve, but in 1975 were still below the national
average, whereas in Wales they declined slightly. The 36 insti-
tutions in and near London were the only ones where there were
women’s colleges or where women were concentrated in any of the
medical schools, and their presence in senior posts was propor-
tional to their representation, although women in senior posts increased by 0.3 per cent, from 12.1
per cent of all women to 12.4 per cent of all women, a gain of
0.3 per cent, whereas the distribution of men increased from
21.4 per cent to 21.7 per cent of all men, 2.4 per cent.

Women have held senior posts in the full range of subjects.
The first woman they held in 1912 was in botany, education and
English; in 1930 women held such posts in mathematics, physical sciences,
and in 1939 in zoology. The range increased to 1939, with 11 women
holding such posts in 11 subjects. In 1951, women held posts in all the
main subject groups, including mathematics and engineering.

Women have held senior posts in nearly all subject groups, and
in 1975 in all subject groups, including mathematics and engineering.

Tables 11.6, 11.7 and 11.8 show the distribution of women by
subject at various periods. In Table 11.6, the figures for 1912–13
and 1930–1 are drawn from the Commonwealth Universities
Yearbooks, whereas those for 1966 and 1975 (which also include the represen-
tation of women in subject groups) are drawn from the University
### Table 11.6  Numbers, distribution and representation of women and men academics in subject groups in selected years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Groups</th>
<th>1962</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities, etc.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2,805</td>
<td>2,782</td>
<td>3,281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject group</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Univs.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of Univs. w. women</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering, Vocational, etc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Administration, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of universities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Owing to the way in which the Commonwealth Universities Yearbook is compiled, London is counted as one university throughout; Scotland is counted as one university throughout; University of St Andrews, Dundee, is counted as a separate university throughout. When they are listed, St David's Lampeter, the Welsh School of Medicine and the Royal Technical College, Glasgow, are included as separate institutions.

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbooks, 1914, 1922, 1931, 1952.
TABLE 11.8 Women academics in selected subjects, 1912-1951

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology (incl. Botany)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany (inc. Agric.)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiology/Botany</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology (incl. Natural History)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoology (inc. Natural History)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry (incl. Tech. Chemistry)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commonwealth Universities Yearbooks, 1914, 1922, 1931, 1952. Grants Committee returns. They are not therefore exactly comparable because the UGC figures do not include part-time staff, whereas the Yearbook figures do include some part-time staff. The figures give an order of magnitude as between different subjects and as between men and women, and can be compared on this basis.

The decline in the distribution and representation of women in education has been compensated for by an increase in medicine. It seems probable that women held a much higher proportion of posts in education in 1912 and probably in 1930 than they do now, but the information is too meagre to be able to say with any certainty that they did. The decline in the distribution and representation of women in medicine to have been a more important subject in the past than it is now. Women have always held a proportion of posts in medicine, and in 1975 held 26.2 per cent of such posts. Nearly one third of women in 1912 and almost a half of women in 1940 have been in medicine, figures which are not to be compared with those for men. The change in this distribution is expressed by Herlitz and Trow (1971, p.158) that women were concentrated in arts and social sciences. It is true that the representation of women in the science-based subjects is under 10 per cent, but only about 10 per cent of academics are women in any event, and the representation of women in medicine increased between 1940 and 1975, but not in the shift away from science towards social sciences was lost to women.
continue to make very slow progress in engineering and slightly faster progress in medicine.

Another and slightly less laborious way of obtaining an indication of the representation of women in different subjects is to count the number of universities where women held posts in the various subjects. Table 11.7 presents this information by subject groups. The first column for each year shows the number of universities teaching at least one of the subjects within the subject group. The second, the number of universities teaching at least one of the subjects in that group. It is apparent from the numbers shown in Table 11.4 and the numbers of departments shown in Table 11.7 that women were not to be found in large numbers in engineering and other vocational faculties in accordance with common expectation. What is more surprising is the small number of university departments with women in the social sciences subject group. This group compares business and management, geography, social policy, sociology, politics, history, administration, law, psychology, sociology and social anthropology. These subjects tended to be "late developers" in British universities, with the exception of geography and law, which is also a predominantly male subject where no women were to be found in 1912 or 1921.

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20 There are important differences within subject groups, both in the numbers of women and the dates at which they penetrated the subject. Table 11.8 gives the details. In 1912, there were more women in botany than in any other subject except education or English. The absence or the small number of biologists is surprising. Among the humanities, French is a "late developer" but had considerably more women than English in 1930. Women were, however, to be found in less expected and less common subjects, such as glass technology, meteorology, econometrics, geography and Arabic and African languages. By 1930 women were represented within most subject groups in nearly all universities and in most departments. History and mathematics, however, were "late developers" and women in these disciplines were few. The increase in the latter group is attributable to expansion in economics and geography as well as in social studies, social work and sociology. French was the subject which dealt with an increasing number of women in 1930, but the number of departments was still small. Mathematics departments were much more quickly than before the Second World War to have women members. Women had begun to obtain more posts in engineering, technological and other vocational subjects, although still relatively few. Thus, the total proportions and levels of women were increased in most subjects during the period, except for history and mathematics, in which the number of universities was still very low. In particular, they had assumed more subjects, but they still had not made much progress in law or engineering.

It is impossible without knowing more about the size and scope of subjects at university level at different periods to attempt an explanation of these differences. It is, however, possible to put forward hypotheses for the differences as well as for the distribution of women between universities and their lack of promotion.
The data, incomplete though they are, raise many questions. These questions can be divided into three groups: those concerning the rank of women, and those concerning their distribution among subjects. The first group of questions has been briefly discussed and it is not proposed to say more here. The second and third groups raise issues concerning social-psychological pressures and access to power.

It will have been noted that the proportion of women reached a certain level, about 10 per cent unevenly distributed between subjects, and in senior posts about 5 per cent, and then seems to have got stuck. The data themselves and published work (BSA, 1974; Blackstone and Fulton, 1975, 1976) cast doubt on the notion that women 'choose' to participate in the academic profession in the particular ways in which they do. And if they do, the meaning of their 'choice' would itself be problematical. Most people have little choice about their first job, least of all members of disadvantaged and visible minorities; and that first job disproportionately influences subsequent opportunities.

The data throw no light on when women were recruited or whether they were recruited when few men were available or at periods of expansion. Some constantly able women obtained their posts only at a time or in a place where no suitable man could be found (Epstein, 1970, p.173ff; Hochschild, 1975; Deem, 1978, p.96). However, women's abilities may be made use of by appointing them to those temporary research posts where they will do the work which will make men's reputations. Wives also often perform this role (Glastonbury, 1978).

Once in tenured posts, neither men nor women can be sacked without considerable trouble and expense. Advancement is said to depend on publication, research, performance of administrative duties and teaching, in that order. Recent work in this country and some other countries is reported that this need not be a major problem if grants are available. Women, however, are often the least well funded. But, however intellectually productive, they are likely to be denied both posts and promotion.

Some women can be discouraged; and their working lives can be made unpleasant, with the intention of encouraging them to resign. Academic women may be especially vulnerable to such pressures because they are acting contrary to the expectations of society: they are exceptions, possibly "abnormal". They can be isolated from such intellectual and scholarly life as goes on within the academic community, so that their intellectual development is restricted. Some women who have chosen to be academic workers (Bennett, 1970, p.192; Fowles, 1970; Strain, 1970, p.192) have found that they are unable to publish, to establish themselves as scholars or to become well known. Some women have been unable to develop their ideas to the same extent as others. They may then feel that their work is taken seriously or not seriously as well as that of their male colleagues (BSA, 1975; Sommer, 1967, p.192ff).
For the consistent pursuit of scholarly research many people need a supportive environment. Teaching, administration, external interests such as public and voluntary work, the day-to-day pressures of ordinary living and of keeping friendships in repair; all demand time and energy. But research requires continuous time and an ability to postpone immediate demands. Women academics, who are often in a position of having to juggle to prove themselves, must necessarily find it difficult to postpone immediate demands for long-term ends of uncertain outcome— for the outcome of research cannot be known. Furthermore, sex-role stereotypes and conventions require women to pay attention to immediate demands and to be conscientious about routine work. A woman may find herself having to choose between remaining at home, with a fixed routine of domestic work and the expectations of society, or of pursuing fully her professional career and research interests, but in isolation and in conflict with her immediate environment. ‘The men in this institution expect women to be seen (if they are pretty) but not heard. I am not pretty, I am heard and I am heard of—and they don’t like me’, one woman remarked. In substance, women academics face a dilemma similar to that of Isotta Nogarola.

It is perhaps understandable if an unmarried woman with intellectual interests in a provincial town opts for good relations with colleagues; otherwise, whom is she able to talk to? She does not have the companionship of husband and children. Her colleagues are likely to be members of the non-university organizations— civic, political, religious, voluntary, intellectual — where she might otherwise seek congenial companionship. Such factors may lessen the productivity of single women and help to explain the finding of Williams et al. (1973, p.399) that married women had published more than single women. Doing research is a venture into the unknown, and inevitably is seldom carried out from the beginning in the most economical way. But much can be learnt from trying out ideas on sympathetic colleagues. Great commitment is needed to carry through a research project largely in isolation, as all work on PhD students shows (for example, Wall and scratch, 1968; Rudd and Hatch, 1968).

It is possible, even probable, that women overestimate the extent and depth of scholarly talk among men. It is understandable that women who have had to be very committed to their work and scholarly interests to have undertaken research and to have overcome all the barriers to holding a university post may be less likely to believe that they are included in the system of scholarly talk when they enter the university. But for some men, obtaining a university post may be the culmination of a natural progression of being good at schoolwork and of being delivered successfully from good school to university, to post-graduate work and so on to a permanent position and at least some promotion. In other words, Isotta Nogarola’s problem is in good or academic parlance, a problem of academic juniority and of academic juniority at all stages. Communications (1972, pp.341,400, read
that women needed encouragement to take up an academic career. Furthermore, able men have a much wider effective choice of careers than do able women, and many of these careers offer greater rewards of pay, power and prestige for hard work than does university teaching. University teaching appears as one of the more open careers for women. Nevertheless, the refusal to take a woman's work seriously, joking and outright hostility can all be used to keep down those few women who get in, and so to keep down the numbers in senior posts, and the numbers who apply for posts at all.

The distribution of women between subjects raises other issues. Unfortunately, there are no data available showing the disciplinary breakdown for individual subjects as opposed to subject-groups. The data do not show, for example, whether the large number of women botanists reflects large botany departments, although subjective impressions suggest that it does not. It is not possible in the space of this chapter to examine the relationship between the numbers of undergraduate and post-graduate students and the academic staff in the various subjects. It seems unlikely, however, that small numbers of students can wholly account for the extraordinarily small number of staff in some subjects, if only because academic careers last so much longer than student careers.

The decline in the proportion of women in education is very striking. It has been suggested that this decline reflects the increasingly academic development of the subject, but it is not certain that it is so. The academic side of education departments seems to have grown faster than the methods side, and women seem not to have maintained their proportion of new posts. However, a count of staff, excluding research staff, at one major education department suggested that women's share of methods posts declined both proportionately and in absolute numbers, but their share of academic posts increased slightly in both ways.10 If there was a development that occurred generally (and further work needs to be done to establish this), then the following hypothesis might explain it. Methods lecturers are recruited from schoolteachers, and for schoolteachers the education departments of universities have high status and prestige. For academics, education departments, rightly or wrongly, tend to have low status and therefore are less attractive for this and no doubt other reasons to those who could expect to obtain appointments in mainstream departments. Able women have more difficulty in obtaining appointments than men and may therefore be more likely to apply for and to accept appointments in education departments.11

There is no study of the sex-stereotyping of subjects in Britain such as Feldman (1974, p.43) has done for the USA. But it is clear from Table 11.8 that sex-stereotyping is not a sufficient explanation of the different proportions of men and women. Similarity, concern with people (Bernard, 1964, p.83; Epstein, 1970, p.154) will not do. Bernard also suggests that women have made their major contributions in areas and at levels where there are definitive bodies of knowledge, and relatively little controversy; the great social critics had been academic men (p.124); but if women's work is not taken seriously, women will not be perceived
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is great social criticism. Kramer, in his introduction, suggests
that women have been poorly represented in political science
because it emphasizes power demands. (Bernard, 1964, p.xx).
Subjects may be related to power in various ways. They can be
these works, within the university, involve the requirements of
large sums of money or the deployment of large staffs; for example,
engineering and medicine. They can be concerned with the study of
power and with instruments of power; for example, politics, econo-
mics and law. They can involve teaching those who will later
exercise power, for example, businessmen and lawyers. Within a
wider context, powerful subjects can be those which influence the
ideological climate of society. For example, theology in the past
and sexology in the recent past. All such subjects concentrate on
the control and development of a subject which involves its ideolog-
ical concern, once in such circumstances with those in senior positions,
especially those in professional and head of department posts.
Promotion to such posts depends both on an ability to do the job
(but this is not necessarily the critical prerequisite) and on power.
Within a wider context, powerful subjects can be those which influence the
ideological climate of society; for example, theology in the past
and sexology in the recent past. All such subjects concentrate on
the control and development of a subject which involves its ideolog-
ical concern, once in such circumstances with those in senior positions,
especially those in professional and head of department posts.

D.E. Smith (1978) tellingly explores some of these
relationships and finds ‘power and authority in the educational
process are the prerogatives of men’ (p.289).
The subjects in which the proportions of women are low tend to
be those which are powerful in one or more of the ways already
referred to. A technological society makes this true of education.
As Touraine (1974) has shown, access to many positions of power
requires ability and a high degree of technological knowledge of
the sort obtained in higher education. Furthermore, access to
higher education, especially in Britain, requires good schooling.
Hence the training of teachers becomes increasingly important.
Again following Touraine, it is inevitable that universities
should reproduce the social hierarchy. It is therefore not
surprising that women have not increased over half a century. It
seems as though the struggles at the turn of the century were
necessary to obtain for women a 10 per cent token share. The
Women’s Liberation Movement needs both to safeguard this share and
increase it.

The Women’s Movement and the development of women’s studies now
provide help that was largely lacking in earlier centuries.
Although women’s religious houses in the Middle Ages and women’s
colleges from the late nineteenth century did provide respect for
women’s learning, the association with religion or charity meant
that scholarly activity was not political. Women’s studies today
endeavors to combine scholarship and a political base, not only
in other countries in the seventeenth century. The development
of women’s studies provides a forum for intellectual discussion.
Not that, women’s studies is concerned with the ideological
climate of society.
The first issue of the Commonwealth Universities Yearbook appeared in 1914, and included for each university a report for the year 1912-13 and a staff list. The Yearbook has since appeared annually, except during the two world wars. The staff lists normally show names of staff with their rank or status under departments or with an indication of subject. Part-time and temporary staff are often included. The Yearbook has generally followed the usual convention of listing men with surnames and women with first names. In the earlier years, some male first names and the titles Mrs or Miss were sometimes included.

The Yearbooks I selected for examination were 1914, 1922, 1931 and 1952. To bring the analysis up to date, I also examined the UGC statistics for 1966, 1969, 1972 and 1975. Only the data for 1966 and 1975 are reported, as there was no change in direction in the intervening years. I chose all the dates to accord as far as possible with the conventional 10-year intervals, but to take account also of events which I believe to be relevant to the proportion of women in universities during this period: the two wars and the slump.

I counted the number of women by university and rank, and listed each department and subject in which they appeared for each of the four years. For the women holding senior posts, I noted the subject for each woman. I counted the number of men in each university for each of the four years. For both men and women, I counted every name, regardless of status and whether part-time or temporary, but excluded any names listed twice wherever possible. Where the list showed, for example, 8 research assistants without any names, the 8 were entirely omitted, as there was no means of knowing how many were men and how many women.

I compared the figures resulting from my count with some UGC statistics for one year for some universities, but the differences were so great for some of these universities and were clearly not attributable to the inclusion of part-time staff (as the UGC return gave separate figures for these) that I could see no purpose in attempting to reconcile the two. My figures are consistently higher than those of the UGC.

The UGC return gives separate figures for women than I could see no purpose in attempting to reconcile the two. My figures are consistently higher than those of the UGC.

The UGC return shows that the numbers of university teachers rose from 2,606 in 1923-4 to 3,907 in 1937-8. There has also been a rise from 2,606 in 1923-4 to more than 38,000 in 1975. The figures I have compiled offer an order of magnitude, a basis for further work, and an indication of what might be fruitful questions to ask.

NOTES
1 Girton College was the first of the women’s colleges to be established at either of the ancient universities, but Cambridge was the last university in Britain to exclude women from full membership—which it did until 1948.
2 See, for example, Kohn (1965), McWilliams-Tullberg (1975).
3 See Appendix for a note on the methodology.
Chapter 11

4. The term Young Civic is taken from Williams et al. (1973, p.433). The schools in Scotland are:

- Edinburgh
- Aberdeen
- Dundee
- Glasgow
- St Andrews

In Wales there are 6 schools:

- Cardiff
- Bangor
- Swansea
- Cardiff
- Aberystwyth
- Swansea

In England:

- Old civic: Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Manchester Institute of Technology, Newcastle
- Young civic: Exeter, Hull, Keele, Leicester, Nottingham, Reading, Southampton

5. Williams et al. (1973, p.442) chose their sample from Dundee, Edinburgh and St Andrews, which, according to my data, had a rather better proportion of women than Aberdeen, Glasgow and the Royal Technical College, Glasgow (later Strathclyde). But their data is 17 years older and the position of women could have changed in the interval.

6. Salaries ranged as follows, according to the Report for 1923-4, HMSO (1925, p.30):

- Professors: £300-£2,000, av. £977
- Readers: £250-£1,000
- Lecturers: £150-£800
- Ass. lecturers and demonstrators: £120-£500, av. £607

7. The proportion rose to 11.6 per cent if the theological, divinity and veterinary schools were excluded.

8. Halsey and Trow (1971, p.158) were relying on the figures quoted by Ingrid Sommerkorn in her thesis (1967, p.111). Her figures do not entirely support their view. The first figures showing the subject distribution of men and women academics appear in 'Statistics of Education' for the year 1965-6 which was published in 1968, and would therefore have been available to the authors of the 1971 report. However, the figures quoted by Halsey and Trow were not based on these figures. In 1967, the figures for the academic professions were published in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway.

9. In that institution, and excluding all research staff, in 1966 about one-third of the methods staff were women, and in 1975 about one-quarter. Of the women staff, in 1966 about one-sixth were on the academic side and in 1975 about one-quarter. The numbers are small and the classification difficult, so these figures must be treated with caution.

10. Several women in this position are known to the author.
The experiences of women graduates in the labour market

Lynne Chisholm and Diana Woodward

'And we were told there were five things a woman graduate could do: teach, the Civil Service, the armed forces, secretarial work— I can't remember what the fifth was... and you didn't know yourself if you were capable of going into something which seemed a very male preserve.' (1960 woman graduate respondent)

Out of date? Over a decade later (in 1974) the Working Party on Equal Opportunities for Women of the Standing Conference of University Appointments Services reported as follows:

Legislation making it compulsory for posts to be advertised to both sexes does not mean that women are more likely to be appointed to the posts offered (response of one engineering company to working party enquiries).

One gets the impression that a considerable number of women graduates have limited career ambitions, do not want to find themselves in highly-competitive situations... I am sure these attitudes develop at a very early age. (University Appointments Officer's report)

There is discrimination right through the education system... University and polytechnic careers advisors often are involved in remedial work, or find themselves advising women students whose prospects have been blunted by poor advice at school... which has narrowed their field of choice to the traditional... women's occupations. (Working party proposals)

This report concluded that women graduates who are actively and consciously challenging discrimination are in the minority; most accept the barriers or give up after rejection from one or two non-traditional job applications. Where they did succeed and succeed well, they appeared to do so because they were probably a self-selected group with characteristics not shared by the majority of their peers.

Material focusing on the interaction between higher education and the labour market specifically for women is scarce on both sides of the Atlantic. This shortage of useful work in the fields of occupational choice, labour market structure (especially occupational segregation) and career development results essentially
from the traditional stance adopted by occupational sociology:

women are either ignored, assumed to fall within the terms of a general analysis which on closer inspection proves to be predicated upon purely male experience, or are treated as second-class citizens with ‘special problems’ (Claude-Mathieu, 1977; BSA, 1975).

On an empirical level, the majority of the research originates from the USA and deals largely with the aspirations and expectations of college women: in effect, orientated towards the ‘home-work dilemma’ (Angrist and Almquist, 1975; Baruch, 1972; Ginzberg et al., 1966; Wolfson, 1976).

Educational channelling and sex-role socialization at home and school result in girls and women entering a narrower range of occupations with lower aspirations and expectations for progress (Byrne, 1978; Levy, 1972; Marini and Greenberger, 1978; Mathews and Tiedeman, 1964; McKeefery-Reynolds, 1977; Oxford University Department of Educational Studies, 1971; Rosen and Aneshensel, 1978; Wait and Dye, 1977; and chapters in this volume).

Further, the existence of a sexually-segregated dual labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976) is an important structural factor in the explanation of women’s employment patterns: women work at a narrow range of tasks within a narrow range of occupations, in lower-status badly-paid positions offering little opportunity for career progression (Hunt, 1968; Epstein, 1970; Robinson, 1978).

Women suffer both overt and covert discrimination in recruitment, promotion, salary and day-to-day interaction at work (Hunt, 1975; Hartnett, 1978; Wolff, 1976; Valentich and Gripton, 1978; Chiplin and Sloane, 1976; Hagan and Kahn, 1975; and others).

Graduate women are no exception: most enter teaching or public service occupations traditionally dominated by women; they achieve less in purely career terms; they are discriminated against; and they appear to manage their careers less well than their male peers because of a complex of structural and situational constraints, together with the effects of micro-psychosocial barriers which are reflected in women’s typical lack of self-confidence in their abilities (Chisholm, 1978).

The examination of the progress and experiences of 1960 British women graduates expands upon the issues raised above. The extent and patterning of their career development over fifteen years not only demonstrates sharp disparities between women and men graduates, but also illuminates the radically different contexts in which the two groups approach and experience the labour market.

The material presented arises from successive phases of the longitudinal ESRC-financed ‘National Survey of 1960 Graduates’ questionnaire distributed in 1964 and 1973, and in-depth interview data collected from a sub-sample of the cohort in 1975.

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE COHORT

In fact 50 per cent of the women respondents graduated with an arts or social science degree, whereas 62 per cent of the men did (Kelsall, 1969, table 2.1), the broad occupational
destinations of the two groups were bound to diverge. Many women 
graduates, by virtue of the subject of their degree, were automat-
ically excluded from a wide range of technical and scientific jobs, 
especially within industry. Yet even those women who did graduate 
in science or technology were unlikely to enter such occupations: 
only 17 per cent were first employed in industry, whilst 59 per 
cent went into the education sector. Almost half of their 
similarly-qualified male peers entered industry - a sharp contrast 
to women graduates in science and technology (Kelsall, et al., 
table 4.5).

The vast majority of both women and men graduates (86 and 80 per 
cent respectively) first took posts in three sectors: public admin-
istration, education, and industry. Public administration drew 15 
per cent of the women and 12 per cent of the men. But whereas 
the remaining 68 per cent of the men were split equally between ed-
ucation and industry, all but 9 per cent of the remaining women fell 
within the education sector. In other words, over three-fifths of 
1960 women graduates went into administering (new material) or 
lecturing.

By 1966 there had been some movement between sectors, in favour 
of education, which now employed 71 per cent of women and 43 per 
cent of men graduates in the sample. Industry was the loser in 
this process. The men graduates, however, were more likely than 
the women to have remained in the same employment sector over 
the period between their first job and that in 1966. In particular, 
the women were more likely than the men to have transferred 
from education or private practice. Whilst clearly a smaller proportion 
shifted to education, men also transferred to the public administrative 
sector (Mellish et al., pp.52-6).

Such changes continued in the same vein between 1966 and 1973, 
with education being the most popular sector. As people gradually 'settle 
away', men and women graduates employed in education increased slightly (to 73 and 
43 per cent respectively); industry continued to lose its recruits (by 1973 employing only 22 per cent of the men and 4 per cent of the 
women respondents); public administration remained virtually 
stable. (3)

Whilst all graduates tend to be concentrated in a few sectors 
of the economy, then, women are even more so classified: their 
early educational and general socialization experiences, which 
left 60 per cent of the women to graduate in an arts discipline, 
background and interest, are likely to be reflected in their choice of 
employment sector. The data suggest (as reported by the interviewees) that a 
significant proportion of those women who entered careers in 
fields other than teaching encountered difficulties which led them 
to make a career move into education. Interestingly, many of these traditionally "feminine" and female-dominated 
sectors of education and social work are also those in which 
women graduates are almost always numerically fewer than men.
graduates in any occupational group; there are fewer of them, employed or not. Unfortunately, their representation is always less than proportionate. The women graduates employed in public administration in 1973, 62 per cent were in local government and 26 per cent in hospital services. Together with those employed in museums and libraries, these three are the only university occupational categories where women graduates are disproportionately overrepresented in comparison with those of their male peers employed in public administration. Within the civil service to refine the classifications still further, graduate women proportionately exceed their male fellows only in the lower-status executive grades (which offer fewer opportunities for high-flying careers).

Most economically active women graduates were and are employed in the education sector; but they predominately predominate in the less prestigious and less well-paid categories. Almost two-fifths of the men employed in this sector in 1973 were in the universities, but only 16 per cent of the women were. Women graduates are in higher education employment, mainly they are far more likely to be found teaching (at any level) or in administrative roles. Elsewhere in the sector, over 20 per cent of the women graduates employed in educational research were to be found 15 per cent of the women employed in the sector in 1973 held state primary teaching posts. In the less prestigious FE/HE institutions, only 10 per cent of the women employed in education overall in 1973, and 17 per cent of the men. Where men graduates are in high-flying careers.

Outside public administration and education, the numbers of 1960 women graduates economically active in 1973 were so small as to be swamped by their male peers. In the engineering industry, 99 per cent of the 1960 graduates employed are men, although the branch accounted for less than a third of the male respondents employed in the industrial sector. Those few women in industry are to be found in the branches including big combines like ICI, Unilever, the breweries, Kodak and Beecham. The very scale and diversified character of these undertakings mean that women graduates can be absorbed into more 'acceptable' areas: research, personnel, etc.

In the commercial sector, minute numbers of 1960 women graduates are employed in banking, insurance and finance, market research, advertising, and PR work. There may well have been some change during the 1960s in the latter three groups, due to expansion both of these branches themselves and of social science courses at degree level. But if subsequent cohorts follow the pattern of the 1960 cohort, women employed in these fields will remain those of below average earnings and career prospects. The structural demands of, for example, the occupations of advertising executive are such that require "the sale of one's soul" and, indeed, of a degree typically incompatible with responsible family life. Women graduates in these fields are likely to have left their male peers only in the traditional fields of administrative distribution and in the service trades. In 1973, there were no 1960 women graduate respondents who were practising architects, accountants, surveyors, or consultant engineers. There were seven practising women solicitors (100 men), and three women barristers (18 men).

The graduate labour market structure is as strictly sexually-
segregated in the general labour market in the situation does not appear to have altered over the years since this cohort left university (Standing Conference of University Appointments Services, 1974). Our data also suggest a retrenchment over time; 1960 women graduates have withdrawn ever more solidly into traditional fields of employment. This has not been the case for men graduates; if anything, by relinquishing industry and moving into education, they have experienced a liberalisation of occupational fields. The findings for the title, occupational segregation by sex has remained high through this century. Traditionally sex-biased occupations have apparently become more resistant to female entry, whereas traditionally female-dominated occupations have become less resistant to male entry. (6)

SINGLE GRADUATE WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career achievement

Throughout the period 1960-75, single women have been less likely than married women to be employed in the education sector, though the difference is not great. (7) As early as 1964 women whose first posts had been in the minority sectors of communications, private professional practice, the armed forces or the churches, had tended to leave these fields within five years of graduation (Standing Conference of University Appointments Services, 1974, p.61). Initially this suggests a quality of 'innovation' amongst some of these women remaining single and not entering education. The 1975 interview material collected from single graduate women did not substantiate this notion; but we did not select specifically for those in non-traditional fields (although in practice, those employed in such fields are likely to be found in a small number of 'female' branches).

Of these 33 interviewees (14 per cent) were employed in education; fewer than we would expect, but the small size of the sample can account for such imbalances. (8) Their occupations were as follows:

- Schoolteaching (N = 6)
- Civil service (N = 3)
- Social work (N = 2)
- Librarianship (N = 2)
- Transport engineering (N = 1)
- Admin. (govt.) (N = 3)

In comparison with a group of their male peers (N = 50, all married) also interviewed in 1975, the single women had adopted markedly less in both status and salary terms. Only four of the women could be termed high achievers, whilst two-fifths of the men were. The 1973 median income for these married men was £3,550 p.a.; for the single women, £3,000 p.a. (10) The lesser achievement of the women is partially due to the restricted and stereotyped range of occupations they chose to enter. They did not enter industry, which, for this sample of graduate men at least, offered high rewards in both salary and status. Why they do so is as yet unclear; they may be trained as physicists and the area, 1962; Arrow and Barbaresco, 1974. Most probably for the
education sector does not compensate: teaching and lecturing in Britain structurally provide few opportunities for high achievement (Hilsum and Start, 1974; Williams et al., 1974).

Yet those single women employed outside the education sector are prone to have suffered, both in terms of climbing career ladders and the diminution of earning potential (contrary to the impressions formed by university appointments officers noted earlier). In university teaching in particular it is a secure but relatively small paid occupation for well-qualified, for women, overqualified graduates. If both women and men are to realize a good chance of approximating to the earning potential of even the lowest-paid of their male peers in professional occupations, they should enter teaching or another of the public service professions. In having done precisely that, they are exhibiting a pragmatic rationality (Chisholm, 1978, p.329).

The single women’s social class backgrounds were as high as the married men’s, if not higher. While this is not surprising, no edition of UCCA statistics will reveal, it has been known for some time that social class inequalities in university entrance are more marked for women and also for the single women interviewed. In the interview sample came from at least routine non-manual families, whereas this was the case for almost all the single women (92 per cent). The single women were also awarded equally good degrees. In that both of these factors—social class background and degree class—could be argued perhaps to influence (in differing ways) the likelihood of career success, we can conclude that so far as these factors are concerned, their lesser career achievements cannot be attributed to such factors. Interestingly, the data suggest that social class background does not function to aid career development for women in the same manner as it does for men. As Epstein (1973) postulates, sex acts as an overriding dominant variable.

The single women also held as many extra qualifications on top of their degree as did the married men. Such qualifications are of most use when specifically related to the occupations held in that, the single women tended to hold them. We suspect this reflects a higher level of ambivalence at graduation over future career plans. American college women graduating in 1968 were reported by Angrist and Almquist (1975, p.80) to display precisely this quality:

The study class reflects the cumulative effects of a college education. They feel and express the push towards the work-world, picking a field, etc…. But they have to mesh these multiple interests in terms of the larger societal expectations for women. Thus when a contemporary orientation: they are indecisive, vague, weighing out alternatives, stalling for time. The authors report this as the cornerstone of their findings. Single women tended to take up academic diplomas leading to no professional qualification or specific vocation, otherwise they pursued secretarial diplomas. Their motivations to do so are telling:

"My parents were very insistent that I did it…. I needed something practical to add a vocational edge to a non-vocational degree…. I didn't want to do it but I could see it was a sensible thing to do."
Girls usually get into publishing with the aid of shorthand and typing. My first job wasn't in any way a secretarial post, but... 

"My first employers said, "Yes... you must do a secretarial course before you come here." So I told them I didn't want to do secretarial work, so they said, "No, no, this isn't secretarial work."

One final point about the effects of degree class and extra qualifications upon career progress: it is frequently said that women need to show themselves to be positively better than male competitors to achieve similar rank; Hunt (1975, p. 85) evidences this. Whilst for the married men in this sample neither factor appeared to be related to career success, the four high-achieving single women all had good degrees (first/upper second), and all possessed more than one extra qualification, each of which was vocationally related.

Discrimination against women

A fuller exposition is detailed elsewhere (Chisholm, 1978); it suffices to say that a considerable proportion of the interviewees had been affected by discriminatory practices, directly or indirectly. Occupations (university administration) and posts central to the work of an organization (broadcasts from the Meteorological Office) were reported by respondents as having been closed to women in 1960. Lower pay than that given to male graduate recruits to similar posts was common publishing was particularly bad here. Women graduates were not given the same training as men graduates, and were thus inevitably excluded from promotion. Epstein (1976) has identified the following positions that can be closed to women: teaching (secondary schools); industry; telecommunications; civil service; teaching; social work; university (excluding for a variety of well-worn "reasses")... These experiences were by no means confined to the period preceding equal opportunities legislation. Which has no doubt reduced the extent to which they could be perceived is in any event a result of deeply rooted attitudes in the workplace. Those individuals in the workplace in a position to make personnel and promotion decisions: Epstein's (1976) gatekeepers. Several respondents talked about bosses who simply did not like working as equals with women and who would not promote them. Reports from Hunt (1975), the Standing Conference of University Appointments Services (1974) and INSEAD (1977) have confirmed these attitudes as prevalent in industry, amongst management in general, and for a wide range of employers who recruit graduates. It is clear that discrimination is not necessarily subject to strict formal rules that discrimination exists, whether against themselves or others. They frequently made contradictory statements in this connection. They displayed a truly remarkable propensity to fail or positively to refuse to recognize discrimination; to play down its significance; and to conform to traditional sex-role ideology in finding justifications for its practice (e.g., "You see basically women can't nowadays handle..."
Very many women are married, for whom the earning is not the main consideration... and they are not career-oriented'). Women have collaborated in the discriminatory process by accepting the traditional conception of women as workers. They do so in largely predictable, given the persistence of sex-role stereotyping which remains an integral part of girls' school experience (e.g., Major, 1975; Halloun, 1975; Scully, 1975). The channelling of the education system is orientated to the requirements of the wider social and economic system, in which women as a group are tied in a characteristic manner to the systems of production and reproduction. The channeling of self-conceptions based on a stereotype of sex role parallels and reinforces the maintenance of a sexual division of labour fundamental to contemporary western social and economic organization. In reality, women have little choice but to conform to traditional expectations, whether in terms of their ideas about themselves or in the actual patterning of their lives.

Career management

An abundant literature attests to the generally deleterious effects of sex-role socialization upon women's participation and performance in the work-world (see Fransella and Frost, 1977, 5 and 6). Others have shown how organizations do not respond rationally to women because of cultural norms and beliefs about their role and abilities (Chisholm, 1975; Begun and Hahn, 1975; Epstein, 1970, 1976; Miller et al., 1975; Miller, 1976; Wolff, 1976). The single women in this sample experienced far less promotion than their married male peers; discrimination accounts for part of this. In addition, they themselves may not have been as actively oriented as the men in terms of career management. First, two-thirds of the promotions they did receive were internal (i.e., within the same employing organization); the majority of the married men's promotions were external. The implication is that the promotion experiences of the two sexes are not similar. The persistence of women's typical lack of self-confidence, an outcome of their sex-role socialization. For example:

'I suppose in another way a reason I'm nervous about applying for higher posts is that I lack confidence in myself... and I feel happier at something I know I can manage.'

Second, from a study of the reasons they gave for changing jobs over the years, the single women emerged as being more often found themselves in basically-defined unsatisfactory (16) job situations, for both personal and career reasons. In other words, they tended to be 'pushed out' of their jobs (which was more typical of the married men). Some single women without a family financially dependent on them and settled in residence, schools, etc., can more readily extricate themselves from unsatisfactory jobs. Nevertheless we can conclude that 'push' factors are more likely to result in moves bad for career prospects (i.e., the timing may be wrong).

Finally, these single women continued to display the low
aspirations typical of women as a disadvantaged social group, in
spite of their status as graduates firmly established on single
women's careers as well as on their present level, but this was so for only one-sixth of the
married men. The men were also far less ambivalent about future
promotion, and were clearer about the directions in which they
wished to proceed. Perhaps by this time the women had become
more used to their lesser chances of success? Certainly; but their
responses often were the characteristic ambivalence and lack
of self-confidence:
"When I'm completely confident in what I'm doing, and feel that
I've learnt it all, I may want to move on."
"I don't know what I intend to do ... you know I don't plan any
definite objective ... I think I wait and see how it turns out."
"I have no pattern, no career ambition ... each job is enough
for the time, until suddenly it isn't and then I move."

MARRIED WOMEN GRADUATES' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

These are full-time workers reflecting on their situation:
"I can remember when I was at university, if I had to make a
choice between having a job or having a husband and family I'd
rather have a husband and family."
"I think a lot of my friends who did equally well at school
were frustrated at home, or didn't bring up their family, or
had no career only to gain some kind of
taken-for-granted: and I really think I've been very lucky."

Like the first respondent above, 1960 women graduates in general
approached the labour market with the traditional dichotomy between
home and work firmly established in their minds. Very few of
those who married have been as lucky as the second respondent,
who has managed to keep up almost continuous career involvement since
graduation (self-employed and working largely from home). Higher
education clearly raises possibilities and aspirations to combine
work, career and family in some way: we know that highly-educated
women are more likely to remain in or return to the labour force
after marriage (Kelsall et al., 1970; Woodhall, 1973). It does not
broaden women's occupational horizons or teach them to question the
taken-for-granted in this sphere of their lives. Our married women
graduates were even more heavily concentrated in the education
sector than the female sample as a whole: this was clear in 1966 (Kelsall et
al., table 7.3) and the trend has since intensified.
The education sector counted as the main occupational field for
77 per cent of the 1975 interview sample (N= 57) of married gradu-
ate women with children. Of those currently employed in 1975 83
per cent were in education (three-quarters of them in
school-teaching). The range of occupations in which the interviewees were
ever engaged was predictably narrow:
High frequency

Schoolteaching (incl. playgroup work)
FE/HE lecturing, tutoring, research
Social services (administration and practice)
Librarianship, archiving, curatorship
Professional services in industry (economic forecasting, computing, personnel work)
Communications (public relations, advertising)
Secretarial work and related
Industrial research

Psychotherapy

Low frequency

Shopwork

Nearly all the interviewees had followed the 'in-out-in' pattern of labour force participation; hardly any questioned a social structure and cultural ideology which automatically limited their career involvement in scope and significance. Amongst the 1960 female graduate cohort as a whole, labour force participation patterns closely follow those of marriage and family-building. In 1966 only one-fifth of married women with children were economically active by their own definitions of the job market (Kelsall et al., table 2.8). The bulk of first births to these women occurred during the period 1963-7; by 1973, when their children were growing older, 55 per cent were employed. Amongst the 1975 interview sample, 62 per cent had jobs of some kind, almost all part-time, although they were not men in paid work but women working for their own families and private, could they have been accommodated? In other words, had they for complex traditional definitions of the hierarchical ordering of the home v. work priorities in the lives of married women with children, and had they attempted to secure a viable career for themselves in spite of the very real practical problems entailed in combining work and family for women in our society (unless they restrict themselves to intermittent involvement in a small range of relatively flexible occupations), would they have found jobs and careers anyway? Structural and situational factors are the determinants of the extend and patterning of married women's participation in the labour force, regardless of their own preferences (Perrucci and Targ, 1978; Barron and Norris, 1976; Hudis, 1976; Brosenschaft, 1978; Ginzberg et al., 1966). The inherent conflicts and dilemmas at a socio-psychological level which accompany each such context service the existing system vie the irreversibility of their status as working women (i.e., being a housewife is a constant alternative), and as such have negative consequences for career development itself, typically characterized by irrationality of career decision-making and discontinuity because of life-cycle changes (Bailyn, 1964). The study of labour market structure per se has grown in extent in recent years, emphasizing its segmental character and in part-icular focusing upon the idea of a dual labour market. In this model, 'primary' and 'secondary' sector jobs can be readily distinguished from each other. The former are characterized by higher pay and fringe benefits, greater security and stability, and wider opportunity for career progression; the latter display the opposite characteristics. Employers benefit from this arrangement and may positively promote it in the case that they retain groups

...
of valuable skilled employees by offering good wages and conditions; on the other hand, they have access to a supplementary labour force which can be used as required, at low cost and under little obligation to such employees in the long term. Barron and Norris have demonstrated how in Britain the secondary labour force is chiefly composed of women, on the basis of wage levels; and they point to various factors which promote the relegation of women workers as a group in the long term: economic voluntariness, lack of flexibility, lack of difference, little interest in acquiring training, low economism, and lack of solidarity.

These factors apply even more forcibly to married women workers. Harvey (1978) emphasizes on one side the changing character of advanced industrial economies' occupational structure (the shift to service sector employment with the opportunities for low-cost labour-intensive work paralleled by reduced opportunities in traditionally male-dominated industrial jobs) together with the increasing availability of married women workers as a function both of demographic change and the increasing need for women's wages to sustain household income. On the other, she observes (p. 230, p. 235-6) how the division of domestic and economic tasks creates a basis for the difference between primary and secondary employment as it applied to men and women's work... internal forces within the family facilitate the distinction between primary and secondary employment as it applied to men and women's work... limitations are placed on women's employment opportunities and their bargaining power in the labour market is weakened as a result of the division of labour in the household.

Barron and Norris contend that a dual labour market can apply not simply over the whole economy but also within a particular firm, industry, or sector of the economy. Most of our sample of graduate women are employed in the education sector. The frequency with which the married women have taken part-time teaching or research jobs since their maternity on the other hand has varied. We need to specify whether the part-time nature of such jobs is an indication of dual employment. Our respondents have typically held several such jobs in succession in an attempt to maneuver themselves into a more favorable position: they move for permanent jobs, more hours, and hence better pay and conditions. It is not simply a question of gradually increasing work involvement as domestic responsibilities allow: they have had to take what was available. These married women graduates are filling the secondary sector of a dual labour market for professionals. Their situation as re-entering married women workers poses for them distinct problems, as Garnsey (p. 236) highlights: 'For women, bargaining capacity is likely to change over the life cycle, and this in itself will influence the occupational positions that they are able to take up and the market situations in which they are thereby placed.'

The women interviewed in 1975 have displayed a remarkable
resilience as workers within this constrained framework, though their approach has been one of conservative adaptation rather than radical change.

Typically, a married woman graduate worked for two or three years before interrupting her career to have children. After this point, job moves or interruptions of employment were frequently occasioned by their husbands' job moves; this was at least one factor in a quarter of the women's labour force movements since graduation. One respondent worked as a marketing manager after five years to go abroad with her husband, while her only employment has been part-time teaching. Another offered a traineeship as a television producer on graduation, turned it down for similar reasons. She has since re-trained as a primary teacher but works part-time. In another case, the woman had been promoted after her original change. She has attempted to get into broadcasting but found the job unsatisfactory and has not succeeded. In fact there is a distinct trend for the women to retreat further into the female ghetto over the years. A quarter of the sample had changed fields at some point, half of them into teaching. Only five of the 37 women interviewed were employed full-time at the time of interview, though three worked together with their partners and were primarily concerned with their family. None could be termed high achievers in strictly career terms, and as one of them pointed out: 'I see my past jobs as a series of jobs that just happened. I don't feel that my current job is the full potential of the job that I might otherwise have done; the fact that one's not doing something that one really wants to do because one has family responsibilities is a major obstacle."

Most of those interviewed had held one or two full-time posts since graduation, but had held several part-time posts, working mainly at home. Between them, they have approximately 76 years of such work, of which about six years each on average form or less half of that of their married men and single women peers also interviewed. They had led very different lives between them, but in relation to the number of jobs they have held, they have performed as well as the men. For the women, caring for the children has been more than 'standing still in terms of career (on average), have done far less well than the men. This similarity arises because the married women are even more concentrated in the 'safer' fields of employment. But it also suggests that graduates women's career development is hampered first and foremost by their sex. The discriminatory attitudes about these actual and potential abilities which have impinged continually on employers. Only semimom
without wishing to underestimate this, however, are the actual constraints imposed by marriage and family upon women a hindrance to career development. These problems are then compounded by 'barriers preventing women from succeeding which often exist at a socio-psychological level' (Prather, 1971, p.173).

CONCLUSIONS

The experience of higher education clearly does nothing to mitigate or reverse the effects of home, and particularly school, labelling and channeling processes which direct women into traditional fields of study and employment, typically ill-equipped to compete successfully with men. Our women graduates, married and single, have not in general achieved a similar measure of career success as have their male peers, despite starting out at graduation with similar qualifications and equally-distributed background advantages.

Discrimination at work has certainly played a part, as have the practical difficulties inevitably experienced by married women with children in our society in keeping up a measure of career involvement. In addition, the stereotyped and restricted range of occupations 'chosen' and aspects of career management by women in our society. Certainly, by the time they reach university entrance it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to overcome the consequences of degree study in traditional fields of employment and to maintain the discriminatory character of the labour market structure - not to mention lending a spurious justification to the same. We know that the socio-psychological foundations of sex-role prescriptive attitudes and behaviour are established much earlier (see Belotti, 1975), but it is at secondary school that these do irreparable damage by determining (far too early) subject specialization, and reinforcing its effects. Study choices which are only partly based upon real, perhaps unrecognized, preferences and aptitudes irreversibly open and restrict later options, whether in terms of higher education or occupation choice. Such channelling is doubly deceptive, since the education system superficially subscribes to an ideology of equal academic competition between the sexes. This agrees with physical form as higher education whilst on one level women entering university are expected to compete as equals with their male peers, when they finally enter the 'real world' they find their educational achievements to be no protection against, first, the operation of a dual labour market; second, prevailing ideologies about women's abilities and characteristics which deny them career advancement; and, finally, their own hesitancy and lack of confidence, outcomes of the 'double bind' to which they have been relentlessly exposed. The education system cannot change the labour market structure directly; this requires social change of a radical and different
order. But what is currently most disturbing, for this cohort of graduates and others, is that the education system has established the pre-conditions for the production of a doubly exploited group of workers, many of whom have become employees of the education sector itself. This cannot be healthy for anyone concerned. (17)

NOTES

1 Bibliographic research in preparation for this article turned up a review of four recently published American monographs specifically directed to the topic of the interaction between higher education and the labour market (Dreijmanis, 1978).

2 Assuming that reviews address themselves to the core content of the publications on hand, one wonders how four sets of researchers centrally concerned with the problems of decreased demand, underemployment and restricted opportunities for graduates over the last decade were able to ignore completely their undoubtedly different consequences for men and women. (17)

3 Further details of the sample and methods of investigation are available in Kelsall et al. (1970, 1972) and Chisholm et al. (1977).

4 Other sectors (commerce, private practice, churches, the armed forces, communications) show an increasing proportion of men graduates employed in research jobs, though none of these sectors accounted for more than 8 per cent of the cohort at any one point. For women graduates desire representation in any of these sectors never exceeded 5 per cent until the reverse was the case.

5 This process applies within sector too: see later. Three of the four single graduate women (discussed below in text) employed in the industrial sector in 1973 were in research labs or departments. They are well known to occupy uncomfortable positions in the organizational structure and hierarchy, and are generally considered temporary, none of the open opportunities available to line management. The promotional pyramid is flat and the ceiling low. None of the three single women similarly employed had reached a stage where such a decline had to be made, and they did not envisage ever doing so.

6 If 1000, 70.1 per cent of US employed women (or men) would have had to change their occupation in order for a non-segregated labour force to exist. By 1961 this figure had dropped to 50.3 per cent. These percentages were adjusted to allow for the fact that highly segregated occupations (e.g., junior white-collar jobs) have grown much faster during this century than those which segregate less. Gross concludes that this slight reduction in occupational segregation has been effected by men entering 'female' occupations rather than the reverse. 67 per cent in 1973.
The interview sample was restricted to random selection from three geographical areas. The inclusion of Greater London means that, because it undoubtedly offers the widest range of posts in ‘minority’ sectors, a random sample will be naturally weighted towards those employed in such sectors. I.e., above average for their occupational group. For further details see Chisholm (1978).

The women’s salaries also occupied a far narrower range than did the men’s, in conformity with Suter and Miller’s (1973) findings for the US.

An exception are public service occupations, also ‘protected’ in equal pay and superficially at least equal opportunities, and where, in practice, the ratio of male to female earnings is in fact lower than that earned by men in other group was in the civil service.

Social class origin was determined by already-collected evidence from earlier phases of the project on the basis of the respondent’s father’s main paid occupation. The one-sided basis of such a measure is appreciated, but in 1965, at the time of the project’s design, social stratification theory and methodology had not adapted to conform to the new perspectives now emerging from critical feminist analysis.

Except for those in university lecturing but here a good degree is an entrance qualification rather than anything else, and it applies equally to men and women applicants.

It may be that single women had not planned their careers so effectively in the crucial early years. Angrist and Almquist’s (1975) findings support this; most of our sample said they had originally expected to marry at some point, and this is likely to have affected their planning in some way.

Another draft of this chapter was given as a paper to the BERA seminar, ‘Women, Education and Research’, 14-15 April 1979.
Women, school and work
Some conclusions

Rosemary Deem

The chapters in this collection not only tell us about the current fate of most women during their schooling, and subsequently in the labour market or within the family; they also point to enormous gaps in our knowledge about the processes, ideologies and mechanisms whereby women are schooled for their work in a quite different way from the manner in which men are schooled for their work. In addition some of the chapters make definite policy or strategy recommendations for overcoming at least the most extreme forms of discrimination against women. It would, of course, be foolish to assume that changes in education alone can bring about radical changes in the life-chances and power position of women, given the all-pervasive nature of patriarchal relationships and the central importance of the sexual division of labour to the organization of capitalist societies. But this need not prevent us from trying to alter the schooling of women so that they are less disadvantaged in relation to men than they are at the present time.

A number of chapters in the volume imply either directly or indirectly that a major potential area of change lies in the training of teachers to be much more aware of the processes of gender-typing and gender categorization going on in schools, and also in showing new recruits to teaching ways in which they may deliberately try to overcome some of the worst effects of gender-typing on their pupils. This could also be extended to existing teachers as well, for, as Chisholm and Woodward demonstrated, teachers who have been socialized into the gender norms of the culture have difficulty in trying to achieve if such teachers can only encourage the reproduction of a gender-role but also believe in its legitimacy. Although the Women’s Liberation movement may be able to provide psychological and other support for those teachers who are prepared to challenge these deeply ingrained norms, it will not, of course, provide the economic means by which they can do so. The creation of labour and maintenance of patriarchal relations of dominance, which the movement can offer in principle to appeal to those who do not even perceive the validity of its aims. For example, Chisholm and Woodward found that not only does the education system establish many of the preconditions for the double exploitation of women at work and in the home, but the education system also forms a major market for the employment of women yet...
The women in their sample were even less prepared to admit that they might have been disadvantaged or discriminated against because of their sex. It is apparent, then, that teacher training does not very often, or indeed in some cases not at all, raise questions about sexism and sexual divisions in education, nor point out the effects of gender in schooling.

Although teachers now much more often during their training are exposed to the effects of ethnic minority group membership on educational experiences and performance, if this is not combined with an appreciation of the fact that, as Fuller’s chapter 4 notes, ethnicity does not have the same impact on girls as it does on boys, then strategies which might help male pupils from ethnic minorities will not necessarily help female pupils either.

Although teachers are now much more likely during their training to receive specific instructions about the effects of ethnic minority group membership on educational experiences and performance, if this is not combined with an appreciation of the fact that, as Fuller’s chapter 4 notes, ethnicity does not have the same impact on girls as it does on boys, then strategies which might help male pupils from ethnic minorities will not necessarily help female pupils either.

And it need not be imagined that all this applies only to female teachers. The levels of gender-consciousness possessed by male teachers are likely to be even lower than those of female teachers, for, as Fuller notes, gender identity is often taken for granted by men and not seen in terms of the problems that it may present to men, as well as to women. The teaching strategies developed by male teachers may be especially critical in subjects which are rarely taught by women, in encouraging patterns of curricular differentiation between the sexes, and in bringing about pervasive patterns of interaction between male and female pupils.

At the same time, it seems to me that we need to find out very much more about the nature of the gender identities, as such parts of research on teachers have, that male teachers use the more, and female teachers less conscious, gendered identities from this note. In other words, we need to discover whether, and in what ways, women do approach teaching from a different perspective from men, and whether, and in what ways, men become conditioned by such a state of affairs, if found to exist, among them.

And some teachers believed that their male colleagues by contrast were not so much critical of the occupation and occupational tasks as they were to domestic-classroom practices. Discomfort proceding, it is not. What is the nature of that things can only successfully teach, and, more importantly, are themselves as teaching successfully great children? Or is this a myth used to rationalize the monopoly of senior teaching posts in secondary education by men? And how much does the actual training of women as teachers reinforce the gender-appropriate behavior already transmitted to them by their earlier schooling? And there is no reason to believe that we are not ready to support new teacher training may be altered so that teachers become aware of, and able to combat, the impact of gender in schooling. Nor can we hope that many teachers of either sex will adopt the kind of positive strategies toward female pupils which Weiner suggests might improve the mathematical ability and potential of girls.

But it is not only teachers who need sensitizing to the ways in which gender is made relevant in the schooling of both girls and boys; it is also the case that parents need to be sensitized too. They too can be made to see the kind of positive strategies for teaching children who are different in terms of their gender and the potential of girls.
culture itself as well as by education, we need not be surprised that many parents never question the gender identities into which they socialize their children. Indeed, the fact that our own socialization is different, as well as by education, we need not be surprised that many parents never question the gender identities into which they socialize their children. (5) And parents must be made to realize (and teachers, as well as women's groups of all kinds, could help with this process of sensitization if their own training had already alerted them to its importance) that gender-typing adversely affects not only girls but also boys. (6) As Tolson has demonstrated, despite their patriarchal dominance, men are as imprisoned, albeit in different ways, by their gender identities as are women. (7)

Within the school itself, there are also many possible changes which might reduce the patterns of sexual discrimination to which girls are subjected. One needs to recognize that a return to single-sex secondary schooling might be one way of overcoming some of the problems created by sexual division in mixed education, although as Shaw argues, it is by no means certain that it would be a successful one. (8) Within the school itself, there are also many possible changes which might reduce the patterns of sexual discrimination to which girls are subjected. As Shaw indeed suggests that a return to single-sex secondary schooling might be one way of overcoming some of the problems created by sexual division in mixed education, although it is by no means certain that it would be a successful one. (9) As Tolson has demonstrated, despite their patriarchal dominance, men are as imprisoned, albeit in different ways, by their gender identities as are women. (7)

As well as encouraging women to be vigilant, both as parents and as teachers, in looking for indications of sexism in texts and in refusing to use them or allow children and adolescents to read them, such a strategy must ultimately also involve publishers and writers too. The latter is a much more difficult task, if only because so many of those involved represent exactly those relationships of patriarchal dominance which women are fighting against. But it is insufficient simply to fight against sexism in school books (or indeed in any other kind of books) without finding out more about just what kind of impact sexism in books has on those who read them, otherwise we run the danger of overestimating the impact of books and the images and ideas they portray, and underestimating the impact of other factors in schooling. Furthermore, we may fail to understand how ideas and images fit into the other processes of gender-typing and symbolic segregation of the sexes which are occurring both inside and outside education. It is therefore important to see to what extent gender-stereotyping and patriarchal relationships, as well as the sexual division of labour, are present in the actual subjects which comprise the school curriculum. The 'hidden' curriculum is clearly relevant here too, because we will be unable to understand just what kind of impact sexism in books has on those who read them, otherwise we run the danger of overestimating the impact of books and the images and ideas they portray, and underestimating the impact of other factors in schooling. Furthermore, we may fail to understand how ideas and images fit into the other processes of gender-typing and symbolic segregation of the sexes which are occurring both inside and outside education.
many examples are taken from the cultural world of the male rather than the female, so in many school subjects the content falsely assumed to be neutral is not so at all, and may well have a definite sex as well as class bias. (9) So we cannot understand why girls 'prefer' biology to physics, or why boys 'choose' chemistry rather than history or French without a more thorough examination of what it is that they are choosing or rejecting. If science as currently taught in many schools reflects in its content and emphases precisely patriarchal relations, then is it necessarily advisable for us to recommend pushing girls into this area of the curriculum without also trying to alter the form of what is being taught? I have myself advocated elsewhere the adoption of a core curriculum in secondary schools, despite the many problems which surrounds the interpretation and implementation of this, as at least a preliminary stage in reducing curricular differentiation patterns between boys and girls. (10) But if such a move is to be effective, then we have to be very clear about what subjects are to comprise a core curriculum. We must ensure that the content of what we include does not produce a pattern of competence at, liking for and interest in subjects which only encourages girls to choose these subjects in the later years of secondary schooling (11) in forcing all children to take subjects which they may not like or be good at, but still retaining intact notions of subject-gender appropriateness.

Research on assessment and evaluation has also consistently failed to take gender into account as a significant variable; Harding shows, this may be a serious shortcoming, since her evidence indicates that girls may perform better on essay-type answers and boys better on multiple-choice answers. Hence, before we embark upon new types of assessment or consider moving towards a common 16-plus school examination (13) it is critical that more research is carried out on the differential effects of different modes of assessment on girls and on boys. In further educational innovations which look as though they increase the range of equal educational opportunities may not do so at all, as far as girls are concerned. Clearly the need to examine learning theories and methods of assessment applies as much to further and higher education as to schools.

If we consider research on women's achievement as a whole, it is evident, then, that we need not only much more research on specific issues, but also more ethnographic material of the kind presented in this
collection by Clarricoates, Lidwell and Fuller, focusing not just on schools but also on female youth cultures and extending to further and higher educational establishments. The sexual division of labour and curricular differentiation between the sexes may actually be much greater in further education colleges than it is in schools. (14) With a majority of male teachers except in a few areas like catering, hairdressing and secretarial skills, and with female students mainly taking courses aimed at leading to low-paid occupations with few prospects, whilst male students are mainly engaged in learning skills which will give access to much more highly paid jobs with much greater prospects of promotion. Rendel's chapter 11 on women academics suggests that higher education is dominated by a male patriarchal culture which excludes women altogether or welcomes them as 'token women', and it is likely that this culture is also operant in colleges of further education. Unless research is carried out in such colleges we do not and cannot know how the patriarchal culture works in such a setting, or what affects it has on female students and teachers.

We also need to be able to relate the cultures of patriarchal relations operating within the contexts of schooling to the cultures of girls and women outside educational settings. Lidwell's work offers a pioneering approach to this, and also makes evident our present state of ignorance about the youth cultures surrounding girls as opposed to boys. It is interesting then to look at the patterns of work and training for women and girls which appear to form part of what is either peripheral or inscrutable to male cultures. (15) Yet, if the cultures of girls outside school reflect no less strongly than their schooling does, the importance to their lives of domesticity and marriage, then it is not surprising that so few women become academics or that young women subsequently turn to the Open University as their only chance of post-school education, having discovered either the limits of domesticity or the problems faced by poorly qualified women in the labour market.

Chapter 8, in which changes are required and more research urgently needed is that of entry into, and experience of the labour market by women. Chapter 9 by Treby and Turner displays all too well the limitations of liberal legislation on equal opportunities in bringing about changes to the typical employment patterns of girls and women, and she depicts the vicious circle of male attitudes, lack of female role models and low pay for women which prevents them ever reaching the point of doing 'normal' jobs. Griffiths is right to refer to 'normal' jobs, it is not just their attitudes which must change but also those of parents, schools, employers, and society; the investment of resources does not necessarily ensure these changes. Thus in espousing true gender equality, employers must also consider the expectations of male and female employees. As Kelly and Hatters argue, society must move forward in a less rigid pattern of skill training for jobs, one which can accommodate individuals at any stage in their lives and not only in leaving school or college; and also within the contexts of the domestic responsibilities of these employees, whether these be male or female, and provision for dealing with these within the
context of paid work. Much more vigilance and monitoring of the impact of legislation such as the Equal Pay Act (1970) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) is also called for.

But none of these strategies will actually change the labor market; that is still left to the state, consumer demand, the state of the economy, changes in technology, sources of raw materials and supplies, and so on. The election in May 1979 of a Conservative government, rapidly followed by cuts in public expenditure (which is affecting both education and the availability of jobs in the public sector, as well as the provision of job-experience schemes under the auspices of the Manpower Services Commission) is likely to continue to reduce still further the extent to which school-leavers (and especially girls, for whom paid employment may not even be seen as a priority) have any degree of job choice at all. This development, together with projected changes in technology (the silicon chip and microprocessors), may merely serve to increase the extent to which girls are seen as a way of filling existing labor shortages. Whether the state is now ready to encourage girls to enter new fields of employment, areas traditionally dominated by men, if such opportunities are only to be available to a tiny minority of school-leavers. Equally, it is almost irrelevant to talk merely of remedying girls' 'under-achievement' whilst seeking to do nothing to alter the sexual division of labor and the relations of patriarchy which dominate our processes of production, and which ensure that most women are forced to choose 'fulfillment' in domesticity.

The outlook then, both for girls who are currently at school and for women who have already been schooled into accepting a patriarchal class society, is not a particularly optimistic one. It will be a complex and difficult task to overcome the structures of patriarchy both inside and outside schooling in such a way that they are not replaced by even more restrictive structures, but the job of actually altering the schooling of women lies outside the scope of any book, but it is in the profound belief that unexamined action can produce undesirable and ill-conceived changes, whilst theoretically and empirically informed action stands at least a better chance of success, that this collection of views is offered.
NOTES


For example, Kelsall and Kelsall (1969) detail much research of this kind, and the approach is also exemplified in Pollard (1974).

Some preliminary progress towards this kind of research may be found in the work of Nathan (1976) and in Nathan et al. (1976).

Stott and King (1976) give an excellent account of the dangers of sexism portrayed by the media.

Research on the socialization practices of parents may be found in the work of Nathan and Nathan (1966 and 1976).

Stott and King (1976).

Some preliminary progress towards this kind of research may be found in the work of Bennett (1976) and in Hannam et al. (1976).

Stott and King (1976).

It is important not to forget that the notion of most pupils making any meaningful and considered choice between school subjects is probably illusory; see Woods (1976).

Maccoby (1966).

‘School Examinations’ (1978) sets out the arguments for and against a common 16-plus examination.

See Byrne (1978) for a more detailed consideration of the situation in further education.

Smith (1978) suggests that a similar situation may also exist in journalism.

Hall and Jefferson (1976) and Sypher and Pearson (1976) for detailed analyses of male youth cultures.
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This book is dedicated to all women in education, everywhere.
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Acknowledgments

I should like to thank Professor John Eggleston for asking me to write this book, and for his help and advice whilst it was being written. Dr M. A. Cruickshank’s comments on Chapter 1 were also of assistance. Members of the British Sociological Association’s Women’s Caucus and Sexuality and Divisions study group have provided an invaluable source of encouragement and support. Papers read at some of their meetings have proved extremely useful in formulating many of the ideas contained in the book. My students at North Staffordshire Polytechnic (especially the 1976-7 Sociology of Education option group) have also played their part in the development of arguments and clarification of issues relating to the education of women.

June Lee coped very competently with the typing of the manuscript at very short notice.

Finally, I should like to thank Roger Murphy, of the Associated Examiners’ Board Research Unit, Aldershot, for permission to reproduce Table 3.3 on p. 68. This Table originally appeared in a paper given by him at the British Psychological Society’s conference on ‘Sex Role Stereotyping’ in July 1977. Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 are reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty’s Stationery Office.
Chapter 1
The Entry of Women into Mass Education in a Capitalist Society

The development of mass education in England and Wales since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been marked by three crucial divisions: social class, ability and sex. The first has been given extensive treatment by sociologists and educationalists, and has been of implicit concern to many other groups interested in education. The second has been exhaustively researched by both psychologists and sociologists, and their investigations have been used to justify and to deplore differential educational provision on the basis of ability level. The third division, sex, has been the subject of much less analysis. Certainly a Report published in 1923 noted that girls were more lethargic in their school performance than were boys, and more likely to take arts subjects, which required less effort than sciences or practical subjects. Although subsequent official reports on education have dealt in passing with the difficulties of educating girls in both academic subjects and the domestic arts, there have been relatively few attempts systematically to analyse the education experiences and performances of girls in comparison with those of boys. No great endeavour has been made to discover whether sexual divisions are as relevant to education as are class and ability divisions. Only in the 1960s and 1970s with the growth of a significantly sized Women's Liberation Movement in Britain, and the progress of legislation relating to equal treatment of males and females in public life, have sexual divisions in education come to be perceived as a problem of considerable significance.
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It will be argued in this book that sexual divisions, in the process of bringing up children within the family, and more especially in the formal education of children carried out by schools, are of crucial importance both to an understanding of the position of women in capitalist society, and to a comprehension of how the division of labour between the sexes is maintained. Through their use of science and technology, capitalist societies have increased the mastery of human beings over the natural world, and over biological and physiological constraints on human behaviour and thought. In such societies, therefore, it might be expected that biological and physiological differences between individuals of different sexes would be of much less importance to the organization and relationships found in these societies, than in previous forms of society. In the latter instance, biological and other innate differences, such as muscular strength or the capacity to become pregnant, might have been expected to exert greater influence over what tasks individuals of different sex carried out. But in most capitalist societies there remains a strongly entrenched sexual division of labour, separating what women do from what men do. Because of this, it is both possible and feasible to argue that the sexual division of labour must be essential to the maintenance of capitalist society, although the exact ways in which it is important, particularly in relation to the family, remain controversial.

Althusser has argued that societies involved in the production of goods must, in order to continue that production, reproduce both the forces of production (that is, in capitalist society, those who work for wages, technology and the means by which production is carried out) and the existing relationships of production. The latter include relationships between workers and employers, relationships between social classes, and the sexual division of labour. Whereas the means of production are reproduced within the economic system by means of profits, labour power and the social relationships of production are reproduced by a number of institutions, including the family and the school. These institutions are called by Althusser Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), and they differ from other apparatuses of the state in capitalist societies in that their primary function is to pass on ideology, rather than to repress individuals through the use of violence.
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as does the police force or the army.12 Ideology comprises not only ideas, but also the practices of different class groups.13 Families pass on to children their own cultural beliefs and ideas, and also the styles of living and behaviour which they themselves use. Bourdieu calls this their 'cultural capital'.14 In school, Althusser claims that children learn two main items: first, the techniques or 'know-how' of the dominant culture in society, and second, what he describes as the 'rules of good behaviour' which are 'rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of order established by class domination'.15

In the case of both boys and girls the techniques learnt usually include both literacy and numeracy, but it will be argued in a subsequent chapter that whereas boys are usually more than adequately socialised into numeracy (and into spatial and abstract thinking), girls are often effectively taught only skills of literacy. And whereas boys, according to whether they are the sons of capitalist employers, middle-class professionals, or working-class semi-skilled labourers, learn at school their appropriate place in the class and work hierarchy, girls, irrespective of their class background, are much more likely to learn that a woman's place and primary responsibilities lie in the home and the family, not in the labour market. Class variations in this, of course, occur; in the nineteenth century the daughters of the bourgeoisie who were educated learnt a very different culture (that of accomplishment in conversation, music and needlework, for example) from that learnt by working-class girls. Whereas most girls from the bourgeoisie were expected to supervise their servants, rather than carry out domestic labour or rear their children themselves, working-class girls were taught that their lives would be spent in doing domestic work, either in domestic service for others or for their own husbands and families.16 Such class variations still occur, whereas working-class girls today are expected to give up altogether their unskilled or semi-skilled occupations after marriage or the birth of children, middle-class girls may be encouraged to combine a career with marriage.17

Hence it is argued that schools, together with the family, contribute heavily towards the maintenance of a society's social relationships of production, including class relationships.
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and the sexual division of labour. But for many girls, the
school joined the family in this process much later than was
the case for most boys, and the relationship between the
church and family (which Althusser claims has been replaced
by the school-family coupling), was also operative to a much
greater extent for boys, who could take an active part in
church activities, and for whom churches provided education
long before they also provided education for girls. Whereas
boys were considered an essential part of the church and, at
the development of industrialization, of the labour force, and
whereas these two factors played an important part in
increasing educational facilities for boys, girls’ roles in the
church and in industrialization were considered to lie in the
family, so that for them schooling was considered less neces-
sary than for boys. It was, indeed, only as the church, the
state and charitable institutions began to realize that the
sexual division of labour, morality and domestic skills could
be taught more effectively in schools than in the family, that
girls began to enter education in large numbers.

It is claimed, then, that there are strong connections be-
tween the subordinate position of women in capitalist society
and the maintenance of that form of society, and that the
maintenance of the sexual division of labour has, since the
nineteenth century, been carried out increasingly by the
school as well as the family. The relationship of capitalist
employers to their employees is primarily an economic one,
so that employers are more concerned with extracting profits
from their businesses than with looking after the social wel-
fare of their employees. The separation of work from home,
and the nature of labour and work under capitalism has
meant that the typical family unit has become the nuclear
family, consisting of parents and immediate offspring not
owning the means of production, and subsisting by selling
labour power, not by home-based subsistence agriculture or
craft-work. In order that wage labour may be kept healthy,
well-fed and cared for, and reproduced in the form of new
generations of children, women are expected to bear and rear
children and to take the responsibility of caring for all mem-
bers of their families outside of working hours. If women did
take some responsibility for tasks like child care, cooking,
cleaning, washing and shopping, and if men had to
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share these tasks, then either employers would find their employees less healthy, or less hard-working, or with less time to work, or they and the state would be forced to provide many of the services which the nuclear family and women within it, now provide largely free of charge. A change such as this would radically alter the existing structure of society.

The expansion of education in the nineteenth century owed as much to the demands of capitalist employers for a work force not entirely ignorant of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and to the church’s belief that a limited amount of learning would enhance Christian beliefs – church worship and compliance with religious norms of behaviour – as to the efforts of liberal reformers who thought that everyone should be educated for its own sake. Capitalists, the church and charitable institutions all saw the education of girls in terms of the effects which it would have on their families (that is, in increasing their domestic skills so that a higher standard of care would be provided, and in raising the moral standards of their children and menfolk) rather than for the benefits which it might confer on girls themselves, and this has remained a dominant concept in the education of working-class girls to the present day.

Small Beginnings: Girls’ Education 1800-70

Perhaps the most crucial difference between working-class girls and the daughters of the bourgeoisie lay in their actual, rather than in their ideologically-supposed, place in the sexual division of labour. There has grown up a myth that women, particularly married women, have only begun to participate in the labour market in large numbers during the twentieth century. But there is a great deal of evidence to show that working-class women formed a sizable proportion of wage labour throughout the nineteenth century, and even before this time. Furthermore, the Factory Acts which controlled the employment of women and children after the mid-nineteenth century would have been pointless if there were no women or children already being employed in productive work, and the Acts were evidence not just of a desire to protect women from the vagaries of industry, but in
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part expressed the ideology of the current sexual division of labour, which emphasized women's place at home and in the family.²¹ However, certainly not all women who worked in the nineteenth century were factory workers; some worked at home of labour in small sweat-shop industries, and a very large number of working-class women were engaged in domestic service. By 1861 there were some 2½ million women (over one-quarter of the total female population) in paid employment, at a time when the benefits of contraception were almost unknown, so that a lengthy period in the lives of most women was devoted to child-bearing. Nearly half of the women employed were in domestic service,²² a job which replicated many of the skills, characteristics and place in the sexual division of labour which most women were expected to take up anyway. For most married women in paid employment the extent to which they were financially better off was entirely dependent on their relationships with their husbands, although the 1857 Marriage and Divorce Act gave wives some financial rights and these were extended to include property rights by an Act of 1882.

Besides factory work, small industry, outwork and domestic service, some daughters of artisans and shopkeepers became governesses to private families, tutoring children in return for board, lodging and a tiny wage. Although the status of governesses exceeded that of ordinary domestic servants, the rewards and conditions of work were little different and, indeed, so many ex-governesses became destitute in their old age that in 1843 a Governesses' Benevolent Institution was set up to help them. Only a few girls from families of the bourgeoisie found their way into governing. The majority of such girls were not expected by their families to work at all, but instead to devote their time to acquiring accomplishments which would make them attractive prospects on the marriage market, for as Borer (1976, p. 228) points out: 'Daughters were still regarded as the property of their parents, to be disposed of in marriage as they wished.' Once married, these women were not expected to engage in domestic labour themselves but merely to supervise their staff in the performance of domestic tasks, and otherwise to idle away their time in tea parties, musical evenings, sewing, embroidery, dancing and foreign conversation.
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Girls from families of the bourgeoisie or the aristocracy were seldom educated outside the home before the last quarter of the nineteenth century, unlike their male peers who had enjoyed public and endowed school education well before this time. The Taunton Commission in 1868 found only twelve endowed schools for girls in the whole of England and thought little enough of the standards of these. Schools for middle- and upper-class girls were almost entirely single-sex establishments, whilst most working-class girls who were educated attended mixed schools. The question of single-sex versus co-educational schools in the education of girls is still a controversial issue. While it is true that single-sex schools in the nineteenth century were able to place all their emphasis on learning which confirmed rather than challenged the existing class structure and sexual division of labour of society at that time, this was equally true of most mixed schools. Furthermore, some single-sex schools for the daughters of the bourgeoisie were pioneers in providing girls with an education which, while not confronting the sexual division of labour directly, did offer girls an education not radically dissimilar to that received by their male peers, and one which could provide them with the basis of an independent lifestyle. Schools like the North London Collegiate and Queen's College, London were amongst the first to give girls the chance to learn 'masculine' subjects like maths and science. But on the other hand, the Taunton Commission in 1868, and the Public Schools Commission one hundred years later, both found fee-paying schools attended by girls to be of a lower academic standard than those establishments attended by boys.

By the middle of the nineteenth century there were in existence some colleges which trained intending teachers and offered a kind of secondary education to girls. These colleges had a very narrowly focused curriculum, and strong control was exercised over the behaviour of their students. For example, Sturt (1967, p. 153) quotes from the rules of a female college in York: 'No pupil to go without leave, nor write letters without permission. The envelopes of all letters to be signed by the superintendent or Miss C. Cruse.' Although male college students were often treated in a similar way, there were different ideologies underlying the education of
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the two sexes, with religious morality paramount in the college-training of many boys, but the sexual division of labour and conceptions of femininity influencing the college education of girls. There are also reports of mixed training establishments holding self and staff criticism sessions for men students, whilst the women students merely sat and listened.25 Girls were often examined in subjects not taken by boys, such as seamstressing, knitting and sewing, whilst subjects like algebra, land surveying and geography were frequently reserved for boys. The cost of training female students was often less than the expenditure on male students, because the former required little equipment, and their learning of domestic skills could often be incorporated into the everyday running of the colleges themselves, thus reducing the number of domestic staff employed.

For working-class girls, their prospects of receiving any education at school or at home were much less than those of middle- and upper-class girls, and the content of working-class girls’ education, when available, emphasized the domestic arts to a greater extent than the curriculum studied by middle-class girls. Accomplishments in singing, music or embroidery were not considered necessary for working-class girls. Before 1870, those working-class girls who were educated, whether in Sunday School, dame school, industrial school, or British or National School, received a basic curriculum which differed but little from that offered to working-class boys. But girls were likely to learn fewer arithmetical skills than boys—sometimes only those relevant to household budgeting—and no boys were forced to spend their afternoons engaged in needlework or knitting, although the crafts which boys did were equally related to their future class position and location in the division of labour. Since domestic service was the immediate fate of many girls on leaving school, and since their ultimate goal was held to be marriage and a family, emphasis was placed on providing instruction in skills and morality which would help girls to become obedient servants first, and subsequently, thrifty and respectable housewives and mothers later. The possibility that girls would enter a different occupation, or fail to get married, was not considered. Anything out of the ordinary in school was usually reserved for boys, so that school outings,
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for instance, were rarely attended by girls. Turner, however, suggests that schools run by Quakers treated boys and girls more equally than did schools set up by other bodies.26

Once Kay-Shuttleworth became secretary of the Committee of Privy Council on Education, the state began to take an interest in education, giving money to some schools and setting up an Inspectorate to monitor standards, and the responsibility for preserving the class relations and sexual division of labour of the developing capitalist society began to pass slowly from church and private hands into those of the state. The passing of the first effective Factory Act concerning the employment of young children also increased the likelihood of working-class children receiving some education; children began to be seen less as tiny adults, and more as a separate group.27 During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, children were often educated in single-room coeducational schools, but screens were used to divide boys from girls when the latter were engaged in activities such as needlework or sewing. Children taught in industrial schools often learnt little more than the simple skills they would need to work with, and these were usually carefully graded on the basis of sex. The 1862 Revised Code Regulations, which made grants to schools and payments to teachers dependent on the examination performance of their pupils, did little to widen the curriculum offered to either boys or girls in any type of school attended by working-class children.

It was not until after the 1867 Act which extended the franchise that pressure built up for a more satisfactory system of education to be made available to the working classes than the existing ad hoc arrangements. In the event, the 1870 Education Act did not prove to be the educational panacea of the working classes, which was hardly surprising since much of the enthusiasm for mass elementary education came from capitalist employers and professionals, who had much to gain from setting up a system of schooling which would minimally educate, impose morals upon and control working-class children so that they did not aspire beyond the social class or employment held by their parents. Even after the Act had been passed empowering locally elected school boards, many areas, including large industrial cities, did not immediately provide sufficient schools for the children in
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Similarly, the 1869 Endowed Schools Act, which allowed endowments to be used to set up schools for girls as well as for boys, did not have a startling effect on the position of secondary education for middle-class girls. But the period after 1870 did see some significant changes in the educational chances of some middle-class girls, and also saw the increased involvement of the state in the education of the working class.

The Slow March of Mass Education for Girls: 1870-1901

The 1870 Education Act has sometimes been seen as a watershed in the history of the development of mass education. However, this view was not one held by its proponents or by many commentators and critics. Those concerned with the passage of the Bill through Parliament saw it as little more than a way of plugging the gaps in the existing voluntary system of education. Critics saw the legislation as evidence of the influence of capitalists in demanding a semi-literate but still subservient work force, which would be taught in inferior establishments by poorly trained, badly paid teachers. As well as requiring local School Boards to provide elementary schools in areas where existing voluntary provision was insufficient for the potential clientele, the Act also required parents to obtain instruction for their children, although compulsory education was not introduced in 1870; even after this was enacted in 1888, enforcement was sometimes difficult. Children sometimes failed to attend because they were already illegally engaged in wage labour, particularly in times of economic recession when fewer jobs were available to children. Truancy amongst girls was less often because they were working for wages, but more frequently because they were required to look after young children and carry out domestic duties in households where all adult members were engaged in wage labour. Furthermore, elementary education did not become even partially free until 1891, so that still other children failed to attend because their parents could not afford the fees, or were unable to clothe their children adequately enough to make school attendance possible.
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For working-class girls then, the 1870 Act did not provide them with any solutions to their problems of being confined to low status work and domestic labour within the family, but indeed ensured that the structure of capitalist society, which located men without capital in the labour market, and women without capital in domestic drudgery, continued to be reproduced. The education which working-class girls received in no way widened their horizons, for as Marks (1976, p. 190) points out:

The philanthropic members of the middle classes... believed that if working class women could be educated to run their homes "well", women would recreate the sacred middle-class resting place, and would thus discourage men from visiting public houses, and thus drunkenness, poverty and wife-beating would be stamped out. As a result, there were many schemes to include the domestic arts in the curricula of elementary schools.

Here, again, the ideology surrounding the utility of educating girls is clearly demonstrated to be in terms of the benefit to society, to capitalist production and to family life, rather than being seen to benefit girls themselves.

By 1876 domestic economy had become one of the subjects which earned grants for schools and was seen as a form of vocational training for girls, much as crafts or book-keeping might be seen as suitable vocational education for boys. That domestic economy also condemned many women to a life of public or private servitude was a proposition never considered, since the acceptance of the role of women in domestic labour was essential to the expansion of capitalist production. In 1882 cookery was added to the subjects which girls were encouraged to take at school because grants could be obtained for offering it. As Sharpe observes, girls at school were often only entered for one or two examinations which almost invariably included domestic economy, and the numbers taking this subject in elementary schools had risen from 3,307 in 1876 to 59,812 in 1882. In 1890 laundry-work was also added to the elementary school curriculum. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century sexual divisions in elementary education were clearly visible and the education of working-class girls was, if anything, more sex-specific than
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before 1870. While educational opportunities, albeit linked to the structure of the labour market and to class relationships, were beginning to expand for working-class boys, those available to girls were far less in extent. Lawson and Silver (1973, p. 341) state that: "the education of working class girls... went side by side with that of boys, working class girls were not, however, promoted up the educational ladder in the same way as boys", but then, of course, there was no intention to do that, since girls were expected to take up quite different positions in the social relationships of production from their male peers.

During the period 1870 to 1901 middle-class girls did, it is true, fare rather better than their working-class sisters, and there is no doubt that their connections with the rising bourgeois class of capitalism were advantageous to them in this respect, although it is also true that male industrialists still sometimes tended to see their wives and daughters as possessions. Davies (1975, p. 39) points out that: "such men sought to express their wealth and developing power first through the finery and then through the idleness of their women." But it is also important to remember that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were more women in the population of marriageable age than there were comparable men, so that some middle-class women were forced to find means of living independently, apart from a family. This period also saw the beginnings of the Suffragette Movement, and an expansion in the number and types of work available in the labour market. Although those three factors did not, in themselves, improve the standards of education offered, they increased the likelihood that middle-class girls would seek wider horizons than those offered by marriage, 'finery' and 'accomplishments'.

By 1870 girls were able to sit for both the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations, although only a few schools were able to give the necessary instruction and preparation for these. But doubts had been expressed about the suitability of competitive examinations for girls and, whereas boys sitting the examinations were given a merit ordering, girls were awarded only a pass or fail. And despite the passage in 1875 of legislation allowing universities to award degrees to women, and the opening of a college for women attached to
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Cambridge, plus successful attempts by girls at the local examinations which qualified for university entrance, neither Oxford nor Cambridge awarded degrees to women until the twentieth century, and in Cambridge's case not until after the Second World War. Educated women were a threat to the established order, especially the sexual division of labour and the family, and it was constantly stated that women could do themselves irreparable damage if they engaged in intellectual pursuits, even rendering themselves unmarriageable. 38

The 1869 Endowed Schools Act, together with pressure from those who felt the conditions experienced by governesses to be intolerable, succeeded in opening up more secondary education to girls, so that in 1895 the Bryce Commission on secondary education was able to say that there had probably been 'more change in the condition of secondary education for girls than in any other department of education'. 39

But although by then some girls' schools had begun to teach subjects like mathematics and science, other schools still presented to their female pupils a narrowly conceived education based on their class position, their place in the sexual division of labour, and on the cultural capital of the female members of their families. Whilst not subject to the stultifying round of domestic economy suffered by working-class girls, middle-class girls were taught arithmetic in relation to household budgeting, and spent more time engaged in music, singing and dancing lessons, riding, embroidery and foreign conversation than in learning sciences, technical or practical skills.

For those girls who did acquire a reasonable education, and who managed to escape from the clutches of their bourgeois parents, the structure of the labour market provided some possibility of independence and employment, albeit still within the confines of a rigid sexual division of labour. The creation of the County Boroughs and Counties, the reform of the Civil Service, changes in Post Office policy and the invention of the typewriter all brought jobs for clerks, telephonists and typists, many of whom were women. Teacher training was becoming more widely available and the opportunities in nursing were also greater. But if the expanding face of capitalism brought with it more jobs for women, these very jobs were to shape the future education that women received, and the flocking of women into such jobs marked
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the further extension of a dual labour market and sexually
divided education system, both of which are still with us.32

The Commencement of Feminist Militancy and the Foundations of Mass Secondary Education: 1902-44

If the previous period saw changes in the position of middle-
class girls and an improvement in their educational chances,
the first four decades of the twentieth century also saw
changes taking place in the education of working-class girls,
and in their position in society.

During the early part of the century the Suffragette Move-
ment rose to prominence, but it was undoubtedly a middle-
class movement which had little or nothing to say to the
ordinary working-class girl or woman. However, the strength
of the suffragettes was proof of the success of at least some
women in either educating themselves, or obtaining an educa-
tion which to some extent transcended the traditional place
of women in the sexual division of labour and allowed them
to think in terms other than those of marriage, the family
and domestic labour. But the attainment of partial female
suffrage in 1918 was also attributable in no small measure to
the long hours of work and effort expended by working-class
women in maintaining the industrial production and sustain-
ing the munitions industry of Britain whilst men were fight-
ing in the First World War.33 Neither the acquisition of full
adult female suffrage in 1928, nor the growing political
strength of the Labour Party had any significant impact on
the ways in which working-class women were educated, since
one cannot yet vote for a different curriculum, nor for a dif-
f erent sexual division of labour in society. Since 1928 rela-
tively few women have become members of parliament,
fewer still cabinet ministers, and almost none capitalist
employers. It has taken almost half a century since full
female adult suffrage to get legislation passed on the treat-
ment of women at work and elsewhere, and that legislation
has still to be proved effective.34

Since the end of the nineteenth century women from
middle-class backgrounds — and to a lesser extent women
of working-class origins — had begun to question their role in
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the sexual division of labour. The increased availability of contraceptives began to remove one of the biological props for the ideological and structural position of women as weak, subordinate, child-bearing and child-rearing creatures. Although there was no real change in the percentage of women employed in wage labour between 1881 and 1951, with the figure remaining at just over a quarter of all females, there were almost certainly more women aware of the contradictions of having to carry out domestic labour within the family and at the same time engaging in wage labour. Family size began to decline among the middle classes first, but Ladefoged estimates that family sizes for all classes reached their lowest levels during the Depression years of the 1930s. Women who wanted to work or, as during the Depression, women who because of the nature of their work and low levels of pay could more easily obtain work than men, were more able to do so because the size of their families placed less of a burden upon them. The expansion of clerical and secretarial jobs, shopwork and the distributive trades, and the growth of the service sector, afforded job opportunities—and of an unsatisfactory and badly paid nature—to women of both the middle and working classes. The Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919 also opened the much-guarded male professions to women for the first time, although even now women are badly represented in many professions.

Within education itself changes still came, but slowly. The 1902 Education Act established Local Education Authorities to take charge of elementary education, although such education did not become free until the passage of the 1918 Education Act, and fees were not finally abolished until 1921. Like its predecessor, the 1870 Act, the 1902 Act was not conceived of in any belief that the working class had a right to education, but was much more closely linked to the economic demands of a capitalist system of commodity production. The education provided under the 1902 Act continued to emphasize to working-class children their class position, and their future role in the social relations of production. The introduction to the 1904 School Code, which attempted to widen the curriculum for elementary schools, but which continued to include for girls the by now inevitable cookery, needlework and domestic skills, said:
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The purpose of the Public Elementary Schools is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it . . . assisting both girls and boys, according to their different needs, to fit themselves practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life . . . to implant in the children habits of industry, self-control, and . . . perseverance.

It goes almost without saying that the 'work of life' assumed for girls was still that of being housewives and mothers, and domestic subjects were held to be an important facet of this. Furthermore, until the First World War, domestic service remained a major occupation of employed women, so that this too required the learning of similar skills.

In 1907 the Free Place Regulations provided a means by which the brighter members of the working class in elementary schools might obtain a free secondary education. However, in the same year, maintenance grants for pupil-teachers were ended, and although these were replaced by bursaries for those intending to become secondary school teachers, this now involved waiting until the age of seventeen to enter a college training course, and a delay in earning a salary of several years, so that some working-class boys and girls were deterred from entering teaching. The proportion of unqualified to qualified teachers remained the same as at the beginning of the century, with one-half possessing no qualifications, but the advent of the Free Place system might, in other circumstances, have been expected to increase the numbers of members of the working class entering teaching as qualified teachers. By 1920 some 185,000 girls were receiving a free secondary education, and in 1921 the minimum age for leaving school was raised to fourteen years, so that all working-class children were able to stay on longer at school. But in 1933 the Free Places at secondary schools became Special Places and subject to a means test, so that some working-class children were prevented from benefiting from a secondary education. (Such schools gave a more advanced education than found in most of the elementary schools which other children, unable to pay fees, had to attend until leaving school.) The 1930s also saw the advent of intelligence testing as a way of selecting which working-class children should receive a secondary education.
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Although by the end of the First World War domestic service as an occupation had already begun to decline, long after this time schools continued to educate working-class girls for entry to this job as well as to prepare them to care for their own families later on. Alternative lifestyles to domestic labour were never given any consideration. By the 1930s some secondary schools even had special housecraft flats built in to their domestic science rooms, so that even at school girls could not escape being irrevocably linked with the home and domestic work. A series of Official Reports on education preceded the passing of the 1944 Education Act and, for the most part, these proceeded to talk about educating boys, pausing only briefly to comment on the necessity to educate girls in child care and domestic skills. Thus, no chance was missed to emphasize to those responsible for educating girls that the paramount task of the schools here was to reinforce and reproduce the existing sexual division of labour. For example, the 1926 Hadow Report emphasized the importance of teaching girls housewifery if the nation was to enjoy future prosperity, thus illustrating clearly the dependence of a capitalist society on the continued performance of domestic labour by women. The 1943 Norwood Report on Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools scarcely mentioned girls in its general sections, except in connection with general studies courses in the sixth form, and in commenting that girls found School Certificate maths more difficult than boys. Girls were singled out for special mention, however, in a section on domestic subjects, when it was declared by the Report that:

"The grounds for including Domestic subjects in the curriculum are variously stated in the evidence submitted to us: briefly, they are, first that knowledge of such subjects is a necessary equipment for all girls as potential makers of homes. Women who read that might be forgiven for thinking that the advent of free education for many girls had brought them nothing more than the opportunity to learn, in the formal environment of a school, all those domestic skills which they could, in former times, have learnt at home. The period after 1902 was probably more successful with
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regard to the education of middle-class girls. Although the standards of girls' secondary education still remained low in some schools, and in others the curriculum offered continued to emphasize only the liberal arts, changes outside education were influential inside education. The gradual expansion of employment opportunities, the Suffragette Movement, and the opening up of the professions and universities exerted pressure and demands on the secondary education of girls which had to be met by some, if not all, schools. However, this pressure was not seen by all as a healthy one and there was rising concern about the amount of strain which the taking of School Certificate Examinations might impose on girls, and Lowndes (1969, p. 92) comments that: 'the parents saw in three years strenuous preparation for the examinations a potent source of overstrain, particularly in the case of girls'. A Report in 1923 on the 'Differentiation of Curricula between the Sexes' also noted the strain imposed on girls by secondary education, remarking on the capacity of girls but not boys, to do work which they had been set even if it exhausted them. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone that one source of strain may have been the contradictory expectations which school, parents and capitalist society faced girls with, nor that the docility and subservience into which girls are socialized may predispose them to finish every task they are set without question or complaint.

The curriculum of middle-class girls' schools was not always noticeably wider than that found in elementary schools, or in secondary schools attended by working-class children with free or 'special' places. Few schools attended by middle-class girls had the necessary resources to teach sciences properly, other than biology, and when sciences were offered to girls, they were often presented in terms of explaining the working of domestic equipment or the principles of domestic tasks such as cooking. Sciences were largely seen as 'masculine' subjects inappropriate to girls, since science and technology were mainly of use in the production of goods and profits, a world from which girls were largely excluded. Thus, schools in the early part of this century initiated something which has proved hard to eradicate - a tradition that sciences are not for girls. After the beginning of the twentieth century, many more middle-class girls

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began to enter higher education. But the subjects which they studied were mainly arts, or social sciences which, in the pioneering days of the early twentieth century, were closely tied to careers in social work, and this pattern of subject choice still holds good today. By not teaching sciences to girls, or by teaching it at a different level and in a different context from the ways in which it is normally taught to boys, schools ensured then and ensure now, that girls are fixed in their positions in the sexual division of labour: whatever they go on to after school, whether higher education, further education or a job, they are excluded from whole areas of human knowledge, areas which could otherwise help them to break through at least some of the barriers of inequality erected by class relationships and the sexual division of labour.

Girls, Capitalism and Mass Education

Girls may have entered education in large numbers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but, on the whole, what they got out of that education was a confirmation of the position of women in the social relations of capitalism, particularly with regard to the sexual division of labour. The expansion of elementary education in England and Wales during the last part of the nineteenth century, and the early part of the twentieth century was closely tied to the interests of capitalism, and increasingly these interests were mediated by the state. It was not in the interests of the capitalist mode of production to encourage women to leave the home and the family for the labour market, except on a temporary basis in times of economic prosperity or in war-time, since this would have meant finding alternative means of reproducing and rearing a replacement labour force and looking for other ways by which to ensure the welfare of wage labourers outside of work. Hence schools, whilst teaching girls some basic skills of literacy and numeracy in common with boys, at the same time constantly stressed the importance to girls of learning domestic skills which would enable them to become competent housewives, thrifty homemakers, and careful mothers. Whereas the education of boys, regardless of class position, was seen as something necessary
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for them as individuals (even if for working-class boys the ultimate beneficiaries were employers), the education of girls was perceived very differently. In educating girls, the main benefits were seen to accrue to homes and to families, and ultimately to the development of capitalism, not to girls themselves. This close link between the family, marriage and the education of girls is one which has remained strong until the present day.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the family itself is very important in the initial socialization of girls into ideologies about the sexual division of labour, and into a cultural capital which is at once isolating and home-centred, and vastly different from that passed on to boys. Education builds on what the family has already commenced, and in its reproduction of the sexual division of labour by different categorization and classification of girl pupils, their skills and qualifications (as opposed to the categorization and classification of boy pupils), points most girls in the direction of marriage and the family on leaving school. Education itself does not create the sexual division of labour, nor the kinds of work available in the labour market, nor the class relationships of society, but it rarely does anything to undermine these. Hence, although Adams (1975, p. 150) optimistically claims that ‘just as the First World War resulted in women getting suffrage and the Sex Disqualification Removal Act, the Second one offered them equal education and equal pay’, it will be demonstrated in this book that neither of the latter have really been achieved by women, and it will be suggested that the achievement of equal education by women is something incompatible with the present culture, ideology and social relationships of production in capitalist Britain.
Chapter 2

Sexism, Socialization and Culture in the Education of Girls

Culture and Education

It has been claimed that one of the two main aspects of learning in schools is the acquisition of the techniques and elements of culture. Indeed, the importance of the relationship between education and the dominant culture in a society has long been recognized. Williams (1965, p. 195), for example, says that:

the way in which education is organized can be seen to express, consciously and unconsciously, the wider organization of a culture and a society... the content of education... expresses... certain basic elements in the culture.

He goes on to emphasize that what comprises the content of education is a particular selection of knowledge, which is closely connected to the ways in which schooling and learning are organized. Other writers have drawn attention to the fact that the kind of culture transmitted in schools is by no means always a culture shared by every group being educated, and that this can adversely affect the educational experiences of those not sharing the culture being transmitted.

In class societies, the family is an institution equal in importance to the school in the transmission of culture, which includes values, practices and beliefs as well as more tangible elements like literacy. Cultural differences in capitalist societies are found between classes, with a marked variation between class groupings not owning the means of production.
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and classes owning capital; but they are also found between
the sexes. Class itself is an important factor influencing chil-
dren's educational experiences; as Bernstein (1975, p. 28)
comments:

Class is a fundamental category of exclusion and this is
reproduced in various ways in schools, through the social
context and forms of transmission of education... working-
class children... are crucially disadvantaged.

But for girls, not only class but also their sex can help to
exclude them from significant aspects of the educational ex-
perience. Because women in capitalist societies have a dif-
ferent and subordinate position in the division of labour
compared with men, some of the knowledge, skills, values
and ideas presented in schools are of no use to women,
except as confirmation of their position in the sexual division
of labour. Other aspects of the culture presented in schools
serve merely to demonstrate to girls that their place in
society is to rear children and carry out domestic labour. As
Bourdieu (1973, p. 73) points out:

the inheritance of cultural wealth which has been accumu-
lated and bequeathed by previous generations only really
belongs (although it is theoretically offered to everyone)
to those endowed with the means of appropriating it for
themselves.

In other words, schools may theoretically offer the same ele-
ments and techniques of culture to everyone, but dependent
on their class position and their sex, they may or may not be
able to make use of these aspects of culture. And schools
have many subtle ways of indicating to children which
aspects of culture they are supposed to absorb -- and which
they are not -- whether by means of streaming pupils by
ability, counselling subject choice on the basis of class, sex or
ability, or in some other manner. Of course, it is possible to
overstress the importance of cultural determination of human thought and action. As
Stenhouse contends, if we see culture as the sole factor
shaping the behaviour and thinking of individuals, and educa-
tion as the main transmitter of culture, then education itself
becomes nothing more than a process of indoctrination. The
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dominant culture of a society rests on the economic, political and social organization of that society, and these also influence how people act and think. But even beyond this, individuals have some degree of choice, although cultural and structural factors may in some cases severely limit the extent of that choice. The problem is that it is usually much easier to do or to think as expected, rather than to choose an alternative way, particularly since the objective conditions of a society (for instance the limited number of well-paid rewarding jobs, the necessity for some people to care for children and carry out domestic labour) are likely to support what is culturally and ideologically expected, rather than what is deviant or nonconformist. Some women, for example, do transcend the sexual division of labour, or successfully combine marriage and a career. But most women are unable to challenge either the ideology or the structure of the sexual division of labour, and so much accept the cultural determination of their position in society (even if they are aware, or become aware, of the contradictions inherent in that sexual division of labour). Indeed, many of them are not even likely to perceive their position as having been determined, but rather as 'chosen'.

Sexism, Sex-stereotyping and Culture

The family, schools, culture and the structure of capitalist societies support each other to a remarkable degree in the process of subordinating and differentiating women on grounds of sex, and they do so often in very specific ways, although these are not necessarily visible to those on whom the process operates. Two concepts are frequently used to analyse the ways in which girls are socialized: sexism and sex-stereotyping. Sexism can best be understood as a process by which certain kinds of phenomena and behaviour are attributed to a particular sex. For example, Chafetz points out that in many Western societies the colour pink is associated with female, and the colour blue with male. Crying, wearing skirts, horse-riding and washing-up are associated with being female, whilst 'keeping a stiff upper-lip', wearing trousers, playing football and mending cars are associated
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with being male. Yet there is no intrinsic quality about any of these actions or phenomena which demand that they be male or female. Scotsmen wear kilts, girls play football, boys ride horses, women mend cars and men wash up; but all of these actions may be seen as deviant or as ‘unmasculine’ or ‘unfeminine’ according to the sex of the individual concerned.

Frazier and Saddler (1973, p. 2) go further in defining sexism and base this on Shortridge’s definition; they say it is:

A belief that the human sexes have a distinctive make-up that determines their respective lives, usually including the idea that (1) one sex is superior and has the right to rule the other (2) a policy of enforcing such asserted right (3) a system of government and society based upon it.

It often used to be assumed that sexism applied only to women, and this definition reflects, whilst not requiring, such usage, but it should be made clear that in fact sexism can and does affect both men and women. For instance, textbooks used in school science teaching are sexist if their text and illustrations refer to and show only men. Careers advice may be sexist if pupils interested in medicine are counselled to enter nursing if they are female, but advised to become doctors if they are male, regardless of personal preference or ability.

The notion of sex-stereotyping is related to the concept of sexism, and refers to a process whereby individuals are socialized into thinking that they have to act and think in a way appropriate to their sex. Sex-stereotyping is found in both formal education and in socialization processes, although there is no suggestion that all socialization and schooling consist of sex-stereotyping. However, girls who climb trees, play football and dislike wearing dresses, even if they are very young, are often labelled ‘tomboys’ by their parents and friends and encouraged to be more ‘lady-like’. Similarly, boys who cry or play with dolls are warned that they are behaving ‘like a little girl’. Personal inclination and interest are thus seen to be secondary to characterization on grounds of sex.

Sexism and sex-stereotyping are evident in the school curriculum in the way pupils interact with each other and with teachers, in reading schemes and textbooks, in the allocation and distribution of resources, in games and play.
facilities, in uniform and in many other aspects of education. It is important to realize that sexism and sex-stereotyping are problematic not merely because they seek to constrain the thoughts and actions of individuals on grounds of sex, but because they frequently portray a picture of the real world which is inaccurate. As Lobban (1976, p. 42) says of her survey of sexism in reading schemes for young children:

The world they depicted was not only sexist; it was more sexist than present reality and in many ways totally foreign to the majority of children, who do have . . . at least some experience of cross-sex activities.

Furthermore, sexism and sex-stereotyping can be extremely damaging to the self-images of those children who do not, cannot or do not wish to conform to the stereotypes. In her research on a comprehensive school Wolpe found that one boy who was unpopular with his classmates owed his unpopularity to the fact that he was seen as 'feminine'. This label was applied to him because he sometimes sat with the girls at lunchtime — an action considered taboo by all the other boys — disliked football and PE and preferred Beethoven to pop music. A girl who had few friends at school was interested in playing football, doing odd jobs around the house and disliked wearing pretty dresses. Both children were thought by their classmates to be odd, because their preferred activities were those usually associated with the opposite sex. Their behaviour was seen by other children at school to threaten their own conformity to the stereotyped traditions of male and female behaviour.

It has, in fact, sometimes been argued that the high degree of continuity in sex roles in different societies over long periods of time is proof that sex roles have a strong biological basis and are thus difficult — or impossible — to alter. But biological differences between men and women are not as straightforward as is sometimes claimed; the degree of biological distinguishability between the sexes can vary from a great deal to the almost imperceptible, so that the precise sex of some babies — or even adults — is sometimes in doubt and this may on occasions lead to individuals 'changing' their sex. Furthermore, although biological differentiation between the sexes is based mainly on variations in the chromosomes
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composition of cells which make up the human body, and on
the possession or non-possession of certain hormones, we do
not yet know enough about the effect of hormones on human
behaviour to be able to say that biological factors in behaviour
and thought are more basic (or less amenable to change) than
cultural or psychological factors.\textsuperscript{18}

In fact, sexism and sex-stereotyping of roles have been
shown by many anthropological studies to vary in their con-
text from one society to another, which suggests that cultural
factors in behaviour and thought do override biological fac-
tors.\textsuperscript{19} However, before examining in detail the ways in
which sexism and sex-stereotyping work in socialization and
schooling, it may be useful first to analyse briefly the ways
in which girls and boys have been found – for whatever
reason – to differ in abilities and attainment.

Sex Differences in Children

There is now quite a body of research in this area, some of it
clearly displaying beliefs that sex differences illustrate the
superiority of one sex over another. Early twentieth-century
research by Thompson suggested that, whereas boys were
superior in ingenuity, girls were better at association and at
memorizing material.\textsuperscript{20} Hollingsworth found that there were
fewer 'feeble-minded' girls than boys but concluded that this
was traceable to the less competitive nature of girls' work,
which meant that mental disorders were harder to detect
than they were in boys.\textsuperscript{21} In a series of psychometric tests
Terman and Miles discovered that there was a dichotomy of
interests between boys and girls. Whereas boys had strong
interests in exploits, adventure, outdoor and physically
strenuous activities, machinery, tools, science and inventions,
girls preferred domestic affairs, aesthetic objects, sedentary
and indoor activities, and looking after other people. Girls
were revealed to have a marked superiority in verbal ability
while boys were much better in mechanical ability. Terman
and Miles also noted that whereas boys on the whole appeared
self-assure, aggressive and fearless, girls displayed greater
powers of sympathy, were more timid and more apt to show
emotion than were boys.\textsuperscript{22}
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More recent research has also discovered substantive differences between the sexes. Maccoby’s review of this research provides a comprehensive account of contemporary research in this area.23 There seems general agreement that, prior to attending school, the general intelligence of girls is higher than that of boys, but that after some time spent in school this position gradually reverses.24 In verbal ability girls excel at the pre-school and early school stages, but by about the age of ten boys have almost caught up.25 However, girls throughout their school careers are better at grammar, spelling and verbal fluency than boys.26 Girls learn to count earlier than boys and, in the early years of schooling, few differences other than this are found in number ability between the sexes.27 Later in their educational career boys start to forge ahead, especially in arithmetical ability.28 In spatial ability, research suggests that from an early age boys are superior to girls and retain this advantage throughout the years of schooling.29 Some tests for analytic ability show boys to be ahead of girls, but other tests show boys and girls with similar levels of ability.30 Tests for creativity suggest that girls are better at what Hudson has termed ‘divergent’ thinking31 which is often associated with creativity in the arts.32 But other tests, for example those involving thinking of new ways to use toys, show boys as better creative thinkers.33 Follow-up studies of exceptionally gifted children indicate that boys in this category are more likely to fulfill their promise than are girls.34 There is also recognition in some research that girls are more passive than boys. Fogelman found that when children were given Piagetian tests of conservation of quantity, using Plasticine, girls performed better when they simply watched and commented on an experimenter, whereas boys performed better when they carried out the experiments themselves.35 Not only has it been established that there are differences in the skills and aptitudes acquired by boys and girls, but it has also been shown that these differences are reflected in school performance: Douglas (1967, pp. 99-100) states:36

There is much evidence from past studies that girls are more successful than boys in the primary schools. In reading, writing, English and spelling, the average eleven-year
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old girl beats the average eleven-year old boy. But although the girls retain their superiority in these basic subjects when they reach the secondary school, they fall behind the boys in many others, particularly arithmetic, geography and science.

Class differences may also overlay variations in performance according to sex, and Banks argues that the achievements of girls at school are even more dependent on class than those of boys. Indeed, Douglas found that more girls than boys left school at the minimum age, which is by no means surprising, since the opportunities available to working-class girls on leaving school (even more so than is the case for working-class boys) are rarely dependent on a high level of education or on educational qualifications gained at school. Yet at the age of transfer to secondary education, girls—regardless of class—are often rated as better educational prospects than boys. And at the ages of eight and eleven years Douglas found that girls performed better in tests based on school subjects, although no clear sex differences emerged on the basis of IQ tests. However, he discovered that by the age of eleven middle-class boys were beginning to catch up, partly because of their performance in arithmetic tests. And whereas girls up to the age of eleven displayed better reading ability, boys were found to have a larger vocabulary.

Once girls go on to secondary school their performance in relation to that of boys may begin to deteriorate, although Dale has claimed that this is more marked in girls attending single-sex schools than in girls at co-educational schools. Douglas, Ross and Simpson found that at fifteen years of age, regardless of type of school, boys were surpassing girls in their school performance, with higher scores also on non-verbal intelligence tests, although girls continued to gain higher scores on verbal intelligence tests. Other, more statistical data on the relative performances of boys and girls in GCE and CSE examinations confirm these findings on the relative performances of boys and girls at secondary school.

For the minority of girls who get as far as taking ‘A’ levels their achievements are not as good as those of comparable boys. But, in any case, the majority of girls and boys at school are not highly academic, may not even take GCE ‘O’
level examinations, and certainly are unlikely to proceed to 'A' level courses. So we cannot assume that because the 'O' level achievements of those girls who sit these exams are broadly comparable to the results obtained by boys, all girls do equally as well as all boys. Furthermore, girls at 'O' level tend to specialize mainly in arts subjects, whilst boys gravitate more towards maths and sciences, so that seemingly comparable exam results are frequently in quite different subjects.

So far it has only been established that there are sex differences in aptitude, ability and performances. But it should not be assumed that these are innate or necessarily biologically rather than culturally influenced, especially since it has already been suggested that it is in the interest of a capitalist society to select different skills, values and ideas to transmit to different social groups.

Socialization into sex differences

Infancy and early childhood

The point at which sex differences begin to become apparent and the age at which boys and girls begin to be treated differently is the subject of some considerable debate. Chafetz, for example, argues that even the initial association of different colours with male or female babies has an impact on the ways in which parents and others act towards babies on the basis of their sex. This view is shared by Goldberg and Lewis who, in their research on very young infants, found that mothers of six-month-old baby girls talked to and touched them to a greater extent than was found to be the case for mothers of six-month-old baby boys. The same researchers also discovered that whereas mothers of male babies expected them to be noisy and adventurous, the mothers of female babies expected them to be quieter, cleaner and less venturesome than would have been required of boys.

In contrast to these findings, the Newsons' study of infant care amongst families in Nottingham found few signs of
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differential treatment according to sex in the early years of children's lives, although they did note that some fathers were more willing to help care for a baby if it was male.49 Their evidence does suggest, however, that if children are not stereotyped according to sex in early infancy, it is not long before sexism is visible to those children - whether or not they are aware of it. They comment that the roles played by working-class parents tend to be much more rigidly allocated on grounds of sex than those of middle-class parents, especially in relation to childcare and domestic labour, which are seen by many working-class men as 'women's work': 'it seems to be generally the case in our society that as one proceeds down the social scale, the sex roles become more sharply defined and more rigidly typed' (Newson and Newson, 1963, p. 207). The Newsons explained this finding by suggesting that as manual work relies to a greater extent on strength and muscle power than does non-manual work, working-class views on the biological basis of sex role differentiation are upheld by their work experiences. Although the extent of the difference in rigidity of sex role definition between working-class and middle-class parents may now be declining, rigid role definitions may continue to exist for those who are employed in heavy manual work, and be passed on to their children, so that the sexual division of labour comes to be seen by those children as having a firm biological - rather than social and economic - basis.

But children may at an early age learn the differential evaluation of sex roles even before they become aware of the biological basis of sex differences. Kohlberg's researches on five- and six-year-old children indicate that, by this age, children are not only aware of distinctions between male and female roles, but are also alert to society's higher valuation of men and male roles.50

Children of school-age
As children grow older, so their degree of awareness of sex differences and the extent of sex-stereotyped behaviour increases. The Newsons' work on seven-year-olds found many more variations in behaviour and parental response or attitudes
These findings are explained by the researchers by reference to the greater degree of autonomy which seven-year-old children have as compared with younger children. This reflects an implicit assumption by the Newsons that sex differences in behaviour are innate so that when children are allowed to choose their own activities they choose those which are in accordance with their membership of a particular sex. Other researchers have drawn rather different conclusions from similar evidence about sex differences in behaviour, suggesting that these are socially created rather than biologically based. Chafetz (1974, p. 221), for example, argues that:

Children learn from the actions of their parents and other adults with whom they come into contact. What we do with great effort and psychological cost to overcome sex role stereotypes will become our children’s habitual responses although this too is oversimplified, since it assumes that sex stereotyping can be overcome simply by changing people’s attitudes, without recognizing that the basic structure of capitalist societies is one in which the division of labour between the sexes plays a major part.

The actual differences in behaviour between boys and girls of primary school age may be quite striking. The Newsons found that mothers of seven-year-old boys were highly likely to characterize those boys as ‘outdoor’ children, whereas mothers of similarly aged girls most frequently described their daughters as children who spent a lot of time indoors. That this should be the case might be expected from evidence examined earlier, which suggested that mothers of young boys were more likely to think of their sons as adventurous than were mothers of young girls. And it was also established previously that mothers talk more to female babies than to male babies. Hence, boys may well be encouraged to spend long periods of time outside, while girls are kept inside talking to their mothers, and gradually taking an interest in household domestic tasks. The boys in the Newson’s study who were said by their mothers to be ‘indoor’ children, were often considered to be shy, which explained (to their parents) their wish to stay indoors. No such
characterization of 'indoor' girls was given, since staying inside was clearly felt by most parents to be normal behaviour for girls. The Newsons' researchers also showed that seven-year-old girls were much less likely than similarly aged boys to play in the street or roam outside. The mothers of these girls were more likely than mothers of boys in the study to fetch their children from school, suggesting that girls may be more closely supervised than boys.57

The skills and abilities in which children of different sexes excel or in which they are inferior at school, are reflected in the activities of those children when they are at home as well. The Newsons found that seven-year-old girls were much more likely than seven-year-old boys to list reading and writing among their special hobbies.58 Making models, by contrast, was a hobby largely confined to boys, who were often introduced to it by their fathers; knitting and sewing were predominantly female pastimes.59 Games and toys can also play an important role in stereotyping children's behaviour on the basis of sex.60 The Newsons' research on these discovered that jigsaw puzzles were used mainly by middle-class boys, which may help to explain why boys do better on tests of spatial ability.61 Both boys and girls were found to play ball games, but whereas boys preferred team games like cricket or football, girls preferred solitary games involving, for instance, the rhythmic bouncing of a ball on the ground. Lego and other constructional games were used mostly by boys, which may increase their mechanical ability as compared to girls. Dolls were an important toy for many girls, but few boys.62 Although special dolls, such as Action Man, are made for boys, these are in a rather different category from most dolls played with by girls; they have no connection with the home, the family, appearance and domestic tasks as do most dolls played with by girls — indeed, Action Man may not even be classed as a doll. Girls' dolls — which are usually, although not always, female — encourage their owners to engage in traditional female behaviour — caring for others, playing 'Mummy', keeping house, sewing, showing concern for clothes and appearance — whereas boys' dolls are usually more adventurous male characters who can be used in 'masculine' play outside, as opposed to inside, the home. Belotti (1975, p. 80) questions whether girls' apparent
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Preference for dolls—as opposed to other playthings—is a ‘natural’ preference:

I have seen girls of eighteen or twenty months old spend hours and hours taking a whole lot of little cars, aeroplanes, helicopters, boats and trains from a bag, line them up on a carpet and move them about with the same pleasure and concentration as little boys. In the same way one can see boys spending the whole morning washing, cleaning the tables and polishing shoes. Later this pattern of play disappears. Children have already learnt to ask for the ‘right’ toy because they know the ‘wrong’ one will be denied them.

The Newsons argue that the play of girls tends to mirror that of adult women with whom they come into contact. Hence, their play involves looking after babies, doing housework, going shopping, visiting the doctor or going on holiday. This is claimed to be the case even where a girl’s own mother works! If this is so, then there needs to be a more convincing explanation of why girls adopt domestic roles than the Newsons’ suggestion that these roles are most easily accessible to and observable by girls. Boys, the Newsons suggest, cannot observe men’s roles as easily (because they are all hidden away at work) and hence use more fantasy and creativity in their play.63 But this may be made more possible for boys than for girls because television, radio, films and comics portray far more men in heroic and fantasy roles than they do women. Girls looking for alternative female roles are likely to be confronted in the media with yet more unheroic, housewife figures whose fantasies are confined to dreaming about romance with the milkman or washing-machine mechanic. It is also likely that girls are encouraged by their mothers to engage in domestic duties, whilst boys are not so encouraged and, indeed, may even be discouraged from so doing. Thus, whilst girls are learning that domestic tasks are ‘female work’, boys are also learning this stereotype, which they will apply later to their own girlfriends and wives, and which is also supported by society’s existing sexual division of labour.

At the same time, girls are also likely to be learning the appropriate ‘female’ manner in which to express emotion. The Newsons found that seven-year-old girls who quarrelled
with their friends did so by shouting at them, whilst boys who argued with their friends were likely to settle disputes by the use of physical force.64 They comment (1976, p. 198) that this is related to "a cultural understanding that it is neither seemly nor safe to allow little girls to brawl in public places". On the other hand, girls were reported by their mothers to display more aggression at home than boys, and the Newsons (1976, p. 198) explain this by declaring that "the sanction [against aggression] is lifted in the privacy of the home to the extent that female aggression if not exactly accepted, is not totally forbidden." The showing of aggression in public by girls may also be made less likely by other processes at work in their socialization. The Newsons discovered that mothers of girls were more likely to intervene when their daughters became involved in unsuitable friendships, than was the case for similarly involved boys. And because girls are less free to choose their friends and roam the streets, they are less likely to use bad language, or perhaps less likely to let their parents hear them use it. Girls may, because of their socialization, be easier to bring up; the Newsons' research found that girls were threatened with punishment and punished less often than boys,65 and that few girls were considered by their parents to be difficult to handle, whilst boys were placed in this category quite frequently.66

The evidence on socialization so far examined suggests that, within the family and in the early years of schooling, boys and girls behave differently, acquire different skills and aptitudes, and are often treated by their families and other adults in sex-related ways. This supports the argument presented by Althusser that the family, in combination with the school, acts to reproduce and confirm the existing sexual division of labour in society.67 Boys and girls quickly become aware of sex-role differences and begin to accept them as normal and 'given', so that what could be considered problematic is rarely seen as such. But it is not only with regard to activities, attitudes and skills that there are differences between the sexes. The consequences of different socialization processes based on sex are also to be seen in the cultures which pre-adolescent — and adolescent — girls typically adopt.
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Girls and 'Feminine' Culture

The socialization of girls does not cease to become separate to that of boys at adolescence, but continues to differ as girls become teenagers. Yet, as McRobbie and Garber indicate, studies of youth culture have largely ignored girls, or perceived them as marginal to the sub-cultures studied. However, McRobbie and Garber argue, the reason that girls are marginal to male youth cultures is because the culture of girls is often distinct from that of boys. Working-class girls usually have interests and pursuits different from working-class boys, and are much more home-based in their leisure time. Middle-class girls may have more money to spend on leisure than working-class girls—at least until the latter start work—and hence may spend less time at home than their working-class sisters, particularly if they are involved in sports like riding, tennis or skating, or in hobbies like singing or ballet; but even so their culture is usually very different from that of middle-class boys. Smith comments that teenage girls may often be under greater pressure than teenage boys to carry out household tasks, and hence less likely to have considerable leisure time when not at school or doing homework. Spending money on clothes, hairdressing and cosmetics, he suggests, may form an important part of what leisure girls do enjoy; boys, on the other hand, although they may spend money on clothes, are less likely to be as consumed as girls with their appearance. Much of the research on the culture of adolescent girls—and there is not nearly as much of this research as there is comparable research on boys—points out the greater home-centredness of girls' culture. As we saw earlier, even very young girls are encouraged and expected to stay at home much more than are boys, so this trend is merely continued into adolescence, by which time it has become an accepted part of 'being a girl'. Whereas middle-class girls in late adolescence may come into contact with student cultures and become more independent of the home, working-class girls are unlikely to undergo this experience. Some of the hobbies which girls take up, for example, cooking or sewing, may later form part of the blurring of leisure and work which is characteristic of the housewife's role, and the home-centredness of those hobbies may help to prepare
the girls concerned for the isolation which they will expe-
rience when they become housewives.71
What McRobbie and Garber term the ‘Teeny Bopper’ cul-
ture is ideally suited to girls who wish to stay at home during 
their leisure hours as it requires only a bedroom, record 
player and permission to invite girl friends to visit the house. 
Although teenage girls may go out with boys and spend much 
time thinking about them, there is much awareness that boys 
apply crude labels to girls who flaunt their sexuality or allow 
themselves to be sexually exploited. Furthermore, the ‘Teeny 
Bopper’ culture involves none of the risks of humiliation and 
degradation that may occur in the development of strong 
relationships with boys.72 McRobbie and Garber (1976, p. 
220) say:
Involvement in Teeny Bopper culture, then, can be seen as 
a kind of defensive retreat away from the possibility of 
being sexually labelled, but also in displaying a high degree 
of self-sufficiency within the various small female group-
ings: ‘we have a great laugh with the girls’.
Boys, of course, may also engage in retreatist cultures not 
involving girls, for example in sports like rugby, or fishing, or 
in repairing cars and motorcycles. But these cultures are dif-
ferent from those of girls in that they are less often home-
based and, where they are, often involve being in a garage, 
shed or garden rather than the house itself, which may be 
viewed solely as a place for the more domestic pursuits of 
girls and women. In so far as the ‘Teeny Bopper’ culture is 
oriented towards the idolizing of pop-stars, it is also claimed 
that it orients girls towards romance and anticipates future 
real relationships with boys, and eventually towards marriage 
itself — something which is viewed as an idyllic state.73 In a 
subsequent paper McRobbie notes that many adolescent girls 
are aware that real marriages are not like this yet the fantasy 
of perfect marriage persists, partly because for many working-
class girls with limited educational qualifications and few job 
skills, life presents few alternative ways of living as an adult. 
Furthermore, says McRobbie, girls are often aware that their 
leisure time and interests are boring and insular, but are un-
willing to do anything to prevent this or develop new interests. 
Adolescence is seen as a time of waiting for real life — marriage
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- to begin. But at the same time that very boredom and insu-

larity are preparing girls for their future roles in the home.74

Comics and magazines read by teenage girls are quite unlike

those read by teenage boys. Whereas the latter tend to read

magazines on specific topics, like football, motor cycles, cars

or fishing, girls read magazines which talk about clothes,

make-up, 'getting a man', and pop records or pop singers.

Stories in girls' magazines are about love and romance, rather

than about adventures, work or interesting activities.75

It is not only working-class girls, uninterested in school

and doing badly there, who adopt home-centred cultures and

are expressly concerned about pop music, boys, romance and

clothes. Llewellyn, in her researches on two girls' secondary

schools (one working-class, the other predominantly lower

middle-class), found that teachers often complained that girls

were uninterested in school work and only concerned with

their social life. Indeed, at one school girls with steady boy-

friends were seen as more stable and more likely to succeed

in exams than girls without steady boyfriends.76 Schools

thus reinforce the separate culture of girls and in so doing

help to reproduce the existing sexual division of labour, even

where the girls concerned are academically capable. Llewellyn

found that academically successful girls, especially working-

class ones, tended to have a less active social life than other

girls and spent less time 'hanging around' street corners near

their homes.77 But this may mean that even academically

successful, lower middle-class girls are home-centred, un-

venturous and passive.

Sharpe's analyses of schoolgirls in Ealing suggest that it is

not only the Teeny Bopper culture which keeps girls at home,

nor simply the need to undertake domestic tasks, but also

the definite social control policies exercised by the parents

or guardians of girls.78 Adolescent girls are seen to be 'at risk

if they are allowed too much freedom. But even this practice

is not without its problems, as Sharpe (1976, pp. 213-19)

points out:

Despite the so-called permissiveness of society today, girls

are still kept under quite a strict family control, which has

consequences beyond the simple one of their protection.

Parents fear for the safety of their daughters if they are
out at night. But rather than equipping them with knowledge and confidence about the 'facts of life' many of them prefer a method of strict control.

For girls from immigrant families, particularly those emanating from cultures where marriages are arranged by parents for their daughters, control may be even stricter, so that immigrant girls may be prevented even from joining in the limited culture of English schoolgirl. An Asian girl whose parents do allow her some freedom explains what it is like for some of her friends whose parents are stricter. I have a lot of freedom by Indian standards. Some girls aren't allowed to go to school discos even when they finish at seven o'clock. If there is a school trip they have to take home a note from the teacher and even then their parents might not let them go. . . . Some of them aren't even allowed to take their friends home or go out for a walk.

Asian boys are given much more freedom than their sisters although, if their parents are very strict, they may have less freedom than comparable English boys.

The sub-cultures of pre-adolescent and adolescent girls are, then, usually quite separate from the sub-cultures of adolescent boys, or have only a marginal attachment to these. Girls' sub-cultures are frequently home-based, reflecting both their greater involvement in carrying out domestic chores, and their parents' desire to control them by keeping them at home. The cultures reflect - sometimes in a way closer to fantasy than to reality in detail (as opposed to outline) - the future roles of women in the sexual division of labour in society. Personal relationships, appearance, romance, marriage, and insularity, are the hall-marks of these cultures. And in school as well as in the family the ideological message which is passed on to the majority of girls is one which supports both the distinctive culture of their sex and the existing structure of capitalist society. It will be seen that this message is transmitted in a variety of ways.
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Sexism in the School

1 Pupil and teacher interaction

Despite the recent interest shown by sociologists and educationalists in studies of classroom interaction, few of these studies have been explicitly concerned with the interaction of girls. Sometimes findings which contradict previous research have failed to be interpreted in terms which would account for the discrepancies: namely that the pupils concerned are girls. Yet, given that the socialization and subcultures of girls differ, sometimes radically, from those of boys, it might be expected that the interaction of girls in school would differ from the interaction of boys in school.

The significance of girls' distinctive culture, however, is rarely recognized. For example Furlong's research which discovered fluid interaction amongst pupils, with children sometimes acting in groups and sometimes individually, in seeking an explanation of this phenomenon does not even mention that the pupils involved are female. Yet we might expect that girls, who are encouraged to be much less competitive than boys, whose home-centred culture encourages self-sufficiency but at the same time the company of other girls, who are less involved in roaming the streets and in gang-formation than are boys, would display different patterns of classroom interaction from boys. This is apparent in the following extract from Furlong (1977, pp. 180-1):

Q: Why is history so good, what sort of things do you do?
Angela: Copying down notes from the board, writing notes from textbooks, and doing diagrams and things.

Q: Well some teachers run their classes by having discussions, do you think that's as good a way of learning as writing from the board?
Angela: No. I mean in your spare time you can discuss, but not in the lesson.

This girl's belief that good teaching and learning consists of writing down notes and copying things from the board -- as opposed to discussing things and thinking them through -- fits
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remarkably well with Frazier and Sadker's (1973, p. 93) research which suggests that: 'Girls are reinforced for silence, neatness and conformity and in this dispensation of rewards, the process of learning is thwarted.' The reluctance of girls to participate in discussion is also characteristic of their performance in higher education. And this despite their apparent superiority over boys in verbal ability. Here the sexism of the school seems to prevail over their potential aptitude for discussion.

Lambert's study of girls at school, which was a companion study to those done of boys in grammar and secondary modern schools by Lacey and Hargreaves, also shows findings which are rather different from those found by researchers in boys' schools. Whereas Hargreaves found that deviant cliques of boys achieved poor academic performances in school, Lambert found that a somewhat similar grouping of girls was associated with reasonably good standards of academic work. The pressures to conform, to be neat, quiet and hard-working are obviously much greater and much more difficult to avoid for girls than they are for boys.

Delamont's research on an upper-middle-class private girls' school does take into account the fact that the pupils concerned are female, but the relevance of her findings to this point is not always recognized, and in any case the girls studied are a quite atypical group in class terms. Delamont discusses the role of youth culture in influencing school interaction, while failing to note that the cultures of girls differ markedly from those of boys. She also neglects to examine the impact of the distinctive socialization process undergone by girls, although the pupils studied seem to have almost an obsessive concern with being quiet, good at school work and getting teachers to like them. Their idea of a good pupil was that they should:

Try to be good at the subject.
Always the right answer.
The better you are the better they are likely to like you, but I think its basically liking the subject.

Boys seldom perceive their role in this way and there can be few boy pupils of whom it could be said, as it was of one girl in Delamont's study (1976, p. 70), that 'She only answers
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when she's sure she's right.’ Indeed, Dale’s research on single- and mixed-sex schools suggests that girls from single-sex schools like the one studied by Delamont are likely to have a more obsessive attitude to their work than girls from mixed schools, encouraged by the stricter discipline, absence of boys as a possible distraction and concern with academic work found in girls’ only schools.88

Not only are girls in school encouraged to be silent, neat and conformist (as Frazier and Sadker show us),89 they are also encouraged to play down their sexuality and yet at the same time to behave differently from boys. They are, therefore, frequently placed in a double bind situation; ‘yes you are girls and must therefore be treated differently from boys’, but ‘you must not act or behave as girls normally do’. Wolpe in a study of a mixed school noticed that when girls complained about boys ‘touching them up’ on the corridor, neither the head teacher nor the other staff recognized the sexual connotations of the behaviour, which was teaching girls that they were sexually and socially passive objects to be manipulated by boys. The incidents were treated by teachers merely as indicative of boys’ high spirits and of girls ‘asking’ to be interfered with.90 Delamont in her examination of how teachers control pupils, notes that control of girls’ dress may be an important strategy, with jewellery, make-up and other adornments being forbidden.91 Boys may also be made to regulate their appearance, but looks are of far less importance to their sexuality than they are to the sexuality of girls.

Girls, then, interact with each other and their teachers in a way which frequently differs from the mode of interaction adopted by boys. But the sexism of school and school behaviour does not end here, but pervades the curriculum — and the hidden curriculum — which girls as pupils are offered.

2 Sexism in the curriculum

What exactly constitutes the curriculum of a school is the subject of some controversy; for example, it is sometimes understood simply as that which is officially taught in lessons. A broader definition is used by some educationalists92 who conceptualize the curriculum as ‘all the learning which is
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planned or guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually inside or outside the school'. Lawton (1975, p. 6) extends the definition of curriculum still further, by arguing that it is "essentially a selection from the culture of a society", which is precisely the point which theorists like Bourdieu make about educational institutions when they contend that these institutions transmit the dominant culture of a society.93 The problems which girls, particularly working-class girls, face with regard to the curriculum of a school include not only the fact that the selected culture is inappropriate to their own class position, practices and beliefs (a contradiction also faced by working-class boys), but also that the selected culture is inappropriate to their position in the sexual division of labour.

Sexism in the curriculum is something to which particular attention has been drawn both by the Women's Movement in Britain and also by the development of courses, mainly at post-school level, in Women's Studies.94 These courses focus on women and women's interests, whether in literature, history, the arts, the social sciences or other areas of culture, and in so doing they and their compilers have made apparent the extent to which most subjects and areas of learning neglect the role of women and women's interests. History as taught in many schools, for example, deals mainly with the activities of men; literature is quite often concerned only or mostly with works written by men.

Where subjects or areas of learning do relate to women and women's interests, they often do so in a very restricted manner. For example, domestic science and needlework are considered to be 'feminine' subjects, but are concerned mainly with teaching girls how to be efficient housewives and mothers -- not with instructing them in aesthetic or general skills -- whilst at the same time boys may be discouraged from taking such subjects, as the skills involved are considered unnecessary for men.95 Other subjects may have 'neutral' content in the sense that they relate to phenomena and skills which are not designed especially for either sex, but they may be taught in a sexist way with girls being encouraged not to take them, because they are "masculine" subjects. Sciences, for example, particularly those like physics and chemistry, may use skills of numeracy and abstract thinking at which
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some girls are not particularly practised, and instead of try-
ing to improve these skills so that girls can do well at sciences,
some schools may try to move girls into other areas of learn-
ing. Dale's research suggests that when girls do display an
interest in the sciences, they are often most fascinated by
those aspects dealing with people, rather than with the parts
which concern the mechanics and explanation of non-human
phenomena.97

A study of curricular differences between boys and girls at
secondary schools carried out by a team of Her Majesty's
School Inspectors found that many schools, whether uninten-
tionally or deliberately, channel girls into separate areas of
the curriculum from boys.98 Girls may end up taking tradi-
tionally 'feminine' subjects like cookery, and also congregate
in the arts disciplines, whilst boys gravitate towards practical,
technical, mathematical and scientific subjects. In games and
physical education boys and girls often undertake separate
activities. The 'blocking' together of optional subjects often
prevents pupils from mixing arts and sciences in the later
years of secondary schooling.99 Girls who want to study a
science are often encouraged to take biology, a 'human
interest' science dealing with animals and people; but on its
own, without physics or chemistry, biology is of limited use
(compared with other sciences) in gaining entry to higher and
further education, or a job. Dale's work on mixed and single-
sex schools claims that all pupils are likely to achieve a higher
level of academic performance in co-educational rather than
single-sex schools.100 But other research indicates that,
whether this is so or not, girls are more likely to choose
maths and science subjects in single-sex schools than in co-
educational schools, despite the fact that girls in co-educational
schools are more likely to be offered the chance of taking
sciences.101

Sharpe observes that girls may be discouraged from study-
ing sciences because the teachers are frequently male, rather
than female.102 This may combine with girls' lack of experi-
ence or skill in the subject matter of sciences, and Sharpe
says (1976, p. 148):

It is not surprising that many girls have relatively little
interest in or understanding of, scientific or technical
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subjects. Their lack of experience of these at home, the absence in their characters of the independence associated with analytic abilities, and the apparent non-scientific nature of women's adult role also contribute to this.

Whilst boys appear to compensate for their relatively poorer reading performance and verbal skills by developing spatial, mechanical and analytic skills in the sciences and mathematics, girls seem frequently to capitalize on the verbal skills already acquired, without seriously attempting to develop or improve other skills. This helps to confine them to 'feminine' subjects and the arts.

Of course, some subjects which are not traditionally 'feminine' do take into account the role of women in society, and facilitate discussion on women's position in society; social sciences and social studies courses may provide an ideal vehicle for this. Yet in practice, these courses may do no more than examine women in relation to their traditional role within the family. This may have the effect of confirming women's existing position in society, rather than questioning it. Even courses which do raise such questions may run into problems if they are given to pupils who have previously been taught in a sexist way. Griffiths found that when teaching a CSE Mode 3 course called 'Learning for Life' pupils were often reluctant to give up their traditional views on men and women in society and disliked thinking about the possibility of finding ways of living outside the nuclear family. Literature which approached problems in a non-sexist way was unpopular with her male students, who found such writing uninteresting. And because the course was seen by other teachers in the school as unconventional, discipline problems arising elsewhere amongst children taking the course were blamed on the course's 'subversive intentions'.

Even seemingly innocuous courses, such as those dealing with sex education, may be taught in a sexist way. Davies has argued that some such courses see sexuality in females only in relation to love and the family while not treating male sexuality in this way at all. This view of women as different from men, and less free than them, is likely to confirm stereotypes rather than question them.

Other courses are sexist in their content because they are
Sexism in learning is much more apparent in secondary schooling than in primary schools. The Plowden Report found little evidence of girls and boys taking separate subjects at the primary level, except in games. This, of course, does not preclude elements of sexism in the teaching of basic subjects like history, but because the range of subjects is smaller than in the secondary school, and because many primary schools place a strong emphasis on individual rather than class learning, the extent of such sexism is probably much less than in the secondary school.

However, in one particular area of primary school learning, reading, much interest and concern has been shown about the extent of sexism (also class-bias and racism) found in reading schemes. Research has been carried out which pinpoints the elements of sexism in children's literature. It has been noted that reading schemes and books for young children rarely contain women as central characters. Where they do, women are often portrayed as playing passive roles, as princesses or 'damsels in distress', or are helped and advised in their exploits by men. Less important female characters are most often described in domestic roles, engaging in tasks like cooking, washing up, ironing or cleaning floors, while menfolk...
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look on. Men and boys usually have a more interesting time, even if they are shown within a family context, because they are able to go on outings, make models, take motor bikes and cars to pieces, never cook, wash-up or clean, and are the only people who drive cars. In her study of recent English reading schemes, Lobban (1976, p. 42) found hardly any working mothers in them, and a rigid distinction between masculine outdoor, instrumental activities and feminine, indoor, domestic activities.

the reading schemes showed a 'real' world people by
women and girls who were almost solely involved with
domestic activity and whom the adventurous and innova-
tive males might occasionally allow into their world (the
rest of human activity and achievement) in a helpmate
capacity.

Of course, it is arguable to what extent reading schemes do influence children's perceptions of the world, but since we do know that girls learn to read earlier than boys, it might be ex-
pected that any adverse effects would be felt more by girls than by boys. Certainly girls who have already been social-
ized into thinking that women's roles are rigidly separated
from men's will have these beliefs confirmed by the sexist
content of reading schemes. And for those girls who have
different experiences of the roles of women to those por-
trayed, the reading schemes are likely to cause some bewilder-
ment about what exactly society does expect of women.

In the curriculum then, sexism is apparent in a number of
ways: it is present in the characterization of some subjects as
male and some subjects as female; it is found in the content
of some disciplines, which emphasize male rather than female
endeavour, or which take for granted the existing position of
women in society; and it is found in the orientation of
subjects towards boys or girls. But learning itself is not the
only aspect of schooling which is sexist. There is another and
more subtle way in which education may be sexist, and that
is in the 'hidden curriculum', in other words the 'invisible'
manner in which learning is organized and shaped.
Sexism in the hidden curriculum

The emphasis placed by Marxist theorists on the functions of schooling in capitalist society in reproducing the social relations of production has caused attention to be directed not only at what children learn in school, but also at how they learn, that is the 'hidden' aspects of learning. Vallance (1974, p. 13) says:

"the functions of the hidden curriculum have been variously identified as the inculcation of values, political socialization, training in obedience and docility, the perpetuation of the class structure. . . . I use the term to refer to those non-academic but educationally significant consequences of schooling that occur systematically but are not made explicit at any level to the public rationales for education."

If aspects of the hidden curriculum are sexist, and indeed if schools are to reproduce the existing sexual division of labour, then it is likely that the hidden curriculum will be sexist so that, even if the curriculum itself becomes or is less explicit, pupils will continue to act and think in sex-stereotyped ways.

There are many aspects of the school and school day which incorporate some element of sexism. Adams and Lauri-kertis suggest a variety of means by which girls may be made to feel inferior to, or different from, boys. Boys' names may be placed first on class registers, followed by girls' names. Female pupils may be lined up in separate rows from male pupils. In sports or in academic learning and examinations, girls may be urged to compete against boys and vice versa. In terms of uniforms, girls are often required to wear restricting and impracticable skirts or gymshirts, whilst only boys are allowed to wear trousers. School playgrounds are often segregated into areas for boys and areas for girls, with boys playing boisterous games on their section and girls behaving quietly on theirs. Describing one school where this is the case, Wolpe (1977, p. 39) points out that although the pupils had chosen to have segregated play areas, the girls' playground was thought to be boring because nothing exciting ever happened on it. She goes on to say:

"There are in fact no chances for girls to participate or to be physically active during the school breaks. Their own
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quiet playground precludes this as all balls are banished from it. They cannot join in with the boys in football. The situation is structured in such a way that they have little alternative but to be onlookers. The game is a socially prescribed activity for boys.

This, of course, is encouraged by the rigid separation in many secondary schools of girls' games and PE from that of boys, something which often begins in primary schools. In assemblies girls may be allowed to sit whilst boys remain standing. Outings may be arranged separately for each sex. For children who attend mixed schools, the sex balance of the school staff may also reflect a separatist view of the capabilities of men and women, replicating the sexual division of labour in wider society. For instance, only a small number of heads of mixed comprehensive schools are women. Most heads of science and maths departments are male, whilst there are more likely to be female heads of departments in subjects like English, history or languages, and most likely to be women heads of department in home economics or girls' games. Clerical and typing staff are almost certainly female in most schools, as are cleaners, cooks and meal supervisors; caretakers, on the other hand, who do 'heavy' work, will all be male. Conversely, however, children in primary schools may find quite a different situation, since teaching young children has long been regarded as women's work — an extension of their 'caring' role from the home to the school. Whereas being a headteacher or a head of department in a secondary school is seen to require authority and 'masculine' skills, these are not thought necessary in a primary school. Indeed, for many years one union of male teachers had as one of its objectives the achievement of a situation in which boys over the age of seven years should be taught only or mainly by men. Sharpe suggests that one reason why boys do less well in primary school than they do in secondary school may be that primary school confronts them with a 'feminine' environment, not only in terms of the sex of the teachers, but also in terms of the behaviour which is required of them. She says (1976, pp. 143–6).

In fact, the primary school values directly contradict the independent assertiveness that parents usually try to
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encourage in their sons. Although teachers may obtain some obedience and conformity from boys, it is likely that they see primary school as being a much more appropriate environment for girls. As a result boys have less incentive to work hard, and become more difficult to control.

Once children move on to a secondary school, women teachers may be seen by both girls and boys as less appropriate to the situation. Dale’s study of mixed and single-sex schools gives some strong indications that this is frequently the case. Here are just three of the comments made by pupils in that research about women teachers: 117

‘Women teachers were not respected by the boys.’

‘Boys did not like the mistresses telling them what to do and what not to do.’

‘Women teachers are far more changeable in temperament than men. You know where you stand with men—no bitchiness.’

Some boys in Dale’s study felt that women teachers were unable to control their classes effectively and girls, particularly those from single-sex schools, felt that women were often harsh and unpleasant teachers. Dale’s (1969, p. 175) own opinion about women teachers are made quite clear in his research:

it is generally acknowledged that the feminine mind takes great care of detail and if anything is over-conscientious (which leads to fussiness . . .). In the mixed school the men on the stuff would keep such a process in check.

Dale’s argument is that no secondary school should be single-sex or staffed by men or women only. The presence of male teachers makes women teachers less particular and stringent, and makes female pupils less silly and giggly and more co-operative. At the same time boys become less boisterous in the presence of girls. 117

But what Dale sees as desirable staff-student relationships in a school may encompass exactly that sexism in behaviour which schools ought to be aiming to get away from, that is a belief that women should behave in a deferential and coquetish way towards men. As Wolpe notes in her study of a mixed
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secondary school, all that the presence of male teachers in a school may do is to teach girl pupils to behave in a traditionally stereotyped way, and reward them for so doing. She cites one case where, in relation to a male teacher,
girls adopted a very 'coy' manner... when bringing up work to the desk or calling him over to discuss a particular aspect. 'Oh Sir', would be accompanied by a giggle, a fluttering of the eyes and a movement closer towards him. This type of behaviour did not occur in classes with older male teachers who distanced themselves from the children.

There remains a suspicion then, that when Dale argues that male teachers modify the behaviour of female pupils and teachers, it is modification in terms of the traditional stereotypes of female behaviour in relation to men which he has in mind. But it is not only male teachers who help to create or confirm stereotyped behaviour, it is also sometimes encouraged by female teachers. Harrison, for example, suggests that female teachers may reinforce their female pupils' perceptions of themselves as pretty, submissive and unintellectual in relation to boys.

Sexism may also operate unconsciously in the classroom by virtue of the degree of attention which teachers pay to male and female pupils. Frazier and Sadker argue that in a mixed class boys may often claim more of a teacher's attention than girls, because their behaviour is noisier and potentially more disruptive than that of girls. Similar conclusions on the response of teachers to pupils of different sex have also been reached by Douglas and Griffiths. The consequences of paying more attention to boys than girls may mean not only that boys take up more of their teachers' time and energy, whilst girls may be neglected, but may also result in girls failing to ask sufficient questions about their work and about the problems they encounter in that work, because they are used to working with less help from their teachers. Obviously not all teachers do spend more time teaching or disciplining male pupils than female pupils, and for some of those teachers who do, their action may be quite unintentional. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that this kind of strategy is adopted by some teachers, and equally
important to realize that it may have serious consequences for girls and boys in school, both in terms of understanding the work that they do and in relation to their own concepts of themselves as worthwhile pupils.

The connections between school and the economy and the labour market are, of course, crucial aspects of education in a capitalist industrial society, and the mechanisms whereby schools filter their pupils into jobs or impart ideas about appropriate jobs are often sexist, precisely because this is one way in which schools reproduce both the social relations of production and, more specifically, the sexual division of labour. Since the 'real' place of women in capitalist societies is in the family, any careers advice which girls receive at school is likely to be limited in extent, and frequently not taken seriously either by those offering it or those receiving it. The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 has made blatant sexism in careers' literature illegal — for instance advising boys to become doctors but girls nurses — but the Act has probably had no impact on the verbal advice given to schoolchildren, particularly since the structure of the labour market has not been significantly changed by the passage of legislation on sex discrimination. The more academically successful, middle-class schoolgirls are less likely to experience sexism in careers' advice than are working-class girls, since there is some provision for the former to enter the labour market in a serious way. Working-class girls, on the other hand, may be channelled into a narrow avenue of unskilled or temporary work. When doing research on two girls' secondary schools, Llewellyn once listened to a careers' talk given to secondary modern schoolgirls by a careers' adviser, in which the latter outlined two main criteria for choosing a job: whether a pupil shared a preference for liking people or things. Those who liked people were advised to enter shop or office work; those who preferred things were advised to seek jobs in factories. Of course, many working-class boys have an equally limited choice of work, but that choice is determined mainly by their class position, and not by their sex. In a study of working-class schoolgirls Sharpe found that their career choices included jobs like office-work, teaching, nursing, shopwork, air basteing, handweaving and reception work. She comments (1976), p. 164):

She comments (1976), p. 164):
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The jobs they chose reflected, of course, the jobs that were normally open to them; these, in turn, were usually extensions of their ‘feminine’ role and exploited some supposedly ‘feminine’ characteristics.

These ‘feminine’ characteristics included meeting new people, caring for others, looking well-groomed, and enjoyment of travel.

Of course, as Hussain points out, education itself is not entirely responsible for channelling individuals into occupations, since much of the selection of personnel is carried on outside of educational establishments, and educational qualifications are not, in themselves, entitlements to jobs, although they are important in determining access to jobs. But careers’ advice and the kind of qualifications acquired at school are relevant to the occupations which children decide to try to enter, and girls are often thus doubly disadvantaged. Employers, of course, do not want those who aspire to greater things than their class position and sex should allow.

As a Training Officer in a retail store says:

Our girls need to be able to read and write well, to add up, and to have the right manner. ‘A’ levels would simply give them ideas and make them restless.

There seems little difference between that kind of sentiment and the concern shown by nineteenth-century industrialists lest their employees should, by attending school, learn to think for themselves.

Sexism, Culture and Education: Some Conclusions

It has been suggested that, in capitalist societies, there are close connections between the family and the school in contributing to the maintenance and reproduction of those societies. Cultural differences exist between different classes, and these are first made apparent — and passed on — in the family. Schools subsequently transmit only a selection of culture, usually that of the dominant political and economic class in society. Some children, by virtue of their origin in the dominant class or because of their sex, are more able to make use
Sexism, Socialization and Culture

of, and understand, the culture which is transmitted in schools. It is also clear, although most educational theorists ignore this point, that schools and families transmit different cultures to boys and to girls. These, sometimes quite radically different cultures, reflect the sexual division of labour in society as well as the class relationships. The socialization of girls and the cultures into which they become absorbed, frequently result in fairly rigid sex-stereotyping of skills and activities. At school these quickly make themselves apparent, with girls doing well at verbal skills and performing better at primary school than boys, but failing to develop satisfactory skill levels in spatial, mechanical or technical ability and often becoming less numerate than boys. The sexism of the curriculum, and the hidden curriculum, and the different patterns of interaction between female pupils and teachers (as compared with male pupils and teachers and particularly in the years of secondary schooling), combine to ensure that girls mainly specialize in different areas of learning from boys and that they are treated and seen in quite separate ways from male pupils. Thus, on leaving school, most girls are prepared only or mainly for the traditional place of women in the sexual division of labour: the home and the family.

The results of this process of establishing sex differences are entirely satisfactory for the capitalist labour market and society in general.127 Workers are cared for by women, new potential workers are born and socialized within the family, and women are also available – either before or after marriage if economic necessity or culture dictates – for a variety of unskilled, low-paid, temporary or part-time jobs. The capitalist labour market has what Barron and Norris have called a 'dual' structure, where most well-paid, skilled, permanent full-time work is done by men, and other kinds of work mainly by women.128

Although it has been argued that family and school do, to a very large extent, ideologically reproduce both class relationships and the sexual division of labour, whilst transmitting only the culture of the dominant group in society, this is not necessarily to say that schools are unable to change at all unless the structure of capitalist society is altered first. Nor is it argued that every school, and every aspect of learning
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and its organization supports that capitalist society. Some schools are trying to overcome the worst aspects of sexism and sex-stereotyping in their curriculum, if not in their hidden curriculum. But this can only be successful if those involved in education believe that education is about fulfilling people's potential, and not about pleasing employers. And this is not an easy undertaking in a society where capital and profits finance most of the education provided for children, and at a time when educational expenditure is under heavy attack. However, as the next chapter will demonstrate, changes in education are necessary if women and men are ever to break away from the confines of the sexual division of labour. Education alone certainly cannot change the social relations of production, although for many years it was a firmly held belief that it could. But education may begin to alter people's attitudes towards the social relations of production and the sexual division of labour; however limited in extent that change of attitude may be, and it can begin to extend the range of skills which children learn at school. At the present time, however, the subtle sexism of socialization, culture, learning and the hidden curriculum, is heavily supported by the structure of capitalist society and this support is clearly reflected in the structuring of educational opportunities themselves.
Patterns of Contemporary Curricular Discrimination and Differentiation in the Education of Girls

In the previous chapter it was suggested that the socialization, cultural forms and educational experience of girls were pervaded by sexism and by processes of sex-stereotyping. But education in England and Wales has come a long way since the nineteenth century; every child of between five and sixteen years of age is now entitled to free primary and secondary schooling, and there is increased concern about the effects on educational performance of social class background and ability level. In particular the period since 1944 has seen many changes in the organization and content of education in England and Wales. The demise of the tripartite system of secondary education, including selective schools and the eleven-plus, is almost complete and grammar, technical and modern schools have in many areas been replaced by comprehensive secondary schools. Reports have been issued dealing with all aspects of education ranging from primary schooling to higher education and giving consideration to equality of educational opportunity in relation to social class and ability. Primary schools have moved towards a freer organization of learning and towards child-centred education, and secondary schools also have begun to experiment with different methods of teaching, used mixed ability teaching or new ways of streaming pupils, and expanded their curricula. An unprecedented expansion in higher education took place during the 1960s, both within the autonomous university sector and in the publicly controlled establishments. New public examinations for school leavers have been
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introduced: the General Certificate of Education in 1951 and the Certificate of Secondary Education in 1963. The setting up of the Schools Council in 1964 to look at school curricula and the increased size of many comprehensive secondary schools have allowed and encouraged the widening of subject choice and curricular innovation. Much more recently concern has been shown about standards of literacy and numeracy in schools and the amount of control exercised by teachers over curriculum content, and a 'Great Debate' on education has taken place between politicians, civil servants, industrialists and parents. A Sex Discrimination Act relating to education as well as to such matters as employment and the supply of goods, came into effect in December 1975, and an Equal Opportunities Commission was set up to deal with problems arising from the implementation of the Act, which makes discrimination on grounds of sex illegal in most areas of public life. Might we not now assume that girls, along with the working class and those of low academic ability, have finally achieved equality of opportunity?

The Concept of Equality

Since 1944 there has been much controversy in educational circles over the interpretation of the concept of equality, and particularly the concept of equality of educational opportunity. The 1944 Education Act itself saw equality as something which must be related to age, ability and aptitude. But the manner in which the Act was implemented ensured that these three factors merely served to determine which groups should have most resources, facilities and prestige, so that, for example, the secondary modern schools to which the vast majority of working-class children went were in no sense equal to the grammar schools attended by a small elite. This preserved inequality, rather than decreasing its extent. In the decades since 1944 other definitions of equality of educational opportunity have also made themselves known, notably the idea of equal access to common secondary schools and the notion of compensatory education for particularly disadvantaged groups. But contradictory principles of equality have made themselves manifest, so that whilst some seeking
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equality in education have seen its achievement as something to which everyone has a moral and ethical right, others have seen it in meritocratic terms — equality of access to elite positions on the basis of ability — rather than access based on wealth or inheritance. Finn and Grant have suggested that the notion of equality has provided the Labour Party, the political group most concerned with egalitarianism in education, with enormous problems because of the need the Party has felt to combine its endeavour to achieve equality with servicing of the economy. At a time of economic recession, this contradiction is currently of considerable relevance to an understanding of what is happening both to the education of girls and to the education of the working class in general. At the same time that the strengthening of the economy is seen to be a major political priority, with consequent cuts in public expenditure and a shift of emphasis towards science and technology in educational resources and spending, there is also political concern about academic standards in schools, and about equality of opportunity for women. The two different trends in policy virtually cancel each other out, since rising unemployment, lack of educational expenditure and cut-backs in teacher training (all of which arise from current economic policy), effectively prevent the raising of academic standards in schools and block the achievement of equality of opportunity for women.

The notion of equality of opportunity in so far as it applies to education is, in any case, something which must be treated with caution. Certainly, during the 1950s and 1960s there was a belief prevalent among Labour Party politicians and members, and also amongst some educationalists, that changes in education could bring about changes in the inequalitarian structure of society as a whole. Thus, equalizing educational opportunity was seen as a way of equalizing the distribution of other kinds of opportunities and resources as well. However, since the 1960s it has become apparent that either the idea that eradication of educational inequality leads to eradication of societal inequality is mistaken or that the methods chosen to eradicate educational inequality have been unsuccessful. Indeed, there seems an element of truth in both these conclusions. Eradication of unequal educational opportunities, even if this were possible to achieve, will not
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by itself alter other aspects of societal inequalitarianism, particularly when the class relations and relations of production in society remain unequal. The notion of equal opportunity both supposes that children entering school are equal, although for example a mass of evidence on working-class children and their educational experiences indicates that inequality is present before the age of entry to school, and implies that opportunities to become equal actually exist, which in a class society and a system of production based on a polarization between owners and non-owners of capital, they manifestly do not.

The preceding chapter examined some of the processes contributing to the inequality of girls in relation to boys. In this chapter, it will be argued that developments in education since 1944 have altered, but not eliminated, the extent to which schools discriminate and differentiate between pupils on the basis of their sex, and that consequently, despite the concern to achieve equality of educational opportunity shown by educationalists and policy-makers since the Second World War, the educational chances and experiences of girls continue to be different, and separate, from those of boys.

Developments in the Education of Girls since 1944

The immediate effects of the 1944 Education Act were beneficial to both working-class boys and working-class girls, since the Act enabled them to obtain a secondary education as well as an elementary one without the payment of fees or passing of a scholarship examination. However, right up until the 1970s the leaving age was to remain a barrier to working-class educational success. Although the leaving age was raised to fifteen in 1947, the GCE examinations, which were established in 1951, could only be taken by grammar school pupils at the age of sixteen and by pupils at other schools at the age of seventeen, and this remained the case until the Beloe Report at the end of the decade recommended that these restrictions should end. So until that time not only did many working-class children at secondary modern schools lose the chance of gaining GCE qualifications but, as the Gurney-Dixon Report on early leaving noted, so did many working-class children at
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grammar school, because they left school at the minimum age. Regardless of ability level, more working-class girls left grammar school early than did boys and it is likely that one important reason for this was the belief that the education of a girl, who would almost certainly marry, was of less importance than the education of a boy, who would have to work for most of his life.

The Norwood Report which preceded the 1944 Act had indeed argued that the educational needs of children would vary according to their aptitude and their interests. Whilst the Report recognized that the particular interest of boys lay in their future jobs and careers, it claimed that the special interests of girls related mainly to their future roles as wives and mothers. The Report failed to take into account both the possibility that some girls would not marry or would combine work with marriage, and the future roles of boys as husbands and fathers. And except in relation to domestic subjects, Norwood’s discussion of curriculum implicitly assumed that the main object of its concern was the education of boys, an assumption which subsequent official Reports have also been guilty of making.

The Crowther Report 15–18 published in 1959 claimed to be concerned equally with both boys and girls and appreciated that many girls would remain in paid employment even after marriage. Nevertheless, Crowther paid more attention to the academically able girl, who it was assumed would subsequently take up a dual role as worker and wife/mother, than to the less-able, working-class girl whose future was assumed to be likely to take a different form and towards whom (Crowther, 1959, p. 34):

all schools can and should make adjustments . . . to the fact that marriage now looms much larger and nearer in the pupils’ eyes than it ever has before . . . there is a clear case for a curriculum which respects the different roles they (i.e. boys and girls) play.

Despite this, the Report paid far more attention to girls and their future roles in marriage than to boys and their future roles in marriage. However, Crowther was one of the first Reports to recognize that some girls at least would find themselves playing a dual role as workers and wives, and it was
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also notable for the consideration given to the importance of girls continuing their education after leaving school. It is clear from the evidence presented by the Crowther Report that the specialization by girls in a narrow range of arts subjects in the later years of secondary schooling was something established in the early stages of secondary education for all. The Report also noted another trend which continues to affect the educational and occupational prospects of girls, that of entering secretarial, commercial or other further education courses of limited educational value after leaving school, and the failure of more than a very small percentage of girls to obtain day-release training from jobs which they entered before the age of eighteen.

The Newsom Report on the education of average and below-average ability students, like Crowther four years before, implicitly and explicitly recognized that changes were taking place in the status and employment prospects of girls. But this Report too felt obliged to emphasize once again that (Newsom, 1963, p. 37)

For all girls, too, there is a group of interests relating to what many, perhaps most of them, would regard as their most important vocational concern, marriage . . . many girls are ready to respond to work relating to the wider aspects of home-making and family life and the care and upbringing of children.

The Report itself placed great stress on the necessity for school learning for girls to relate to their future family responsibilities and to their interests in personal appearance, dress and social behaviour. Once again, the role of boys in marriage and domestic labour was neglected, as were any purely occupational interests which girls might have outside marriage, motherhood and personal relationships. Girls, indeed, were seen by the Report as being intellectually and emotionally different from boys, interested in subjects only if they related to people, caring for or relationships with others. In science, for instance (Newsom, 1963, p. 142):

A boy is usually excited by the prospect of a science course. . . . He experiences a sense of wonder and a sense of power. The growth of wheat, the birth of a lamb, the
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movement of clouds put him in awe of nature; the loco-
motive he sees as man's response; the switch and the
throttle are his magic wands ... The girl may come to the
science lesson with a less eager curiosity than the boy but
she too will need to feel at home with machinery.

It is hard to believe that there is really so much difference be-
tween the sexes: with every boy displaying a great curiosity
about the world, and every girl showing a total lack of
interest in it. The Newsom Report dealt only with children of
average or below-average ability and as in the Crowther
Report before it, there is an acceptance of the traditional
roles of marriage, family and domestic labour for the working-
class girl, although a transition to a dual role is recognized for
her middle-class sister. Thus is the insularity and home-
orientedness of the culture of working-class girls reinforced.

The Robbins Report on Higher Education was published in
1963, and it noted the lower per-
centage of girls as compared to boys entering higher educa-
tion in Britain. In 1962 only 7.3 per cent of the relevant
female age group, but 9.8 per cent of the appropriate male
age group obtained places in higher education. The Report
commented that (Robbins, 1963, p. 62):

rising professional requirements may in future lead to
more girls entering those occupations by means of full-
time courses in higher education.

Like Crowther, the Report noted with concern the tendency
for girls to specialize in arts subjects rather than in sciences.
In 1960-2 in England and Wales girls accounted for 66 per
cent of 'A' level arts-only passes but only 41 per cent of
science-only 'A' level passes. In addition, it was observed that
the 'A' level performances of girls did not match their per-
formance at 'O' level. Only 6 girls to every 10 boys passed
two or more 'A' levels in England and Wales in 1962-3. This
was reflected too, said the Report, in the different higher
education destinations of the two sexes, with girls making up
only one-quarter of university students but two-thirds of
training college students. Girls were seen to be failing to enter
many professional occupations, despite having comparable
academic ability to boys, and this was attributed partly to
their failure to take science subjects (Robbins, 1963, p. 127):
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It is desirable to encourage more girls to read applied science. At present, very few girls in this country seem to be attracted to a career in applied science and the contrast with some other countries, notably the Soviet Union, is very striking.

This Report at least recognized that there was nothing inherent in girls' biological make-up preventing them from reading sciences, which is in contradistinction to the stand taken on girls and science by Newsom. But as with Crowther, the main thrust of the Robbins Report was towards middle-class girls of high ability, a group seen to differ in many respects from working-class girls of lesser academic ability.

The Plowden Report on primary schooling in 1967 examined the differential school performances of boys and girls at pre-secondary level, noting the superiority of seven-year-old girls in reading and other verbal skills.\(^{14}\) On the question of curriculum, the Report observed merely that (Plowden Report, 1967, p. 249)

the distinction between what is done by boys and girls has partly disappeared. Except possibly for the oldest children, it is quite artificial and unhelpful; boys enjoy stitchery and girls can benefit from work in wood and metal.

Plowden may also, unwittingly, have influenced the education of girls by encouraging the freeing of primary school teaching from rigid time-tabling and curricula, and the placing of emphasis on child-centred learning at an individual pace. This may either have decreased the tendency noted by Douglas for boys to gain more attention from teachers than girls, or alternatively, it may have increased this tendency.\(^{15}\)

The development of comprehensive secondary schooling has progressed considerably since 1965 and the first attempt by a Labour Government to persuade Local Education Authorities to adopt this kind of schooling. Furthermore, in 1972 the school leaving age was raised to sixteen. By 1975 some 75 per cent of secondary school children were no longer undergoing any form of selection for entry into secondary education.\(^{16}\) A wider range of curricula has become available to many children in state schools. Comprehensive schools have explicitly been seen by many of their protagonists as a way of ending class and ability distinctions in education.
distinctions which by the early 1960s were seen by the Labour Party as compounding class inequalities in Britain. A former leader of the Labour Party, Harold Wilson, told the 1963 Party Conference that:17

*I7

...we believe in equality of opportunity... we simply cannot as a nation afford to neglect the educational development of a single boy or girl, we cannot afford to cut off three quarters or more of our children from virtually any chance of higher education [my italics].

The contradiction between the concept of equality and the need to service the economy mentioned in the earlier discussion of equality in this chapter, is also visible in this speech, nevertheless Wilson does explicitly refer to girls as well as to boys, without any of the implicit assumptions made by many official reports that only middle-class girls will need occupational training and a worthwhile education outside of domestic skills. It might, therefore, be reasonable to expect that, with the advent of comprehensive schooling, girls have indeed obtained this chance.

However, in their report on comprehensive schooling published in 1970, Benn and Simon found that at least 50 per cent of the schools they examined restricted some subjects to boys only and that 49 per cent of those schools also limited some subjects to girls only.18 In the mid-1970s, with many more children attending comprehensive schools than when the Benn and Simon study was carried out, and with less than one-third of state secondary schools retaining single-sex status, some 98 per cent of mixed secondary schools continue to separate girls from boys at some point before their pupils are sixteen years old.19 This applies even in craft subjects, since not all schools operate a rotating system of craft education, so that all pupils have the opportunity to try out different crafts regardless of sex. Girls on non-examination, final-year ROSLA courses often have fewer choices of pre-vocational courses than boys.20

A recent DES Survey on Curricular Differences for boys and girls found that formal differences in curriculum between the sexes begin to crystallize from the age of seven years.
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onwards, often starting with boys' crafts and games, and girls' crafts and games. This was found to be the case also in middle schools, with greater differentiation commencing at entry to secondary schooling, although some schools claimed this to be the unintentional consequence of time-tableing problems or shortage of facilities. By the fourth and fifth years of secondary school most pupils were found to be experiencing a core curriculum of subjects like English, religious education, maths and PE, and a range of other optional subjects. Whilst noting that option choice might be made for a variety of reasons, the Report suggested that the structuring of option choices might also be responsible for influencing their shape. Over one-quarter of schools studied, for example, provided pre-emptive curriculum choices (DES Education Survey 21, 1975, p. 7):

For example crafts' departments often will accept for technical drawing—a supposedly free choice subject—only those pupils who have already done metalwork, a subject from which girls are excluded.

A further 28 per cent of mixed schools in the research had option choices which encouraged early specialisation in either arts or sciences by blocking certain subjects together. The Survey appraising its findings said (DES Education Survey 21, 1975, p. 21): 'there are significant differences in subjects studied by girls and by boys and these differences are too striking to be accepted without question'. Thus the tendency for girls to specialise in the arts and boys in the sciences noted by Crowther in the 1950s and Robbins in the 1960s is still with us in the 1970s and, as the DES Survey suggests, this trend is still marked enough to be worthy of further analysis.

Arts and Sciences in Curriculum Choice: Trends and Implications

The DES Survey on curricular differences does point out that different choices by girls and boys may reflect a variety of factors which have nothing to do with discrimination against one sex or the other: the influence of particular patternings...
of options, friends, families, teachers, and personal likes and dislikes. But these in themselves, as shown in chapter two, are also likely to be strongly affected by the differential socialization of girls and boys. And certainly a clear pattern of curricular differentiation does appear between boys and girls, and is important not only within schools, but also for post-school education and occupational choice, where a narrow or inappropriate range of specialist subjects may severely restrict further opportunities. Further, as Shaw (1976, p. 134) has noted:

"divisions of knowledge in their institutionalized form of curricula, correspond more or less directly to divisions of labour. We can see in the range of choice offered to boys and girls both the means and expression of economic and social control."

And social class differences may also affect the kinds of option choices made, with middle-class children being more aware of the implications of their choice; as Woods (1976, p. 197) points out:

"to the initiated middle class pupil it is his [sic] choice and he makes it carefully with a view to job, ability and prospects. To the estranged, generally working class pupil it is a line of least resistance."

Thus the working-class girl may be particularly vulnerable to pressures by others to choose subjects which will fit in with her expected future vocation as a wife and mother, rather than being as aware as some middle-class girls may be, that she is likely at some point to want, or need, interesting work outside the home.

If we ignore for the moment subject specialization in public examinations and look at the relative percentages of boys and girls in secondary schools who actually attempt CSE and GCE 'O' level examinations, girls are actually more likely to be entered for CSE and GCE 'O' level examinations than are boys (see Table 3.1). A higher percentage of boys than girls leave school without having attempted any exams, and slightly more boys than girls leave school with no examination passes – despite having sat for examinations. Although a higher percentage of girls than boys obtain GCE 'O' level passes, this
TABLE 3.1 School examination attempts and passes, all school leavers 1973-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempting no exam</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>19.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting exams, but no passes</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting CSE</td>
<td>61.50</td>
<td>64.70</td>
<td>62.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating CSE in one or more subjects, Grade 5 or above but no 'O' level passes</td>
<td>30.70</td>
<td>29.70</td>
<td>30.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting GCE 'O' levels</td>
<td>47.20</td>
<td>50.10</td>
<td>48.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating 1-4 'O' levels but no 'A' level passes</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.80</td>
<td>25.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating 5 or more 'O' levels, but no 'A' level passes</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>8.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempting GCE 'A' levels</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>16.90</td>
<td>17.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating 1 'A' level</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating 2 'A' levels</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pating 3 or more 'A' levels</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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position is reversed in CSE examination passes. At 'A' level, a higher percentage of boys than girls sit the examinations. Girls have a better record in passing one or two subjects at 'A' level, but boys are more successful in obtaining three or more 'A' level passes.

Within these patterns of examination attempts and passes, however, another trend is also clearly visible. This is the tendency already noted for girls to take mainly arts subjects, and for boys to specialize to a greater extent in mathematical, scientific and technical disciplines. In Table 3.2 can be seen the distribution of passes and subjects for boys and girls sitting CSE examinations in the summer of 1970 and 1974. In English and history there are broadly similar numbers of passes between boys and girls. But far more girls are successful in French than boys, whereas this pattern is slightly reversed for maths and to a much greater extent for physics. Whereas in biology there are twice as many passes by girls as by boys, few girls obtain passes in technical drawing or metal or woodwork. Boys and girls do about the same in social
Curricular Discrimination and Differentiation

TABLE 3.2 CSE Examination passes 1970 and 1974 (Grade 5 or better), selected subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>93,855</td>
<td>84,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>36,281</td>
<td>32,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>20,790</td>
<td>30,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>89,582</td>
<td>76,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>46,180</td>
<td>4,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>14,558</td>
<td>36,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td>47,356</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork and woodwork</td>
<td>52,027</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>40,165</td>
<td>33,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic subjects</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>54,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>5,609</td>
<td>27,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences and vocational</td>
<td>9,326</td>
<td>8,972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Science and vocational subjects, but boys score greater successes in geography, whilst rarely obtaining passes in commercial or domestic subjects, both of which are taken and passed by girls in large numbers.

Similar patterns of subject choice are also apparent at GCE 'O' level where higher numbers of girls than boys both attempt and pass examinations in arts subjects whereas in science subjects more boys than girls enter and are successful in examinations. In biology, however, it is interesting that there is a higher female entry, but a higher pass rate by boys.

At 'A' level, the extent of polarization between boys specializing in scientific and mathematical subjects, and girls specializing in the arts is even more marked than at 'O' level.

The numbers of subjects passed and the qualifications acquired are, however, only one factor relevant to job or post-school education entry. The kinds of subjects taken are also crucial. A job requiring five 'O' levels will usually specify particular subjects – English, maths and a science, for example.
Curricular Discrimination and Differentiation

**TABLE 3.3** Male and female entries and pass rates, GCE 'O' levels (all boards), June 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Entry %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng. lit.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>141,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>106,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng. lang.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>201,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>183,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>94,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious studies</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>87,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>116,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>61,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**TABLE 3.4** GCE 'A' level subject specialisation, all school leavers 1973-4 (passes in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject combinations</th>
<th>1 'A' level Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>2 'A' level Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>3 'A' level Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science, with maths</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, no maths</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other combinations,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including science</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All subjects</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>14.38</td>
<td>14.62</td>
<td>22.13</td>
<td>21.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some subjects have more currency than others, especially in the current economic climate where there are fewer than usual openings for unskilled labour or semi-skilled workers, but still a demand for skilled labour. Very few skilled jobs in industry can be obtained without some kind of apprenticeship or training, and entry to these almost always requires maths and science qualifications. Arts subjects are of limited value for direct entry to jobs and usually lead to different routes in higher and further education, so that after leaving school girls are likely to follow very different paths to those taken by boys of comparable ability level and social class background. For example, in 1973-4, 3.9 per cent of all female school leavers entered teacher training courses, but only 0.9 per cent of all male school leavers did so. Many of the courses offered in polytechnics have a scientific or technological bias, whether they are conventional degrees, sandwich courses, or Higher National Diplomas (HND), and this is reflected in the higher percentage of boys taking up polytechnic places. In 1973-4, 2.3 per cent of all male school leavers went on to a polytechnic, but only 1.4 per cent of all female school leavers did likewise. Recently more girls than boys have been continuing their post-school education by attendance at colleges of further education and technical colleges: 13.5 per cent of 1973-4 female school leavers as compared with 6.8 per cent of male school leavers. But even here girls are more likely to be taking courses in secretarial or clerical skills, hairdressing and nursery nursing, rather than in bricklaying or motor mechanics. Some two-thirds of courses in further education require maths or physics passes which girls seldom possess. Table 3.5 gives some indication of the separation of post-school destinations of girls and boys. Even within some of these choices, differentiation between males and females exists. Most girls who take degree courses, for example, read arts or social sciences, rather than sciences, mathematics or technological disciplines. Of those taking up employment, whereas boys are more likely to enter jobs offering apprenticeship or other training and some career prospects as well as reasonable pay, girls are often forced into low-status, non-manual jobs with poor pay and few career prospects because of their qualifications or absence of them, becoming shorthand typists, nursery nurses, hairdressers or riding instructors.
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TABLE 3.5 Destinations of school leavers 1973-4 (in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree courses</td>
<td>28.63</td>
<td>15.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and design courses</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND/HNC courses</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OND/ONC courses</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering courses</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing courses</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial courses</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>14.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE 'A' level courses</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE 'O' level courses</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>3.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other FE courses</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary employment before full-time course</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>248.07</td>
<td>221.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destinations unknown</td>
<td>39.24</td>
<td>31.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of leavers</td>
<td>350.12</td>
<td>331.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DES Statistics of Education 1974, vol. 2, School Leavers, Table 1, p. 11.

Thus, girls are frequently caught in a vicious circle. Their initial socialization and subsequent adoption of home-based cultures predisposes them towards certain kinds of school subjects, particularly those which utilize the verbal skills which develop more quickly in girls than in boys at primary school. On entering secondary school, instead of trying to develop new skills in numeracy and spatial and mechanical ability, girls concentrate on those verbal skills already established. They may be encouraged to do this by teachers and parents precisely because they are good in some subjects and weak in others. If in addition sciences and maths are perceived by many girls to be "masculine" subjects, and where preemptive patterns of curricula or blocking together of specialist options effectively prevent or make difficult girls' opportunities to take technical subjects, then girls are pushed more and more towards the arts subjects, or towards biology as a suitable 'feminine' science. Once these patterns of subject
choice are established, public examination entries and pass rates reflect them, and may serve to stop girls from ever going beyond the narrow occupational confines of arts disciplines, whether they enter a job immediately after leaving school or go on to further or higher education first. It is not the intention to argue here that girls— or boys— should not take subjects which they enjoy, and are good at. But whilst entry to jobs and higher or further education remains heavily dependent on having obtained passes in particular subjects at CSE or GCE 'O' and 'A' level, then teachers, pupils and parents should recognize the perils of a system of schooling which allows students to specialize in certain subjects, to the exclusion of others, at a relatively early age, and at a time when the full implication of a given choice may not be known or recognized.

Of course, it is certainly true that girls are not the only ones to enter dead-end jobs with low pay and no prospects, working-class boys with few or no academic qualifications are also likely to obtain similar jobs. But the crucial difference is that boys are culturally expected to work for most of their adult lives, and so may subsequently have some incentive to improve their educational or practical skills in order to obtain better jobs. Girls, on the other hand, are not expected to work outside the home for long periods of time, and for many schoolgirls and girls working in unsatisfying jobs, marriage and a family are likely to appear as a much more attractive alternative, particularly since the cultures of many schoolgirls emphasize romance, personal appearance and relationships and an idyllic concept of marriage, as we saw in the previous chapter. Thus, little thought may be given to the possibility of not marrying, of becoming divorced or to the prospects of working for perhaps twenty or thirty years after child-rearing, and still less to the idea of working whilst bringing up children. Yet for many women these are both realistic and likely outcomes of their adult lives, and in 1977 women made up 41 per cent of the labour force. Projections on the future size of the labour force suggest that the proportion of married women working will have risen by 22.9 per cent by 1981 and by 32.9 per cent in 1986, compared with a growth rate of only 4.2 per cent for men over the same time period. It is time that the education
of all girls took notice of the length of their likely involvement in the labour force.

The present economic climate and state of economic recession in Britain mean that many school leavers of both sexes are going to experience great difficulty in finding a job of any kind. Half of unemployed school leavers are female, yet moves made by the government to combat unemployment amongst this sector of the population have not always taken account of this. The Job Creation Scheme, which provides funds to private and public employment sectors to enable the temporary employment of young people, has provided more work for boys than girls. Three-quarters of the sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds employed under the scheme are boys. Similarly, those benefiting from government-sponsored incentive grants to industry to encourage the taking on and training of young people, are almost entirely male. The two organizations set up to help the unemployed, the Manpower Services Commission, and the Training Services Agency, have been heavily criticized by the Equal Opportunities Commission for continuing to prepare women only for jobs which are traditionally ‘women’s work’, and which are currently in short supply, rather than encouraging women to train for skilled manual jobs, for which a higher demand exists in the labour market. 

Furthermore, there is a danger that the existence of strongly-held and expressed moral social beliefs about unemployment and ‘being on the dole’ may force school leavers into taking any job that is available to them, however unsuitable, and in the case of girls this is likely to mean the traditional poorly-paid female jobs, like shop work, laundry work, hairdressing, looking after animals or caring for young children. Even girls with high ability and good academic qualifications are likely to be affected in their choice of future careers by the economic recession, unless they have, exceptionally, acquired their qualifications in mathematics or the sciences. The cuts in public expenditure at local and national level and, ironically, a falling birth rate (which in other circumstances might have increased the opportunities available to women), have helped to bring about a massive closure of teacher-training establishments and drastic cut-backs in the numbers of teachers employed by local education authorities.
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Teacher training has long been the most popular form of higher education for girls, and teaching itself one of the most likely professions for an educated girl to enter, but now many who would formerly have entered teaching will have to look elsewhere. Arts qualifications which would have been quite suitable for teaching may be less suitable for entry to other professions and, in applications to other sectors of higher education, many force girls to compete against each other for static or reducing numbers of places on arts and social sciences courses, whilst students with science or technical qualifications find a much less competitive situation when looking for a place in higher education.

Hence, it may be concluded that although there have been considerable changes in primary and secondary education since 1944, these have not yet brought about the eradication of discrimination and differentiation in the education of girls, as compared with the education of boys. Girls continue to be subjected to a curriculum which emphasizes to them their non-productive and sex-linked roles in the social relationships of production, even though this process is sometimes less apparent in the education of middle-class girls, of whom some kind of non-domestic career is now increasingly expected.

Because few significant changes have occurred in education in relation to girls, this does not mean that there have been no developments relevant to the struggle of women to obtain an education in which they are not subjected to discrimination and a different pattern of curricular choice on grounds of sex. Three developments seem to have particular significance for the education of girls: the debate over single-sex versus mixed schools; the 1977 'Great Debate' on education; the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act together with the accompanying establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Single-sex versus Mixed Schools: are Mixed Best?

Many educationalists regard this issue as already having been decided in favour of mixed schools.26 However, the controversy has recently been reopened by the findings of the DES Survey (1975, p. 12) on curricular differences, which found that:

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Girls are more likely to choose a science, and boys a language, in a single sex school than they are in a mixed school, though in a mixed school a higher percentage of pupils may be offered these subjects.

Almost all primary schools are now co-educational, but about one-third of state secondary schools, and most independent schools, are still single-sex. There are some problems in comparing the extent to which the two types provide girls with equal educational opportunities because of evidence that single-sex schools sometimes have a higher social class and ability mix than mixed schools. However, this does not mean that comparison is impossible, simply that findings must be treated with some caution.

The most extensive study of mixed and single-sex schools is that work done by Dale, and he concludes that mixed schools are more successful than single-sex schools in every way - academically, attitudinally and socially. It must be remembered that Dale’s work was based only on grammar schools, and although he looked at both pupils and ex-pupils who had attended one or both types of school, his ex-pupils were all trainee teachers — perhaps not the most representative group that could have been studied. Dale noted that in mixed schools the presence of girls made boys more amenable in their behaviour and that the harsh discipline, obsession with academic work and high degree of concern with trivialities often complained of by pupils in single-sex schools were lessened in schools with pupils and teachers of both sexes. He observed from his researches that pupils in mixed schools appeared to be less anxious about school than pupils in single-sex schools and also found that bullying, clique-formation and quarrelling amongst pupils were less marked in mixed schools. On the question of attainment, Dale’s evidence suggests that both boys and girls do as well or better in mixed as in single-sex schools, because in the former boys and girls compete against each other and hence work harder. Dale (1974, p. 36) argues that ‘the different approach made to problems by the male and female mind, both in staff and pupils, might contribute to a broader understanding’ (my italics). Dale’s conclusions on the superiority of mixed schools are also shared by other researchers, although in another
study Dale and Miller found no association between class of degrees awarded and attendance at a mixed or single-sex school. However, not only the DES Survey on curricular differences contradicts Dale's findings. A study by King during the 1960s found that in mathematics (1965, p. 160):

boys and girls from single-sex modern schools did consistently better than those from co-educational schools.

And Shaw has argued that (1976, p. 137):

the social structures of mixed schools may drive children to make even more sex-stereotyped subject choices, precisely because of the constant pressure of the other sex and the pressure to maintain boundaries, distinctiveness and identity.

Certainly, Dale’s own evidence on the experiences and attainments of girls does not entirely justify his conclusions that mixed schools are better, since one reason frequently given by pupils in their explanation of why they preferred mixed schools was that in single-sex schools there was too strong an emphasis on academic work and academic success. What Dale seems to miss is the point that what pupils and ex-pupils like or dislike is not necessarily the same as what is educationally good or bad for them and that their preferences may express the sex-stereotyping to which they have been exposed. Although girls in single-sex schools may have less choice of subjects, they are likely to be much freer to choose which ones they take than in a mixed school where they may be competing with boys for resources and also perhaps subtly encouraged to fulfil their traditional sex-roles. In addition, the emphasis on academic learning in a single-sex school is not likely to convey to girls the impression that it is unimportant whether girls do well at school or not, a message which may well already be conveyed to girls by their socialization and culture, and not always contradicted in mixed schools. Furthermore, girls in single-sex schools are more likely than girls in mixed schools to be taught maths and science by women and are hence less likely to think of these subjects as 'masculine'.

Whilst it would probably not be desirable, just on grounds
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of narrowness of curriculum choice if for no other reason, to return to a situation where all or most secondary schools are single-sex, we ought to give some thought to whether the 'normal social adjustment', which mixed schools are argued to give to pupils, does in fact encompass the worst aspects of sex stereotyping, as examined in the previous chapter. Evidence from American research in schools does suggest that this is the case.34

In a mixed-sex environment . . . there appears to be a stronger need to differentiate between the sexes. Girls find it more difficult to compete for academic success with boys than with other girls because they fear, perhaps unconsciously, that this may be threatening to the boys, who will consequently reject them as potential sexual partners. This is certainly an issue which is worthy of far more research attention than it has received so far, if only because it would help teachers and policy-makers to see how they could increase the educational opportunities available to girls in mixed schools and how they could start to reduce the amount of sex-stereotyping which goes on in many of those schools.

The 'Great Debate' on Education

Most of the concern shown by those interested in equality of opportunity in education after 1944 focused for a long time on the structure of education, principally resources and types of schools, and mechanisms of selection for secondary education.35 However, much more recently the apparent failure of comprehensive schools to achieve working-class equality, the difficulties experienced by employers in recruiting skilled labour and school leavers of high ability into industry, right-wing critiques of state schooling and 'progressive' teaching methods,36 and the increased militancy of school teachers37 have all caused a shift in emphasis of educational debate from the structure of education to its content and transmission. In a speech at Ruskin College, Oxford in October 1976, the British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, expressed his concern about standards of education, methods of teaching in schools and the absence of strong links between education and
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industry, and spoke of his commitment to a core curriculum for all schools. Early in 1977 the Secretary of State for Education, Shirley Williams, told the Schools Council (responsible since 1964 for many of the curricular innovations in education), that it would have to reduce its number of teachers' representatives and increase the number of lay members as well as taking more notice of the DES's views on curriculum. The 'Great Debate' on education initiated by the Labour Government during 1977 to discuss the 'crisis' in education, centred on four main areas of education:

1. The curriculum;
2. The assessment of standards;
3. The education and training of teachers;
4. School and working life.

Public debates took place on these subjects in a variety of regions in England and Wales between invited audiences of educationalists, parents, politicians and industrialists. The extent to which education was fulfilling the requirements of equal educational opportunity for girls was rarely raised either in the discussions preceding the public debates or in the debates themselves. The document which was issued by the DES outlining the form the public debates would take, stated in relation to curriculum (DES, Educating Our Children, 1976, p. 2):

In addition to establishing the basic skills, the curriculum should enable children ... to understand the society of which they are part, including the economics of everyday life and the role of industry and commerce in sustaining our standard of living.

It is quite clear from our earlier examination in this chapter of the curriculum choices available to girls that in no sense is this currently being achieved for most girls attending schools in the state sector; yet this point failed to attract much attention. Although Educating Our Children did suggest that girls needed to be given more positive encouragement to enter new careers and jobs by employers and trade unions, it would have been more or as useful to point out that greater positive encouragement from schools might also be in order. The idea of a core curriculum, that is a specification of what subjects should be taught in schools, and of which skills
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pupils should acquire during their school careers, was some-
thing much discussed during the regional meetings of the
‘Great Debate’, and in the policy deliberations which preceded
and followed the regional meetings. Certainly, some kind of
core curriculum which incorporated the teaching of mathe-
tatical and scientific skills to all school children, as well as
literary and aesthetic skills, would have been very helpful to
the many girls who at present are leaving school with quali-
fications in very narrow areas of learning. Although the
Green Paper on Education published in July 1977 (a docu-
ment which attempts to summarize the findings and conclu-
sions of the regional meetings held earlier in that year), recog-
nized the advantages of establishing a core curriculum, it
rejected the imposition of such a curriculum on teachers, and
failed to say what might be included in a core curriculum,
other than specifying that English, maths and science should
be included in all school time-tables.41 Furthermore, if the
Green Paper proposal to recruit more teachers experienced in
other employment is adopted, as well as the recommendation
that the Certificate of Education be phased out as a course
for training teachers, then girls who want to enter teaching
are going to be even more disadvantaged. Many of them will
be unable to obtain the necessary experience in another job
first and will not obtain the necessary academic qualifications
to enter Bachelor of Education training courses, which the
Green Paper suggests should include two ‘A’ levels and a
maths ‘O’ level.

Thus, it may be concluded that although the Great Debate’
on education has briefly discussed some issues of relevance to
the education of girls, its emphasis on the links between
industry and education may well result in changes which will
not be beneficial to girls. If it had discussed to a greater extent
why girls failed to take science, why they were often poor at
maths and why women were rarely found in skilled jobs in
industry, the Debate could have achieved much more.

The Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunities
Commission

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 sought to make
sex discrimination unlawful in employment, training and related matters . . . in education, in the provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the disposal and management of premises [my italics].

The Act also set up an Equal Opportunities Commission to help enforce the legislation and to help bring about general equality of opportunity between the sexes. However, although the Act seemed to promise to achieve much towards equal opportunities for women, there are a number of problems both with the Act itself and with the procedures by which a complaint may be made.

In relation to education, for example, the Act allows that where students of either sex are admitted to an establishment they must have equal opportunity with other students to enjoy the facilities available for other students. But if one single-sex girls' school, for instance, does not have facilities for chemistry lessons, then in order to make a complaint under the Act, it would be necessary to show that all comparable schools within the same authority had those facilities.

There is, therefore, no compulsion under the Act for Local Authorities to provide additional resources which would make the achievement of equal educational opportunity a possibility regardless of sex. Nor does the Act allow for positive discrimination to be used in education in favour of a disadvantaged sex.

The procedure for making a complaint under the Act in relation to education differs from the procedure for dealing with other areas of the legislation. Any complaint about education in the public sector must go first to the appropriate Secretary of State, and subsequently go not to a tribunal (as do employment cases under the Sex Discrimination Act), but to a county court. As Coussins notes, this in itself is a deterrent.

However, there is also another problem which relates to the nature of discrimination in education as opposed to in employment or elsewhere. Coussins (1976, p. 85) points out that:

"cases do not occur in a more long-term and ongoing way. Individuals may not stand out as being particularly affected; it is more likely to be children in a whole area, children
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of a certain age, mature women students, the readers of a particular textbook or some other group. Neither is the remedy likely to be a simple short-term action.

Not only have few genuine grievances under the Act been taken to the Equal Opportunities Commission but the Commission itself has not initiated very much research or investigation into discrimination in education. It has looked into the allocation of grammar school places in Tameside (where twice as many of these have been awarded to girls as to boys) and has begun to examine possible discriminatory practices in secondary schools. Further, it has asked the DES to review the system of student grants, which presently discriminates against many women in the further education sector who are taking non-degree level courses for which grants are discretionary rather than mandatory. But the Commission has left many areas of discrimination in schools untouched; for example, it has decided not to try to use legislation to influence schools’ choice of reading schemes for young children, even though some of these are known to be sexist.43

But it is not just that the procedure for making complaints about discrimination is cumbersome and bureaucratic, or that the EOC has failed to initiate sufficient investigation into discrimination in schools — although both the legislation and the Commission have been criticized heavily on these points.44 It is also the formulation and scope of the legislation which is at fault.45

the ‘basis of the Act is that it is unlawful to treat one sex less favourably than another’ but that it is ‘not prima facie discriminatory to treat boys and girls differently.’ In other words differentiation between the sexes is not equated with discrimination, and is therefore not illegal.

Furthermore, individual cases taken to court, even if successful, are unlikely to prevent similar practices going on in other areas of education or in other Local Authorities. And positive discrimination in favour of one sex is not allowable in education under the Act as it is in training and employment, yet as Coussins (1976, p. 90) says:

Positive discrimination in some form in the education system is absolutely necessary if girls and women are to
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regain the ground they have lost, or have never had, over the years.

We can then expect little in the form of radical changes in sexism and discriminatory or differentiating practice of schools to emerge from the Sex Discrimination Act or the Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Education of Girls: Where are We Now?

In this chapter it has been suggested that although the education of girls has advanced enormously in England and Wales since the nineteenth century, there are still discriminatory and differentiating practices which are restricting the educational achievements of women. Middle-class girls of high or average ability are now likely to encounter fewer difficulties than was formerly the case, since teachers, policy-makers and the community in general increasingly recognize that they will work for a large part of their lives and are likely to combine marriage and motherhood with a career. But few working-class girls are likely to enter 'careers' as opposed to 'dead-end' jobs, and there remain strong beliefs that for them work outside the home is of little importance, and that their main interests lie in marriage, child-rearing and finding out how to perform domestic tasks more easily. And for both classes of girls, of whatever ability level, their socialization combines with their culture and schooling to push them into specializing in arts subjects during the later years of secondary school. Arts subjects are insufficient preparation or qualification for a wide variety of occupations and post-school training, and in particular for those jobs or further/higher education which will provide satisfying, well-paid work later.

Discrimination against girls may take subtle forms, as the previous chapter showed in its examination of sexism and sex-stereotyping, and is often difficult to detect and unmanageable to investigation or complaint under the Sex Discrimination Act. Differentiation between boys and girls, as this chapter has shown, is easier to detect but just as difficult to eradicate, and curricular differences between the sexes remain a serious problem. Although mixed schools provide a
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wider curriculum choice than single-sex schools, single-sex schools are often more successful at encouraging girls to take traditionally 'masculine' subjects, and the 'social adjustment' which mixed schools are argued to achieve may be merely a further confirmation of sex-role differences. The 'Great Debate' on education has failed to look in any depth at the reasons why schools are not sending out many girls into industry -- other than as unskilled temporary workers -- and has neglected to consider the beneficial effects which a core curriculum including sciences, maths and technical subjects might have on the education of many schoolgirls. The Sex Discrimination Act has not provided the promised panacea for the ills of women's education. Girls may have gained equal access with boys to primary and secondary schooling, and do enter further education in larger numbers than boys. But what they have gained access to is not always the same in educational content and occupational currency as that to which boys have access. And until curricular and non-curricular discrimination and differentiation on grounds of sex are ended, both girls and boys will continue to receive an education which is incomplete, inflexible, and inhibiting to the full development of their potential as human beings.
Chapter 4

Women in Higher Education

If women in nineteenth-century Britain did not easily achieve access to formal schooling, their battle to enter higher education required greater persistence still, and lasted long after the 1944 Education Act had, in theory, offered all children, male and female, equal access to primary and secondary education. The British university system was founded on principles of elitism, and these have continued to be strongly upheld by a capitalist class society for which it is axiomatic that society consists of one dominant group and many subordinate groups. The sexual division of labour which forms part of the social relations of production in British society demands that women be excluded from the ruling group as active participants. Because higher education has always been seen as one source of recruitment to and socialization of the dominant group in society, it has been exceedingly difficult for women to make claims regarding their right to a higher education.

Whilst the full entry of girls into primary and secondary education, irrespective of their social class background, was eventually accepted on the grounds that a 'suitable' education would play an important part both in teaching them the skills necessary to carry out their adult roles as housewives and mothers (and that it would also conform to them the ideological appropriateness of their place in the sexual division of labour), no such ideological justifications were extended to higher education. Indeed, the inclusion of women amongst those admitted to higher education either as students
only, or subsequently as teachers, represented in the nineteenth century and still represents, a threat to the elite character of that education and also a threat to the existing social relations of production and the ideology underlying them. If women received higher education they might have their expectations about their lives raised, and their perception of their role in the social relations of production altered, with disastrous consequences for the capitalist mode of production.

Hence, although university education in Britain existed long before the nineteenth century, so great was the resistance to women entering universities that it was not until the passage of legislation in 1875 allowing universities to grant degrees to women, that any of these institutions began to admit women students on a comparable basis to men. Even after this date, some universities continued to see female students as a category quite separate from male students, so that Oxford did not admit women to degrees until 1920, and Cambridge not until 1948. And although women students have become less scarce in universities and in polytechnics in the second half of the twentieth century, higher education remains an area of learning from which many women are excluded, both as potential students and as potential teachers. As Blackstone and Fulton (1975, p. 270) say:

Women are discouraged from a wide range of high-status subjects with relatively good job opportunities . . . are less encouraged to enter college or university, to undertake graduate work, and to enter the academic profession, and not only by informal and subtle means . . . forms of overt discrimination have been used, both in admissions and in the granting of financial aid.

Although at various times since the 1960s – and particularly since the passage of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975 – the relative scarcity of women in higher education has given rise to concern in official policy-making circles, encouragement to women to enter higher education has rarely been given a high priority. Indeed, policies and policy-decisions which have been made in the late 1970s appear to attach little or no importance to the higher education of women. The reduction in the numbers of initial teacher-training
places available has removed one important source of post-
school education for women, and few alternative courses
requiring comparable entry qualifications have become avail-
able. The strong emphasis on the importance of having more
higher education courses in the sciences, mathematics and
engineering is unlikely to produce an increase in the numbers
of women applying for entry to establishments of higher
education.\textsuperscript{4}

The Fight of Women to enter Higher Education

It is important to realize that in looking at the past and con-
tinuing difficulties experienced by women seeking access to
higher education, we are considering not just sexual barriers
but also class ones. Middle-class women have fought their
way into the hallowed fields of higher education with great
effort, but the struggle of working-class women to enter
higher education has hardly begun.\textsuperscript{7} It took middle-class
women a long time to prove that they were worthy of higher
educational facilities; in medical education for example,
women offering themselves as candidates for medical diplomas
at London University in the 1850s were refused those diplo-
mas. Consequently by 1870 there were only two qualified
female practitioners in Britain, neither of whom had obtained
their qualifications in Britain. Despite many attempts by
women to take higher educational courses in medicine, they
were unable to do so until after the Bill of 1875 allowing uni-
versities to award women degrees. Women trying to acquire
medical qualifications and the endeavours of girls' private
secondary schools in opening university local examinations
to their pupils, were influential in bringing about the 1875
Bill, but it seems likely that it was only the anticipated small
size and class composition of female demand for higher edu-
cation which brought about the partial capitulation of
some universities.\textsuperscript{9} Others continued long after 1875 to deny
women degrees on the grounds that their founders had set
them up only for boys, but as A. J. P. Taylor has pointed
out, other stipulations of founders were already being ignored,
for example marriage bans and religious tests.\textsuperscript{7} Although by
the end of the nineteenth century some women were receiving

\textsuperscript{4} Women in Higher Education

\textsuperscript{7} The Fight of Women to enter Higher Education

\textsuperscript{9} Although by the end of the nineteenth century some women were receiving
university degrees, the numbers of women to whom this chance was given were very small. During the nineteenth century the only girls who received a secondary education of a sufficiently high standard to allow them to proceed to higher education, were a tiny minority of middle-class girls whose wealth and slightly enlightened parents sent them to schools like the North London Collegiate School which, unlike most nineteenth-century schools educating girls, did offer a curriculum which went beyond the narrow confines of basic literacy and ladylike accomplishments. The 1870 Education Act did little to improve the educational lot of working-class girls, and although the 1902 Education Act and the Free Place Regulations of 1907 saw a very slight improvement in the prospects of obtaining a secondary education for a few working-class children, it was not until well after the 1944 Education Act (offering free secondary education to all) that anyone began to consider under-representation of working-class or female students in higher education as a problem. This is not to say, however, that universities offered the only form of post-school education available to women during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, since teacher-training establishments provided some limited opportunities for women too, and some of those women who benefited from these were working-class. By 1846 there were some nine training colleges in existence where women could train to become elementary school teachers, although as Borer points out, the level of education actually offered by such colleges was probably nearer to secondary schooling than to a university degree. In addition, neither middle-class nor working-class women who entered teaching, often choosing it because they had not succeeded in achieving marriage (then considered a life-goal for women), were well paid. Teachers in the nineteenth century were exploited and had little status or autonomy. After the 1870 Education Act many more elementary teachers were required and further establishments were opened to train suitable candidates. Limited though the educational horizons of most training colleges were, for a long time they provided the only chance of post-school education for working-class women, as well as the possibility of upward mobility through the class structure.
as an excuse for failing to provide sufficient degree-level education for women in universities or comparable institutions, on the grounds that women are well catered for already, and do not need or want degree courses other than those leading to a teaching qualification. The presence of teacher-training establishments, then, has hindered rather than helped the provision of higher education courses for women.\textsuperscript{13} The lesser entry requirements of these establishments – in comparison to degree courses in universities and elsewhere – may also have subtly acted to lower the aspirations and efforts of girls still at school, so that good ‘A’ level performances have been seen by some girls with places at colleges of education as unnecessary.

Women and Changes in Higher Education Policy

The relative absence of girls in higher education has not, since the beginning of the 1960s, gone unnoticed and some efforts have been made since that time to attract more working-class students in general, and more women in particular, into higher education. The 1963 Robbins Report on higher education stressed the relationship between the universities and economic growth, and pointed out that the ‘wastage’ of girl school leavers who did not go on to higher education – despite having the academic ability to do so – was not in the best interests of the nation’s future economic prosperity.\textsuperscript{14} At the time of the Report, Britain was still enjoying reasonable economic growth, and graduates were finding it relatively easy to acquire jobs commensurate with their level of education. This expansionist attitude contrasts starkly with the concern of educational policy-makers in the late 1970s to reduce or keep static the number of young people entering higher education, and to tailor the courses offered closely to the demands of the labour market. But between the Robbins Report and the cut-backs in expenditure in the higher education sector of the late 1970s, many changes have taken place in the provision and structure of higher education, some of which have affected the opportunities available to women students. As well as expansion in the numbers of universities and the range of courses offered,
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the "binary" system of higher education has been set up, establishing numbers of non-university institutions, notably the polytechnics. The Council for National Academic Awards has taken on the task of validating degree courses in these institutions, which have been placed under the control of Local Education Authorities rather than enjoying the relative autonomy of the universities. Universities have continued to see themselves as centres of academic excellence, concerned with elite socialization, the transmission of high-status knowledge and research. The former Colleges of Advanced Technology which became universities in the mid-1960s (on the recommendation of the Robbins Report) have broken away from the traditional pattern by concentrating on applied rather than pure knowledge; however, because of their technological bias, they have attracted fewer women students than their more conventional counterparts.15 The new universities, although they have scarcely succeeded in attracting more working-class students into higher education, have been more successful than the former CATs in attracting female students, because they were to the forefront of the 1960s expansion in arts and social-sciences courses - areas of study which have attracted large numbers of women. Polytechnics, on the other hand, were established as a gesture of benevolence towards the working-class even if their public image has suffered because they have been seen as 'second-class' universities. But Donaldson, in an analysis of polytechnic development since the 1960s, questions the extent to which most polytechnics have achieved the objectives set out for them. For example, amongst those objectives were working-class higher-educational opportunities on a full and part-time basis; strong links between courses and local industry or commerce; a higher degree of community control and involvement than most universities.16 Certainly, if women are counted as part of the working class and a community to whom more opportunities are to be extended, then the polytechnics have not been overwhelmingly successful. In 1974 2.3 per cent of all male school leavers went on to a full-time polytechnic course, but only 1.4 per cent of female school leavers did so.17 For an analysis of male and female student numbers in non-university higher education see Table 4.1.

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 has removed some of
Women in Higher Education

TABLE 4.1 Student numbers in non-university higher education, 1968, 1971 and 1974 (in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>1968</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>1974</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNAA 1st Degree</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>6.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDD/Dip.AD</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. T. Dip./Cert.</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other advanced</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>20.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.73</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>32.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the most overt forms of discrimination used against potential women students, for example the quotas used by medical schools to restrict the number of female applicants allowed to take up places. But as Blackstone and Fulton suggest, not all the barriers preventing women from entering higher education necessarily involve overt forms of discrimination. The processes of sex-stereotyping and curricular differentiation in school are likely to have a strong influence on the aspirations of girls in relation to higher education, so that girls are either encouraged not to be high achievers – except in "feminine" subjects like home economics – or else they are channelled into arts subject choices rather than into sciences and maths. Thus, some girls never even contemplate higher education; others are persuaded that they are best suited to a very vocationally specific course in teaching training, and only the highly motivated usually remain to try for university and polytechnic places. Of these, since it is apparent that many girls who do take "A" levels specialize in arts subjects, most will be competing against each other and highly qualified male applicants, to enter arts and social sciences degree courses, whilst the few who have taken sciences at "A" level may find a university or polytechnic place much more easily. The expansion in arts and social sciences degree courses during the 1960s certainly helped many women to enter higher education who might not otherwise have done so. But
the tide has now swung away from these areas and in so far as
expansion is possible, or contradiction to be prevented, it is
in the areas of sciences and technology that new develop-
ments are taking place, areas that few women are able to
enter at university or polytechnic because they lack the
appropriate 'A' level qualifications.

One institution which has, since 1971, been able both to
encourage women students and to offer science, technology
and maths courses to those without existing formal qualifica-
tions in these areas, has been the Open University, although
its recruitment has been primarily amongst more mature
students rather than school leavers. Indeed, it was at one time
feared that24 as the Open University started its courses in
1971 . . . it would become "a haven for housebound Guardian
housewives". But as it happened, only 27 per cent of the
first year's intake were women, and very few of them house-
wives, so that in fact the percentage of women students at
the Open University in that first year was slightly less than
that found in conventional universities. The percentage of
women on Open University courses has not gone up signifi-
cantly since 1971, and although this is partly a reflection of
the regional quota system, it is also a product of the many
difficulties faced by women wanting to return to a course of
study: lack of finance; low levels of confidence; problems of
minding children and organizing domestic work; absence of
transport for getting to study centres. McIntosh's evidence,
however, certainly indicates that women who do take open
university courses persist in their studies at a higher rate than
men, and obtain credits in foundation courses more quickly
than male students, even in traditionally 'masculine' areas
like science, technology and maths.25

The Lucky Few: Women in Higher Education

Some women do, of course, get into higher education, both
as students and more exceptionally as teachers, and the num-
bers are growing slowly. Between 1968 and 1976 the percent-
age of women amongst UK applicants to university increased
from 30 per cent to 36.2 per cent and the percentage of
women amongst those UK applicants who were successful in
obtaining places over the same period rose from 29.7 per cent to 36.9 per cent. The University Central Council on Admissions also reported in 1976 that when applications with no chance of success (because of poor 'A' level grades) were discounted, women university applicants actually had an advantage over men in obtaining places in medicine, languages, engineering and technology. In polytechnics and in other institutions offering advanced courses too, numbers have increased.

But even those women who do get into higher education display, on the whole, patterns of subject choice which are different from those of most men in higher education. The pattern of curricular differentiation established between the sexes in schools is thus carried on. Women in polytechnics and universities are most likely to be found on courses in arts, social sciences, education, business studies, catering or design. Sciences, maths and technology courses all have a heavy preponderance of male students. Women rarely take sandwich courses, which combine academic studies with work experience; in 1974 22,724 men took these, but only 3,621 women. In certain subjects, for instance in languages and in some of the social sciences, women do comprise a major part of the student body. But in postgraduate study (except for courses of teacher training) even in subjects where women make up a large percentage of the undergraduate population, they are conspicuous by their absence.

And if women are few in number amongst postgraduate students, amongst academic staff of institutions of higher education they are even more rare. Indeed, it is at this point that the process of filtering out women from the world of

TABLE 4.2. Graduate teachers in public sector higher and further education, 1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 60</th>
<th>Over 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male graduates</td>
<td>18,314</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female graduates</td>
<td>3,416</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Higher education reaches its peak of efficiency. In universities, for example, only 10 per cent of ordinary lecturers are women, less than 6 per cent of readers and senior lecturers and under 2 per cent of professors. In polytechnics the position of women is very similar, although the absence of separately-published statistics for further and higher education in the public sector means that the figures give a less accurate picture. Not only are there fewer women teaching in higher education but in view of the numbers of women students taking first degrees in arts and social sciences, this suggests processes of discrimination and filtering out. There is also evidence that women who overcome these processes face further discrimination and differentiation in the form of lower salaries and fewer chances of promotion than their male colleagues (see Table 4.3).  

| TABLE 4.3 Average salaries of full-time FEIHE teachers in public sector, 1974 |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                      | Under 25            | 25-29                | 30-34                | 35-39                | 40-44                | 45-49                | 50-54                | 55-59                | 60 and over         |
| Male graduates       | 2,128               | 2,475                | 2,945                | 3,322                | 3,528                | 3,706                | 3,801                | 3,829                | 5,196                |
| Female graduates     | 2,094               | 2,377                | 2,706                | 2,888                | 2,982                | 3,006                | 3,180                | 3,235                | 2,686                |


Although Blackstone and Fulton's evidence is now somewhat dated, more recent sources suggest that the trends they observed are still continuing (see Table 4.4). A report published in 1977 suggested that the salaries and promotion chances of women lecturers at the London University Institute of Education were below those of their male colleagues, despite the existence of the Sex Discrimination Act. And another controversy in the same year, about the procedures for making appointments at the University of Cardiff, also gives rise to the suspicion that women may be disadvantaged where and if posts are allocated on the basis of an 'old-boy' network amongst male academics. The pattern of employment between the sexes in universities is not confined to a
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TABLE 4.4 Average UK university teachers' salaries by age, sex, publication, 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


few institutions but is common to them all. A female lecturer at a university in South West England said in 1976 of her institution:39

I find there are no women professors at all. . . . At a rough estimate there are eight women readers or senior lecturers . . . out of 195; 48 women lecturers . . . out of 502; and three women research fellows out of 18.

In polytechnics too, the absence of women lecturers is also a clearly established trend. There are very few women heads of department, and no woman has yet been appointed a director of a polytechnic.40 In both universities and polytechnics there is also evidence to indicate that it is women rather than men who are to be found in untenured, part-time, temporary and marginal posts.41

Becoming and being a Female Student

Now that the Sex Discrimination Act has made illegal overt forms of discrimination on grounds of sex in the admission of students to courses in higher education, the percentage of women amongst the student body is slowly increasing.42 However, in some institutions where the main bias of courses is towards the applied sciences and technology, such as in the
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In technological universities and the polytechnics, the percentage of women remains low. The main barriers to the access of women into higher education now appear to relate to three main factors. First, the tendency of women to specialize in school subjects which do not give them a free or wide choice of courses in higher education, and which ensure that women compete against large numbers of other students for their higher education places. Second, girls may consciously be encouraged by parents, teachers and friends to lower their aspirations in relation to post-school education - irrespective of their actual or potential ability - on the grounds that their future roles as wives and mothers will not be compatible with the kinds of occupations that they might enter after completing a degree or degree-type course. Courses such as teacher-training or secretarial-training may be argued to be more suitable for girls since they offer conditions of work (and the possibility of part-time employment) which will be compatible with marriage and a family. Hence the socialization of girls into the sexual division of labour in society, even though this may be modified for middle-class girls and those of high academic ability, is successful in diverting the attention of many girls away from most courses in higher education. Third, and this observation is only speculative (though deserving of further investigation), the home-based culture of many girls in addition to their strong internalization of the sexual division of labour, may make them more reluctant than boys to leave home in order to read for a degree or a similar qualification.

Although, clearly, women who actually become students will have successfully overcome these barriers, this does not mean that they will have been totally unaffected by their existence. Indeed, women students are likely also to be affected by the same factors which have prevented others of their sisters from becoming students in the first place. Their choice of 'A' level subjects and their choice of arts or social sciences courses in higher education is likely to place them in close proximity with most of the other women students to be found in higher education. This may have an impact on those girls who do make untraditional choices of courses, because their departure from the 'norms' will be clearly visible, and they may be seen as deviant or 'odd' by those women who have made more conventionally 'female' choices.
Although women who become students will have triumphed over the notion that higher education is not suited to women, they may nevertheless be sufficiently socialized into the ideology of the sexual division of labour to believe that their educational progress and achievements are of less importance than is the case for male students. Higher educational establishments are usually mixed-sex institutions and, as in co-educational schools, the presence of men may tend to make women act and think in sex-stereotyped ways to a greater extent than would be the case in a single-sex establishment. Hence, some women students may subordinate their own academic achievements to those of men, making remarks such as:

"My degree doesn't really matter very much; I'll probably get married after graduation" or "I would like to get an upper second, but it would upset my boyfriend if I get a better degree than he has."

These sentiments may be intensified by the attitudes of some higher education lecturers towards female students if they express views like this:

"We expect women who come here [to university] to be competent, good students, but we don't expect them to be brilliant or original."

Finally, women students may, especially those who have been socialized into a home-based domestically oriented culture (even if their attachment to this culture is not so strong as to prevent them entering higher education at all) tend to retreat into that culture when at university or polytechnic to an extent which goes beyond making a separation between their own academic achievements and those of male students. While male students participate in many of the sporting and cultural activities which higher education establishments offer, some female students, although certainly not all, may prefer to stay in their lodgings, hall of residence or flat, working, cooking or engaging in other traditionally 'female', home-based leisure pursuits such as dressmaking or knitting. This may be relatively unimportant, but to the extent that women students choose traditionally female activities, they may be cutting themselves off from more than team games, rock-
climbing or drinking in the Student Union bar, and may be failing to take advantage of a valuable part of their higher education.

Roger Smith's research on women journalists and their failure to be successful on Fleet Street puts forward the suggestion that this failure may be partially due to the exclusion of female journalists from certain informal learning situations which are freely available to male journalists. These learning situations offer the possibility of acquisition of skills, information and political acumen which cannot be learnt by formal instruction. Smith argues that such kinds of knowledge are acquired by male journalists at times when women journalists are not likely to be around — on night shifts for instance, or in places where women are unwelcome, such as in drinking clubs or public houses. A similar analysis may be applied to higher education where discussion of ideas and facts by students outside lectures, seminars and practical or laboratory work may be as important as more structured discussion and learning. Much of this informal discussion takes place in bars, in pool-rooms, after a game of football, or simply over coffee. Women will be subtly or not so subtly excluded from some of these situations, and will sometimes simply not be there, if their cultural alternative to lectures and other organized work is to return to their lodgings, flat or hall of residence. That women do rarely take part in informal discussion of their work is suggested by evidence that they are often reluctant to participate in intellectual argument even in formal settings. Webb argues that the particular "cognitive style" used by women students may militate against them in their subsequent academic performance, particularly in disciplines where persistent and determined defence of and argument about abstract ideas is a criterion of high academic achievement. It seems feasible to argue that one source of the distinctive "cognitive style" of many women students may simply be their cultural exclusion from situations in which an alternative style might be learnt or practised. Furthermore, as Fraser and Sackur note, other qualities associated with successful academic performance such as aggression, confidence, self-assertiveness, competitiveness and ambition, are encouraged in male school pupils, but not in female pupils.
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In other aspects of student life, however, women students seem to fare better. For example, women have not been prevented from taking up student union offices at either local or national level, and have thus participated actively in student politics. Student groups have not been unwilling to take up issues of interest to women students — low grants for married women students, nursery and crèche provision, contraception, abortion — although in most cases the issues have also been of interest to men students too. But student organizations have shown a surprising lack of concern about the general problem of why women are under-represented in higher education and what can be done about it, and about sexist teaching and curricula. And these omissions may be due as much to the failure of women students to draw attention to such issues as to chauvinism on the part of men students.

Sexism and its Challenges in the Curriculum of Higher Education

Just as many schools offer and teach subjects which are sexist in their content or in their underlying assumptions, so higher education continues this trend. How many universities or polytechnics study women writers or poets, examine the history of working-class women rather than working-class men, or are concerned with ‘economic woman’ as well as ‘economic man’? Where the interests, concerns and achievements of women are taken into account, it is often in the context of a specialized Women’s Studies course, mainly taken and taught by women, rather than as part of ordinary, core courses taken by all students.40

The importance of sexism in areas of knowledge in higher education can only be understood fully in relation to the ways in which educational institutions are organized. As Bernstein has argued,41 traditional educational systems are characterized by strong authority, value and subject boundaries, such that Bernstein (1971, p. 56) remarks:

Knowledge transmitted within such systems is private property with its own power structure and market situation.

Moves to establish more open educational systems, he claims,
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can have drastic consequences for the institutions concerned (1971, p. 59): disturbance in classification of knowledge will lead to a disturbance of existing authority structures, existing specific educational identities and concepts of property.

The ideology of the social relations of production, including the sexual division of labour, is based heavily on the content of education as well as on its authority relationships and the values which it transmits. If the content is altered, then the ideology of the existing social relationship of production is threatened, as well as the identity and status of those who teach the traditional conceptions of knowledge.

It is precisely this kind of threat which is provided by demands to move to non-sexist forms of knowledge in higher education. Whether these demands take the form of specialized Women's Studies courses, or whether they affect courses taken by all students, they effectively challenge the legitimacy of the existing power structures in higher education to transmit sexist knowledge, by offering alternative definitions of reality. Second, challenges to the transmission of sexist knowledge question the validity of claims made by academics that knowledge transmitted in higher education is objective truth; their own admittance of subjectivity causes other claims to objectivity to be examined more closely.

Women's Studies courses themselves are usually interdisciplinary attempts to look at issues and themes of concern to women. They may, because of their interdisciplinary character, threaten the property claims and subject identities of those who have carved careers out of hiding behind subject boundaries. There is often no reluctance to allow Women's Studies courses to be taught, providing that they are optional and/or non-examinable; as such they are thought likely to attract only committed feminists and even provide male lecturers with an excuse for continuing to teach in a sexist way, because "the women are already catered for". Only if Women's Studies courses demand compulsory status are they seen as threatening, because then uncommitted students may begin to develop critical views of the rest of the curriculum in particular, and of academe in general. Women's Studies also dispute the definitions of education and of the social
On the one hand, by imparting technical and social skills and appropriate motivations, education increases the productive capacity of workers. On the other hand, education helps defuse and depoliticize the potentially explosive class relations of the productive process, and thus serves to perpetuate the social, political and economic conditions through which a portion of the product of labour is expropriated in the form of profit.

Sexism is strong not only in the arts and social sciences, where the main focus of attention is on male philosophies, creativity, theories and actions, but in the sciences too. With the exception of biology, botany and zoology which women tend to prefer to other sciences in higher education, most science is taught in close relationship to its role in capitalist societies and has no relevance to those who reject capitalism or who are not allowed to participate in its economic production. Science no longer corresponds to the Socratic desire for knowledge alone. It functions as an aspect of production (production of truth) itself serving the higher goal of production.

Science has a masculine image, right from its introduction into the secondary school up to the level of university or polytechnic. This image, presented by the ways in which it is taught, the manner in which scientific textbooks are illustrated, and its content, often does discourage girls from taking it seriously, as Sharpe's study of working-class schoolgirls demonstrates.

The sexism of curricula in higher education is of importance not just within its own sphere of influence, but also because of its influence on other sectors of education. As Bernstein (1971, p. 69) says:

The major control on the structuring of knowledge at the secondary level is the structuring of knowledge at the tertiary level, specifically the university. Only if there is a major change in the structuring of knowledge at this level can there be effective... change at lower levels.
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A higher education system which continues to permit the transmission of sexist knowledge not only fails to contribute to the intellectual potential and development of its own students, but also helps to perpetuate the transmission of sexist knowledge in other sectors of education. Furthermore, the teaching of sexist knowledge reinforces the ideological reproduction of the social relations of production which is begun in the school.19

Women as Academics: a Token Elite

The most striking thing about women teachers and researchers in higher education is their numerical rarity. Even in subjects which at undergraduate level are dominated by female students, women seem to fail to act beyond the level of a first degree, and are conspicuous by their absence in the academic profession itself. As Webb says of sociology, a subject dominated by women at the undergraduate level (1977, p. 1):

Although women represent something like two thirds of the Sociology undergraduate population, within the ranks of professional sociologists their appearance is a relative rarity. . . . the major ‘leakage’ of women is between undergraduate and postgraduate study.

In effect then, two problems which affect the representation of women in the academic profession need to be considered at the outset. The first problem is that of why women are under-represented - even at the level of studying for a first degree or its equivalent - in the sciences, mathematics and technological subjects. The extent to which this rests on the previous socialization and culture of many girls, as well as on their subject choices at school and on other forms of curricular and hidden-curricular forms of differentiation between boys and girls, has already been discussed in some detail. The second problem is that of why women drop out of academic life after undergraduate study, since clearly this reduces the ‘pool’ of women from which potential academics are likely to emerge.

The limited evidence which is available on women as undergraduate students suggests, although it does no more
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than this, that women are often less committed to a high level of academic performance than are men.47 It is also possible that women approach their studies differently from men, concentrating more on written work and examinations, rather than trying to excel in verbal discussion and argument.48 This may affect the extent to which women are 'noticed' as potential graduate students, particularly in courses where the class of degree is heavily dependent on examinations taken at the end of the final year, so that 'clues' to potential research students may be sought not only on the basis of work already examined or assessed, but also on the ability of students to conduct arguments and defend points of view.49 However, problems of commitment and variations in approach to learning seem to stem as much from the general socialization and schooling of women in industrial capitalist society (and from the societal allocation of women to subordinate, domestic and 'caring' roles in the sexual division of labour), as from the structuring and learning in higher education, particularly since similar characteristics of learning and commitment seem to be present in girls at school as well as amongst those in higher education.50

Indeed, the socialization of girls and the sexual division of labour dominant in industrial societies also provide a further source of explanation for the absence of women amongst postgraduate students and academics. For those women who have been determined enough to enter higher education, the end of a first degree course often marks a watershed in their lives. Pressure is likely to be put on them by families, friends, tutors, careers advisers and others, to leave higher education after obtaining their initial qualification, either because of impending marriage, the birth of children, or because 'over qualified' women are felt to be unemployable and worse still, unmarriageable.51 Women who do decide to continue with their studies must either put off marriage and having children, or else try to cope with the difficult task of combining these with academic study at a time when they have no career mapped out which would justify their decision.52 Furthermore, married women who want to do graduate work may be faced with having to carry this out in institutions which are unsympathetic to or unable to supervise adequately their research, because a husband's occupation
determination at which institutions or place they are able to study. Even for women who are not married, graduate work still presents problems of motivation and of justifying deviation from the 'normal' practice of other female graduates. Furthermore, if as Webb suggests, women's interests in a particular discipline do not coincide with current definitions of high-status areas within that discipline, then they may experience difficulty in obtaining a place for graduate study, or their researches may fail to be taken seriously by peers and supervisors and other established academics. The latter is likely to seriously affect their chances of obtaining an academic post on completion of their studies.

This, of course, raises another issue, that of the extent to which potential lecturers or researchers in higher education are able to leap the final barrier from postgraduate study to employment, an undertaking which is becoming ever more difficult as the number of vacancies for suitable posts contracts, and the number of candidates increases. Similar factors to those which prevent women continuing from undergraduate to graduate study may come into play again, with pressure from family, friends and others to leave the academic world and seek employment or marriage or engage in domestic labour and childrearing. But there is also another factor, which is probably less apparent in admission to graduate study since the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, but still apparent in appointments to academic posts — direct discrimination against women. Although as Byrne says (1975, p. 7).

Until the inexorable pattern of lower take-up by girls of scientific and technical school and later college examinations is reversed, there cannot be a flow of suitably qualified women candidates for teaching posts in colleges and polytechnics other than for domestic and welfare subjects. Yet, this is far from being the only reason why women are so noticeably absent from the academic staff of institutions of higher education. Overt discrimination on grounds of sex in relation to employment is now illegal in Britain, but the onus is on those who have been discriminated against to supply evidence of this to an industrial tribunal. This has proved difficult enough in many cases, but in relation to academic
employment it may be almost impossible. If a number of equivalently qualified candidates are short-listed for a post, it would be very difficult to prove that a woman amongst them had been discriminated against by not being employed, even if this was the case.

Women may be discriminated against in applying for academic posts on a variety of grounds. As already suggested, their choice of postgraduate work may have been in an area which is regarded as having low status within the discipline. They may be considered as bad employment 'risks' on the grounds that they may leave to get married, or to have children, after only a short time. Academic employment for females may be seen by male academics on appointment committees as something which contravenes the ideology of the sexual division of labour in industrial societies. Also, as Blackstone and Fulton argue, women may lack academic 'sponsors' who take responsibility for furthering their academic career from postgraduate days onwards, because most networks of sponsors are composed of males, and there are fewer female academics to act as sponsors to postgraduate students. Other factors are also influential in the failure of women to obtain academic posts. Fewer women than men actually apply for posts, and this is not only because the 'pool' of women candidates is smaller, but also because women, particularly if they are married, or are expected to care for dependent relatives, may have a restricted choice of work area. Lack of confidence may also prevent women from applying for posts which they are capable of taking up. And child-rearing may make full-time posts difficult to manage, so that married women may tend to apply only for part-time posts.

Even for women who are successful in obtaining academic posts, all problems do not immediately disappear. Promotion may be difficult to obtain, either because women academics are sometimes less qualified than male academics (with fewer completed PhDs and first class honours degrees) or because they have fewer publications. Blackstone and Fulton found that women academics in both Britain and America tend to have higher teaching loads than male colleagues (which may help to prevent them publishing as much as men), and a higher
commitment to teaching. But the same study also noted that women are less often involved in postgraduate teaching than men, an area of work which often forms an important criterion of promotion.60

Because there are so few women holding tenured, full-time posts in universities or polytechnics, and even fewer in senior positions, women are often effectively excluded from positions of power and authority within those institutions. Universities and polytechnics are highly bureaucratic, with complex hierarchies of authority.61 Although Moodie and Eustace, in their extensive study of British universities, argue that during this century non-professorial staff have seen a substantial increase in the amount of power that they wield in relation to professorial and lay-persons, their own analysis still suggests otherwise.62 And if ordinary lecturers have begun to gain power in universities at the expense of other groups, it is male lecturers rather than female lecturers who have become thus privileged, in contradiction to the arguments of those who claim that these days everyone holds power in universities.63

Firstly the junior academics united . . . and successfully invaded the faculty boards, senates and councils. Then the impossible happened; the universities had to bow to the participation of students in their most sacred places. The last class interest group emerging is the ultimate proletariat of technicians, clerical and maintenance workers. We shall soon find them in our professorial appointments committees.

Women academics in part-time, temporary or marginal posts are indeed likely to have an even less certain place in the bureaucratic hierarchy than cleaners, students or porters, all of whom enjoy some status and relative permanency within their institutions. Because women are under-represented as teachers in higher education, their chances of influencing bureaucratic processes of decision-making – whether these refer to matters of curriculum, budgeting, facilities, resources, admissions policies or appointments – are only good if they are prepared to acquiesce to the decisions of their male colleagues.

Further, as is the case for women students, there is often
cultural exclusion of women academics from potentially important learning situations participated in by their male colleagues. This applies not only to intellectual discussion, but also to other important aspects of academic life and work; political in-fighting, and preparation for formal decision-taking take place not in committee rooms or senate chambers, but in senior common room bars, at football matches or over rounds of golf. The formal workings of bureaucracies often seek merely to confirm what has already been decided somewhere else by somebody or other. Since women are rarely included or welcomed into the male cultural world of beer-drinking or port-tipping, sexual innuendo, team-sports and shoulder-slapping, they are effectively prevented from acquiring the kind of inside knowledge of how their institutions work which is so essential to meaningful participation in bureaucratic systems. And as Whitehead has shown for a very different but comparable setting, women who try to enter the closed cultural world of men are likely to meet with considerable ridicule and resistance. She says (1976, p. 201):

Much of the behaviour I have described is not by any means confined to other places, other times, another class...

Men's drinking groups occur in senior common rooms, the Houses of Parliament, the Inns of Court, Board Rooms, recreation clubs and in pubs, bars and clubs with a variety of clientele.

There are, then, not only very few women actually employed as academics in higher education, but it is also the case that this group suffers from the problem of tokenism. That is, there are too few women in the power-structure of higher education for them to be able to make much impact on the basic assumptions, sexism, and discriminatory practices of many of their male colleagues. Further, there are not enough women academics in a position to help female undergraduates and graduate students not to underrate their own potential achievements, and to encourage these students to endeavour to become academics themselves. And so the cycle of discrimination and female 'dropping-out' is perpetuated, not only by the subject choice of girls at school and in higher-education, but also by the very absence of sufficient women in the academic hierarchies to help their sisters onto the ladder of academe.
Academic Freedom and Women in Higher Education

It seems evident from the foregoing analysis that women remain seriously under-represented in higher education, both as students and as teachers or researchers, and that consequently many women are still failing to achieve their full academic potential. Even for those women who are successful, the hegemony of male culture and the sexism inherent in many disciplines and in the 'hidden curriculum' of higher education, prevent them from doing as well as they might in a different cultural and curricular context.

More women will only get into higher education if they begin to study at school the disciplines like the sciences and technology which have traditionally been seen as 'masculine' or if, alternatively, entry requirements for higher education become more flexible, so that all subjects can be studied with a minimum of previous background in a particular discipline. At the level of undergraduate study, discrimination against female applicants is probably lower than it has ever been, following the Sex Discrimination Act, but if girls continue to compete against themselves for increasingly limited places on arts and social sciences courses, then the absence of overt discrimination will be of no help. The curriculum of higher education must also become less sexist, or women who are successful in obtaining places will find little to hold their interest and attention once they are there. More efforts must be made to make procedures for applying for postgraduate places and academic appointments less amenable to discrimination against women on grounds of sex, or the 'wastage' of women at the graduate and postgraduate stages of higher education will continue. The more women there are in higher education at every level, the greater will be the possibility of the male cultural hegemony being overturned, and the less will be the extent to which institutions of higher education reproduce the ideological supports of the sexual division of labour in the social relations of production.

The implications of the struggles now being fought for and by women in higher education go far beyond the system itself. They involve re-examining many assumptions, values and principles which underlie Britain's present way of life and capitalist mode of production. In recognizing and demanding
that everyone has a right to enter higher education if they wish, and that they also have a right to be taught in a non-sexist way, women are not only putting forward their own cause, but the whole question of social justice. Some male students and academics in higher education may see the entry of larger numbers of women and non-sexist knowledge as a threat to their academic freedom. But sexism in higher education is a misuse of freedom and of power: men have no right to academic freedom if its very existence denies freedom to women.
Chapter 5

Women as Teachers - Separate and Unequal?

The major concern of the argument put forward so far has been to suggest that both the family and the educational system are instrumental in reproducing the existing sexual and class divisions of labour in capitalist British society. Hence, girls from working-class families (despite undergoing state secondary schooling until the age of sixteen), are likely to enter the same low-paid, unskilled jobs once done by their mothers, and eventually to become housewives and mothers themselves. Although changes have occurred within the education system, the structure of capitalist society remains essentially the same. By concentrating girls in areas of subject specialization inappropriate to other than traditional 'women's jobs', schools ensure that monotonous, insecure, badly paid jobs, and the unpaid work of domestic labour and childcare continue to be carried out by women. Girls from middle-class families would seem, on the face of it, to have more opportunities open to them than working-class girls. However, although middle-class girls may remain at school longer, and achieve a higher measure of academic success than their working-class counterparts, and although there is more expectation that they will enter some kind of career (perhaps combining this with marriage and a family), their options are no less than those of working-class girls, channeled into areas traditionally occupied by women. Teaching has been an occupation entered by women in large numbers; in the nineteenth century mainly working-class or lower middle-class women, but this century increasingly middle-
class only. And like secretarial or office-work, or nursing, teaching has promised more to the women entering it than it has actually given them, in terms of status, financial rewards and career prospects. In this chapter it will be suggested that women who enter teaching have been no less strongly socialized into accepting the existing sexual division of labour than have other women. Because of this the position of most women in teaching is one which emphasizes the distinctive place of women in the sexual division of labour, as will become apparent in the ensuing analysis.

It has been implicitly recognized for some time that teaching, because it recruits large numbers of women and because it has so many internal divisions, is, therefore, a profession which differs from other professional occupations such as medicine or law; it is highly bureaucratic, has low status, little autonomy over clients or practice of the occupation, and no definite knowledge base. Indeed, in the nineteenth century employers of teachers in elementary schools were anxious to exert strong social control over their employees, both in their teaching and in their private lives. Salaries of teachers remained low at that time because as Turner (1974, p. 31) notes, employers ‘were inclined to believe that teachers, like their pupils, should not be encouraged to seek a higher status than that to which they were born’. Nevertheless, some educationalists have argued that teaching is one of the few occupations which has provided women with the chance of social mobility independent of a man and has also offered them the possibility of taking up a well-paid occupation with high job satisfaction and excellent career prospects.

However, it will be argued here that since the nineteenth century women teachers have traditionally been engaged in teaching at a lower level and with younger pupils than have men teachers, and that they have been differentially rewarded financially and in terms of status, as compared to their male colleagues. If teaching has provided some women with an opening into a professional career, it has done so without fundamentally changing the position of those women in the sexual division of labour in British society.
Women as Teachers

Teaching as a Feminine Activity

Recently there has been much interest shown in the links between families and schools as institutions which together contribute towards the reproduction of class relationships and the sexual division of labour in capitalist societies. Families and schools in such societies share the responsibility for rearing and socializing children, and it has been further suggested that there is an analogy between the way that the family deals with children and the manner in which schools treat them. This affects not only the socialization and education of girls but may also be seen to influence how women teachers teach, what they teach and how they are perceived as teachers. One present sexual division of labour demands that women work mainly outside the dominant system of production and the labour market, undertaking domestic labour and rearing children within the context of the nuclear family. Primary and nursery school teaching require many of the same skills and involve confrontation of similar problems to those found in child-rearing. That there is a similarity between motherhood and the teaching of young children is something understood by teachers and by student teachers as much as by parents. As Gibson (1970–1, p. 23) says, 'there is general agreement that the primary school teacher should be more concerned to act as a sort of substitute mother than the secondary school teacher'. Although the establishment by some local educational authorities of middle schools, which are intermediate between primary and secondary schools, has blurred the distinction between the primary and secondary sectors as separate spheres of education, nevertheless a strong distinction is still made in teaching between those who teach young children and those who teach older children. Generally speaking, the older the pupils, the greater the status of those who teach them. Whereas the task of teaching young children is thought to be mainly concerned with inculcating acceptable standards of behaviour, teaching basic skills and encouraging pupils to accept the value of learning, the task of teaching older children is seen to focus on the instruction of pupils and evaluation of what has been learnt. Despite the existence of middle schools, the findings of Curtis’s research on the differences between primary and secondary schools
Women as Teachers

are still of relevance to the argument that the teaching of young children differs from the teaching of older children. Cortis (1972-3, p. 113) says:

the primary teacher ... appears a more 'rigid', insensitive type coming from a more densely populated area, with overtones of 'suspiciousness' and 'conventionality' distinguishing his [sic] behaviour.

The secondary teacher, on the other hand, is more 'sensitive', more satisfied with his work, and has more progressive educational attitudes than his primary counterpart. He is less 'rigid', even inclined to 'laxity' and has more commitment to his academic main subject as a separate identity.

Implicit in the distinctions made between the teaching of young children and the teaching of older children is the idea that, whereas the former task is most suited to women, the latter is the province of male teachers. For many years a major teachers' union, the National Association of Schoolmasters, believed that boys over the age of seven should be taught mainly by men, although the Sex Discrimination Act has now made this belief difficult to sustain. The Association in question was originally a splinter group from the National Union of Teachers, breaking away in 1919 when the NUT took up the cause of equal pay for women teachers. Hence, there is a clear link between anti-feminist beliefs and the idea that women are only capable of teaching young children. Although the NAS has now amalgamated with the Union of Women Teachers, this in no way diminishes its anti-feminist stance during much of this century, although the amalgamation does indicate a grudging willingness to recognize the equal contribution of some women in teaching.

Until the Second World War it was also believed that once women were married their new domestic roles meant that they were unable to continue teaching other people's children, so that women teachers who married were sacked from their posts. Secondary education itself was for a long time the preserve of the church and clerics, so that it became associated with men as teachers long before industrialization, and even after industrialization, it was only in the twentieth century that more than a few privileged girls were able to gain access to a secondary education. Both of these factors
meant that secondary teaching was historically associated with men rather than women, and this association, backed up by our societal division of labour, has remained ever since.13 Bowles and Gintis have argued that schools in capitalist society mirror the authority relationships found in the wider society, so that pupils are imbued with a sense of hierarchy and a set of values appropriate to their eventual place in that hierarchy once they leave school.14 There is, indeed, more than one sense in which relationships in schools replicate those found in the wider society. For example, maternalistic and pastoral roles are often played by women teachers, and paternalistic and authoritarian roles by men teachers. Many primary schools implicitly recognize the similarity between their relationships and structure, and that of the family, even referring to their organization of pupils as ‘family’ groupings. Mothers are frequently seen as the model for teachers of young children and fathers seen as the model for teachers of older children.15 Hence, although some aspects of teaching are considered appropriate tasks for women, other aspects are considered unsuitable.

Women Teachers: Financial Rewards and Career Chances

The concept of teaching as a feminine role in relation to certain kinds of learning and particular age ranges of pupils is fundamental to an understanding of the position which women occupy within teaching. Despite entering it in large numbers for many decades, and despite the achievement of feminist victories over the employment of married women teachers and equal pay, as a group women in teaching have never achieved as much in financial or career terms as have men. Once they stray outside the confines of primary education they may find themselves unable to obtain promotion or forced to adopt stereotyped roles. For example, in a study of a large comprehensive school, Richardson found that whereas the head of the school was seen to play a paternal role towards the pupils, the senior mistress was allocated responsibility for pastoral care – a role which might make further career development difficult.16 When we examine the distribution of senior teaching posts,
we find that in both primary and secondary schools men are proportionately more likely to hold positions as head teachers than are women (see Table 5.1). Even the Plowden Report on Primary Schooling, whilst recognizing the predominance of women over men as primary school teachers, nevertheless entitled one section of its report, 'The Head Teacher and his staff'.

**TABLE 5.1 Full-time teachers by grade of post, England and Wales, all maintained schools, 1974**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade of Post</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>12,365</td>
<td>10,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy heads</td>
<td>7,092</td>
<td>10,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd masters/mistresses</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior teachers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 4</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>3,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 3</td>
<td>6,764</td>
<td>13,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 2</td>
<td>8,796</td>
<td>36,251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale 1</td>
<td>8,600</td>
<td>76,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45,667</td>
<td>148,412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From Table 5.1 we can see that not only are men more likely than women to have posts as headteachers, but also that they are to be found in greater proportion in senior posts of all kinds, with the exception of deputy-heads in primary schools. In the year to which the table refers, over 80 per cent of female primary school teachers held posts of Scale three or below, but this was the case for only just over 50 per cent of male primary teachers. In secondary schools the position was similar, with about 40 per cent of male teachers in posts of Scale four or above, but only 20 per cent of female teachers in comparable jobs. This is partly a reflection of the fact that more women than men leave the occupation before they have had sufficient teaching experience to be promoted to senior...
Women as Teachers

posts as is shown in Table 5.2. Nevertheless women who do
remain in full-time teaching are, on the whole, less likely to
gain promotion than their male colleagues.

| TABLE 5.2 Age structure of full-time teachers, maintained schools,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England and Wales, 1973-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, if part-time posts in teaching are examined, it
becomes apparent that many of these are held by women
rather than by men. In January 1974 there were 40,873
qualified part-time women teachers in maintained secondary,
middle and primary schools in the United Kingdom, but only
6,501 male part-timers.26 Part-time teachers are amongst
the most disadvantaged in the occupation. Paid only for the
hours they teach, and not for preparation or marking, they
receive no holiday pay, sick pay or maternity pay, are liable
to dismissal at a week’s notice, and possess no security of
employment from the end of one academic year to the begin-
ing of the next. Only those teaching sixteen or more hours a
week are entitled to any protection under the Employment
Protection Act.20 But since the family and the school are so
effective in reproducing the existing social relations of pro-
duction and ensuring that the sexual division of labour
remains unchanged, it is not surprising that many women are
forced to take up part-time employment in teaching. Carrying
out domestic labour, rearing young children and other
responsibilities within the nuclear family are tasks that, if
given only to women, may well not be compatible with full
time teaching. Unfortunately, the convenience of teaching

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part-time is not matched by the conditions and terms of employment which this kind of work offers.

Not only are most women in teaching placed in inferior posts when compared to their male colleagues, but they are also disadvantaged in salary terms at almost every level of the occupation, despite the existence of equal pay in teaching since 1960.

If teaching, then, does provide an occupation for women which has good pay, career prospects and high status, it does so only in comparison with other jobs for women, which also reflect the existing sexual division of labour in society. Men who enter teaching have a much greater likelihood of receiving high salaries and promotion than most of their female colleagues (see Table 5.3). Their involvement in marriage and the nuclear family is seldom held to be detrimental to their careers, whilst this is often evidenced as a reason why women make unreliable teachers, are thus not promoted, and are paid less. The contribution of men to this unreliability is seldom recognized by those who thus criticize women teachers.

### TABLE 5.3 Average salaries, all teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales, 1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>£2478</td>
<td>£2097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Non-graduate</td>
<td>£2743</td>
<td>£2103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>All teachers</td>
<td>£2467</td>
<td>£2184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>£2795</td>
<td>£2399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Non-graduate</td>
<td>£2367</td>
<td>£2097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>All teachers</td>
<td>£2548</td>
<td>£2184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### The Commitment of Women to Teaching

It has sometimes been claimed that women teachers do not display the same degree of commitment to their occupation as that shown by men teachers. This lesser commitment is
Women as Teachers

explained in the same terms as women's inferior salaries and career structures, with reference to the 'real' interests of women in marriage and the nuclear family rather than in work. Hoyle (1969, pp. 87-8) for example talks of:

the 'special conditions' attaching to female employment such as the fact that their careers are often intermittent, that they are usually only secondary breadwinners in the family, that they tend to be residentially immobile.

Hoyle, of course, assumes that all female teachers are married, earning less than their husbands, and willing to cease paid employment on child-birth. Furthermore, there is the implicit assumption that all these factors are the fault of women and are not attributable to their relationship with men in the sexual division of labour, or to the manner in which capitalist societies organize and reward productive and non-productive work.

Other writers have referred to the higher rate of 'wastage' amongst women teachers leaving the occupation, as compared to men teachers. In 1967 the Plowden Report noted that three women in primary schools left to every one man, although this does not take into account the much smaller number of men in primary teaching to begin with. Pollard suggests that the wastage rate amongst women teachers is so high that we must see women in the occupation as the least professional and most expensively trained members. Talking about the campaign launched during the 1960s to encourage married women to return to teaching, Pollard (1974, p. 57) recalls that this raised questions about 'dilution of the profession, and about where the priorities of a married woman might lie if, say, her children were ill'. Again, blame is attached to individual women, and not to the system of social relations of production which ensure that it is usually married women – not married men – who have to care for sick children.

In any case, it is not justifiable to assume that because women often have heavy responsibilities for carrying out domestic labour and caring for children, their commitment to any other task is necessarily lower than that of men. Even if women do give up teaching to have children, many are anxious to return to teaching as soon as they are able to do
Women as Teachers

In a study of student teachers Hellawell and Smithers found that, whereas the future career ambitions of male students often lay outside school teaching or education altogether (1973-4, p. 46), 'women students were consistently more favourably disposed towards actual school teaching than men'. Women in this study were thus found to possess a greater commitment to teaching than men.25

Grace's analysis of teacher role conflict found that women were less likely to experience most areas of role conflict, and showed a tendency to tolerate more inconsistencies in their occupation than did most of the men.26 He does not comment that this may be merely a reflection of women's lives in contemporary capitalist societies which typically contain more contradictions and inconsistencies than do most men's lives. And although Grace tries to argue that women's lesser perception of role conflict is indicative of their smaller degree of commitment to their occupation, this assumption would seem to hinge on a definition of commitment - something which Grace himself recognises to be balanced delicately between advancement in a career through constant mobility from school to school, and remaining in one school but showing strong commitment to the pupils in that establishment. In the latter respect women in Grace's research shared loyalty to their schools and pupils with less than 10 per cent of them showing strong desire for career advancement. As one said (Grace, 1972, p. 74): 'Being a married woman it is not so important for me to "get on" - I want to know a group of children - "getting on" is secondary.' Indeed, the greater degree of constraint operating on the circumstances and locations in which women teachers (if they are married or have dependents) have to find jobs, may indicate that they are much more persistent and committed to teaching than many men, particularly since it is still a strongly held cultural assumption that whilst a woman moves with her husband if the latter acquires a new job, the reverse is seldom acceptable.27

Women and Teacher Training

It has been suggested that certain kinds of teaching are recognized as areas of feminine expertise, whereas other areas are
Women as Teachers

seen as more appropriate to male skills. These beliefs, which are based on the traditional sexual division of labour found in capitalist societies, have a serious effect on the status, salary and careers of many women teachers. But it is not only the school and the family which reproduce the sexual division of labour; the process of teacher training also has a part to play. Indeed, teacher training as a form of vocational preparation separate from any other form of education was something which was partly, if not entirely, set up with women in mind. In the nineteenth century when colleges began to be established specifically for the training of teachers, few women who wished to teach were able to enter the occupation as men were, through the church or a university education.28 For those women who entered teaching after a period at training college, as Parry and Parry (1974, p. 172) note:

Sexual divisions between training colleges for men and women respectively were rigidly institutionalised. The connection between religious and moral training, and the notion of the enforcement of sexual morals, which formed such a central theme of the Victorian era, was manifested in colleges organized more on the model of the religious seminary.

Not only were there rigid sexual divisions in the provision of training places, but strong lay, church and community control was exercised over both the work and social lives of teachers once they commenced work, and this remained the case throughout the nineteenth century.29 However, women who wished to enter teaching as an escape from the even more restricting life of a spinster or that of a domestic servant, had little choice but to accept these social controls over trainee and practising teachers. Training of women for teaching in special colleges was considered more necessary than the training of men, and heads of secondary schools often preferred to recruit male teachers from university or ecclesiastical sources.30 The courses which women at training college in the nineteenth century underwent were often more concerned with reinforcing the traditional skills and characteristics associated with being feminine, than with offering instruction in the professional skills of teaching. Domestic economy formed an
Women as Teachers

important facet of the education provided, both on the
grounds that women would have to teach it and that they
would need to know how to run their own homes later.31
Discipline was strict and students were rarely allowed out of
college either alone or accompanied by other students; they
were forced to wear similar clothes and exercise often con-
sisted of walking in a crocodile or military-style drill.32 The
harsh conditions and social control relaxed a little towards
the end of the century, the quality of training improved and
some day training colleges, as opposed to residential ones,
were set up.

But despite these and many other changes33 which have
subsequently taken place in teacher training since the end of
the last century, much of the original ideology of training
colleges remains. Women training as teachers are still seen
differently from men similarly training, and for a long time,
even in the most recent decades of this century, they have been
subject to a social control based on assumptions about the
subordinate status of women in society. Training colleges
retained rules about the behaviour and conduct of their stu-
dents long after many universities and other similar institu-
tions had begun to relax those following the period of stu-
dent unrest in the late 1960s. Indeed, it is not so many years
since a student at a college of education was asked to termi-
nate her course after having been found in her college room
with a man ‘after hours’, on the grounds that a girl with such
loose standards of sexual morality was unsuited to the teach-
ing of other peoples’ children. It is difficult to imagine a simi-
lar misdemeanour by a male student being tackled or seen in
the same way. There is a curious, almost ironic, contradic-
tion in the beliefs held about women as student or practising
teachers, in that their training constantly emphasizes to them
their proper place in the sexual division of labour, and their
ultimate destiny as wives and mothers, whilst at the same
time expecting them to behave as though they were asexual.

It is not only that teacher training emphasizes to women,
and is effective in reproducing, the existing sexual division of
labour in society. Its task in this respect has been made easier
by the relative spatial and educational isolation of teacher
training from other forms of higher and further education, an
isolation which was commented upon unfavourably by the
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James Report in 1972, and which was seen by that Report as a major contributory factor to the divisiveness existing in teaching as an occupation. The geographical isolation of many colleges has allowed them to function effectively as social controllers of the skills and behaviour of their mostly female students. Indeed, Taylor says of training colleges before the Second World War that they were often institutions (1969, p. 205) in which a diluted form of gracious living was engaged in by a largely spinster staff, in an impressive if educationally unsuitable and draughty building at the end of a mile long drive, ten miles from the nearest town.

Although there are probably no colleges now which conform to this stereotype, legacies of those days remain in teacher training. The academic isolation of many establishments and their preparation of students for a relatively narrow vocational field has, intentionally or not, limited the occupational horizons of many of those students. Girls in particular, have often entered teacher training not because they especially wish to teach, but because they have not acquired the qualifications for entry to any other form of higher education. But the subsequent certification which they have obtained from colleges of education has frequently had no currency outside the education sector. Certainly, cut-backs in initial teacher training and the consequent mergers of colleges of education with other institutions of further and higher education, have had the effect of increasing the range and diversity of courses offered, but this has come too late for many women, and it is a policy which has been carried out at the expense of those colleges which have been closed altogether.

Teacher training of non-graduates in isolation from other students undergoing higher education then, has contributed to the reproduction of the existing social relations of production in society, and has reinforced—or even to some extent created—the ideology that the teaching of young children is a feminine vocation, whilst the teaching of older children belongs to a different category of skill altogether, to be prepared for, in the main, by taking a degree first, and teacher training later. The present enthusiasm for recruiting into secondary schools teachers with industrial or commercial
experience may only serve to strengthen those beliefs and exclude yet more women teachers from the world of teaching beyond the primary or middle school.35

Women as Teachers: are they Different?

There is certainly evidence to indicate that women teachers are socialized into believing that their vocation is to teach young children. But are women, as teachers, really so different from men teachers? Or is this just a myth which helps to perpetuate the existing ideology and structure of the sexual division of labour in society? There are certainly those who believe that women do teach in a way very different from that of men. Morrison and McIntyre (1969, p. 51) for example, claim that:

The sex of teachers is a factor which appears to have an equally pervasive influence on classroom relationships; among other things, it has been shown to affect the teacher's perception of pupils, the aspirations and achievements of pupils, and the teacher's degree of involvement in the job of teaching.

But, on the other hand, in his investigations into formal and informal teaching styles, Bennett found few marked differences of opinion or teaching aims between male and female teachers36 and discovered only a small amount of evidence to suggest that informal teaching styles were favoured more by men than by women.37

But there is material which implies that women teachers in mixed schools, especially secondary schools, may experience more discipline problems than men teachers in a comparable situation. In a series of interviews with new teachers, a teacher in her probationary year studied by Hannam, Smith and Stephenson (1976, p. 63), said of her pupils in a comprehensive school:

if only they were scared of me so that they would sit in their places and be quiet and listen and do what I say . . . I can't do it the way the kids are used to because I'm not a big aggressive male, you see.
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Other female students in the same study reported particular problems with their boy pupils, sometimes calling in other, male, members of staff to help. On occasions, pupils themselves would suggest this as a solution, as one woman explained (Hannam et al., 1976, p. 78):

I don't hit boys who mess around . . . If I don't hit them the others get very cross and uptight, 'Miss, can't you shut them up? Get the slipper out and hit them. Send them to Mr Pendry, he'll hit them'.

That these discipline problems were caused as much by the sexist stereotypes already possessed by the pupils as by any fault of the teachers concerned, is evidenced elsewhere in the same work, where female teachers complain of sexual banter and abuse from male pupils, even in primary schools. And this is one of the problems that confronts female teachers; the schools in which they teach are busy socializing their pupils into the existing sexual division of labour, so that boys in particular, as they grow older, are likely to assume power over women teachers and exploit it. Indeed children may not see women as effective teachers at all. Mosgrove and Taylor (1969, pp. 26-7) found that:

children's stereotype of the good teacher is a young married man with children, who gives little homework and no corporal punishment. They may reject as 'good' teachers women, elderly teachers, and those inclined to behave towards them as their parents might.

Dale's research on mixed and single-sex schools found that girls showed a preference for male teachers, and that female teachers, especially those in single-sex schools, were often seen as unpleasant, harsh disciplinarians, obsessed by trivial details and academic work. Dale himself intimates that women teachers may experience discipline problems and claims, further, that (1969, p. 95):

there is a possibility that the female personality may not be ideally suited to the traditional class teaching situation . . . where there is some need for dominance, which comes more naturally to a man than a woman.

This assumption, of course, begs the question of whether it is
women per se who cannot teach mixed classes of secondary school age, or of whether it is the way that women are socialized, the way that their pupils are socialized and the social relationships of production in society and their accompanying ideology which makes both women teachers and their pupils unable to believe that they can cope.

There is insufficient evidence for it to be possible to decide whether, in fact, all women do teach differently from all men. In so far as existing data support this conclusion, it is arguable that the differences observed may be due less to the actual abilities and skills of female teachers as compared with male teachers, than to the sexual division of labour and its ideological supports as they exist in capitalist societies.

Women, Unions and Teacher Politics

Sexual divisions in teaching have not been confined to teaching or to teacher training only, but have also permeated the areas of teacher politics and unionization. Since the nineteenth century secondary school teachers have had separate unions for male and female teachers, although the National Union of Teachers has always admitted teachers of both sexes to membership. The National Association of Schoolmasters, which grew out of a split with the NUT over the issue of equal pay for women, maintained for many decades of this century that any teaching union which attempted to represent both male and female members was doomed to failure as the two groups had contradictory interests. Men, it was argued, saw teaching as a career and major source of income which was poorly rewarded in comparison to other 'male' jobs. On the other hand, it was claimed, women saw teaching as a job, not a career, and comparing it with other occupations open to them, found it satisfactory in most respects, including salaries. Subsequently the NAS has joined forces with the Union of Women Teachers, and so has been forced to partially retract its earlier arguments about women teachers. However, the UWT sees itself as an association of 'career-teachers', and not simply as a union for all women in teaching, and with the NAS, and the NUT, has been one of the most militant of the teacher associations in pursuit of
salary claims and improved conditions of work.41 The NUT, which has a two-thirds female membership, has often been a staunch defender of the interests of women teachers, although its Executive Committee has usually contained a predominance of males.42 Other teacher associations with women members, for instance the Association of Assistant Mistresses and the Headmistresses Association, have followed their male counterparts in being less militant in their demands over salaries and work conditions, and have concerned themselves with other, more 'professional' aspects of teaching.43

In so far as the interests of women and men teachers do differ, the differences can be seen to stem more from the structure of capitalist society than from any other single factor. If women were not seen as subordinate to men, and expected to engage primarily in domestic labour and child-rearing within the context of the nuclear family, then the interests of all women teachers in teacher politics might show a greater concurrence with those of men than they do at present. Zeigler, writing about American teachers, has even suggested that the existence of a large number of women and a smaller number of men in teaching may cause men's political activism and interests to become 'feminised'. His reasoning is that teaching is an occupation best suited to females who are usually satisfied with it as a job, who hold more orthodox political views than men, and who are unlikely to become embroiled in militant politics; he tries to provide data which demonstrate that men in teaching may be forced to adopt similar strategies if they wish to remain teachers.44

Certainly, the failure of women to participate fully in white-collar unions is an established sociological proposition about union activity.45 But women in the NUT over the last hundred years, have supported the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Suffragette Movement, pursued the issue of equal pay for over forty years until its achievement in teaching in 1960 and fought hard for the removal of the ban on the employment of married teachers. The Union of Women Teachers has been a more recent arrival on the scene of teacher politics, but since the late 1960s has shown as much militancy as other unions in supporting various forms of direct action on pay claims and conditions of work.46
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Teacher associations with women members have not always tried hard to interest most of their members in full and active participation, preferring instead to stress the instrumental benefits of membership such as third party insurance or sick pay schemes. But, in addition, women have from an early age been socialized into accepting a position in the social relations of production which isolates and excludes them from direct participation in class struggle or any other form of political action, a position which places them predominantly in non-productive roles within the nuclear family and emphasizes their different role in the division of labour as compared to men. In recent years most teachers who have taken strike action or supported militant sanctions have been men rather than women. But this can only be explained partially in terms of the different interests of male and female teachers. Indeed, women's lack of militancy may be partly attributable to their concern with the professional status of their occupation, over and above instrumental interests in salaries and conditions of work. Militant action is seen by some women teachers — and indeed by some male teachers — as a strategy which is potentially very damaging to the professional status of their occupation. But the spread of the Women's Movement in Britain has been particularly strong amongst those involved in education, and this is likely to ensure that in future women teachers become more politically active, both inside and outside their occupational associations.

Women as Teachers: Separate and Unequal

In this chapter the status, role and career prospects of women teachers have been examined in some detail. It has been suggested that women who teach are both seen as, and see themselves, differently from, men teachers, in terms of the kind of teaching to which they are suited, their commitment to their occupation, and their involvement in teacher politics. This separation is encouraged and shaped by both the socialization of women within the family and their education, as well as by the social relations of production, in particular the sexual division of labour existing in capitalist societies which
socialization and education help to reproduce. Women in this division of labour are seen primarily as domestic, non-productive labourers within the context of the nuclear family, who are expected to have responsibility for the rearing of children. The teaching of young children by women is seen as not incompatible with the sexual division of labour, but women who teach beyond this level may be seen as intruding into a male preserve, may be perceived by their pupils as unsatisfactory teachers and may experience discipline problems.

In all types of state schools, the majority of senior posts and headships are held by men rather than by women, and the promotion prospects and financial rewards offered to female teachers are less good than those available to male teachers. Women are assumed to be less committed to teaching than men, but it is often the other tasks which they are expected to fulfill within the nuclear family, and their subordinate status as wage-earners in relation to men, which give rise to a lesser commitment, or a commitment to a particular school rather than rapid career advancement. In training for teaching women often follow a different path from men, and their geographical and academic isolation may subject them to sexist processes during their training, whilst the qualifications which they obtain severely limit their career opportunities. In teacher politics, women are often less active than men, although they have fought hard to achieve victory on issues of special interest to them. As with their level of commitment, their non-involvement in union activities is as much due to their position in the sexual division of labour and their exclusion from the politics of class struggle, as to their own lack of interest.

Since the nineteenth century teaching has provided an apparently excellent escape route for women seeking financial and social independence from the nuclear family. But in reality the escape has often been illusory. Women in teaching have, to a considerable degree, been confined to the same roles and skills that they are expected to fulfill within the home and in the family, and their status in relation to male teachers has remained subordinate. Despite the existence of equal pay and the passing of a Sex Discrimination Act, women in teaching do not occupy a position similar to that occupied by men. They remain separate, and unequal.
Chapter 6

Women, Education and Society:
the Possibilities of Change

It has been suggested in this book that the education of women in British society is frequently different from, and sometimes inferior to, the education received by men in the same society. There are clearly many aspects of education in both schools and in institutions of higher and further education which require change if women are to develop their full potential in schooling and other areas of educational opportunity. However, blame for the present inequalities of the education of women in Britain cannot be laid solely at the door of educational establishments, educators and educational policy makers, the capitalist mode of production, the family, and the role of women in the sexual division of labour are also crucial factors. If sexism and sex-stereotyping are to disappear from society, and if the positions of women and men in the sexual division of labour are to be changed to such an extent that labour is no longer allocated on the basis of gender, then it cannot be expected that change in education alone will achieve these goals. Changes will also need to be made in the wider society, in the allocation of responsibility for child care and domestic labour, in roles and relationships within the family, in the relative statures attached to manual and mental labour. But this is not to say that changes in education will have no significant impact on society, since a reduction in the degree of sexism and sexual differentiation in education will also help to increase people’s awareness of the possibility of achieving change elsewhere in society.
One of the biggest threats to the reduction of sexism in education is that posed by fluctuations in the economy. Economic recessions, like the one experienced by Britain in the 1970s, can result in pressures for, and policies on, cuts in public expenditure. Since education in British society is a major area of expenditure, it is particularly vulnerable to public spending cuts. Although it may be argued that people’s attitudes are of crucial importance to the existence or absence of sexism in schools, differentiation on grounds of sex is often based on unequal allocation and distribution of learning resources. Furthermore, sexism may be implicit in certain kinds of resources, such as reading materials or textbooks. If expenditure in schools is cut back, sexist reading schemes and other sexist literature may continue to be used, simply because non-sexist replacements are too expensive to purchase. Indeed, people may be discouraged from producing non-sexist literature because there is only a limited market for it. Children in primary schools may be forced to use play equipment which encourages sex-stereotyping because schools cannot afford to buy sufficient equipment for all children to choose which they use on the basis of interest. In secondary schools, shortages of money may mean that girls continue to be unable to make non-traditional choices of subject, such as sciences, technical subjects or mathematics, because not enough teachers or facilities are available for this to be possible. Similarly, boys may be prevented from taking arts subjects or domestic subjects.

In higher education the closure of colleges of education may well reduce the choice of courses available to women students with arts qualifications. Government initiatives on unemployment and training of school leavers for employment may also be affecting the post-school options available to girls. In further education the Manpower Services Commission (created in 1974 to provide public employment and training services), and one of the Commission’s off-shoots, the Training Services Agency, which runs training schemes and courses, have both made considerable inroads into course and curriculum development and are becoming increasingly important in the financing of higher education. Since few of the people
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involved in the Commission or its agencies are women, and since most of the courses being provided under its auspices are technical, vocational and industrially-oriented ones which require scientific, technical or mathematical skills, girls are unlikely to benefit substantially from this involvement of the Commission in further education, and may well have their chances of taking courses suited to their interests and existing qualifications reduced. The Job Creation Scheme, which is a Government sponsored body helping to provide temporary work for the young unemployed, has also not favoured girl school leavers in its schemes, and about 76 per cent of the jobs in their programme up to 1977 were intended for boys.3 Girl school leavers then, are likely to find their chances of continuing their education or entering a worthwhile job hampered not only by their sex and school background in arts subjects, but also by the effects of the economic recession.

Can anything be done about all this? The existing legislation on women's rights and sex discrimination does not appear to have the breadth to cope with many of these problems, partly because the procedures for making complaints are based on individual cases, whereas the problems are often general ones.4 Furthermore, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the major official body concerned with implementing the British legislation on sex equality, has also suffered from the economic recession and the unwillingness of many to take the question of women's equality seriously in the face of what are seen as more pressing economic and political problems.5 But there is also the further difficulty that some problems of sexism in schools seem to lie beyond the scope of legislation. Whilst it would be possible to legally require schools to provide equal resources, equipment, and teachers for both sexes, our existing educational system would make the financing of these things difficult to arrange. Under the present system of block rate-support grant allocation to local authorities by central government, it is not possible to insist that money is spent on any particular item of expenditure. Any legislation on matters like sexist literature would probably be contested and opposed by teachers and teacher organisations on the grounds that the determination of what books may be used and which may not is a dangerous precedent and threatens the autonomy of the teaching profession.
Legislation on issues of sexism and sexual differentiation is at best an incomplete answer. On other aspects of sexism in schools, such as teachers' or pupils' attitudes, legislation would not be feasible, or even conceivable.

Pressure groups of an activist kind provide another partial solution. Parent-teacher associations, women's groups both inside and outside the Women's Liberation Movement, and student or pupil groups can all agitate for a fairer allocation of resources, teachers and equipment to both boys and girls. These groups can also press for the use of non-sexist literature in schools and colleges of all kinds, by drawing up lists of what is already available and circulating these to educational establishments, and by organizing the writing of more non-sexist literature suitable for all levels and ages of students in a variety of subjects, from reading lessons to chemistry. And, of course, parents who are aware of the problems arising from sexism and sex-stereotyping can endeavour also to reduce the extent to which these processes play a part in the way their own children are brought up, so that schools which introduce sexism and sex-stereotyping are seen as deviant rather than as normal and 'natural'.

Changes in educational policy may also be advantageous to women in certain areas of schooling. For instance, the development of a core curriculum in secondary schools might help to eliminate some aspects of curricular differentiation between boys and girls. In 1976 the DES, setting out the four aspects of the then forthcoming 'Great Debate' on education, distinguished between a common curriculum in which all pupils follow the same educational pattern, and a core curriculum which suggests an irreducible minimum of subjects essential to the education of all children, with room for variation beyond that minimum. Whilst noting that subjects such as English, mathematics and science might be part of this core curriculum, the document suggested that decisions about the content of a core curriculum must also take into account what subjects are already taught in secondary schools, and the needs of pupils which are being met, or that need to be met. The notion of a core curriculum is a controversial issue amongst educationists, not only because of disagreements about what it should comprise, but also because of conflicts of interest over how such a curriculum could be implemented.

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in schools without degrading the expertise and autonomy of teachers. And, of course, the concept of curriculum involves more than simply what subjects are taught where. As Jenkins and Shipman point out (1976, p. 5):

A curriculum then is concerned with prerequisites (antecedents, intentions), with transactions (what actually goes on in classrooms as the essential meanings are negotiated between teachers and taught, and worthwhile activities undertaken) and with outcomes (the knowledge and skill acquired by students, attitude changes, intended and unintended side effects etc.). Hence, to impose common subjects on schools would be insufficient to achieve a core curriculum, since there would also need to be agreement on common objectives. However, if agreement could be reached on the many aspects of the notion of a core curriculum, to the extent that non-sexism and the teaching of basic skills (literacy, numeracy, spatial, mechanical and technical abilities) became adopted as objectives of secondary schooling, with an appropriate accompanying core of subjects, then both girls and boys would be likely to benefit. At the present time the English system of education requires an earlier degree of specialization from pupils than most other industrial societies, and elimination of some of that early specialization would reduce the chances of girls and boys leaving school with qualifications and learning back-grounds heavily dependent on a single group or category of subjects and skills. The reduction of sexism, sex stereotyping and curricular differentiation between boys and girls in schools would benefit both boys and girls, because it would decrease the extent to which the sexes are pushed into activities and areas of study on grounds other than personal aptitude or interest. Willis has argued that many working-class schoolboys rarely identify culturally with either academically-successful working-class boys, or with working-class girls because of the existence of two crucial cultural divisions. These divisions are, Willis claims, first the distinction between mental and manual labour, and second the division of gender. The counterculture of some working-class boys can, Willis suggests, be seen both as a rejection of individualism and
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mental activity, and of femininity and women as significant aspects of culture. Willis's research indicates that mental activity is often identified with both femininity and weakness, whereas manual activity is identified with masculinity, strength and virility. He says (1977, p. 149):

If the currency of femininity were revalued, then that of mental work would have to be too. A member of the counter-school culture can only believe in the effeminacy of white collar and office work so long as wives, girlfriends and mothers are regarded as restricted, inferior and incapable of certain things.

Although non-sexist educational practices would not remove the cultural distinctions between mental and manual activity or the societal relevance of gender differences, they might reduce the significance of these divisions within schools, so that boys and girls, at least those within the same social class groupings, would come to see each other as individuals rather than in males and females.

Beyond the level of schools other changes could also be made in education. For instance, the Equal Opportunities Commission has suggested that higher and further educational institutions should make efforts in their advertisements and prospectuses to encourage women applicants. In addition, institutions could become more flexible (until such time as the introduction of a core curriculum might make such flexibility less necessary), in their entrance requirements for courses. For example, the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics has set up a sub-committee investigating how much basic knowledge a student actually requires to take a degree course in science. If sciences and technical subjects could be taken at post-school level by those with a variety of previous subject experiences, then the present curricular differentiation between boys and girls might be less disadvantageous to both sexes, although to some extent flexibility about previous subject knowledge already applies in the arts and social sciences. Certainly, the Open University has been successful in providing courses at degree level which require minimal knowledge of the subject taken prior to the start of the course. At present there are many anomalies in the system whereby
local education authorities allocate grants to students taking courses in higher or further education establishments. Girls as well as boys may be deterred from taking courses because they cannot obtain any form of financial support whilst studying. At the present time many vocational and academic courses below degree level attract only discretionary grants, and these have often been early victims of cuts in educational spending. Although in some areas students who attend college for only three days a week are allowed to draw social security payments at the same time (providing that they remain able to take up a job should a suitable vacancy occur), this is no real solution, as many courses of post-school study require attendance on more than three days a week. A report published in 1977 by the Manpower Services Commission suggests that work should initially be abolished for the 16-19 age group, and that these years should be taken up with various forms of post-school training and work-experience schemes. Although this might be helpful to many girls seeking post-school education, it still leaves unsolved the problems of mature women students and how their courses may be financed. The only practical solution would seem to be centrally-financed, mandatory grants for all students of any age group taking full-time courses in further or higher education. Mature students could, of course, also be helped in other ways. Some institutions of higher education already make provision for the admission of mature students to courses without formal entrance qualifications, but women often lack the confidence to apply for such courses; they could be encouraged to do so not only by the existence of financial security, but also by the existence of courses and facilities tailored to their needs. Mature students and younger students of both sexes, if they have the care of young children to consider, should be able to use child care facilities attached to the institutions at which they are studying, rather than having to search for alternative private and often very expensive sources of child care.

In some countries, for example in China and Sweden, policies of admission to courses of post-school education have placed emphasis on the equivalence of work experience to academic qualifications, although this has often proved to be
a cogent source of political controversy. In Sweden in July 1977 new admission plans for entry to post-school education were put into operation, giving equal currency to work experience, ability to complete the course, and formal educational qualifications. The courses available to students in Swedish higher education also incorporate a high degree of flexibility, with points awarded for the completion of courses, and the possibility of taking courses part-time in the evenings, although this latter option does not usually apply in medicine, engineering or the natural sciences. Such plans may give women a greater chance of returning to study long after leaving school, but even in the Swedish system, the majority of those newly attracted into higher education appear to be opting initially for courses in administration, social work and cultural work professions, although more mature students are being attracted to medicine. Financial aid on a means-tested basis is available to all students taking courses in higher education, but often in the form of loans rather than grants. The number of female students in Swedish higher education has been increasing gradually since the mid-1960s, and for some years there have actually been more women than men students—the reverse of the situation in many industrial societies. However, in technical courses men still predominate.

The Swedish experience suggests two things of relevance to education in Britain. First, it indicates that more people—both men and women, and older people—are likely to gain access to higher education if that access is not entirely dependent on formal qualifications. Second, however, it is apparent that the tendency of women to specialise in the arts and social sciences is not necessarily overcome by a more open policy on admissions to higher education, although Sweden’s male/female student ratio does destroy the belief that there will never be more women than men in higher education. The solution to the arts and social sciences specialisation problem, however, clearly does not lie in higher education, but in the schools. What Britain should be careful to avoid is the kind of development which occurred in educational policy in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, as an effort to halt the trend of feminisation of particular disciplines in higher education and in certain occupations. There entry qualifications for boys to courses which were considered feminised were made
considerably lower than the qualifications demanded for girls, with the result that many girls found themselves leaving school with no chance of a college place and few skills or prospects for employment.20 If the tendency of women to specialize in the arts is to be reduced, it must surely be brought about in a positive rather than a negative way, with women being encouraged to take up science and technical subjects at school and after school, rather than simply being discouraged from studying arts subjects.

As with changes in schools, changes in further and higher education — given the decentralization of the British education system — may only be partially achieved by legislation, and much fighting may also have to be done by pressure groups. And it is important that men as well as women should be actively involved in those groups. For as Chafetz notes, men have so far avoided becoming collectively involved in the campaigns for the equality of women, even though some men as individuals may accept the legitimacy of the cause.21 There are signs that some of the required changes will gradually come about, for example in relation to child care facilities and more flexible admissions policies, but if these are to be adopted in all post-school educational institutions, then pressure for changes to occur must not be decreased.

The Position of Women in Society — Present and Future

An important feature of the position of women as housewives in industrial societies is the isolated character of their labour and their partial or complete economic dependence on male breadwinners.22 However, in Britain as in other societies, the extent of that isolation and economic dependence has begun to decline. Since the beginning of the 1950s there has been considerable growth in the proportion of the adult female population engaged in paid employment, and much of this increase has occurred amongst married women. At the same time the rate of marriage has been rising.23 These two trends have given rise to a situation in which larger numbers of women than ever before have begun to sell their labour power for the greater portion of their lives, but also where
the degree of women’s dependence on marriage has become more widespread than was previously the case.24

However, as most of the growth in female employment since 1960 has taken place amongst part-time workers25 and because women’s wages relative to men’s still remain at two-thirds of the average male earnings,26 it is difficult to understand Szymanski’s argument that most working-class married women in capitalist societies are now economically independent of their husbands for much of their lives.27 In fact, it would seem that in Britain only a few middle-class women acquire the kind of education and jobs which enable them to enjoy economic independence from men.28 The majority of working-class women, despite their involvement in paid employment, continue to take primary responsibility for domestic labour and child care and remain at least partially economically dependent on men.29 Amongst women who do work, union membership has been growing fast.30 Although this is not necessarily indicative of women taking work more seriously, it does suggest that more women in employment are starting to regard matters of pay and work conditions as important rather than peripheral, and beginning to see reasonable wages and working conditions as a basic right to which women as well as men workers are entitled. But women often find it difficult to be active in their unions; branch meetings are frequently arranged after work hours, and in the evenings, when domestic commitments and care of children are likely to be at their most demanding.31 And women trade unionists may find that when they take strike action, support from male trade unionists is limited. Other women may be reluctant to join unions, partly because they have been socialized into believing that their work is not amenable to unionism,32 and partly because, in areas of employment such as shopwork, women are isolated and easily victimized if they become union members.

The attitudes of women towards work and unions, as well as the continuing partial economic dependence of many women on men and the heavy involvement of women in domestic labour and child care, cannot be held to be solely the fault of the education that women receive. Certainly much of their education may convince women that their situation is either just or unchangeable, but education does
not create the subordination of women. It is indeed somewhat disheartening to realize that the position of women in socialist societies is not markedly different from the position of women in most capitalist societies, despite some attempts to reduce the amount of sexism and sex-stereotyping found in the education offered to women in socialist societies. In many socialist societies women are still found primarily in 'women's jobs' and do not have equal pay, although their jobs may include categories of employment such as engineering, which are not considered 'women's jobs' in Britain. Scott and Broyelle both note that in socialist societies women are no less likely than in capitalist societies to be involved in domestic labour and child care to such an extent that any other activities, whether paid employment, political activity or leisure interests, take second place.

Does this then mean that the position of women is unchangeable whether under a capitalist or socialist mode of production, so that no matter what changes are made in the educational opportunities and consciousness of women or in society nothing fundamental is altered? Certainly, those who have analysed the position of women in socialist societies do not accept this. For example, Scott points out that both Marx and Engels assumed that the family in capitalist societies was a function of private property, and that the family would disappear with the abolition of private property, taking with it the subordinate position of women. This belief, Scott suggests, had detracted attention from the real barriers to women's equal development, which she sees as the dominance of patriarchal beliefs, the fact that women work outside the home in jobs and work environments which have been structured by men for their own convenience, and the continued existence of a dual role for women. Scott says (1976, p. 190): 'as long as a woman is regarded as having two roles while a man has only one, women and men will never find themselves on equal footing'. Effectively this argument claims that better educational and job opportunities for women are insufficient to bring about a change in their position. It is of no use women being taught the sciences and technical subjects, and men being trained in domestic skills, if those skills are not utilized once individuals leave school.

Just as it is possible for a woman who has received a scientific...
education to enter a traditionally 'feminine' job afterwards, or to treat a job as less important than a man would, so it is perfectly possible for a man who knows how to cook, wash, clean and care for children never to offer to do any of these things. The connections between knowledge and action are not as close as either reformers or revolutionaries sometimes think they are.

What is needed then, to change the position of women in both socialist and capitalist societies, is a closer link between knowledge and action. The transition to socialism has not brought with it the liberation of women, or men, from the sexual division of labour.

The abolition of private ownership of the means of production does not bring about the end of the single family as the economic unit of society nor the transformation of private housekeeping into a social industry. Even when the best intentions are present, there must also be an economic base sufficiently strong and well-organized to assume these economic functions. At the same time there must be a theoretical concept and a plan of action. So far no socialist society has met these conditions.

The replacement of the family by alternative forms of collective or communal living is not necessarily a solution to the freeing of women from their dual roles. In Israel the kibbutzim have not altogether succeeded in ending the sexual division of labour, nor have they been completely successful in breaking down the boundaries of conventional kin and family life. As Tiger and Shepher note (1977, p. 92):

The sex typing of labour is obvious. Agriculture, industry, construction and auxiliary shops … management, economic and political activity, and movement or outside work are predominantly male. Service, consumption and education are predominantly female.

The same authors also comment on the growing importance of family life in many Kibbutzim since their formation (1977, p. 210):

With the birth of children, the family gradually achieved wider legitimacy. This became easier as new groups joined
However, the Kibbutz has demonstrated that not all of the tasks traditionally performed by the family need necessarily be carried out individually rather than collectively, for instance washing, cooking and cleaning. Certainly it would be possible, without altering the family unit at all, to transfer some of the domestic labour presently undertaken within it to outside service institutions such as laundries and restaurants. In certain of its housing and planning projects, Sweden has gone some way towards the achievement of such socialization of housework tasks outside the home, maintaining the family unit, but at the same time breaking down its isolation from other people.38

Child care, of course, remains a central problem in relation to the family and the position of women, and here the Israeli Kibbutzim have vacillated between caring for all children in communal nurseries, and expecting much of the work of child care to be carried out by individual parents. In many socialist societies a controversy rages over whether child care is best solved by nursery provision outside the home, or whether the answer is perhaps to offer paid leave from employment to either men or women, so that both may have the opportunity to become active parents and to work outside the home.39 The difficulty with the second solution is that unless men are brought up to think that child care is part of their adult responsibilities, women will continue to be the ones who give up work to rear children. Whichever solution is adopted, child care is an issue which must be taken up and dealt with by the state.

Broyelle argues that the socialization of housework and child care is in any case insufficient to alter the position of women. She suggests that a further change in the organization and definition of work is also necessary. This is the abolition of the distinction between manual labour and intellectual work, a distinction which effectively prevents the equal participation of women in production because it is
Women, Education and Society

often argued that women cannot undertake heavy manual work, and therefore do not deserve an equal place in society alongside men. If manual and intellectual work were less separated into different kinds of jobs, and if gender characteristics were no longer attached to these types of work (and to the evaluation of their worth), then both men and women might stand to gain. If this cultural gulf could be bridged, then the basis of sex-stereotyping would be significantly reduced. But this is a change which cannot be legislated and planned for. Educational policies and practices would thus be invaluable as a way of changing people's attitudes towards manual and mental activities.

Do Women want Change?

It may be that the kinds of change in the education of women and in the organization of society which have been suggested here will be seen as idealistic or as unrealistic by some women. Other women may argue that they would prefer to retain their traditional roles within the family and the sexual division of labour, that they are better off as they are. Any social change is likely to be perceived by at least some of the individuals affected by it as threatening and undesirable, and the prospects of a change in the position of women may well be frightening to those women who feel secure in their role as housewives and mothers. There is, of course, no question of compelling people to change either their ideas or their behaviour. Women have a choice; to stay as they are, or to try to alter that position so that they have greater equality with men. The first choice they possess as individuals, the second they will only achieve collectively. Analysis of women in capitalist and socialist societies suggests that many of them are not happy with the status quo, and that they are trying to bring about changes. In many countries in the world now women are fighting for the right to greater participation in economic, political and social affairs; for the socialization of housework and child care; and for the
right to be recognized as people rather than as sex objects, possessions or inferior beings. The choice of women then, is beginning to be made. It is more likely to be an informed and successful choice if both women and men come to be educated in a non-sexist way. The achievement of an education for both women and men which does not falsely and artificially limit thought, skills and abilities on the basis of gender will not be easy in any society, but not to attempt something because it will be difficult is a coward's way out. A non-sexist education is part of a much more complex struggle for the liberation of women; but it is a part of that struggle which must have a high priority, for action without knowledge is no better than knowledge without action. And women must not only educate and persuade other women to fight for changes, whether these are legislative, organizational or attitudinal, they must also educate and persuade men that changes are necessary, not just in education but in the whole organization of society. The arguments in favour of a non-sexist system of education are a good point at which to commence this persuasion; there is no other way in which the full creative and flexible potential of human beings, so essential to the liberation of people, will begin to be realized.
Notes

Chapter I The Entry of Women into Mass Education in a 
Capitalist Society

1 See Lawson and Silver, 1975; Lowsley, 1969; Staut, 1967.
2 See for instance Williams, 1963; Douglas, 1967; Fould, Haley and 
3 Referenced by Marks, 1976.
4 These have included: Committee on Further Education, 1963; Central Advisory Council for Education, 
1967; the Advisory Committee on Higher Education, 1963; Central Advisory Council for Educa-
tion, 1967.
5 The Women's Liberation Movement should not be seen as a tightly 
organized body. It is a loose collection of groups of women dedica-
ted to furthering feminism and the liberation of women in any or 
all of various aspects of life — education, sex, work, social life etc. 
Although people often talk of 'the Women's Movement thinking x' 
or 'believing y', there are many shades of opinion involved between 
and within different groups.
6 The main pieces of legislation passed in Great Britain which relate 
to the equal treatment of men and women are the 1970 Equal Pay 
Act and the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act. For further details of 
these and their achievements, see Coussins, 1976.
7 See for instance work on the schooling of women in Sharpe, 1976; 
8 The importance of these two institutions, the family and the 
school, to the maintenance of the existing structure of capitalist 
society is discussed by Althusser, 1971; Bråthen, 1973; Brinton, 1974.
9 See Barker and Allen, 1976a and 1976b.

10 See Mitchell, 1971; also see discussion of the role of the family in capital society in Neurath, 1974; Gardiner, 1975.

11 Althusser, 1971.

12 Ibid., pp. 136-8.

13 Proctor, 1975.

14 Beveridge, 1975.


16 See Kammen, 1965; Turner, 1974; Sturt, 1967.


19 Williams, 1965, gives an account of the different groups involved in the nineteenth-century expansion of education to the masses.


21 The first Factory Act which affected women was not until the 1840s. Women were stopped from underground work in 1842, but their conditions of employment in factories were not regulated until after 1864.

22 See Best, 1973. He estimates a total of 1,200,000 female domestic servants in 1861.


24 Perry and Perry, 1974.


27 Aries, 1975.


29 Sharpe, 1976.

30 See Marks, 1976.

31 Quoted from the Bryce Commission by Lawson and Silver, 1973, p. 343.


34 Committee, 1976 gives an account of the early progress of the Sex Discrimination Act.

35 See Banks, 1954, for an assessment of middle-class family planning in the Victorian era.

36 Laslett, 1965.

37 Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, 1943.

38 Sharpe, 1976, Chapter I.

39 See DES Education Survey 21, 1975.
Notes to pages 21-7

Chapter 2 Sexism, Socialization and Culture in the Education of Girls

1 Althusser, 1971.
2 For example see Williams, 1965; Bourdieu, 1973; Stenhouse, 1967; Young, 1971.
3 Williams, 1965.
8 Stenhouse, 1967.
10 See, for instance the women featured in Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976.
11 Chafetz, 1974.
15 See Bourdieu, 1973 and Bernstein, 1975.
16 For instance see Tiger and Sheperd, 1977.
17 For instance, a description of 'changing sex' is given by Missik, 1975.
18 See Weisz, 1977.
19 Anthropological studies which deal with cultural relations in the position of women may be found in Bourdieu and Lamphere, 1974; Mead, 1962; Bateson, 1975.
20 Thompson, 1903; summarized by Kline, 1966.
21 Summarized in Kline, 1966.
22 Terman and Miles, summarized in Kline, 1966.
23 Maccoby, 1966; see also Maccoby, 1972.
30 Ibid.
31 Hudson, 1966.
32 Maccoby, 1972.
33 Ibid.; also Maccoby, 1966.
34 Maccoby, 1972.
35 Fogeltrud, 1969-70.
Notes to pages 27-30

37 Bank, 1976.
38 Douglas et al., 1968.
40 Ibid.
41 Date, 1974.
42 Douglas et al., 1968.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 DES Education Survey 21, 1975.
47 Chafetz, 1974.
48 Goldberg and Lewis, 1972.
50 Kohlberg, 1969.
51 Newson and Newson, 1963.
52 For example see Chafetz, 1974; Maccoby, 1966; Belotti, 1975.
54 Goldberg and Lewis, 1972.
55 Ibid.
56 Newson and Newson, 1976.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid., Chapter 4. See also Belotti, 1975, p. 84.
60 Belotti, 1975, Chapter 1.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., p. 221.
66 Ibid., p. 278.
68 McRobbie and Garber, 1976.
69 Ibid. See also McRobbie, 1977.
71 The blurring of work and leisure in the lives of women is dealt with by Oakley, 1976.
72 McRobbie and Garber, 1976.
73 Ibid.
74 McRobbie, 1977.
75 Ibid.
76 Llewellyn, 1977.
77 Ibid.
78 Sage, 1976.
79 Ibid. See also Knight, 1977, and Beanston, 1977.
Notes to pages 55-59

81 Research on classroom interaction may be found in Woods and Hammersly, 1977 and Hammersly and Woods, 1976.
82 But see Delamont, 1976.
84 See Chapter 4.
85 Loreto, 1976.
86 Delamont, 1976, p. 49.
87 Ibid., p. 71.
92 As used by Kec, 1968 and 1971.
94 For details of some of these see Fichot, 1975.
95 See DES education survey, 21, 1975.
96 Ibid. See also Sharpe, 1976.
98 DES Education survey 21, 1975.
99 Ibid.
100 Dale, 1974.
101 DES Education survey 21, 1975.
102 Sharp, 1976.
103 See observation of lessons by Kiddie, 1971; see also Sharpe, 1976, p. 150.
104 Goffin, 1977.
105 Mentioned by Davies, 1976.
106 Quoted by Adams and Lawboroti, 1976, p. 29.
108 See Bennet, 1976.
111 Ibid.
113 See Belotti, 1975, for a discussion about the teaching of young children as a 'feminine' role.
116 Quoted by Dale, 1969, p. 100.
117 Ibid.
119 Ibid., p. 36.
120 Harrison, 1974.
Chapter 3 Patterns of Contemporary Curricular Discrimination and Differentiation in the Education of Girls

1 See Reitman and Simons, 1969, also Fenwick, 1976.
3 Details of these can be found in DES, 1977. See also Hextall, 1977.
4 Banks, 1976.
6 Ibid., see also Fenwick, 1976.
7 Ibid., see also Fenwick, 1976.
8 As noted in the Gurney-Dixon Report, 1974.
16 Figures from Times Educational Supplement, 21 March 1975.
17 Quoted by Fenwick, 1976, p. 128.
19 DES Education Survey 21, 1975.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
25 As reported in the Times Educational Supplement, 1 July 1977, p. 9.
Notes to pages 74–86

28 Ibid., see also Dale, 1969 and 1971.
29 Dale, 1969.
31 Ormerod, 1975; Ashdown, 1972–5; Campbell, 1969.
32 Miller and Dale, 1974.
34 Blackmore, 1976.
35 Young, 1971; Fens and Grant, 1977.
36 For example, these include Cox and Dymon, 1971; Boyson and Cox, 1977; also, Bennett, 1976.
37 See Dearn, 1972.
38 Heade, 1976.
40 DES, 1975.
41 DES, 1977.
42 Coussins, 1976.
43 Byrne, 1976.
45 Byrne, 1977.

Chapter 4 Women in Higher Education

1 See for example, Caine, 1969; Borer, 1976; Turner, 1974; Karon, 1965; Faur, 1967.
2 The position of women in contemporary societies is examined in a number of papers to be found in Becker and Allen, 1976a and 1976b.
3 See Dearn, 1975.
4 In 1976, 36.4 per cent of students entering universities in Britain were female; numbers of women students entering British polytechnics in this year were also higher than in previous years.
5 Notably in the Committee on Higher Education, 1963.
6 For example, see reports of speeches made by Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1977, about policy on higher education. Fairhall, 1977b; Brainard, 1977b.
8 See Dearn, 1975.
11 Tropp, 1957.
Far more girls than boys enter teacher training; for example in 1973-4, 2,070 boys and 13,170 girls of that year’s school leavers took up places on courses of initial teacher training. See DES Statistics of Education, vol. 2, 1974, Table 1, p. 11. Although colleges of education have begun to diversify their courses, these will not necessarily replace teacher-training courses as a form of higher education for girls, particularly if they require two ‘A’ levels. In 1976 only 49.2 per cent of women entering teacher training had two or more ‘A’ levels. See Times Educational Supplement, 19 August 1977, p. 4.


See Burgess and Pratt, 1970, for an account of the transition from CATS to universities.


See Times Educational Supplement, 4 August 1977, p. 4.

See Blackstone and Fulton, 1975.

Ibid., p. 230.

McIntosh, 1975.

Ibid.


See Guardian, 1977b.

See Times Educational Supplement, 4 February 1977, p. 4.

For figures relating to sociology, see British Sociological Association Working Party, 1975.

For example, see Walsh, 1975 and Webb, 1977.

Blackstone and Fulton, 1975.


See Guardian, 1977b.


McDonald, 1975.

See Byrne, 1975.

Data on this may be found in Williams et al., 1974.

Ibid.

Research on what influences student choice of higher education courses suggests that males are more likely than females to have selected their ‘A’ level subjects in relation to a particular career or higher education course. See McCrae, 1973.
Notes to pages 97-98

40. Women's Studies courses have expanded enormously in recent years, especially in further and higher education. See Fairbairns, 1974.
42. Booth and Greene, 1976, p. 11.
43. See McMillan, 1975. Figures for UCCA in 1971 of successful female university applicants in biology, botany and zoology, 44 per cent; in physics, 13 per cent.
44. Sylates, 1975, p. 78.
45. Sharp, 1976, Chapters 4 and 5.
46. See Attibauer, 1971.
51. For example, a female friend of the author's with a first class honours degree was once told by a careers adviser that for her to find employment would be much more difficult than if she were 'a weedy male with a third class degree'.
52. Some of the problems faced by women doctoral students are currently being examined by Daphne Taylorson in research for a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Sociology, University of Manchester.
53. Webb, 1977. For example in sociology, Webb argues, women are often interested in the applications of sociology to practical fields, whilst men may prefer theoretical sociology. Within the discipline, higher academic status is attached to the latter.
54. For example, see Graham, 1979 and 1977a.
56. See also Boulton, 1975.
57. Ibid. See also Harens, 1970.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. See Moodie and Eustace, 1974; Donaldson, 1975; Burgin and Pratt, 1974.
64. See Smith, 1976, for a discussion of a similar analysis in relation to women journalists.
66. As already successfully operated by the Open University admissions scheme.
Chapter 5 Women as Teachers – Separate and Unequal?

4. Tropp, 1957, looks at the early struggles of elementary teachers to control or improve their conditions and status.
10. This point is made by Hoyle, 1969.
27. See discussion of this point in Parry and Parry, 1974.
32. Ibid., p. 275. See also Taylor, 1969.
34. DES Committee of Enquiry, 1972.
Notes to pages 121-35

36 Bennett, 1976.
37 Ibid., p. 55.
38 Hannan, Smith and Stephenson, 1976.
39 Ibid., pp. 84-6.
42 The implications of this are discussed by Roy, 1968 and Masters, 1970.
43 See Dovers, 1976a.
44 Zeigler, 1967.
45 For instance, see Bain, 1970.
48 Ibid., pp. 101-30.
49 Dovers, 1976b.
50 The relative chances of promotion for different categories of teachers were worked out by Masters, 1970.

Chapter 6 Women, Education and Society: the Possibilities of Change

1 Sexism in children’s books is discussed in detail in Children’s Rights Workshop, 1976.
2 This dependence was argued to exist by Jon Wynne, Prospective Labour Parliamentary candidate for Ludlow, in a talk ‘Careers and further education’, at Bewsebury Labour Club, 3 November 1977. See also Hencke, 1977c.
3 Figures and an analysis of the role of the Job Creation Scheme in relation to girl school leavers are to be found in Scott, 1977.
4 See Machin, 1977.
5 Ibid.
6 DES, 1976, p. 3.
7 Ibid., p. 4.
8 For example, see Fairhall, 1977c.
10 See DES Education Survey 21, 1975.
13 Ibid.
14 See McKernon, 1975.
15 See Judd, 1977.
16 Hencke, 1977c.
Notes to pages 134–40

17 Details from Sandgren, 1977.
18 Ibid., pp. 24-5.
19 Ibid.
20 Scott, 1976.
21 Chadim, 1974, p. 234.
22 See Gardiner, 1976.
23 Davies, 1975.
25 Ibid.
26 Davies, 1975.
27 Szymanski, 1976.
29 Ibid.
30 In 1972 the number of unionized women increased by 5.4 per cent, compared with a growth rate for unionized men of only 0.1 per cent. But the number of women not in unions is also rising. See Davies, 1975, pp. 151-3.
32 Ibid. Reporting on a conference of women from public service unions, Karpf notes the comments of a nurse who said that unionism was often felt to be anti-institutional and good nursing.
33 Information about the position of women in socialist societies may be found in Broyelle, 1977; Scott, 1976; Davis, 1976; Rowbotham, 1972.
34 Ibid.
36 Scott, 1976.
37 Ibid., p. 206.
38 Ibid., 1976.
39 Ibid. Also Broyelle, 1977.
40 Broyelle, 1977.
41 Willis, 1974.


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SEX ROLES AND THE SCHOOL

2nd edition

Sara Delamont

London and New York
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In pessimistic perspective, there is every danger that the pace and scope of recent educational reforms in Britain, especially the introduction of a National Curriculum and national testing, will have the effect of diverting attention and effort away from those aspects of the educational process which tend to debilitate and marginalise 50 per cent of our population—women. Optimistically, the shortage of skilled workers in the 1990s in sectors of the labour market where women have traditionally been excluded may have dramatic effects in terms of attempts by powerful, previously uninterested lobbies, to attract girls into boys' subjects, like science. Perhaps we shall see real reform for the wrong reasons. In terms of the amount of heat and noise produced by educational research, gender has been one of the biggest and busiest areas of activity in recent years. Unfortunately, up to now, in terms of real reform in schools, progress towards sex equality has been slow and limited. Sara Delamont's book demonstrates exactly why it is that such equality is so difficult to achieve, and also what needs to be done to achieve it. The book documents the variety of entrenched practices and assumptions in schools which support and reproduce gender bias. Significantly, while the book is presented as a second edition of the author's earlier bestseller, the reader who compares this with the earlier text will find little repetition of material. The flow of research reported in the 1970s became a flood in the 1980s. This is an up-to-date and lively guide to that material organized around the key issues. The book is challenging to teachers, men and women, and to parents. It is a committed book but it is also practical and particularly relevant to the beginning teacher.
Preface and acknowledgements to the second edition

The original version of this book appeared in 1980 and was written in 1978 and 1979. Since then the research base has grown rapidly, and the relevant literature is now too large for any one scholar to grasp. The whole book has been substantially updated, and where possible research from the 1980s substituted for earlier studies. The thrust of the argument has not been changed, but the illustrations are new. Some themes have gone, and some issues are treated in less detail than before. Central to the book is the belief that sexism is a destructive force which harms both sexes, and so the education system should be infused with non-sexist values and practices.

The original edition was typed by Myrtle Robins. This one was word processed by Elizabeth Renton, Pat Harris and Jan O'Sullivan. The library staff of UWCC supported the research with professional dedication. Some of the data were gathered during projects funded by the ESRC (which employed Paul Croll, Anne Jasman, John Willcocks, Margaret Greig, Janice Lea and Sarah Tann, under the direction of Brian Simon and Maurice Galton) and the Welsh Education Office (which employed Frances Beasley and Jane Pitcher directed by Graham Upton and Teressa Rees). Staff and pupils in schools in three English towns (Ashburton, Bridgwater and Caithness), in Edinburgh and in South Wales have patiently suffered me lurking on the margin of their lives for twenty years with good grace.

Stephen Ball found a place for the second edition of this book in his new series for which I am grateful. Since 1980 my ideas on gender have been discussed with Anne Murcott, Teressa Rees, Jane Pitcher, Mary Darwin, Rhian Ellis, Alka Mavlankar and...
Val Connors as well as various male colleagues. Paul Atkinson read the drafts of this version of the book with his usual fortitude and perception when he could have been doing his own work. I owe him an incalculable debt for his support, criticism and sociological imagination. He also word processed the bibliography for me, a true labour of Hercules.

In 1969 forty-four pupils at ‘St Luke’s’ made me aware of issues surrounding gender and schooling. This new edition is dedicated to those women as they enter their thirty-fifth year, and to the memory of Professor Gillian M. Powell who died just as she was about to be the first woman deputy principal of UWC. A staunch supporter of women’s rights, she will be much missed.

Sara Delamont
1 Introduction

A recent school ethnography includes the following comment on women teachers:

If you pushed me, yes, I'd have to say that women in my view do not on the whole make as effective teachers as men. But before the Women's Guardian sends someone to stone me, let me add that there are very many exceptions, including one or two here, and that I am talking in particular about working in this school. . . . This school is a large boys' school, the majority of the staff are men, and the ethos is male. Women often prove to be a liability. (Beynon 1985b:173)

On 7 June 1987, the TV Times Problem Page published the following letter:

Name-caller
I am a 15 year old boy at high school, and my problem is name-calling. I do not know why, but other children have started shouting 'governor' and 'fruity boy' at me, and I find it very upsetting. Can you please advise me how to cope with the strain?

KK, Antrim, Northern Ireland

Issues of sex, gender and even sexuality are omnipresent in education systems. In these two quotes a male teacher tells John Beynon about his distrust of his female colleagues, in the second an adolescent boy reveals the peer pressures on male pupils to conform to certain standards of masculine behaviour. This volume explores the ways in which beliefs about sex and gender influence life in our schools, and, in turn, how school affects our
Sex roles and the school beliefs about sex and gender.

It would be ridiculous to argue, or even imply, that schools create sex stereotyping against the trend of the wider society. Schools reflect the society in which they are embedded, and attempts to innovate which challenge the orthodoxy of the community around them often run into trouble (Smith et al. 1986, 1987, 1988, Gold and Miles 1981). Pupils are strongly influenced by their homes and neighbourhoods, and may discount what teachers and schoolbooks say. However, a body of research (Rutter et al. 1979; Mortimore et al. 1988) reveals that schools do influence pupils’ lives and achievements, and those who wish to change society frequently look to education as their vehicle. Thus various groups in Britain look to education to prevent prejudice, stop pupils smoking, banish litter dropping, improve baby care, raise the level of political debate and bring about many other social changes. Campaigners for women’s rights have been no exception to this and hope to use education to train girls for better jobs, prevent wife-harassing and generally reduce sexism in society. (Sexism is a term meaning stereotyping people by sex, just as racism is stereotyping people by race.)

This book does not argue that schools create sex roles in boys and girls which are at odds with the sex roles operating in the wider society. However, it does argue that schools develop and reinforce sex segregations, stereotypes, and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspects of sex roles in the outside world, when they could be trying to alleviate them.

There is sexism outside schools as the following extract shows:

My brother and I are twins aged nearly sixteen. My mother wants me to leave school and wants my brother to stay on for a better education as she says girls don’t need it— they get married. I’m very interested in French and am doing well in it at school. Do you think it is fair that I should have to leave and my brother stay on?

(TV Times 3 July 1976)

The ‘problem’ was quoted at the end of the first edition of this book. There are still plenty of parents, teachers, heads, advisors, governors, employers and adolescents who hold sexist views
and act in ways that discriminate against one sex or the other, without even being aware of what they are doing. The research that has been produced often fails to reach pre-service teachers, or those on in-service courses, and if it does reach them it does not convince them.

There are statistical studies of sex inequalities in education revealing the lack of girls in science and craft, design and technology (CDT) after the age of 14, and maths after 16, balanced by a lack of boys in foreign languages, home economics and office skills courses after 14. There are job vacancies for young people with skills, but the early evidence from research into the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) and Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) is that boys and girls are being offered different training and vocational preparation which is based on outmoded ideas that the labour market will stay sex segregated. Sceptical readers can easily find such statistics in the educational press and government publications. Here the emphasis is on the social relationships that continue every day in schools, where individual teachers can begin to change and challenge sex-role norms. Individual teachers can do little directly to alter the national statistical picture, but we can all change small things in the content and process of our lessons.

There are five main ways in which schools differentiate between boys and girls to the disadvantage of both sexes. These are: the organization of the school; the teacher’s strategies for controlling and motivating pupils; the organization and content of lessons; the informal conversations between pupils and their teachers; and leaving unchallenged the pupils’ own stereotyping and self-segregating of activities. In Britain’s schools the sexes are still being segregated; the differences between males and females are highlighted and exaggerated; in some either males or females are being disadvantaged. The central arguments of this book are that schools should be actively concerned with sex equality, even if that means confronting stereotyped beliefs pupils hold. Many aspects of everyday life in schools shown in this book should not be happening.

In general, the higher the attainment level of pupils the less sex differentiation there is in their curriculum. There are
Sex roles and the school

e.g., Stanworth 1981) and top bands, but the process is much more blatant and explicit in industrial training units for slow learners (Shone and Atkinson 1981), in Youth Training Schemes (YTS) (Brelsford et al. 1982, Rees 1983, Cockburn 1987) and in the remedial classes of comprehensive schools (Burgen 1981, 1988, 1989). It is easier for a clever pupil to opt for an unusual subject choice or career than for a low-ability pupil, or one who is already in rebellion against the school, or one who is not achieving academic success. The other four types of sex differentiation bear on pupils of all achievement levels with equal force (Delamont 1980b, 1982, 1983a, b, 1984a, b, 1986). The evidence that schools are places where a great deal of unthinking sex discrimination goes on is examined in this book.

The consequences of sex differentiation and sex discrimination

The consequences of sex differentiation are slightly different for boys and girls. The boy who goes through school looking down on females, being allowed to adhere to the sexual double standard, unable to cook and sew, ignorant of childcare and equipped for a world where women wait on his emotional and domestic needs is handicapped for his future family and domestic life, and a lost cause for sexual responsibility and parenthood. He is primarily disadvantaged in his personal, emotional and home life. The girl who does not learn to assert herself, has not studied science, technology and ‘heavy’ craft is primarily handicapped in the labour market, because she lacks the skills (or confidence to acquire them) which lead to higher-paying jobs. However, both sexes are disadvantaged in both domestic and employment spheres if their schooling has left their ideas about sex roles unchallenged and trapped in traditional stereotypes. Boys will be unwilling to enter occupations that are associated with women, even if such jobs (e.g., in the catering and retailing industries) are expanding. Girls will face unhappy home lives if the men they marry are domestically incompetent and hold different expectations about marriage from their own. This may seem to be an exaggerated, even hysterical, view.
There is, however, too much evidence supporting it for the points raised about males and females to be dismissed (e.g. Guttentag and Bray 1976, Best 1983, Safler and Safler 1982, Delamont 1984c, Whyte 1985, Collard and Mansfield 1987, Weis 1989). For example, Guttentag and Bray found that, whereas girls were trying to plan their futures around more flexible sex roles, that is futures in which both parents had careers that mattered and both partners shared housework, childcare and earning the household income, boys were not. Boys expected a future in which they did no housework, took no part in childcare, and supported a non-working wife. Lois Weis's recent study of adolescents in an American city where the steel mills had closed found the same pattern of expectations. Young women saw themselves in an egalitarian marriage, boys envisaged a traditional one.

The schools that these adolescents attended were not dealing with such issues at all. The schools did not encourage the pupils to confront their divergent expectations, or fit the girls for the labour market by equipping them with vocational skills, or train the boys in childcare and housekeeping. Instead, the schools reinforced old-fashioned sex stereotypes. They were encouraging pupils to become male and female adults fitted for a world that has vanished.

About this book
This book argues that, for a variety of reasons which are examined later, schools and other educational institutions today are enforcing a set of sex and gender roles which are more rigid than those current in the wider society. It is asserted that the sex roles demanded by educational institutions are unnecessary for the organization or the individual, and actually produce unhappiness and inequality, as well as wasting talent. The enforcement of these sex roles affects staff and pupils, yet is very rarely a conscious policy. There are taken-for-granted norms but male and female roles in schools which are hard to show in action, are even harder to eradicate. The book first shows how the everyday life of schools and classrooms is permeated with stereotyped ideas about male and female roles, and then focuses
6 Sex roles and the school

on how some schools have tried to change.

There is now a large body of literature on sex roles and
education. Sophisticated arguments about the history and philo-

sophy of education (e.g. Martin 1984) and major contributions
from psychologists (e.g. Gilligan 1982) have been omitted,
although the further reading chapter makes some suggestions in
those fields. Also omitted is the whole area of education outside
the school: further and higher education, adult education,
professional and vocational education are all outside the scope of
this book. Geographically, Northern Ireland is under
represented, most of the examples come from Wales, Scotland
and England, or from Australia and the USA. Chapters 2 and 3
of the book use data collected by a variety of researchers to show
how sex and gender are routinely handled inside schools and
classrooms. Chapter 2 looks at schooling for the under 12s in the
nursery, infant and primary schools, and then chapter 3
examines secondary schooling. The overall perspective on
classroom life adopted is elaborated elsewhere (Delamont
1983c, Stubbs 1976, 1983) and in this volume the focus is on sex
and gender rather than other facets of classroom life. Chapter 4
discusses teachers – how they are trained, their staffroom life
and their careers. The argument that everyday life in British
schools is permeated with stereotyped ideas about male and
female roles which are not explicit but are universal will have
been demonstrated by the end of chapter 4. Chapter 5 deals with
the many attempts to change schools which have taken place
since 1970, and evaluates their effectiveness. The concluding
chapter sets out some research priorities for the sociology of
education, emphasizing topics we know little or nothing about,
and sketches some ideas about removing unnecessary sex
distinctions from the educational system.

The theoretical background

The theory underlying the book is sociological, but it is a critical,
feminist sociology. That is, although the ideas of sociology and
the findings of educational research are used, they are subjected
to critical scrutiny where their treatment of sex differences is
concerned. Central to the perspective is the distinction between
sex and gender. These are closely linked concepts, and are frequently used in a confused and confusing way. Briefly, sex should properly refer to the biological aspects of male and female existence. Sex differences should therefore only be used to refer to physiology, anatomy, genetics, hormones and so forth. Gender should properly be used to refer to all the non-biological aspects of differences between males and females: clothes, interests, attitudes, behaviours and aptitudes, for example, which separate 'masculine' from 'feminine' life styles. Strictly speaking, therefore, we should not talk of sex roles, for the roles people play in society are essentially related not to biology, but to social behaviour; that is, they should really be called gender roles. 'Sex roles' is the common usage and so was made the title of the book, but from now on 'gender' will be used to describe male versus female characteristics except where biological phenomena are being discussed.

Sex and gender are so much a part of our everyday lives from early childhood that it is almost impossible for any researcher, in biological or social sciences, to be objective or dispassionate or disinterested in the topic when he or she is studying it. In this book there will be examples of research where the fears, prejudices or unconscious assumptions of the authors will be challenged, and fresh arguments advanced from the evidence.

A few examples will show the centrality of sex and gender in our personal worlds, and in the way we use gender to classify everything about our worldview. Think about a new baby. The first question asked after 'Is it all right?' is the baby's sex. Then he or she is given a name which is almost certainly gender specific, and dressed in either pink or blue. Or take these further examples: imagine a male lecturer came into the room in a skirt; or a woman Pope; or a man applying for a job as a nanny. Disturbing breaches of what we take for granted could be multiplied and elaborated endlessly. However, for the purposes of this book it is only necessary to argue that classifying people into either the male or the female category is one of our commonest activities, that it is usually done unconsciously, and challenges to our classification are disturbing. The basic polarization between male and female is usually accompanied by a deep sense of what is natural (i.e. correct) and what is unnatural.
Syphilis, diphtheria and smallpox are natural. So are sour milk, cow pats, head lice and cockroaches, but we do our best to avoid or even eliminate them. Generally what happens is that ‘natural’ is used only to refer to things that the speaker regards as “good” – the ingredients in chocolate, motherhood, shampoo made with henbane – or as inevitable and inescapable – the aggression of males, tempests and typhoons, maternal instinct. Conversely anything that is disliked gets the label ‘unnatural’ attached to it whether it is found in the animal world or not. People who are scared or revolted by homosexuality often suggest it is ‘unnatural’ although it is found in animals and has been recorded in many different human cultures. Indeed homosexuality is certainly more natural than many contemporary pastimes such as playing the violin, water polo, ice hockey, or hang gliding.

The distinction between what is natural and what is cultural is equally hard to draw. It is especially hard to disentangle the natural, biological aspects of male and female behaviour (sex) from the cultural, adaptive ones (gender). If we wished to discover whether men are really more aggressive than women because of their biology/nature we would have to take large numbers of boys at birth and rear them as girls, and vice versa. Given the unlikelihood of this, there are widely differing opinions about the relative importance of nature and nurture, often drawn from the same pieces of research. On the whole people who have studied anthropology tend to incline towards the idea that gender is socially created, because every culture discovered across the world has such different norms for ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’. War and weapon making are the only tasks which all primitive societies seem to have reserved for men while being pregnant and giving birth are universally women’s work. Childrearing is not a women’s task universally, but is often left to older children or to the elderly of both sexes.

In this book two precepts are taken for granted. First, that most of the things we associate with being male or female are actually cultural although they are widely believed to be natural (i.e. biological). Secondly I believe that it is more socially...
optimistic, and therefore sensible, to assume that all characteristics of masculinity and femininity are cultural (i.e. part of gender) unless there is irrefutable evidence to the contrary. This is because biological arguments — women are naturally full of maternal instinct; blacks have generally lower IQs than whites — are usually invoked to prevent social change, social justice and equality. If we want society to improve, to be more just and egalitarian, we must assume that a substantial part of any human characteristic, be it ‘masculinity’ or ‘intelligence’, is cultural and hence open to change.

This position is adopted for two reasons, relativity and feminism. Relativity is an outlook which is frequently misunderstood. Briefly it means that the researcher believes that humans are highly plastic and adaptive, and thus a very wide range of beliefs and practices occur in different human societies. The task of the researcher is to discover what members in any particular culture or subculture believe and do, and to try to see how the beliefs and activities fit together in that society. The researcher should never dismiss ideas or actions different from her own as wrong, inferior or perverse, but should strive to grasp their role in the culture they come from. The individual person can still condemn them, but the task of the researcher is to research, not moralize. Thus the researcher who believes in cultural relativity would study apartheid beliefs among Afrikaners to find out how they fit into Afrikaner culture, believing that extreme racism is one variety of human behaviour (e.g. Crapseneno 1985). As an individual, or as a member of a campaign like Anti Apartheid, one can condemn the beliefs as inhuman, but the researcher should still seek to understand the function and symbolic power they have in the culture from which they come. In the area of sex and gender the researcher who studies data from a variety of cultures across the world finds a very wide range of behaviours considered to be ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. One culture does not allow women to milk cows because it is men’s work, another does not allow men near cows because they are women’s work. In one society artistic expression is a feminine sphere, in another masculine. In some places women till the fields and men sit about and look decorative, while in others this is reversed, and so on. Because
the study of anthropological data shows that different societies classify different things as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, the argument that most male and female behaviour is gender not sex seems to me totally convincing. Thus this book assumes that gender roles can be modified as technology, the economic system and even the education system change.

The second reason for arguing in this book that gender is more important than sex is because this is a cornerstone of feminist belief, and this is a feminist book. I believe there are inequalities between men and women which should be remedied so that individuals of both sexes are freer to choose their own ways of life. In particular, it will be argued that schools reinforce, sometimes subtly, but sometimes crudely, the wider society’s ideas about gender roles, and often reinforce them in tougher form than they actually exist in the world outside. Feminists believe that women should be socially equal to men in their society: that is, all legal, financial, economic, educational and other limitations and handicaps based on sex should be removed. This book shows how pupils and teachers work in institutions where this is far from being achieved.

The data in this book
Apart from the data gathered by other researchers whose work is cited, some material used comes from published and unpublished work of my own. The first edition of the book was written while I was doing fieldwork in two English towns (Ashburton and Coalhurpe) as part of the ORACLE project (Delamont and Galton 1986). Some of that research – added to the data from the third ORACLE site (Bridgehampton) – appears in this volume. The six schools studied are called Gryll Grange, Guy Mannering, Kenilworth, Maid Marion, Waverly and Melin Court. Subsequently I have done two Welsh projects in twelve schools – one observational, one mainly using questionnaires (Upton et al. 1988, Pilcher et al. 1989a) – and spent time collecting pupils’ scary stories about school transfer in England and Wales (Delamont 1989b). Full details about those projects can be found in the cited publications. All the schools, pupils, teachers, towns and LEAs are protected by
pseudonyms. Most of these data are qualitative, based on observations, interviews and pupils' writing.
HE PREFERS GIRLS' GAMES

Q. My grandson has always preferred girls’ toys and enjoys pretend games and dressing up in high heels and long dresses. My daughter asked the doctor what to do, and he said to stop it at once. Sometimes I let him play girls’ games for a while, but he cries when I stop him. What can we do?

A. I have great sympathy with your distress, especially as the families of two of my godchildren had similar worries at one time. My goddaughter wanted to be a boy, played boys’ games, only wore boys’ clothes, and only had friends who were boys. Now she is an extremely feminine young woman of 20, enjoying life like any girl of this age. My godson, who is 10 and one of four brothers, has always enjoyed what might be described as girls’ toys. Last Christmas he became the proud owner of a doll’s house, but the other day I noticed him playing football as hard as any of the other boys. I am quite sure this situation will only become a problem if you and his mum get tense about it. I would let him go on playing with these games for reasonable amounts of time, introducing more robust stories and ideas from time to time.

This ‘problem’ was published on the Family page of Woman’s Realm, on 20 June 1987, the answer coming from a ‘trained family therapist’. It shows how anxious adults can be about young children who do not adhere to conventional behaviour. If the question is scrutinized, a whole range of stereotypes appear. The grandparent believes there are ‘girls’ toys’ and ‘girls’
games', and seems to think that imaginative play ('pretend games') and dressing up are unsuitable for males. The mother seems to think the little boy has a medical problem, and the doctor apparently agreed. The expert is reassuring, but also has an idea of 'robust' stories and play behaviours which is stereotyped.

Such a letter is not unique. In 1983 the problem page of Woman's Own carried a similar letter, which voiced the fear unspoken in the earlier one:

Q. I hope you can advise me about my son. He's nine years old and has two younger sisters. The problem is that he's always liked playing with his sisters and their toys. I also recently found out that at breaks in school he always plays with groups of girls. On the other hand, he goes to cubs and enjoys it and when his friends call for him he'll go out to play football or ride bikes. I'm very worried that he'll grow up to be homosexual. I've told him off a few times about playing girls' games but my husband says I'm wrong to do this and he tells the boy to play with whoever he likes. He's such a good boy in other ways and very affectionate. But I can't help worrying about this problem and am much too embarrassed to ask anyone else about it.

A. My first reaction to your problem is to say thank goodness that your husband is not one of those 'macho' fathers who want their sons to be stereotyped, aggressive he-men from the moment of birth. For he is quite right to ask you to allow the boy to grow up in his own way and have the freedom to develop all sides of his personality. It is sad that the tender, caring side is generally labelled 'feminine' and the self-assertive, active side labelled 'masculine', for this makes many people force a connection between these character traits and the future sexual inclinations of a child. But there is absolutely no such connection. Homosexuality has far deeper roots in an individual's upbringing and environment than the mere enjoyment of girls' company and games. So you have
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absolutely no reason to worry. Your son sounds delightfully balanced and free to me, likely to grow into a confident, loving adult - as long as you will let him do so in his own way.

Over the 1980s, then, parents were expressing concern to mass-media 'experts' about boys not behaving in sufficiently 'manly' ways. Girls who like 'male' activities seem to be less disturbing to adults, although both sexes receive a constant stream of messages about what appropriate behaviours are. This chapter examines how young children are brought up, and what their early years of school are like and how they face up to transfer to secondary school.

The naming of children

The minute a child is given a name he or she is forced into a classification system, which gives the baby a gender label and tells us quite a lot of other things about the person concerned. Thus we can tell that Ruxana and Sapanjit are probably British of Pakistani origin; Rhian and Maiz are Welsh; Bernadette and Theresa are Catholic and probably Irish too; Isobel and Margot almost certainly Scotch; Tracey, Stacey and Donna are working class; while Emma, Perdita and Charlotte are middle or upper class. All these people are also clearly female; Ibrahim, Cesair, Joseph, Donald, Darren and Charles would be male equivalents. Only uncommon names are ambiguous as regards gender. The Collins Gem Dictionary of First Names (1976) has 'over 2000 names' each labelled carefully 'm' or 'f'. Only twenty-four names are labelled 'm' or 'f'.

Male and female names are also chosen for different reasons, as this rhyme from an American book (quoted in Walum, 1977:38-9) shows:

She’s made of sunshine, sugar and spice . . . .
Someday she’s bound to change her name.
Now choose the one that will stay the same.

This rhyme headed a list of girls' names, while that for boys includes the lines:

The name that polls the winning votes
The famous name that makes up quotes.

Walum argues that American parents choose pretty names for girls which are polysyllabic, 'more melodic, and softer' while boys' names are 'short, hard-hitting and explosive'. Boys' names are short in themselves, like Lance, or have short diminutives, like Josh and Nick. The names of 1,250 children at four schools in two English cities (Delamont and Galton 1986) suggest that this is true of white, English-speaking parents in Britain too. Boys' names commonly used are monosyllabic or have short abbreviations. The girls' name are polysyllabic, and fuzzy, pretty and pert rather than serious. The naming of children, then, labels them not only with their gender, but carries messages about strength versus frivolity. The kinds of clothes in which the children are dressed continue this gender labelling.

Clothing children

Walum (1977:42) argues that children's clothing is sharply gender differentiated:

In a trip through an infant section of any department store . . . on the girls' racks are princess dresses, grannie gowns, pink satin pantsuits, and bikinis; on the boys' . . . are baseball uniforms, tweed suits . . . astronaut pyjamas and starched white dress shirts.

The position in Britain is essentially similar. Woman printed this letter on 14 February 1987.

IN THE PINK

Having had four sons my only disappointment at not having a daughter was the fact that I loved the colour pink. You could put a little girl in blue, but you certainly wouldn't dream of putting a boy in pink. How things have changed! My 13-year-old son is partial to pink. I've recently had to buy him a pink shirt and pink and grey jumper (and how it suits his fair hair). I've also noticed quite burly men wearing pretty pink jumpers. But I still can't find the courage to put my 20-month-old son in pink — even though I saw a gorgeous
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outfit the other day. I don’t think I’d even dare buy him a pink dummy in case someone said, ‘Pink’s for girls!’ Do other readers feel pink for boys is still definitely out?

In 1982 Woman’s Own did a fashion spread on clothes for children under 3 featuring children of staff from the magazine. The assistant beauty editor announced that Louise (11 months) wore ‘pinafores with pretty blouses and shirts’ and ‘all in one suits’ for bedtimes which she makes sure are feminine in soft fabrics and pretty colours. The home editor dressed Alice (7 months) in ‘saucy outfits made up in soft colours and pretty prints’. Fashion editor Sue liked ‘pretty dresses’ for Katie (6 months) but agreed ‘velour playsuits’ were more practical. The mothers of boys – Adam (7 months) and Oliver (1 year) – used quite different vocabulary. Adam ‘is a real toughie’ dressed in ‘tough and tumble clothes in bright colours’. Oliver’s mother enjoys buying him ‘boy’s’ clothes, rather than the ‘almost unisex things young babies wear’, and he is shown in navy and white.

The Mothercare NOW catalogue (Summer 1989) of clothes for the 6+ age has girls in pastel jogging suits (mint, pink or lemon), while the boys’ track suits are in grey, royal or navy, or display slogans about cycling (Tour de France, ‘Race Winner’) or surfing (‘Ride the Waves’) or are miniature baseball or American football outfits. No girl is shown dressed up as a New York Yankee or a Miami Dolphin. Boys’ pyjamas are bright blue, green and red and show Disney characters, Dr Who, Rupert, monsters, or ten pin bowling. Girls’ pyjamas are pastel pink, or green, or spotted with an improving motto (‘Early to bed and early to rise’ etc.). The baby clothes allow parents to dress children in a unisex style: navy blue and scarlet outfits are available as well as traditional pastels. A pink floral print smocked dress is available, but so too are navy and white dungarees. After the age of 4, however, the world of clothes is gender typed and so too are toys and games.

Toys and games

The toys and games bought for the British child are noticeably class biased. The affluent working-class child has different toys
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bought for different purposes from the child in an 'intellectual'
middle-class home. The working-class child who reaches a
nursery school or day nursery may encounter the "educational"
toys there, however, so these have a wider influence than their
sales.

Two catalogues of mass-market toys were examined, TOYS' "R" US for Christmases 1987 and 1988, and Marshall Ward Winter 1988. TOYS "R" US is one of the largest retailers in contemporary Britain. In its two Christmas catalogues small boys (all but one white) are shown with the following toys: playing snooker (table £49.99) or table football (£19.99) twice each, driving a battery-powered jeep (£139.99 and £299.99) twice, doing wheelies on a BMX (£99.97) or riding a mountain bike (£109.99), with rock guitar (£29.99), drum kit (£69.99) or toy microphone (£24.99), and in a laser tag star helmet (£24.89) with gun (£22.87). Little girls (all white) are shown telephoning from toy kitchens (£64.84 and £48.87) twice and from a Wendy house (£129.97), riding as a passenger in a toy jeep, playing shops (£19.97), at a toy dressing table (£29.99) and standing by her bicycle (£84.99) admiring a boy doing wheelies on his.

There is a much wider range of male fantasy figures than female ones. Little girls are offered the imaginary roles of Sindy as a cafe owner or boutique owner or city girl; of Barbie as a doctor (in 6 inch heels!) as a rock star; three varieties of fairy princess, and Vanessa Warfield from M.A.S.K. Boys are offered the role models of skateboarder, Fungus the Bogeyman, the Ghostbusters, Captain Power, Daniel and Miyaji the Karate Kids, Defenders of the Earth, Dino-riders, Thundercats, Mr Pablo the Painter, Postman Pat, Knights in Armour, Brave Star fighters, Masters of the Universe, Rambo in three disguises, Dr Terror, Centurion Ace McCloud, a game show host and three males from M.A.S.K. Boys have a much richer range of characters to play, and theirs are active and militant.

The pattern is the same when the pictures on the boxes of the kits and games are scrutinised. Only males are shown on the boxes of sports kits and games (Subbuteo, Superbowl, basketball, etc.), on all but one construction kit, on all chemistry, electronics
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and tool sets (on one box a girl watches a boy do the experiments) and on the circus and farm set boxes. Girls only are shown on a painting kit and a 'keep fit' kit. Both sexes are shown on a gardening set, one construction kit, and one drawing set, plus many of the family games such as 'Pop up Pirate'.

The pictures of toys and games in the Marshall Ward catalogue occupy seventy-seven pages, and the sexual stereotyping is similar. There is only one dressing up outfit for a girl (a nurse) and a boy (Superman). Small girls are shown on the telephone while boys drive things and carry guns. There is a toy secretary's desk (£38.75) plus toy typewriter (£19.99), a toy ironing board and clothes dryer (£9.99) and a model supermarket trolley and cleaners' trolley with tools (£19.99). No girl is shown using any sports kit; all the snooker tables, table football sets, skateboards and so on are being used by boys. One girl stands passively on a miniature trampoline, another carries a bag for transporting skates. No girl actually moves in these pages.

The minority of parents who choose toys from the Galt, Kiddicraft and Early Learning Centre (ELC) catalogues are faced with a completely different picture. ELC eschew 'tanks, guns or fashion dolls', and their catalogue is both multi-racial and non-sexist. Small girls push toy buses along make-believe roads, drive pedal cars and toy earth movers, build with construction kits, take guard at the wicket and climb on frames. Alongside the nurse uniform is a black girl in the doctor outfit, and the child cooking at the 'mini-chef kitchen centre' (£54.95) is a boy. Galt similarly shows a girl using the microscope (£5.95) and a black boy with a doll's pram (£42.38). Kiddicraft has a text written by the Newsons, and shows girl and boy babies, black and white, exploring a non-sexist world of developmental toys.

Outside these self-consciously non-sexist catalogues, males have the creative and interesting roles, females are preoccupied with keeping themselves and their surroundings clean. Feminists argue that this is restricting to boys and girls; to boys because they are not offered tender, nurturing roles or skills of cooking and cleaning while girls are not offered active or scientific roles, or any aggressive or construction activities. This not only weighs heavily on children whose interests do not 'fit'
perfectly, but leads them to stereotype the other gender, as we shall see later in the chapter.

Catalogues do not tell us what toys are actually bought for children. An American study (Goodman et al. 1974) undertook participant observation in a large store's toy department for 30 hours in the pre-Christmas peak period. They also asked a sample of eighty-four children what presents they had received for Christmas. The observation produced several interesting conclusions. The researchers asked shoppers the age and sex of the children for whom the gifts were being bought. They found that children under 2 got very similar presents: mainly cuddly toys, and toys to develop skills in handling objects and learning shapes and colours such as blocks, rings and simple constructions. After the age of 2 sex differentiation set in. The adult buyers had rigid sex-role norms about appropriate toys but would make exceptions for individual children with idiosyncratic preferences. In other words, adults did not believe that a train was a suitable present for a girl but would consider buying a train for a girl who had specially asked for one. This fits the British research by John and Elizabeth Newson (1976) who reported that parents, especially mothers, were prepared to adapt to individual children's wishes. Thus a mother would take her daughter to football games, or let a boy cook, if the children wanted it, without shifting their overall expectations of correct behaviour for boys and girls. Given this, it seems sad that schools appear to be less tolerant of idiosyncrasies than parents and force children into hyper-conventional roles.

The American observers found that adult toy shoppers spent longer choosing presents for boys than for girls. The majority bought sex-differentiated toys so that, for example, no one bought a scientific toy for a girl. The toys, and the salespeople, were clearly divided to help the adults in choosing sex-differentiated toys. The women sales staff were selling the cheap toys and the simple ones, while men were selling all the most expensive items, such as bicycles and electric racing car circuits, and all the technical things such as microscopes. The researchers also found a price difference. Of toys costing under £2, 50 per cent were for girls and 31 per cent for boys, while of toys costing over $5 dollars only 18 per cent were for girls and
34 per cent for boys. This suggests an imbalance in the price of toys for the two sexes paralleled by the researchers’ findings on Christmas presents received. They asked forty-two girls and forty-two boys what they had been given. The two groups had received equal numbers of presents, but whereas 73 per cent of boys’ presents were toys and games, only 57 per cent of the girls’ presents were. Girls had received far more gifts of clothes and furniture. Rheingold and Cook (1978) examined the contents of the rooms of 6 year old children, and found that girls had dolls, passive games and arts and crafts while boys had tracks, bricks and equipment for active sports.

This leads us to ask how families differ in their childrearing of boys and girls. The Newsons (1976) showed that boys were allowed more physical freedom and not kept so close to home. This finding is replicated by Roger Hart (1979) who asked children to describe ‘the area you are allowed to play in outside your house by yourself’. The information was plotted on maps and checked with parents for 5 to 8 year olds and 9 to 12 year olds. He found that the boys in both age groups had much larger areas in which they were allowed to play, especially among the 9 to 12 year olds. In addition he found that boys changed their environment more by building things, and that boys were more likely to break the rules and go outside their permitted area. Not only that, but mothers knew they broke the rules and ignored the infringement unless they got into trouble while outside the boundary. These two pieces of research suggest parents operate double standards between their children, with boys allowed more physical freedom than girls.

Books and comics

Many children grow up with few books in their homes, so discussion of books may relate more to school than home life. There are detailed studies of the sex roles which are offered to children in both reading schemes and ‘pleasure’ books reprinted in Maccia et al. (1971), Stacey et al. (1974) and Wandor (1972). Glenys Lobban’s (1974, 1975) early findings on British reading schemes were summarized in the first edition. During the 1970s this concern about sexism in reading schemes reached the mass
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media. In January 1978 Good Housekeeping ran an article asking ‘Are Books Unfair to Girls?’ which began:

See John kick a football. See Jane help Mummy with the dishes. See John paddle in the water. See Jane watch from the beach. See John suggest an adventure. See Jane tag obediently along behind. See John grow into a mature person . . . See Jane, on the other hand, grow up to be a right little weed . . .

The article argued that although the best-selling series had begun to ‘move with the times’, there is still ‘no doubt who is boss’. The books ‘reflect a world that is past, or perhaps never existed’, a world in which mothers do not work outside the home, and spend all their time on housework. Lobban had pointed out that boys are shown spending time watching adult men, not relatives, performing their occupational roles and tasks. Girls see only mothers. Given that mothers are never seen to have jobs (except in the Nippers series) girls are not shown any adult female occupational roles. Despite such research and journalism, publishers have reprinted books in the 1980s – such as Heather Amery (1983) The First Thousand Words – which are replete with sexism. So replete in fact that Ralph Ferve (1988) wrote to the publishers to complain and kept the book away from his daughters. Grauerholz and Pescosolido (1989) carried out a recent analysis of sex roles in children’s literature from 1900 to 1984. In the early years of the century the sex ratio of child characters was equal, and became so again in the 1970s, while between 1920 and 1970 boys predominated. The sex ratio of animal characters and adults has become more and more male dominated, while the number of adult women shown, and the roles they play, are still small and restricted. Pls ga change!

This leads into a consideration of other texts available in infant and primary schools – elementary textbooks. Here we are dependens on American analyses, and Nilsen (1975:208) summarizes their conclusions:

It is ironic that in recent years, little girls lost out in two different ways. Boys are the dominant figures in the nonfic-
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More able than girls in such fields as maths, science, and statesmanship. Then they are the dominant figures in the beginning-to-read book for just the opposite reason. They are thought to be less able than girls in the fields of language arts.

So much for the reading given to children as part of their schoolwork. Most British children spend far more time with comics than books, and absorb gender stereotypes from TV, radio and advertising. The first edition summarised the analyses of comics and TV available in the 1970s. Both print and electronic media change rapidly, and analyses of sex-role messages in comics and popular TV programmes need to be done regularly. Superficially Andy Pandy and Looby Loo are very different from Thundercats, but their sex-role stereotyping is very similar.

Thus we can see that the world in which British children grow up is a gender-segregated world, in which all facets of their lives at home and in the community are deeply impregnated with stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Boys are tough, aggressive and creative, girls mild, verbal and domestic. The Newborns (1978) suggest that children's idiosyncrasies can be tolerated inside a family, but the position changes when a child leaves home for a playgroup, day nursery or infant school. It is to these socializing and educational institutions that we now turn.

Inside schools and classrooms

At the beginning of this chapter the disquiet caused by children who tried not to behave in gender-stereotyped ways was discussed. To understand how most educational classes for young children are reinforcing even more rigid gender stereotypes than the wider society in which they are embedded we must examine the available data on schools and classrooms. However, although there has been a significant growth of research on interaction in schools in the last 20 years (Delsomt 1983c) gender differentiation has been neglected. There are several observational studies of infant and primary
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education (Nash 1973, Sharp and Green 1975, Hamilton 1977) which do not discuss gender at all. However there is King’s (1978) work on infant classrooms followed by Clarricoates (1980, 1981, 1990), Paley (1984) and Best (1983). Lindow et al. (1986) summarize the American research on classroom interaction, selected examples of which are collected in Wilkinson and Marrett (1985). Before examining the findings it is important to recognize that it is hard to gather data on gender divisions in an unbiased way.

Observer bias?

Clem Adelman (1979) studied pre-school classes and although his work was not intended to focus on gender differences, the field notes he took show such differences and the kinds of interpretations he put on them. Adelman had a camera mounted in a robot-like structure he called Charlie. When he first took Charlie into a class the ‘children were struck silent’. Then ‘Sharon . . . went to Mrs S. and cuddled up to her in some sort of fright maybe, while at the same time a young new girl who was drinking milk with the nurse began to cry. Quite soon though, children came forward to inspect Charlie, and then there were ten or twelve children, the majority of them boys, painting very vigorously the surfaces of Charlie’. Here we see two stereotyped kinds of behaviour. The little girls show fear and cry, and boys come boldly forward to try a new activity. These seem to be typical of studies of young children, but are small girls really more fearful of novelty, or is there a difference in adult interpretation of the behaviour?

We certainly have evidence that the same behaviour from a child will be interpreted differently according to the perceived and believed gender of the individual. For example, Walum (1977: 40) reports an experiment in which mothers were shown Beth, a 6 month old ‘girl’ in a frilly pink dress, and Adam, a 6 month old ‘boy’ in blue rompers. Beth was viewed as ‘sweet’, with a ‘soft cry’, offered a doll to play with and smiled at more often. In fact they were the same baby, with different ‘name’ and clothes. In a similar experiment film of a 6 month old baby
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dressed in yellow engaged in crying, crawling, smiling and so on was shown to a sample of professionals (paediatricians, psychologists, nursery nurses and so on) and amateurs (mothers and students). Half of each group of viewers were told that the baby was a boy, half that it was a girl, and all were asked to describe what the baby was doing at each stage of the film. The results were clear. All the professionals, and the students, attributed quite different motives to the same behaviour, according to the gender of the baby. If they thought it was a boy, they described it as angry when it cried, if a girl, as frightened. Only mothers did not attribute motives, but merely said that the baby was crying, crawling or whatever. Thus we do not know if Sharon was frightened of Charlie, or whether Adelman thought she was, or whether she had already learnt that adults expect girls to show fear and reward it with approval.

In part, such attribution of aggression to tiny babies according to their gender reflects a common belief that males are born 'aggressive'. Yet the evidence on this point is clearly inconclusive, and in one famous case turned out to be untenable. Many American researchers had observed new-born babies, to see if there were early signs of sex differences. Study after study showed little girl babies sleeping peacefully or lying quietly in their cots, while little boy babies yelled lustily and waved their arms and legs. The researchers concluded that from birth boys are more active and aggressive, and thus, some argued, aggression in males must be sex linked. So many different American studies showed this behaviour variation that it has ceased to be a research question, yet when some researchers in Britain attempted replication as a routine confirmation, they found that sex difference did not exist among British babies. Boys and girls in maternity hospitals did not behave in distinct ways, but slept or yelled apparently at random. This cultural difference called for some explanation, and the answer turned out to be circumcision. The American boy babies had all been circumcised at birth as a matter of routine, while British ones had not. Thus the supposed sex difference was in fact a reaction to medical treatment. All the American boy babies were in pain or discomfort, after being operated on, while the girls had not been so violated.
The main importance of these studies of perceived sex and gender differences is that they lead to differential treatment of the two categories of babies. From very early years girls are talked to and cuddled more, while boys are tossed around vigorously. Girls are seen as fragile, boys are not. From their earliest hours, boys and girls are brought up in different ways, to reinforce different behaviours, and punish or prevent ‘wrong’ activities. There is no real evidence on how far parents, teachers and others are conscious or unconscious of dividing and segregating the young in this way. Not are there any data on how far educational researchers ‘see’ the behaviours of little boys and little girls very differently because of their preconceptions. As we read observational studies of schools and classrooms we must remember ‘Beth’ and ‘Adam’.

Expectations and interactions in schools

There is important evidence about teachers’ expectations for boys and girls, and their performance on tests and in ordinary schoolwork, which needs summarizing here. At the infant and primary stages girls are more successful than boys in every subject except mathematics (Douglas 1964, Davie et al. 1972, Mortimore et al. 1988) and are rated more highly for good behaviour and personality by teachers. Ingelby and Cooper (1974) collected teacher ratings on 180 West Indian, Asian, Anglo-Saxon, Cypriot, and other white London primary children. Girls received more favourable ratings than boys on all the scales except sociability. Girls were seen as superior in character, brightness, schoolwork, home background and language skills. During the school year the gap between boys and girls narrowed on all the scales except schoolwork. Ethnic minority children had worse ratings than Anglo-Saxons throughout, but the gender gap was equally pronounced within each group. That is West Indian girls were rated better than West Indian boys, Cypriot girls better than Cypriot boys and so on. Hartley (1978) collected data on 393 infant-school pupils. The teacher rated the working-class pupils as untidier, noisier and less able to concentrate than middle-class pupils, and within each class, boys were rated rougher, noisier, untidier and less able to concentrate than
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girls. Thus girls from non-manual homes were most favourably perceived by teachers, and manual working-class boys were rated worst. Hartley also got the pupils to rate each other, and their ratings showed clear sex differences in the same direction as the teachers. Hartley also found that the sex differences were greater in the middle class than the working class. He concludes that 'the pre-school sex-roles of children within the same social class background do not equally prepare them for the pupil role' (p.81).

Teacher ratings of children are important if they relate to teacher behaviour or are communicated to the children. There is considerable evidence that teachers' expectations for children do influence their interactions with them. Brophy and Good (1974) showed that pupils believed to be clever were given longer to answer teacher questions, and more prompts and hints to help their thinking, than pupils who were believed to be stupid. The subsequent research is summarized in Mortimore et al. (1988:105–73), Good (1987) and Brophy (1983). Repeatedly, teachers are more positive about girls under 11 and have higher expectations for them. The evidence is complex on how far such expectations translate into behaviour (Rossett 1985, Lindow et al. 1985, Brophy 1985, Mortimore et al. 1988), but it does appear that boys are more often reprimanded, and given more instructions by teachers than girls.

The discussion of data on gender differentiation in schools begins with features of the formal organization. The first theme is the formal organization of the school, which may mean that pupils lead quite separate lives within the same school building. The second, third and fourth themes are all to do with teacher behaviours inside the classroom. Second is the way in which teachers can and do use rivalry and differentiation between the sexes as an integral part of their classroom management strategies. The third theme is the way in which the teaching may segregate and polarize boys and girls, for example by giving them academic material which is clearly labelled 'for boys' or 'for girls'. The fourth organizing theme on teacher behaviour is the ways in which teachers may differentiate between the sexes in their 'socializing', for example in conversations about pupils' clothes, hair-styles and personal possessions. The final organizing theme
School organization and gender separation

Schools segregate the sexes in many ways. For example, lavatories, changing rooms, cloakrooms and even playgrounds may be segregated. Pupils are commonly listed separately in the register, lined up in separate groups, and offered different subjects. These organizational arrangements are so common that they are taken for granted, and hence invisible. Most researchers do not mention that schools separate even infants in this way. The school which does not divide boys from girls will, by its very oddity, reveal how normal such separations are.

Carol Joffe (1971) studied a San Francisco nursery school which was self-consciously 'progressive' and wanted to eradicate racial and sexual differentiation. One strategy was to have unsegregated lavatories, and this alone was enough to upset some parents. Similarly, King (1978:67-9) claims that the official record cards in the infant schools he studied were colour coded differently for boys and girls, that all the registers listed boys and girls separately, and that 'in every classroom boys hung their coats separately from girls' and were lined up in separate rows at the door. The teachers regarded these as 'natural' and 'convenient' arrangements and thought King odd for asking about them.

Similar organizational arrangements characterized two middle schools in 'Ashburton', an English town (see Delamont and Galton 1986). In many ways Gryll Grange and Guy Mannering were as different as two schools could be, yet in terms of sex segregation they were identical. Both schools listed boys and girls separately on the register, so that the nurse, photographer, remedial teacher and so on called children separately by sex. Both schools had different lavatories and separate changing rooms, and both taught different games to each sex, with a master giving boys football while a woman taught girls netball. Neither school allowed girls to wear trousers. Lining up by sex before and after any activity meant the children sat apart, because the boys had led and the girls followed or vice versa.
Best’s (1983) description of life at Pine Hill, an American elementary school, makes exactly the same points. In these ways the children were constantly reminded that they were either male or female even when this was irrelevant to the activity in which they were engaged. This organizational segregation would not, in itself, be significant if it were not just the first of many ways in which school life separates and then stereotypes boys and girls. School organization is reinforced by classroom management to which we now turn.

Classroom management

Teachers in many nursery, infant and junior schools regularly use sex and gender as an organizing principle and a management strategy within their classrooms. King (1978:52) offers some fine examples such as the teacher saying, ‘Boys close eyes. Girls creep out, quietly get your coats. Don’t let the boys hear you’. This shows a teacher using sex segregation to motivate and to control children, a combination which is extremely common. Later King quotes a mistress ridiculing a child with the comment ‘Oh, Philip is a little girl. He’s in the wrong queue’ (p.68) as a disciplinary strategy. This is a common teacher usage. King also noted a class where, when acting Humpty Dumpty, ‘Mrs Pink makes the girls horses and the boys King’s men’ (p. 68). Lubeck (1985:130) reports similar strategies from a Head Start pre-school, such as the teacher organizing pupils before lunch:

Boys, get on your yellow line. Now girls . . . Now when you go inside the toilets, no wrassling, boys, I’m coming too.

Clarricoates (1987: 199) watched when:

A male teacher informed a games class in Dock Side, who were clambering over items of sports apparatus, that the girls were ‘beating’ the boys in climbing up the rope. Almost immediately the boys went into a paroxysm of activity in order to prove that they were ‘better’.

Vivian Paley (1984: 60-2) an experienced elementary teacher in Chicago, reports herself dividing kindergarten children by
sex. The school was having a Chinese New Year parade, and the class wanted to make a large dragon. Paley decides, for control purposes, that two smaller dragons would be better, and so:

The boys and girls are to walk in adjacent rows, holding the two dragons . . . boys on the right, girls on the left.

The boys' dragon gets badly torn as they fight underneath it, and Paley regrets she did not choose mixed teams to carry them.

Exactly similar patterns were found in Gryll Grange and Guy Mannering among 9 year olds. For example, at Gryll Grange the pupils had to complete a worksheet which asked them to measure features of the room such as the length of the window sills, the height of the doors and so on. Throughout one morning the teacher encouraged the class to hurry and complete this work, and her incentive was a race between boys and girls:

Miss Tweed announces, 'I'm still waiting for most of the boys to do that measuring . . .'. (Later) Yvette has finished measuring her worksheet. Miss Tweed says, 'Another girl finished'. . . (Later when Tammy and Stephanie are up) Miss Tweed says, 'Only seven girls to go'. Someone asks how many boys and the answer is lots . . . . (Later when Kenneth is up for marking) Miss Tweed says, 'Only five girls to go now.' 'How many boys?' 'Nearly all of them.'

This was Gryll Grange, a 'progressive' school, but Guy Mannering was equally characterized by gender-typing. For example, in a cookery lesson the home economics teacher said:

Boys - is it boys who are making so much noise or is it a group of girls? . . . Be careful boys that you get your tables all nice and straight.

Incidentally, cookery may nowadays be done by both boys and girls, but as King (1978:43) also shows, they are clearly distinguished in the school kitchen. He quotes:

Teacher: What must you do before any cooking?
Children: Roll up your sleeves and wash your hands.
Teacher: Right, girls go first.

The boys put on green-striped aprons and girls flowery ones.
number of further incidents will show how typical sex separation is in discipline, motivation and control.

Communal singing in the Hall. Two teachers and all six first year classes (180 pupils). Towards the end of the lesson they sing *There's a Hole in My Bucket* with the sexes divided. Boys are told to ‘pretend to be a bit gormless. I know you’re not’. (Gay Mannering)

(In Maths) There is a wasp in the room. Mrs Forrest asks a boy to get rid of it. He kills it. (Gay Mannering)

Music with Mr Vaughan. Has pupils clapping rhythms – has two girls doing it alone, then two boys. After playing part of *Peter and the Wolf* has scale singing – competing boys versus girls. (Gryll Grange)

Miss Tweed’s class are going to have their school photographs taken. The girls are sent first. (The photographer is in the foyer with a blue backcloth hung up). . . . Kenneth has made 82 + 47 equal over 300. Held up for public ridicule, told he should be the Chancellor of the Exchequer and that ‘Scotsmen don’t usually make mistakes over money’. Girls are told ‘You’ve done enough fussing. I know you’re all filmstars’ and asked about the photographer, ‘Did he faint with delight at such loveliness?’. (Gryll Grange)

This last extract shows the use of gender labelling in discipline, where boys are shamed by reference to adult males in responsible positions, while girls are exhorted to be beautiful. These kinds of controlling strategies shade into teaching, where gender roles are again clearly separated as the next section will show.

Teaching

Teachers in nursery, infant and primary schools value instruction both in basic skills and in social and emotional development (Ashton et al. 1975, Ashton 1981). In both kinds of instruction they are, on the evidence available, polarizing and differentiating boys and girls and reinforcing quite different behaviour
patterns. Lisa Serbin (1978) spent 5 years observing fifteen pre-

school classrooms in New York working in four schools. She 

offers the following account of the build-up to Easter in 1971 as 

a typical example of teacher instruction in social behaviour. The 

teacher played *Here Comes Peter Cottontail* while the boys 

hopped all over the room. Then the girls had a turn as rabbits. 

Next the teacher played *In Year Easter Bonnet* while the girls 

paraded. The teacher said, solemnly: 

Ladies, that isn’t the way we have a parade. When we have a 

parade, we all walk very nicely, and we pick up our feet so we 

don’t make lots of noise on the floor, and we all walk like 

little ladies. Now let’s do it again. 

She played again and the girls tiptoed. A boy asked for a second 

turn for boys. So the teacher played *Here Comes Peter 

Cottontail* again. No one said the boys should be quiet. 

Serbin’s observations show a typical incident with young 

schoolchildren, where the teaching is about social behaviour as 
much as any intellectual content, and the social behaviour is 

highly stereotyped. Other observations Serbin made were that 

boys got a great deal more teacher attention than girls whether 

they were physically close to the teacher or not, while girls only 

got attention when they were physically close to the teacher. 

The staff told Serbin that little girls were boring, and clung too 
closely to them, while boys were more independent. These 

teachers did not realize that their own interaction patterns were 

reinforcing the very behaviour they disliked. Little girls had to 

stay close behind the teacher to get any attention, while boys did 

not. The kind of teacher-pupil interaction was also different for 

boys and girls. Boys got more teacher interaction, more ticking 

off, more praise, and a different type of instruction. Boys got 

‘more detailed step-by-step instruction in how to solve a 

problem or how to do something for themselves’. Serbin found 

that boys got eight times as much instruction as girls, and when 

teachers were faced with this, they said that girls picked up 

things by themselves, while boys needed teaching. 

Serbin also looked at what children chose to play with, and 

found that those pre-school children who played with bricks, 

tracks and climbing apparatus were better at all the problem-
Sex roles and the school

Solving tasks involving visual spatial reasoning. In contrast, children who played with dolls and housekeeping materials were better at fine motor tasks. Among these children the two sets of abilities were not totally sex specific, although it was predominantly boys who played with the bricks, trucks and climbing apparatus, and primarily girls who played at housekeeping tasks. Serbin found that teachers were reinforcing the incipient sex segregation. When there were three new toys in the classes, a fishing game, a sewing game and a counting puzzle, the staff told the classes that they could go fishing like Daddy and sewing like Mommy. Then they got boys to demonstrate the fishing game and girls to demonstrate the sewing game. Serbin was also aware that the staff had a biased pattern of object usage. They spent their time among the teaching tasks and did not go over to the bricks and trucks. This meant that girls, who stayed close to the teachers, never went near the bricks or cars. The researchers then asked the teachers to go to the area where the bricks were, and when they did, the girls went with them and began playing with bricks and cars. Similarly, teachers spent little time with dolls, but if a teacher did go and work with them, boys would follow her there. Serbin says, 'In about ten minutes the whole block corner was occupied by boys and girls, half the children had never been in that area before'. In other words if the teacher encouraged girls to play with 'male' toys by going to work with them herself, girls would play with them, and girls who did improved their spatial reasoning. Yet before the researchers showed the teachers how they were failing to get all children involved in all kinds of task, teachers were unaware of it. If Serbin's observations are true in Britain (and the work of Adelman (1979) suggests they might be) then some action research to encourage each gender to develop all its skills by trying all toys and games seems a priority.

King's (1978) work on infant schools shows how instruction in social skills and academic matters are closely tied together. For example:

(A boy has found a snail in the wet sand box.)
When a girl went to touch it, the teacher said, 'Ug, don't
touch it, it’s all slimy. One of the boys, pick it up and put it outside’ (p.43).

Just the thing to encourage scientific curiosity. Peterson and Fennema (1987) found one elementary school teacher who taught her class about a famous man who had been born in each month of the school year. At the end of the year a parade for parents consisted of twelve boys playing these twelve great Americans. The girls carried placards with the name of the month and the man. Best (1985:60) found that at Pine Hill:

In Kindergarten the teacher encouraged girls to play in the doll house, but no boy ever played there. Wheeled toys and building equipment like Lego blocks and Erector sets were routinely assigned to boys but not to girls . . . . When I suggested to the principal that the boys might like to play in the doll house . . . he agreed but said, ‘If I encourage boys to play in the doll house, the community will run me out’.

Lubeck (1985:106) noted that in the Head Start kindergarten:

For Thanksgiving children were shown how to paste Indian feathers, previously cut out by the aide, onto a construction paper band. All of the girls had three feathers: all of the boys had one each.

A similar pattern was common in the lessons for 9 year olds at Gryll Grange, as the following extracts show:

In Mrs Hind’s class, pupils are writing their own sentences, each one including three words from the board. The word trios are:

- boy football window
- gorilla cage keeper
- monkeys coconuts hunters
- soldier army tank

Several ask her about the words so she reads through them. Says of ‘soldier army tank’

‘That’s one for the boys really I suppose’.
Here we see an entirely gratuitous comment by a teacher implying only boys are interested in warfare. It adds nothing to the lesson, and indeed detracts from it. (It might be good to offer pupils less stereotyped sets of words such as 'girl football window' WRAC army tank, just to see what pupils did.)

French with Miss Tweed. Miss Tweed can get lots of pupil involvement in French by saying 'C'est une fille' and pointing to a boy, and vice versa. . . . When we get on to individual children answering one girl says she doesn't know whether Ralph is a girl or a boy. Miss Tweed makes a great joke about it, 'been here a week and a half and you don't know if it is a boy or a girl'.

Sammy can reduce the whole class to laughter by pointing to Kenneth and saying Voila Maman. Nanette can do the same thing, and joke does not pall. . . . Duncan calls Malcolm a girl which is very funny to class.

Go back to tape. Miss Tweed divides them into boys and girls, the boys are to copy the man on the tape, the girls are to copy the woman.

11.24 P.E as Mr Valentine appears to take the boys to football, Miss Tweed says C'est Maman and gets laughter.

French, a language with gender-differentiated words, is a new idea to the pupils. Teaching the crucial difference between une fille and un fils using the pupils' sense of humour may be good instructional technique. However, it reinforces the idea that males and females are completely different, and any confusion is a source of hilarity. Sometimes there is not even an instructional strategy. Mr LeGard at Guy Mannering managed to put sex stereotyping into a library lesson on The Book.

He tells them on the title page there will be the author's name, and that tells you something about the book. You may recognize the author and therefore know he is a good one. 'If you get a chemistry book by a senior master at a big school he ought to know what he is talking about but is it by someone who is just a housewife, well?'.

Clearly the housewife must stick to her real job, and not branch out.
At Kenilworth, in a music lesson Mr Tippett was introducing the stringed instruments.

Mr Tippett gave out a large number of broken and derelict violins. He said they were not all complete but they would do for drawing... He began by saying that violins were like young ladies: they are fairly big at the top, they are small-waisted, and they have got... err 'Big bottoms' says a child.

'Yes, that is right, large bottoms' says Mr Tippett.

Then he asked what the family the violin belonged to was called. Luella said 'The strings'.

In Mrs Hind's class. Boy is up at her desk. She reads aloud from book 'Mary says she likes looking after people who are ill. What would she like to be when she grows up?'. The answer is, of course, 'a nurse'. Doctor is not mentioned as a possible answer... Mrs Hind tells Kenon to show his book to Janice to help her draw an aeroplane. (Gryll Grange)

Here we see a highly stereotyped piece of teaching material, an English comprehension book. Women are nurses, not doctors. It is also noticeable that the teacher does not add the idea of a woman being a doctor to counteract the sexism of the book, which she could easily do. We also see an example of one pupil being asked to teach another, which is a feature of a 'progressive' school. However, the particular example shows an assumed male superiority in the sphere of machinery/transport. The girl is not told to find out about aeroplanes, but to ask a male.

In Miss Tweed's class for a Maths test. There are mixed questions, straight calculations and problems such as 'If you were sent by your mother to buy half a dozen eggs, how many would you bring her?'.

This is again an example of unnecessary sex typing in academic materials. Why say it is 'mother' who sends for food and is responsible for providing meals? It could just as easily be 'Dad' sending for the eggs, but it is not. Teaching materials are full of such implicit sexism, which are never counterbalanced by...
Sex roles and the school maths problems about Dad going shopping, or Mum digging a trench. If teaching materials and interaction about academic matters is peppered with such stereotyping, then the 'social' interaction between teachers and pupils is smothered in them as the next section shows.

Socializing

Carol Joffe (1974) studied a San Francisco nursery school, and concluded that girls' clothes and appearance were far more frequently complimented than boys', and that girls got more compliments when wearing dresses than trousers. Boys were much more likely to be admired for fighting: teachers would make comments such as 'he really can take care of himself like a man'. Yet the nursery staff were trying to encourage non-sexist behaviour. Most schools have no such aim, and data from Ashburton and Bridgwater show essentially similar patterns of social interaction to those found by Adelman among pre-school children.

Some of the comments recorded in classrooms, such as Mr Tippett's joke about violins, are pure sexism. For example when Mr LeGard taught 1:5 at Guy's Manor about 'the timetable'.

He hands them out some red books and says that they are going to do an exercise on timetables which 'are always regarded as being complicated, but they are not once you find your way around'. A page has a timetable for a bus route from Eastbourne to Hastings. 'We have the page from the bus timetable, the first information you get is the number of the bus. That's useful. Then it tells you where it goes from Eastbourne, Pevensey, Bexhill, and Hastings. That's general, now we get to the timetable itself.'

Mr LeGard then explained how to read a bus timetable, and the children were left to work through a series of questions on this timetable. After 10 minutes, Mr LeGard read out the answers for the pupils to mark their own. All the boys reported getting at least seven out of ten correct; some girls reported only getting two, three or four correct, while Mair and Leila got all ten right and a credit. Mr LeGard, however, discounts their achievements.
Apart from Mair and Leila, the old thing has come up again, that a man can use a timetable better than a woman.

Pupils' views

Of course it would be ridiculous to suggest that teachers are enforcing sex differentiation upon pupils to whom it is unknown. Pupils come to school with clearly stereotyped ideas about boys and girls. Guttenag and Bray (1976: 284) found that among 10 year olds each sex stereotyped the other. Boys thought girls were neat, sensitive, gentle, cautious, good looking, obedient, quiet, apt to cry a lot, and weak! The children actually operated a triple standard. Both sexes were committed to the idea that they could try anything as individuals, that their same-sex peers could break the rules of masculinity and femininity to some extent, but that children of the opposite sex must be rigidly conventional. So it was, in David's eyes, fine for him to be a ballet dancer, but not really suitable for his mates, and unthinkable for Karen to be an airline pilot.

Best (1983) and Clarricoates (1987) have many examples of children's stereotypes impinging on their peers. Clarricoates (1987) was told about Michael:

When Miss Mackeson asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up he said he wanted to be a butterfly. He's just a great big sissy.

(p.191)

Minns (1985) transcribed a taped discussion of pupils' responses to Charlotte's Web, during which children 'explained' why girls cried:

Clayton: Only the boys didn't cry 'cos they were brill... We don't cry like girls. They're babies.
Karen: Miss, I think why the boys didn't cry is because the girls are more sensitive than boys at stories like that.
Tracy: I think I know why girls sometimes cry, 'cos they take things more serious than boys do.
Clayton: ... Men don't cry when spiders die. Women do, they're so stupid.
Best's (1983) book is called *We’re All Got Scars*, because the 8 year old boys at Pine Hill told her scars marked a proper male. Jonathan told Best that to be in a high status boys’ clique scars were a prerequisite, because they showed the boy had fought and climbed and fallen.

Children not only hold stereotyped views about the opposite sex, they also segregate themselves. Joffe (1971) saw three girls who had climbed on top of a large structure in the playground. A (male) comes over and C screams, ‘Girls only!’ to which A screams back, ‘No, boys only’. Similar incidents are reported in Sussman (1977), Clarricoates (1987) and Paley (1984). Karkau (1976) found that boys and girls of 9 rarely mixed: forming separate groups, playing different games and rarely talking to each other. His pupils even had a taboo on touching or approaching a person of the opposite sex. Girls told him that if they were near boys ‘People will think you’re “in love” ’; and boys said ‘If you touch a girl you get “cooties” or “girl-touch” ’ which Karkau describes as ‘a mysterious quality which can only be removed by saying “no gives” ’. When Karkau asked his class about segregation in the playground the boys said that girls could play soccer with them, but the girls pointed out that the boys never asked, only boys were captains of teams, the boys did not pass the ball to girls, and if a girl scored, the boys did not cheer. The boys agreed that all these criticisms were true. Similar observations are recorded in Best (1983) and Clarricoates (1987).

Rivalry between boys and girls is revealed in the following incidents:

This morning there was obvious sex rivalry in racing to get changed after swimming – as pupils were waiting in the foyer for their classmates to emerge from the changing rooms so they could all come back to school there were occasional whispers from the girls: ‘Three boys and four girls, we’re winning. Oh now we’re not’ as more boys emerge from their changing room. (Grp Grange)

They do competitive counting. All stand up and say numbers in French in turn. If wrong they sit down. Davina is the last one on her feet. When Maurice was the only boy left there
were mutters from other boys that he should win for the boys. (Gryll Grange)

English with Mr Evans. Pupils can have one book between two. Dominico and another boy are given the books to distribute. Told to give one between two and then give out spares. Dominico and the other boy give out one between two, and Mr Evans says that they must not give all the spare copies to the boys, but must be 'democratic' - he finds a girl for the last spare copy. (Gay Mannering)

One consequence of the pupils' views and behaviour is that when mixed groups were formed, the task did not get done, as in the following extract from notes on a PE lesson at Gay Mannering:

Pupils are told to get into threes. Girls organize themselves but boys don't. Teacher puts Terence with Coral and Lauretta to the giggles of other boys. The threes are told to get a bench and place it in a specific locality (to do exercises on).

Terence, Coral and Lauretta did not co-operate well; no PE was done by that trio. There is evidence that the more 'progressive' the class, the more polarization there is. Sussman (1977) studied 'progressive' elementary schools in the USA to investigate the hypothesis that where there is 'partial withdrawal of the teacher's authority' (p.xiii) the vacuum is filled by peer group authority. After observation in a variety of schools she found that:

(In a black ghetto school first grade class)
The children's groupings in the room seemed during observation to be quite fluid. The only line of segregation was between the sexes. Ironically, when children are left to group themselves, there is more sex segregation than in teacher-made groups. (p.138)

(In the second grade class of the same school)
In this classroom, there was a fairly clear-cut division of peer groups, not only by sex, but by ethnicity and ability as well. (p.148)
Sussman studied an upper-class school where the 'underground' life pre-occupied the pupils and

There was an intensive struggle for control of a 'fort' which the boys had built on the playground. They would not let 'outsiders' in. Outsiders included all girls. . . . Girls who tried to gain entry on one day were physically attacked by the boys, knocked to the ground, and had their coats torn off. (p. 178)

(In the fifth and sixth grade)

We remarked that it was interesting, for instance, that when she gave her pupils a chance to change their seats at tables all the shifts were in the direction of segregating girls and boys more completely. (p. 193)

Sussman found this sex polarization disturbing, and makes it one major indictment of 'progressive' classrooms. Readers may argue that if pupils separate themselves in this way, it is because such divergence is 'natural' and schools should accept it. All kinds of things may be done 'naturally' by the pupils which schools will not tolerate for a moment, and such segregation should be one of them. After all no school would allow pupils to build a fort for 'black children only', 'council house children only', 'Catholics only', or 'Band A children only'. Any school which heard those cries would attempt to democratize the fort. Yet children are allowed to be sexist even in 'progressive' schools. Claxton's (1987) has shown in her comparative study of four infant schools with intakes from different social classes that gender divisions are manifested in contrasting ways.

Data from the ORACLE project (Tann 1981) give an academic reason for worrying about pupil's own hostilities. Systematic observation shows that when mixed groups of pupils are required to co-operate upon tasks in the classroom they do not. Teachers who want boys and girls to co-operate on tasks must, therefore, struggle to overcome pupil's sex segregation and hostility.

Thus far the chapter has focused on children in the stereotypically 'feminine' atmosphere of primary schools. At 10 or 11 or 12 or 13 a school transfer looms, when pupils have to move
The formative years

Through the postern of fate

In Flecker's poem the Gates of Damascus, the four gates of the city are each given a specific character. The West Gate leads to Lebanon and the sea, the North Gate is the route to Aleppo, and the South to Mecca. Travellers are able to pass through these in relative serenity. The East Gate, guarding the road to Bagdad (sic), is a different matter. To the east lies the desert, and nameless terrors, and probable death. Travellers are urged 'Pass not beneath', and the gate is labelled: Postern of Fire, the Desert Gate, Disaster's Cavern, Fort of Fear.

Pupils preparing to transfer from junior schools to secondary ones face that status passage with similar apprehension. (Status passage is the social science term for the period when we move from one status to another. Being engaged is the status passage from being single to being married for example.) What is clear from all the studies of pre-transfer anxieties is that issues of gender are one important strand within them. Pre-adolescent and adolescent boys believe that they are moving to an institution where their credentials as males will be inspected and their masculinity tested. This is clear from two sensitive American books (Best 1983, Fine 1987) and from all the British work on transfer anxiety. The commonly told 'scare stories', urban legends (Brunvand 1983), myths (Morin 1971) or rumours (Shibutani 1966) about what awaits pupils beyond their postern of fate carry some awful warnings about what happens to small, new pupils at secondary school.

The common myths are:

- the lavatory, shower, rubbish bin myth
- the laboratory rat myth
- the 5 mile run myth
- the violent gang myth
- the weird/strict teacher myth
- the supernatural phenomena

An example of each is given below, taken from data collected either during the ORACLE project (Delamont and Galton...
Sex roles and the school
1986) or by Measor and Woods (1984) or by Delamont during 1987-9 in Wales or in 'Ledshire.'

**Lavatory myth** Before I went to Rowberry Common High School I was told by my sister that when the older pupils found out it was my birthday they would flush my head down the toilet.

**Rat myth** Two stories my sisters told me before I went to the Grammar School they had both attended. Both stories turned out to be true though I didn't believe them at the time.

1. cutting up rats and human eyes for Biology.

**The cross country run myth** Measor and Woods (1984: 21-2) say:

Many boys repeated with some alarm the view that, at the new school, you were frequently expected to go on long distance runs, especially if there was (sic) snow on the ground. Mark said, 'And they say you have to run to Brookfield and back.' And Bruce, 'some kids told me, in PE you run to Brookfield and back - it's nearly five miles'.

**Violent gangs** Before I went to Poynings school I was told by friends that there was an older boy who had been in trouble with the police for GBH (Grievous Bodily Harm) using a chain with spikes on and the rest of the fifth years were to be scared of.

**The weird teacher myth** Before I went to Westhaven High School I was told by my sister that there was a history master who hung people from the light fittings by their toenails if they didn't do their homework.

**The supernatural phenomena** Before I went to the senior school at the Leicestershire Convent I was told by older pupils that the corridors by the chapel were haunted by the 'white lady'. Once some boarders had ventured down one night and had seen this apparition. The nun had hung at one of the
The formative years

These have been discussed in more detail elsewhere (Bryan 1980, Measor and Woods 1983, 1984, Delamont and Galton 1986, 1987, Delamont 1989b). Here the gender implications of these rumours is the focus. As Measor and Woods pointed out, these myths suggest that secondary schools are places where there will be:

New demands of harshness and toughness... in both formal and informal cultures. (p. 19)

For Measor and Woods:

The secondary school represents a new, more impersonal state, where the inner self cannot any longer be safely revealed. (p.20)

Boys have to face up to these new demands, or they will be branded as poofers—like the boy KK whose letter to the TV Times was quoted at the beginning of the book. Male pupils have to claim that they are looking forward to dissecting the rat, doing that 5 mile run, and so on. They have to be prepared to face up to the bullies in the lavatories and playground and to the most weird and fearsome types of teacher including the gay master, such as this one from Ledshore:

That the art teacher was gay and put favourite boys in his dark room.

The informal culture of pupils circulates these stories, which carry clear messages about what proper male and female secondary pupils do. To the adult outsider, primary schools may look sexist. To pre-adolescents, the approaching secondary school is the place where sex roles will become critical. The next chapter looks at what happens in secondary school.
3 The adolescent in school

'A friend wants to come over to do some recording on my cassette player,' said my teenage son. 'Tim's into heavy metal.' Oh dear, I thought what am I letting myself in for? Well, the music which boomed out wasn't my cup of tea but when I walked into the room, there was no wild, head-banging orgy taking place, just a quiet young lad sitting on the settee doing embroidery! Not a traycloth nor a cushion cover, I hasten to add, but a denim jacket with an intricate design of a pop group's logo. I learned later that he is doing three A-levels, including higher maths and physics. Perhaps our teenagers are not the stereotypes we often think them and I, for one will try to look beyond the labels in future.

This was the Star Letter in Woman on 16 January 1988. Again the pressures of the conventional view of appropriate male and female behaviour are apparent. Why a young man interested in heavy metal should not embroider a traycloth if he wished to is not specified, but it is clear that designing stage clothes for a rock group is permissible where cushion covers would not be.

This chapter examines how schools respond to adolescents and adolescents to schools. It begins with a discussion of social science research on adolescence, and then secondary school processes are examined. The pupils whose fears about secondary education ended Chapter 2 are entering not only a new type of school, but also a new stage of their lifecycle.

The adolescent society?
There is a very large literature on adolescence from which it is clear that many social scientists are extremely anxious
The adolescent in school 45
about people between 12 and 21. The majority of authors
project their anxieties and doubts on to adolescents, and there
are dozens of books which stress how confused, disturbed, easily
led astray and vulnerable adolescents are. There is not, however,
very much research on how adolescents see their own lives, not
much sociology, and the literature has some very clear biases
and omissions. Adolescents are researched if they are deviant or
delinquent, and not if they are normal or conformist. Adolescent
boys are researched if they are working class but not otherwise.
Adolescent girls are researched if they are promiscuous or
pregnant, but not otherwise. Hell’s Angels are studied but not
Boy Scouts; Children of God but not members of the Methodist
Youth Club and so on. Researchers on adolescence have been
tempted by the bizarre and exciting, not the respectable and
conventional.

Researchers and commentators have generally been
extremely ambivalent about young people. In their introduction
to Working Class Youth Culture, Mungham and Pearson
(1976:1) pointed out that adolescents were portrayed either as
rebellious, ill-fitting members of a well-ordered world, or
glorified as potential rebels... who will overturn a world which
is sick, lifeless and dull. Attempting to bring some order to the
confused debate, Mungham and Pearson emphasized the sloppi-
ness of most writing about young people, which talks loosely of
‘generation gaps’ and ‘problems’. They preferred to see ‘youth
culture’, not as a unitary phenomenon, but as something
differentiated by class, occupation, education, ethnic identity and
sex. In this they shared the opinion of most of the level-headed
commentators on adolescence. However, their own collection
and the volume from Hall and Jefferson (1975) which appeared
at about the same time both perpetuated one of the worst flaws
in the literature on adolescents: its neglect of gender divisions.
Mungham and Pearson claimed (1976:6) that they could not
find anyone to write about the lives of working-class adolescent
girls, while Hall and Jefferson included one theoretical note and
a short article which drew on data collected in a youth club.

These two collections date from the early 1970s. Since then
there have been some studies of young women (e.g. McRobbie
Wallace (1987) and of female school pupils (notably Griffin 1985 and Davies 1984). However, it is noticeable that much of the work on females appears only in scattered articles rather than books (see Delamont (1989a: 273) for the details of this). It is also striking that many authors ignore gender despite the existence of recent research on females. Marsland (1985) has written a review of the literature on ‘youth’ which deals only with men. Only research on males is reviewed, only male authors cited, yet Marsland never explains his focus. The lack of attention to gender distinctions in the research on adolescence is one of the major flaws in it. Apart from the attention paid to deviant or delinquent youth the methods used in nearly all the studies are biased by the conscious or unconscious preconceptions of their devisors. Detailed attention to nearly every study published reveals such in-built sexism in the methods. For example, Irene Jones (1974) scrutinized Mass Media and the Secondary School by Murdock and Phelps (1973), and raised considerable doubts about their conclusions. One particular aspect of the research struck Jones because of its implicit assumptions. The researchers offered a sample of 522 girls and 299 boys a series of teenage role models with which to identify themselves or not as they chose. Some of these role models were common to both sexes, but some were only offered to one sex or the other. Jones argues that by offering certain roles only to one sex and not the other, Murdock and Phelps were creating polarized results and forcing the two sexes into different, stereotyped roles, rather than undertaking a study without preconceptions. The roles offered to both sexes were good pupil, rebel, ritualist, good bloke/good friend, and pop fan. Boys were also offered street peer, sports fan, boyfriend, and natural leader; while girls were given homemaker, tomboy, girlfriend, and fashion follower. While the girlfriend/boyfriend pairs were matched, the other roles offered only to one sex or the other reinforce crude stereotyping. There is no role of natural leader in the girls’ list nor any equivalent of it. Thus no data are available on what proportion of girls saw themselves as leaders. Equally stereotyped is the existence of roles as homemaker and fashion follower for girls (while denying them the option of street peer role).
or sports fan) yet not offering boys any home-centred role (model builder, carpenter, etc.) or any interest in fashion and clothes. Effectively, therefore, Murdock and Phelps pre ordained that girls would come out home centred and sheep-like, boys street centred and aggressive. Much research on teenagers has suffered from having preconceptions built into it, and has to be read with scepticism.

There is one finding from the literature on adolescence that is particularly important for schooling: the role of the peer group as a source of influence on young people. Young people derive many of their values from their homes, but as they move into adolescence their friends’ ideas on music, fashion, sexuality and schoolteachers become increasingly important. When pupils face transfer to secondary school, they fear the loss of friends made in the lower school and an absence of friendship in the new one. Peer groups, or cliques, are a major factor in adolescents’ school lives.

Peer groups and pressures

The importance of friendship groups among boys in school has certainly been widely documented (e.g. Hargreaves 1967, Lacey 1970, Wills 1977, Bryson 1980a). Membership of, and adherence to the norms and values of, a particular peer group can make a difference to the school attainment and involvement of boys. A boy whose friends work hard and share the teachers’ values is likely to work hard and be tuned in to the teachers’ values himself. He and his friends are likely to dress in clothes the school approves of, be ambitious for academic success, and enjoy different kinds of leisure activity and pop music from other groups. In contrast, groups like Willis’s ‘lads’ will avoid schoolwork, reject teachers’ standards, dress in unapproved styles, do not want academic success, and choose other kinds of leisure. And, as Hargreaves (1967) and others have pointed out, adherence to peer group norms, if they are anti-school, will be stronger than any pressure the school can exert.

Much of this research focused on anti-school or deviant pupils. More recently Aggleton and Whitty (1985) have discussed middle-class adolescents and John Abraham (1989a, b) has produced an account of two different anti-school groups in
the late 1980s – one the same type of rebel as Hargreaves’s from the 1960s and Willa’s from the 1970s, the other (gothic punks) very different in style and philosophy. The gothic punks were disliked by some staff for having female friends, disliking football, and enjoying art – in short for being ‘effeminate’.

Whether peer groups have functioned in the same ways among girls over the past 30 years is not known. Furlong (1976, 1984) argued that the whole idea of a group was too static, and analysed the classroom behaviour of West Indian girls in London via the more fluid notion of the interaction set, which changed from one context to another. However, Lambert (1977, 1980), Meyenn (1980), Llewellyn, Fuller (1980) and Delamont (1976b, 1984a, b) all found girls’ peer groups in schools during the 1960s and 1970s which did function as important parts of their members’ lives and did mediate school experience through group attitudes.

Meyenn (1980) found that the 12 and 13 year old girls in an English middle school did have groups of friends rather than one best friend, and their groups were important to them. One girl, Diane, is quoted as saying ‘if we had to say somebody who was our best friend you wouldn’t say one person. It would be all this lot’. Meyenn found that the sixteen girls were in four groups, which he called ‘P.E.’, ‘nice’, ‘quiet’, and ‘science lab.’. The quiet girls saw themselves as ‘dunces’ and were in bottom groups for lessons. Yet they were not anti-school, but accepted their low status and co-operated to have fun. The ‘nice’ girls were apparently concerned to go through school unnoticed, neither excelling nor failing. The two more visible groups were the ‘P.E.’ and ‘science lab.’ girls. Both these groups wore fashionable clothes and make up, but differed in the relationship to the school. The P.E. girls were noisy and aggressive, and helped each other with schoolwork. The science lab. girls were regarded by the teachers as mature and had internalized the idea that schoolwork was competitive and individual. Their ‘maturity’ meant they were allotted the task of caring for the animals in the science lab. and recognized the value of their privilege. The science lab. and P.E. girls did not get on very well together, for as Diane (a science lab. girl) says ‘When we get good marks they all say “teacher’s pet” and things like that’ while a P.E. girl,
The adolescent in school

Betty, told Meyenn about the science lab group. ‘They’re always trying to get round the teachers and everything. They’re always teachers’ pets, them four.’

Meyenn found that none of these girls was a real discipline problem for the staff, because even anti-school cliques of girls are not, apparently, actively disruptive or aggressive to teachers as boys are. Hargreaves et al. (1975:31) in a study of school deviance actually say that ‘teachers very rarely talk to us about “difficult” girls’. Meyenn’s data are very similar to Ball’s (1981) from Sussex and mine on upper-middle-class 14 year olds collected in Scotland (Delamont 1984a, 1989d). At St Luke’s there were similar distinctions between girls who had adopted fashion and make up and those who had not, and between those who accepted the school’s ideas about intellectual effort against those who saw schoolwork as a task to be completed by fair means or foul (e.g. copying). Data are needed on far more girls in many more kinds of schools from all over Britain to establish if girls too have strong peer groups which function to mediate between the individual and the school. (Better data on boys would also be useful and illuminating!)

Another aspect of adolescent life has frequently been uncovered by researchers: mutual suspicion between the sexes and the sexual double standard, which have educational consequences.

Nice girls don’t

The lads in Hammertown (Willis 1977:43–6) held sexist beliefs about women. They operated a double standard between the steady girlfriend (virginal and sexually faithful) and the ‘easy lay’ (cheap and promiscuous). One of his informants claimed that ‘once they’ve had it, they want it all the time, no matter who it’s with’ so that the ‘easy lay’ is damned by the whole group. Willis suggests the girls have no scope to be assertive or sexual, and are forced into romantic silliness. This double standard was clearly recognized by the girls studied by Deirdre Wilson (1978), Lesley Smith (1978) and Sue Lees (1986). Wilson’s sample of young women between 13 and 15 in northern England divided girls into virgins, ‘nice’ girls who had
50 Sex roles and the school

sex when in love with a steady, responsible boy, and 'lays' who would go with anyone. Nice girls avoided friendships with 'lays' because association with a bad girl could tarnish their own reputation. Lesley Smith’s sample of 14 to 16 year olds in Bristol held similar views, even when they doubted the justice of them. For example:

Liz: Look I don't believe there should be one standard for a boy and another for a girl. But there just is round here and there's not much you can do about it. A chap's going to look for someone who hasn't had it off with every bloke. So as soon as you let him put a leg over you, you've got a bad name.

Similarly, Sue Lees (1986) was told a decade later:

When there're boys talking and you've been out with more than two you're known as the crisp that they're passing around. . . . The boy's alright but the girl's a bit of scum.

Girls have to avoid being 'slags' themselves, and they must not associate with other girls who have bad reputations. Lees was told:

If someone for whatever reason has got a bad name. . . can't go with that girl. Because you get called the same name and if you're hanging around with a slag you must be one. (p.49)

Adolescent girls are careful to maintain their reputations as 'nice' girls and avoid being labelled 'slags' and 'shits'. The latter can be spotted by a variety of signs, but one of them, in the boys' eyes, is a girl's knowledge and use of contraceptives. Teenage girls know that if they reveal any experience with contraception they will be labelled as 'shits' and treated accordingly. In the girls' eyes, it is socially reasonable to risk pregnancy rather than be labelled a 'tart'. Studies on health and sex education (e.g. Rocherion 1985, Measor 1989) in comprehensive schools reveal that teachers do not challenge these adolescent beliefs. It is likely that if teenage pregnancy (Murcott 1980), and even more importantly the spread of AIDS, are to be prevented, teachers will have to find some way of persuading boys to rethink their
double standard, and of encouraging girls to risk social ostracism and preserve their health. Aggleton et al. (1988, 1989) discuss these issues specifically in relation to AIDS.

There is also the controversial issue of adolescents' confusions about male sexuality and sexual orientation. For most adolescents any boy who cannot, or does not, fight, run, jump and struggle to be macho is labelled as 'soft', 'boff' or 'fruit'. (See Delamont and Galton 1980, Beer 1983, Measor and Woods 1984.) These insults, which are not based on evidence of an adult male's homosexual orientation developing, are desperately hurtful for the adolescent boy, gay or straight. Boys who went to Maid Marion School in Bridgehampton objected to wearing the uniform blazers and ties because they were unmanly:

Irving: The things I don't like about Maid Marion . . . Having to wear school uniforms because you look a puff (sic).

Jerome: Things I dislike about Maid Marion are . . . Having to wear a school uniform is another things (sic) I dislike because we look like "BOFFS".

*Masculinity is very precious!*

If teachers systematically challenged pupils' simplistic ideas about male and female behaviour, and presented a clear vision of a world in which all skills and personal qualities are associated with both sexes and irrelevant to sexual orientation, then such insults would have no force. (See Connell (1987), for a fuller treatment of these ideas.) A boy who prefers reading to cross-country running, or sewing to soccer has a right to his preferences, and schools should cherish and encourage them.

These beliefs about sexuality may not seem immediately relevant to education. Yet the magazine Honey In June and July 1977 published a survey of 190 unmarried women between 18 and 26 about their sexual activities and attitudes. This survey showed clear differences between the regions of Britain, between the classes, and, noticebly, by education. Women who had stayed on at school to do A-levels had significantly
different patterns of sexual behavior and attitudes. Such women were less likely to be sexually experienced than early leavers. Once the women who stay on at school or college to do A-levels had experienced sexual relations they were more likely to use contraceptives (97 per cent) than those who were early leavers. The difference between 'stayers' and 'leavers' is clear enough, and supports earlier work of a more scholarly kind such as Kelshall et al. (1972). An exception was Christine Farrell (1978) who found no class difference in sexual experience among girls, but she did not control for school attainment. Willis (1977), however, found that his 'lads' did see sexual experience as marking them off from the 'goody-goody 'earholers' in Hammertown. Sexual experience was associated with masculinity and maturity by the 'lads'.

There is a suggestion, then, that early sexual experience and leaving school at the minimum age are associated, and that, especially in the working class, failure to be sexually active and failure to leave school are both 'unfeminine' and 'unmasculine' respectively. Leaving school at 16 may seem a small issue, but it has far-reaching consequences for the adolescent. It is likely to affect age of marriage, earning power and sexual relationships. The actual age of marriage is definitely related to completing full-time education, for early marriage is associated with one partner being in paid employment. Social Trends, 1988 reveals that in 1986 the average age of marriage for women was 24 years. For men, the average was 26. After dropping steadily for 20 years up till 1970, the age at which first marriage takes place for women rose again. In 1961 28 per cent of brides were under 20, whereas by 1986 only 14 per cent were. Some of the research on youth unemployment - the major social problem for this age group in the early 1980s - suggests that while marriage was delayed by these leaving school without qualifications, cohabitation and childbearing were not (Wallace 1987, Coffield et al. 1986). The distinction is clear between the earlier than average marriage or cohabitation and parenthood of the working-class 'leaver', and the later than average 'coupling' of the middle-class 'stayer-on'. There also seems to be something more nebulous that leads schools to implant in girls the idea that academic success is not feminine, and in many boys that it is 'sissy'.
Certainly the distinction between 'lads' and 'earholes' in the Willis (1977) study is in their attitude to the instrumental value of education. 'Lads' wanted to enter masculine, manual jobs for which educational qualifications were not wanted, while 'earholes' wanted qualifications for their careers. In other words, 'lads' rejected both the instrumental and symbolic values of education. Willis (1977:96) describes the 'lads' idea of a job:

The future work situation has to have an essentially masculine ethos. It has to be a place where people are not 'cissies' and can 'handle themselves', where 'pen pushing' is looked down on in favour of really 'doing things'. . . . The . . . job must pay good money quickly.

Later Willis elaborates this by saying that 'physical labouring comes to stand for and express, most importantly, a kind of masculinity . . . a kind of machismo' (p.104). Research such as that by Hargreaves (1967), Parker (1974) and Willis at least shows a logic and consistency among those working-class boys who reject school. The study by Connell and his co-workers in Australia (1982) is a sensitive exploration of the same processes. (See also Walker, 1988.)

The lack of 'ambition' among girls, especially working-class ones, is under-researched and still not understood. Study after study has found that girls like school much more than boys do (e.g. Dove 1975) and miss the social relationships they have there when they leave (Coffield et al. 1986). Between 1945 (when girls began to get an equal chance at secondary qualifications) and the end of the 1970s, boys left school with more qualifications than girls, and fewer girls stayed on in education after the legal leaving age. The 1980s saw this reversed. Social Trends 19 (1989:55) compares male and female school leavers' qualifications in Scotland, England and Wales in 1975 and 1986, reproduced here as table 3.1. This reveals that the percentage of teenagers leaving school without any exam passes fell sharply, so that only 13 per cent of boys and 9 per cent of girls are now totally unqualified. Among the pupils who left school at 16, girls have better results than boys, more girls than boys enter sixth forms, and those who do A-levels or 'Highers' are performing equally well there. So it is no longer the case that young women
Table 3.1 School leavers' highest qualifications by sex 1975-6 and 1986-7 compared

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<tr>
<td>2 or more A-levels/</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more H-grades</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 A-level/or 2 H-grades at A-C (no A-levels)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 O-levels/grades at A-C</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D or E, or CSE grade 2-5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No GCE/SCE or CSE grades</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total school leavers</td>
<td>425,000</td>
<td>442,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>425,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sex roles and the school

There is a major distinction between the performance of the sexes in terms of the subjects they study. Girls still predominate in modern languages and biology, boys in physical sciences and technologies. There is, then, a sense in which we know why many working-class boys reject school, even if we do not know what, if anything, can be done about it. We do not, however, know why working-class girls, who are less openly hostile to school, continue to opt for leaving without any qualifications that will support them economically. Boys such as those studied by Willis (1977) seem to have a realistic perception of their future in the labour market, while the girls who are their equivalents do not seem to realize that they will have to work for most of their lives in badly paid, unskilled jobs unless they leave school with qualifications, even if they marry. The rosy glow of romance seems to blind adolescent girls to the realities of the labour market and schools have not begun to find ways to make them face reality.
Holland (1988) summarizes the Girls and Occupational Choice (GAOC) Project, which followed a sample of London state school pupils through from 11 to 16. The findings are depressing. Boys and girls narrow and restrict their ambitions and expectations as they move towards the school leaving age, retreating into stereotyped 'masculine' and 'feminine' roles. Girls particularly 'scale down' their earlier aspirations, claiming they are not clever enough for their original choices. Being feminine leads to jobs in the female ghetto. The respondent to earlier work done by the same team, who said 'I would like to be a vet, but I expect I'll be a mother', summarizes the female mixture of resignation and resistance to the aims of schools.

In the next section the ways in which schools treat the sexes are examined, to see how masculine and feminine roles are reinforced.

Sex stereotyping in ordinary schools

It is very hard to recognize all the ways in which perfectly ordinary schools segregate, differentiate and even discriminate against some pupils on the basis of their sex. We all grew up in schools that divided us by sex, and we are all liable to perpetuate sexual divisions because we simply do not notice them. When some of the ways in which schools are sexually divisive are mentioned they seem trivial; others are seen as 'natural' and both labels prevent change. This section uses data from several studies of schools to illustrate ways in which sexual differentiation and discrimination take place, and then explains why they matter and how they can be changed. The five main arenas for sexual divisions in schools discussed are: school organization, teacher control, lesson content and structure, and informal teacher pupil relations and pupils' own stereotyping. In all these areas of school life many teachers are teaching sex-role behaviour by default, because they are stereotyping and segregating the sexes. The lessons about sex roles which are reinforced by organizational and managerial arrangements may not be those which staff want pupils to learn at all.
Sex roles and the school

School organization

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 included several clauses which were designed to stop schools offering different subjects or organisational arrangements to males and females. Yet schools observed in 1977/8 and in 1985/6 were breaking the law and organizing boys and girls into separate subjects. In 1978 Wavertree School in Cheadle (an industrial city in the North of England) offered woodwork and metalwork only to boys, and only girls did needlework and cookery (Delamont and Galton 1986). In South Wales in 1986 two schools visited, Derlwyn and Ffynnon Frenhines, taught all the crafts in single-sex groups, and boys and girls did different subjects. At Derlwyn all the pupils observed were in single-sex and single-ability groups for craft, so the boys from Mr Whaddon’s second-year ‘remedial and statemented’ group did woodwork and metalwork, while the girls did needlework and cookery. This sex differentiation was also found at Ffynnon Frenhines. At a third school, Llanddewi, only boys did metalwork and woodwork, although both sexes got some ‘survival’ cookery. At Brynhenlog, girls did ‘typing’ in a single-sex group while boys did ‘keyboard skills’ in an all-male class. Thus at Derlwyn and Ffynnon Frenhines, boys never learnt to cook themselves a meal or sew on a button; while at Ffynnon Frenhines, Derlwyn and Llanddewi the girls got no chance to handle tools, use lathes or work with wood or metal.

Apart from such striking examples of illegal curriculum segregation, there are many other ways in which schools are organized that separate, stereotype and divide the pupils.

The sex-stereotyped organization in nine South Wales schools in 1985/6 was similar to that found in 1977/8 by the ORACLE project (Delamont 1980; Galton and Willocks 1985; Delamont and Galton 1986). Carol Buswell (1981) saw that pupils were divided by sex about twenty times every day in a Newcastle comprehensive, like the nine Welsh schools. Pupils were listed separately on the register, went into assembly in single-sex lines, waited outside classrooms in single-sex lines, had separate PE, used different classrooms, changing rooms and lavatories, ate lunch in different sittings, and so on. During the teachers’ industrial action of 1985–6, sometimes only one sex was sent...
home. Boys and girls also wore different clothing. Several schools enforced ties and blazers for boys and not girls, or made girls wear skirts rather than trousers and so on. In organizational terms, the sexes were frequently separated and differentiated for administrative convenience, not for educational reasons. Of all the above separations only the changing rooms and lavatories would receive widespread public support. Outside schools females wear trousers, eat at the same tables as males, and hang their coats on neighbouring hooks without any comment. Two brief examples will illustrate these points. At Llanddewi, the first- and second-year children ate lunch at a different sitting from older children, and were further divided by sex, so that all the girls had lunch together, and then all the boys. Pupils of low ability (all statemented children) from Mrs Lavater’s special class which we were observing were therefore separated from one another, so that the three girls went to the first sitting, and the boys were sent in later. Each set of children was observed mixing in the dining queue and at tables with friends from other classes — but never with children of the opposite sex. This is an organizational arrangement which segregates the sexes, and discourages them from interacting socially.

Listing the two sexes separately on the register may seem a neutral act. However if the register is used to organize classrooms serious consequences can arise. At both Waverly and Melin Court (schools in Coalthorpe) the boys were listed first on the register and this had a consequence in technical drawing at Waverly and in woodwork at Melin Court. The ORACLE observers wrote:

After break go to Technical Drawing with Mr. Quill. He lines them up at the back and the side of the room, and allocates seats in alphabetical order. Boys first — leaving spaces for absentees. There are twenty eight children on the class list — and only twenty three proper drawing tables — so five girls get left without proper desks and are given slots on the side benches. Then they are told that when anyone is absent, they can sit in the absentees' seats. (Waverly)

In the woodwork room the new pupils are being allocated
Sex roles and the school

places at the benches in alphabetical order, with the boys first. When Mr. Beech found that he had twenty-three in the group it was girls left without bench places—about three girls left to work in any space left where someone was absent (i.e., changing seats each lesson) starting each lesson by trying to find a bench space to work at. (Melin Court)

Here the use of a sex-segregated register had two consequences: sex-segregated seating in the technical drawing classroom and woodwork room, and inducing a feeling of unease and 'non-belonging' in girls. I am sure the masters did not mean to make the female pupils feel insecure in their rooms, but using the register to organize seating had that effect.

Some schools and teachers are still subverting formal arrangements by informal practices. At an inner-city school studied by Gillborn (1987) in the 1980s, when the mixed third-year class were being told about their post-14 option choices, one science master was clearly planning for all-male science groups in the fourth and fifth year. Gillborn reports:

Mr. Flint shouted across at a group of girls, at the back of the class, to stop talking. He had already succeeded in quietening them with 'I haven't got all day to wait for you lot'. However, he went on very aggressively, 'ONE THING I HATE AND DETEST IS IGNORANT FEMALES... AND THIS SCHOOL IS LOUSY WITH THEM THESE DAYS. Suppose I'd better address myself to you lads. Don't want to see that ugly lot in my lab.'

Only a brave and self-confident girl would have chosen physics and chemistry after that.

School organization is not neutral, even when we take it for granted. Constantly separating pupils by sex emphasizes sex differences, and when male and female pupils are occasionally required to co-operate they find it very difficult (Elliot 1974, Barnes and Todd 1977, Tan 1981, Delamont and Galton 1986, Best 1983).
The adolescent in school

Motivation and control

The ORACLE team found teachers using gender differentiation as a way of motivating and controlling pupils. Using ridicule to enforce discipline was also common. For example, when Miss Wordsworth at Melin Court told the girls in her form to line up for Assembly and a boy, Wayne, stood up, she said: 'Oh Wayne thinks he's a girl.' Wayne sat down again immediately.

Abraham's (1986a) fieldwork in a comprehensive in the south of England in 1986 says:

Disruptive boys would be made to sit with the girls on the assumption that that would keep the boys quiet. (p.70)

Attempting to motivate boys to work by comparing them to girls was frequently seen. For example:

At Waverly Miss Southey had a class in the school library and when she saw most of the girls had borrowed books but none of the boys she said: 'All the girls are taking out books but not one boy yet. Can't the boys read in this class?'.

A few boys then borrowed books but most did not, despite the teacher's comment. Similar teacher strategies were common in nine Welsh schools in 1985/6 both to maintain order or organize activities for which no educational reason existed. For example at Gwaenfyl-y-Garth the fourth-year remedial and statemented group had a rural studies lesson in which the boys were sent out, unsupervised, to wheel some barrow loads of earth to a new flower bed while the master interviewed the girls and filled in their assessment profiles with them. As only one girl could be seen at once, and the others were left to chat, they could have been moving the earth with the boys. The sex segregation served no educational purpose, only an organizational one. A common teacher control strategy was to allow one sex to leave the room before the other. Thus, in Mrs Leithen's class at Gwaenfyl-y-Garth:

'It is 3.30. Mrs. Leithen says 'Nobody is going from here till you are all quiet'. When they are quiet they are allowed to leave a small number at a time, girls first, then the boys in
Sex roles and the school small groups.

This may work as a control strategy, but at the cost of emphasizing that boys and girls are different, and reinforcing their own prejudices. At Derllwyn when the Senior Mistress of the Lower School was doing a history lesson on Pompeii with the remedial and statemented first years she found that Royden was doing nearly all the answering, so she suggested, 'Let's ask the girls for a change'. When the class moved on to RE Royden again volunteered answers to most of the questions and this teacher too suggested that, 'Now the girls in front are sitting awful quiet'. Here again the reasonable teacher strategy - getting other pupils to share in the progress of the lesson - is realized in a sex-segregating way. Other pupils are 'girls' - not individuals - and the other boys in the class were equally unresponsive to the teacher's questions and needed to be encouraged to answer. Singling out 'girls' serves only to reinforce their difference from Royden and other boys, 'shows them up' and does nothing to encourage all the other pupils to participate in the discourse.

Teaching strategies and lesson content

The content of much of the curriculum, and the ways in which teachers taught the material is also full of sex stereotyping. Carol Buswell (1981) analysed the lower-school humanities materials. There were 326 pages of text, including 169 pictures of men and only 21 of women, and 102 individual men were described as against 14 women. Among the tasks for pupils were the following:

1. Look at the pictures of the clothes the Romans wore. Would they be easy for your mother to wash if you were a Roman?
2. Find the name of this make of car. Your father or brother will probably know, ask them.
3. Make up a poem about a very rich man or a very poor man.

Winter (1983) has highlighted the restricted number of female
characters in reading materials for slow learners in the secondary age range, and the limited range of occupations and low ambitions the women characters have. Frances James, a remedial teacher, made the same point in a letter to the Guardian (17 February 1987).

Sexual stereotyping was also common in the textbooks, worksheets and teaching in the Welsh schools. So for example at Ffynnon Frenhines when the second year were doing an exercise on healthy eating with Mrs Barralty, she discovered that none of the children knew what stock was:

Mrs Barralty asked 'What's in a stock? Come on, girls, you do cookery . . .'.
Vaughan replies 'OXO'.

This interaction was doubly interesting. It confirmed for the observer that all the staff knew boys did not do cookery at Ffynnon Frenhines, and stereotyped the girls. As a boy (Vaughan) was the only child in the room to have any idea how gravy was made, so the teacher's expectation was confounded. At Hendy Crynwy, a school where most activities were integrated, stereotyped curriculum materials were in use. For example, in Mr Arcoll's laboratory the walls were decorated with posters. One faded set featured boys and girls doing dangerous things in the lab and being reprimanded by an adult. Another series, published by the Royal Society of Chemistry, on 'Achievements in Chemistry', included five posters, four of males, one the Curies. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) posters of women scientists (see Small 1984:38) were not displayed.

Abraham (1989a) has provided a detailed analysis of the textbooks and materials used in English, French and maths in 1986 in one comprehensive. He concluded that the textbooks in maths and French were male dominated, with men in the powerful and active roles and females in stereotyped 'feminine' ones. One maths book defines 'a mathematician' as male, and another includes the inaccurately sexist claim that:

If the government says that the unemployment rate is 6% they mean that averaged over the whole country six out of every 100 men are unemployed.
Sex roles and the school

Such bias in teaching materials is carried through into exams. The Fawcett Society (see Hendry 1987) studied all the 1985 GCE papers in maths, physical sciences, computing, languages, history and social sciences. Maths papers were replete with 'workmen', 'foremen' and men investing money as well as problems about engines and football. The science and computing papers were 'impartial', but across 270 papers 22 different, famous male scientists were named but only one woman (Marie Curie's death). English literature exams focus on male characters in plays, poems and novels written by men as do the literature papers in French and German. Home economics exams provide the most blatant examples - especially the practical test:

Your brother has a Saturday job at a local farm. (a) Prepare and pack a substantial midday meal for him to take and make a family supper dish. (b) Launder his shirt and trousers, clean and press his jacket and clean his shoes ready for a disco in the evening. (Hendry 1987:37)

As the researcher concludes, boys are 'rigorously excluded from the home economics papers, except as recipients of women's labour.

The stereotyping in texts and materials is particularly damaging because pupils have a 'blind spot' concerning the use of the words 'man' and 'men' to mean human beings rather than just males. This is a common flaw in teaching materials and in the oral parts of lessons. There is ample research evidence that pupils and students hear 'man' to mean 'males' unless they are explicitly told that it covers people of both sexes. There are forty-four articles on this point in Thorne et al. (1983), including Schneider and Hacker (1973) who found undergraduates studying social science interpreted 'men' in that way and Harrison (1975) who reports adolescents making the same mistake studying 'the evolution of man'. Teachers need to explain to pupils, especially those who are low-achievers, that 'man's evolution' means human evolution, and 'great men of science' includes Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin and Barbara McClintock, but few currently do so.

There are authors who claim that teachers allow boys to
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dominate the talk in classrooms, taking three-quarters of all the teacher's attention and making three-quarters of the pupil contributions (e.g. Spender 1982; see also Delamont 1986c). Such claims do not stand up to close scrutiny because there are too few data to make them. However, studies do show differences in the ways teachers respond to male and female pupils. Shuy's (1986) analysis of a high school civics lesson taught by William Bennett (at the time Reagan's Secretary of State for Education) showed he regularly challenged things his male pupils said ('why did you say that?') but never the responses from his female pupils. The girls got positive or neutral feedback ('Okay', 'Alright', 'Very nice', 'Terrific'). (See also Delamont (1986) on this lesson.) A great deal more research is needed on this area, but all teachers can tape themselves and examine whether they are treating the boys and girls in their rooms differently and, if so, in what ways.

Sometimes teachers try to avoid sexism but are frustrated by others. At Ffynnon Freshines we saw the girls from the 'remedial and statemented' class join one of the 'B' band forms for PE. The teacher, Mrs Varrinder, sent those girls who had forgotten their kit down from the upstairs gym to the downstairs one, where the boys were having PE, to fetch back the benches that were normally kept there which had been 'borrowed' before hall term. They returned empty handed, followed by boys carrying the benches, detailed by the PE master, who had been teaching male PE in the main hall. Mrs Varrinder's attempt to get some girls to carry benches was frustrated by the PE master, who chivalrously assigned boys to do it for them, stressing female dependence. Some of the boys assigned were smaller than the girls they were 'helping'.

Teacher-pupil banter

When teachers engage in informal interactions with pupils they may inadvertently be reinforcing stereotyped sex roles. Classroom jokes may also be based on sexual stereotypes, and so are many attempts to make lesson content relevant and immediate to pupils.
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The top French set are in the language lab, and the pupils were answering questions in French about their families. A boy who says he has four sisters gets the cheery comment from the master 'Poor Lad.' (Waverley)

One day at Derllwyn the first-year boys were scheduled for woodwork, but because they had been so badly behaved in the workshop in previous lessons the master took them to the graphics (TD) room, to design a poster instead. While discussing how a 'For Sale' poster should be designed the master said: 'If I was selling a car to a woman I'd put the colour first'. (That is, before the make, price or mileage.) Such stereotyped comments served only to reinforce sexual prejudices that pupils already have.

Riddell (1989: 188) studied two comprehensives in South-west England from 1983 to 1985. In history at Greenhill Mr Stanhope explained Bloody Mary's persecution of Protestants by saying she was forced to stay unmarried, and went on to ask the girls to empathise with her:

When you leave school you may have a career and you may want to return to it afterwards, but still at the heart of your lives will be getting married and having children. It's the most natural thing in the world despite what some feminists might like to say.

In the same school, Mr Hill, a physics teacher, humanized electricity by asking the class to imagine the boys were negative charges and the girls were positive charges.

They all knew, he said, that girls tended to run after boys, but were nasty to other girls, and of course boys did not like each other unless they were queer. This analogy was used for several weeks, interspersed with comments about queers and fruity boys, and was even extended to the description of an ammeter as a dirty old man standing on the street corner counting girls going by.

Riddell says these were extreme examples, but outweighed the even smaller number of lessons which challenged stereotypes.

One woodwork master at Millbridge was honest enough to tell
Riddell that having mixed classes cramped his style because he had enjoyed sharing dirty jokes with the boys, and how 'if you've got girls there ... you've got to watch your language' (p.189).

Jokes would not be a source of sex stereotyping if all other aspects of schooling were more thoroughly egalitarian and free of sex segregation, sex differentiation and sex discrimination.

The pupils' view:

Adolescent pupils have just the same stereotypes and triple standards as younger children, but these are complicated by the developing sense of sexuality, the heightened importance of peer group pressures, and acute self-consciousness. Measor (1984, 1989) is a particularly sensitive chronicler of these issues. The miseries of school life between 12 and 16 are well captured in this letter to Woman (3 July 1989).

They Tease Me

Last week I was on the school bus, and some boys in my class stole my bag. Before I could stop them, they'd opened the side pocket and found my tampons. I just burst into tears and got off at the next stop. Now they all laugh and tease me, calling me Little Miss Tampon. Please help me. I hate school and sometimes I want to kill myself.

This encapsulates many of the findings of research on being an adolescent girl in general and managing menstruation in particular (Prendergast 1989). Boys are equally under pressure to shape up as men, as the desperate letter from KK (chapter 1) showed. In Canaan's (1986, 1987) work on young people in Sheepshead, an American suburban community, being a high-status male pupil means not being a 'wimp' or 'faggot' which has little to do with sexuality, but everything to do with aggressive, macho self-presentation, particularly at sport. So Jack is 'such a fat' just because he cries in class when a teacher asked why he had not handed in his homework. Canaan's teenagers had all the same double standards about sexuality, and all the same stereotypes about male and female roles that
British researchers have found. In Britain the boy who does not finish the cross-country run is a 'boff' or 'fruity boy', the girl who wears the 'wrong' type of skirt to school is a slut. Anyone who suggests that males and females can be friends, or that boys might like art better than metalwork, or that a girl could aspire to be an airline pilot risks ostracism in most schools. Abraham (1989b) studied a group of boys who rejected traditional roles, and they were scorned not only by traditional boys but by some teachers, who complained that they were 'effeminate' and 'softly spoken like a girl' (p.79).

There is considerable evidence that male pupils regard most female teachers as 'soft' compared to men, and may even sexually harass them. (See for example Riddell 1989, Connell et al. 1982; Beynon 1987 and 1989.) Overall, pupils have, by adolescence, become deeply embedded in sexist stereotypes, which schools do little or nothing to challenge. However, there is some evidence that by the mid-1980s adolescent girls were beginning to envisage a less sex-segregated future for themselves, while boys in the same schools were not. Lois Weis (1989) reports this from a depressed industrial area in America where:

Boys still envision a patriarchal future – one in which they are the breadwinners and their wives stay at home taking care of the children. They envision patriarchy in its rather strict sense of separate spheres...The girls are attempting, to break the present-day manifestation of patriarchy.

Similar findings have come out of research on how fear of AIDS is affecting adolescents' sexual perspectives: girls are taking the impact of AIDS seriously, boys are not changing their behaviour at all.

The picture outlined is a negative one and may have left the reader feeling depressed about schools and schooling. In the fifth chapter some solutions and proposals for change are discussed.
4 The teachers

Though most social science is indeed about men, good-quality research that brings masculinity into focus is rare. The political meaning of writing about masculinity turns mainly on its treatment of power. It is necessary to face the facts of sexual power without evasion but also without simplification. The analysis of masculinity needs to be related as well to other currents in feminism. Particularly important are those that have focused on the sexual division of labour, the sexual politics of workplaces, and the interplay of gender relations with class dynamics.

(Carrigan et al. 1987:64)

These men are writing about males in general, but their argument is especially applicable to a chapter reviewing research on teachers. Connell (1985) has conducted sensitive research on gender and teaching which focuses on both sexes. This chapter covers teachers and their views on sex roles in the school. It begins with a consideration of recruitment to teaching, and the ideas and beliefs of entrants. This is followed by a consideration of how practising teachers handle sex roles in the staffroom and classroom. Promotions and careers are discussed next, to see who is successful in reaching top jobs and why. Then the consequences of these various features of teaching are briefly examined. The focus of this chapter, on how teachers view and act concerning sex roles, means that many studies of teachers and teaching are not considered. The research on how teachers work in classrooms is reviewed in Delamont (1987a) and Atkinson et al. (1988). Other aspects of the occupation are covered in Bull (1987), Denessen (1985), Bull and Goodson
It is, however, striking that while there has been an increase in studies of practising teachers in the 1980s, and several authors (see Acker 1989, Nias 1989, De Lyon and Migniniolo 1989) have begun to produce work on women teachers, our knowledge of teaching has large gaps in it. There are very few studies of how teachers are socialized into the occupation (see Atkinson and Delamont 1985a) and none of masculinity and teaching. These are serious gaps when considering teachers' ideas about sex roles, and their role in challenging or reinforcing those held by colleagues and pupils.

Who enters teaching?
The research on the social background of teachers has shown that most come from lower-middle- and upper-working-class backgrounds, and that the women tend to have better social origins than the men. Also, studies have shown that teachers in academically and socially 'select' schools come from higher-status backgrounds than those in ordinary state schools (Lacey 1977). There are good historical reasons for these recruitment patterns which are discussed in Tropp (1957). In this section the focus is on the kinds of people who become teachers, and the ideas they have about sex roles.

Teachers are produced by the higher education system, and so potential teachers are a minority of young people, for the vast majority of school leavers do not enter higher education. Social Trends 1989 (pp. 58-9) shows that in 1986/7 only 25 per cent of people aged 18-24 were still in full-time education: 6 per cent in polytechnics and colleges, 4 per cent in universities, and the rest in further education colleges. Student numbers in full-time higher education have risen since 1980/1, because more people are going to polytechnics and colleges and because more women are entering higher education. In 1980/1 58 per cent of students were men, but in 1986/7 only 54 per cent were. By 1986/7 there were 154,500 male graduates from universities and 101,400 women, with another 145,300 males and 137,100 females graduating from polytechnics and colleges. Women were obtaining 44 per cent of the first degrees. These 320,000 graduates
The teachers are a minority of their age group (10 per cent), and it is from this small population that teachers come. The bare figures do not tell us which students will enter teaching, nor anything about their attitudes and values, and unfortunately we have little or no research on contemporary sixth formers or students. Smithers and Hill (1989) have recently asked sixth formers about their attitudes to entering school teaching as a career. Teaching was not seen as a good job by most of their sample as the following quotes show:

I think the pay is abominable. I think the way children treat teachers is abominable. The work they have to do is a lot for the money they get. They have got degrees yet they are not appreciated at all.

Bad pay, extremely boring, simply repeating work annually, controlled by headmaster.

The wages are very poor and I don't like children.

Only 3 per cent of the males and 12 per cent of the females felt teaching was a very good job. Research in South Wales (Bright 1987) suggests that contemporary teachers are not encouraging sixth formers to train as teachers. He asked 144 male and female teachers on (voluntary) in-service courses whether they would advise a good male/female A-level candidate to enter teaching. Only 19 per cent would advise a male sixth former to be a teacher, and only 31 per cent a female one. Teaching is still seen as a reasonable job for a woman and a poor one for a man. Hilsum and Start (1974:253) asked a sample of teachers whether they would encourage their own children to become teachers. While more than two-thirds of the sample said they would encourage a daughter to teach, over three-quarters would not encourage a son to do so. Male and female teachers were equally likely to encourage a daughter into their own occupation, but women were more hostile to their sons entering teaching than men were.

In the early 1990s there will be a shortage of recruits to teaching, and yet there is very little research on who does choose the occupation, and what their views are on important
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social issues. In Britain, we do not know how students in general
and student teachers in particular conceptualize sexual politics
or sex equality. There is no systematic research on the ideas
about sex roles which recruits to teaching have apart from
Galloway (1975) discussed below. We have some evidence about
the division of labour by sex and the sex roles usual in the kinds
of families from which teachers come. Men teachers come
predominantly from skilled manual working-class homes and
lower-middle-class ones, and these are precisely the kind of
homes in which segregation of sex roles is common, and strong
ideas about different behaviour for men and women are held.
For example, the classic study of a mining town Coal is our Life
by Dennis et al. (1957) showed rigidly segregated sex roles, and
males and females leading separate lives. Incidents recorded in
'Ashton' suggest that there was a strong tradition of all men
combining to keep women in their place - out of the pub, the
club and the betting office - and considerable hostility between
men and women, except during courtship. The period captured
in Coal is our Life now seems very far away and long ago.
However, many more recent studies of working-class and lower-
middle-class households and communities (e.g. Whitehead 1976,
Hill 1976, Blackburn and Mann 1979, Crehan 1986) show men
and women living essentially separate lives at work and leisure,
only meeting in their homes.

The majority of men teachers in British schools will have
been raised in homes with segregated sex roles. Those men who
have left their working-class backgrounds might have also shed
their sex-role ideologies. However, it is equally plausible to
suggest that those working-class males who enter the 'soft' job
of teaching would cling especially firmly to their childhood ideas
of separate sex roles.

More of the women entrants to teaching since 1945 have
come from middle-class homes than the men. However, the
majority have entered teaching via teacher training colleges, and
by the very act of going to these colleges they were missing out
on a general higher education which would open lots of jobs, in
favour of a path into teaching. Their motives for entering
teaching, and for 'choosing' the college of education route, are
not well documented. However, the study by Galloway (1973)
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bears on the point. Her data were drawn from interviews with women in Edinburgh University and Moray House College of Education in the early 1970s and, although unrepresentative of English or Welsh students, they are rich and illuminating. Margo Galloway was interested in women's lives to date and their expectations about their future. These students held extremely conventional ideas about the role of women, the division of labour in marriage and their own futures. Evidence collected throughout the second half of the century shows that American women were scared of being seen as clever by men in case it jeopardized their social success (Komorovsky 1946, 1972). Galloway's sample felt strongly that while men did not mind women being clever and successful, they did dislike women who were 'intellectual'. Her respondents said things like 'It's very foreboding (sic)' and 'I don't want to be very intellectual because I don't want to be very anything' (Galloway 1973:86) and 'men don't like you to be too emancipated'. All but one of the sample said they wanted to marry, most thought marriage and motherhood their main aims in life, and most wanted a husband who was superior to them in age, intellect, earning power and judgement. Typical comments were 'Marriage would mean more to me than any career' (p.87) and 'I think the male should be dominant in any family' (p.92).

One young woman produced, the 'typical' worldview of the majority of Galloway's (1973:105) sample. She had expressed a desire to go to Turkey for visits to collect folk material but added:

I'd like something small but nothing big. I wouldn't like to be famous or anything like that.

Interviewer: You wouldn't like to go down in history as the woman who unearthed all the important Turkish folk tales?
Student: I'd rather be the wife of the man who did it.

This was an extreme case, but not that extreme. The women saw the housework as their duty and did not think men should do very much around the home. A typical woman said 'I don't mind a man helping with just the dishes but nothing else. I can't stand to see a man running round the house with an apron on' (p.96). Washing clothes and bed making were seen as
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particularly unmanly tasks. The majority were sure that children completed a marriage, wanted two or more, and planned to stay home for 7 to 10 years with them. These women based their conventional views of the future on a belief that gender differences are grounded in biological facts, saying women made better mothers for reasons such as 'I think women are born more patient' (p.108). Women teachers who believe that they are biologically different from men are likely to believe that their girl pupils are biologically different from the boys and act accordingly.

Galloway was especially interested in why women who were technically qualified for university had chosen to attend Moray House College to train for teaching. She had expected them to hold less 'emancipated' views of women's role, and believe university was less feminine than training for primary teaching. However, this turned out not to be the case. While the majority of the university students were there as 'the next step' expected of them by their homes and schools, the college students had usually thought about what higher education they wanted. Those women who were objectively qualified for university but did not go fell into two groups. Some were committed to teaching and chose college as the best available professional training, while others were convinced that they were not intellectually capable of university work. Both groups had stood firm against all pressures on them to go to university. None of the girls reported either their schools or parents trying to stop them going on to higher education; indeed the college girls reported pressure to aim 'higher' than they themselves wished to go.

Galloway's data can be seen in the context of national surveys conducted by Andrew McPherson and his colleagues among Scottish school leavers (e.g. Jones and McPherson 1972). In the survey carried out in 1970 they found that many of the young women who chose colleges of education lacked confidence in their own academic ability and had not been the subject of parental pressure to excel academically, unlike equivalent boys. It is not clear whether McPherson's Scottish findings would apply in England and Wales. However, the evidence from Scotland would certainly suggest that the majority of female
entrants to colleges, and hence teaching, were very unliberated. The following letter to the problem page of Woman (2 December 1978) may be more 'typical' than perhaps it looks at first glance:

I am just approaching the time when I have to start applying to colleges and I’m confused. I think I want to be a teacher, but wonder if I’ll fall in love before I’ve finished training and want to have children. Then I think of how many teachers are single and I don’t want to end up like that!

This young woman is obviously unsure about her own future, and also holds very muddled ideas about the interrelationships of teaching, love, motherhood and marriage. She, like the women interviewed by Galloway, is very unlikely to be in favour of using schools to change traditional sex roles.

Male recruits to the profession probably hold similarly stereotyped views about sex roles, although we lack any studies on the point in the UK. Skelton and Hanson (1989) point out how little is known about gender-related issues in initial teacher training, an area of education which has been neglected by sociologists (Atkinson and Delamont 1985a). Skelton and Hanson (1989) report that even student teachers who were aware of sexism in their training course failed to 'see' it when in schools. The standard teacher training course was suffused with assumptions about male and female pupils, all of which may become self-fulfilling prophecies (see Good 1987). In some teacher training courses, gender is covered in the 'theory' part of the syllabus, rather than in the 'methods' or 'classroom practice' sector, and can be dismissed as 'theory' rather than being seen as a crucial element in everyday classroom behaviour.

In short, it seems that most recruits to teaching have had, and will have, conventional ideas about sex roles and little is done to change these during initial training (Equal Opportunities Commission 1989). Of course, some will enter with courses in women’s studies or sex roles behind them, and some will be members of women’s liberation, men against sexism, or gay liberation groups. What happens to radical ideas when the teacher gets into school?
There is evidence (e.g. Lacey 1977) that student teachers with libertarian or progressive ideas find even their training courses and teaching practice hard to take. Lacey suggests that radical education students are likely to be forced out of teaching. Grace (1972) wrote sensitively of the problems facing the new teacher in the urban school, who has been 'carefully separated from the majority of his peers during adolescence' and is 'likely to experience shock at the realities of the inner urban classroom' (p.62). The world which has seemed normal and ordered, because it was an exclusive world in terms of class, ability and race, suddenly seems pathological. Grace says 'above all, it is threatening in the very low regard which its members give to his status as teacher . . . and to the academic specialism. . . . He continues that radical young teachers face the 'greatest contradiction' (p.63). While they may feel themselves as 'messengers essentially of human liberation and of the potentially transforming effects of critical consciousness' (p.63), their audience is unlikely to be receptive. Grace argued that many working-class parents and pupils interpret the teacher's libertarian ideas as 'softness', a finding reported also by Connell (1985).

Whiteside et al. (1969) made a similar point about graduate entrants to teaching and their experience of 'reality shock'. The authors surveyed 157 graduates training for secondary teaching, and suggest that those student teachers who are more traditionally academic are those who find adjusting to ordinary schools most difficult for precisely the reasons spelt out by Grace. Whiteside et al. found that student teachers who did not enter teaching were likely to believe that practising teachers use traditional methods and hold authoritarian ideas. They argue that student teachers face a process of 'reality shock' as they 'slowly face up to entry into the profession'. While their study did not consider attitudes to sex roles among student teachers, those with unconventional ideas would feel at odds with the majority of the occupation for which they are training.

A slightly later study of students in a college of education preparing for primary teaching shows the process of reality shock
The teachers shock as it happens. Hanson and Herrington (1976a, b) followed sixteen new teachers who trained between 1970 and 1973 into the schools to see how they were licked into shape by colleagues and pupils. They concluded that teachers are more influenced by current school practices rather than by their professional and academic education (1976a:568). They report on the conservative influences of the older teachers, and the explicit role pupils take in shaping new teachers into familiar patterns. If pupils and older colleagues try to train new teachers into established ways over such things as Christmas decorations in each classroom, deviations from conventional behaviour about sex roles are likely to be much more heavily punished. Teachers who hold 'progressive' ideas about gender roles would find these just as untenable in schools as other libertarian notions (Cunnison 1989; Joyce 1987).

There are some autobiographical accounts by British feminist teachers (e.g. Elliot 1978, Maciuszko 1978, Joyce 1987). Middleton (1989) has conducted life history interviews with feminist teachers in New Zealand, like Connell's (1985) research in Australia. These all show how hostile to feminism most staffrooms are, a finding supported by one survey. Kelly (1985b) has conducted a large-scale survey of British teachers and found that women teachers were more favourable to sex equality than men, and graduates more 'feminist' than college-trained teachers. Home economics teachers were the least feminist, followed by CDT, maths and science staff. People teaching humanities were the most pro-feminist. These three factors (sex, qualifications and subject taught) are all interrelated; not one graduate woman CDT teacher replied to Kelly's survey. Teachers in London were more feminist than those in other large cities. The most striking finding was that believing in the equality of the sexes as an abstract principle (a belief endorsed by nearly all teachers) does not imply that a teacher accepts any of the conclusions of books such as this one, or has any commitment to scrutinizing their own school for bias in texts, exams, facilities, classroom interaction or career structures.

Research on staffroom relationships shows what pressures are likely to be put upon teachers by their colleagues. Woods
Sex roles and the school (1979:230-1) recounts how a radical teacher was pressured by the headmaster and resigns from the school. From the rest of Woods' material on the staffroom at Lowfield, it is clear that the male teachers there would have little patience with feminism. Beynon (1987) found similar pressures brought to bear on a female drama teacher, Miss Floral, who wanted to explore humanistic, caring, expressive values in a tough boys' school. The teacher who wants to change the ways in which schools structure sex roles for staff and pupils is liable to suffer the same reality shock as teachers with any other non-traditional ideas. The processing by which teachers come to be socialized into the norms and values of their colleagues has not been thoroughly studied in Britain, but there are obviously two arenas in which reality forces itself upon the young teacher, the classroom and the staffroom. The two previous chapters have shown how pupils hold their own ideas about what sex roles should be and reject many teacher attempts to challenge them. For example, when the teacher studied by Beynon (1985a) asked what drama was about, a boy answered 'Drama is girls dancing about, Miss'. This was a direct challenge to the teacher's definition of drama and its importance in a boys' school. The previous chapters have not, however, looked at how staffroom interactions about pupils and other matters focus upon sex and gender, and it is to this we now turn.

Staffroom talk

One important part of staffroom talk is the establishment and maintenance of pupils' reputations (Delamont 1984c, Harries 1982, Hargreaves et al. 1975). The male staffroom 'banter' about pupils quoted by Woods (1979:223-4) shows female pupils being treated as sex objects. One conversation focused mainly on the colour of the girls' knickers and contains comments like 'My girls are dead worried. I told them they'd have to take everything off on Monday, and I hoped none of them were tattooed, and I think they believed me!' followed by 'That wouldn't worry my lot. They'd be only too willing to oblige.' (p.224). Male teachers who can say such things in jest (for Woods shows how really serious issues were not joking matters) are unlikely to
The teachers tolerate other staff wanting to break down sexism. How far male and female teachers carry ideas about segregated sex roles into their staffroom lives and into their judgements about pupils is unknown. However, the data collected by Hargreaves et al. (1975) on teachers’ typifications of deviance among pupils are interesting. They comment that girls were hardly ever mentioned as ‘difficult’ (p.51), and the few extracts referring to girls nearly all mention talking a lot as the problem (pp.155, 227, 231). The one very deviant girl is explicitly singled out for the researchers because she violates appropriate feminine behaviour:

I: Why a tomboy?
T: When you see her knocking one or two of the boys around you know. She’s not a girl I wouldn’t think, she’s not ladylike in any way, not at all. Her voice doesn’t help. She’s got a very male voice I would call it, very rusty sort of voice like mine. (p.191)

and

T: She’s a bully... as powerfully built as most of the boys and she’d give one or two what for now and again. (p.161)

It is not clear that this is the same girl, but a school with more than one such pupil would hardly claim that girls were not difficult. Ann Marie Wolpe (1977:39) found the equivalent case of a boy regarded askance by his teachers for a supposed lack of masculinity. In a London comprehensive school a group of pre-pubescent pupils rejected one of their cleverest form mates, Gary. On investigation the boys in his class claimed to dislike him because he was feminine. His ‘femininity’ consisted of sitting with the girls at lunchtime, disliking games and preferring Beethoven to pop music. Wolpe commented that:

His obvious deviation from the desirable stereotypical masculine norm causes a measure of concern for his teachers. One in particular feels he should be referred to the Child Guidance Clinic because of his preference for Beethoven to Gary Glitter, his collection of Victorians and his repugnance for any swearing at all.
At Waverly I was told about a rather similar pupil. One English master explicitly stated that certain other male staff could not tolerate boys who were not aggressive, rowdy and athletic but thought them ‘pansies’ and hence were intolerant of a boy who preferred reading poetry to football.

Apart from singling out ‘masculine’ girls and ‘feminine’ boys for censure, staffrooms are almost certainly full of beliefs about the nature of boys and girls which may or may not be ‘accurate’ but will certainly affect how males are handled in the school and its classrooms. Wolpe (1977:14, 38) offers two examples of beliefs about sex and gender which have obvious consequences. In one school an English master told her that he expected different kinds of written work with the girls producing ‘more an airy-fairy story’ while the boys were more realistic. This led him to prepare different essay titles which ‘he regarded, and explicitly stated, as being eminently suitable for boys, some for girls and some neutral’. Another teacher told Wolpe that ‘the boys just don’t seem to get down to work or the majority of them have to be pushed. But the girls always do so’. This is a common belief, but the consequences for classroom behaviour are not known and have not been measured. Overall we need more research on how such attitudes are translated into action, both for the conformist majority of pupils and the deviant individual who is ‘effeminate’ or a ‘tomboy’ who apparently upsets most teachers.

There may be features of the occupation which accentuate any ideas teachers brought with them into the profession. Waller (1932:50) long ago pointed out that the masculinity of male teachers was perpetually in doubt, illustrating his point with the way in which swearing and bawdiness stopped when the teacher enter the barber’s, just as if he were a lady. Male teachers were seen as involved with head work rather than hand work, with children rather than adults, and in an essentially feminine job rather than a masculine one. Many years later Ginsburg et al. (1977:34) found similar community reaction to teachers in the English Midlands.

One researcher accompanied two school B teachers to a social club (of which they were members) for a drink during the
As we entered the bar a group of men sitting at one of the tables called out in what sounded like a heckling tone 'Hey teacher. How are you teacher?'. The two teachers acknowledged the 'greeting' with a nod and a formal smile; they seemed to be somewhat uncomfortable until we settled into a table some distance from these men . . .

This incident could almost have come from Waller, except that in his day teachers were not supposed to be seen drinking. The more general point - that male teachers are somehow 'soft' - is well captured by Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (1975):

"The teacher role poses an inherent contradiction that claims that, in order to communicate effectively with children, teachers must exhibit the nurturant, receptive qualities of the female character ideal and the expressive, adaptive qualities of the child. Ironically, those same qualities are viewed as inferior and of low status when one conceives of the teacher in relation to the social and occupational structure of society."

It may be this unease which leads to the sexist micropolitics of the staffroom. Cunliffe (1988) presents an analysis of this commonly reported phenomenon, also raised by Cunliffe (1988) and Ball (1987). Woods' (1979) study of Lowfield secondary modern was one of the first to reveal how male teachers derived considerable pleasure from mocking the senior mistress, and making sexist comments about their female colleagues.

The structure of teaching

Scribbs (1977) summarizes the position of women in the profession. He says:

"The teaching profession has customarily been regarded as an open profession as far as women are concerned. More women enter it than most professions and it is generally, though wrongly believed that within this profession . . . women can enter on a career trail leading to senior jobs. In fact in education in general . . . there is a clear pattern of discrimination against women . . . "

Scribbs points out that the more expensive and academically
high status the sector of the education system is, the fewer women there are. As we move down from higher education to the nursery school, the proportion of women rises. Additionally, within each sector there are fewer women staff in the higher salary brackets and in the senior posts. These inequalities are relatively new, having replaced different ones since 1945. Women entering school teaching, and teacher training institutions had, in 1945, the possibilities of two types of top job. They could aspire to become a headmistress, or the principal of a women’s training college. Both were well-paid occupations with considerable social cachet, and led to other work – the magistrate’s bench, committees, local councils and so forth. Even if one did not reach the top of these parallel trees, one could become a head of departments in either a school or college. Admittedly, in 1945 there was no equal pay for women teachers, but there was a career structure. By 1985 equal pay had become legal in theory – although rarely achieved in practice – and the career structure had gone with the coming of coeducation.

Sutherland (1985) has pointed out that coeducation was adopted in England as an undiscussed adjunct to going comprehensive. No sustained public debate took place at national or local level about the consequences of coeducation for the careers of women in teaching. Yet what women teachers gained with the award of equal pay they lost with the coming of coeducation, because no provisions were made to safeguard their career ladder in the coeducational schools. Teachers only got equal pay in 1961, and in Scotland, England and Wales there existed men’s unions opposed to equal pay for women up until the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) made single-sex unions illegal. The struggle for equal pay, described by Fawcett (1976) was long and bitter, and it should not surprise us if entrenched positions adopted during that struggle have not disappeared. The principle of equal pay in teaching was established in 1955, with a sentiment then pledged to phase it in over 6 years. The National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) campaigned to have the decision reversed, while the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT) campaigned to have equal pay adopted at once (King 1987, Gurr 1987). During this period an NAS man wrote in the Times Educational Supplement (12
April 1957) that women only came into teaching 'to get a husband to get them out of it. The women's staff room has become a waiting room for the bridal chamber and an ante-room for the maternity home'. Such statements can still be heard in staffrooms, alongside the verdict on women teachers quoted at the head of chapter 1. Cunnison (1989:154) reports the following:

an assistant house head came into the staffroom with information about mock interviews to be held as a training exercise for those seeking promotion. His opposite number, a woman, asked to see the information. He handed it over but as he did so growled at her 'What do you want it for? Women are only fit for breeding'.

The battle for equal pay was long – it began with a resolution put to the NUT conference of 1904 – and extremely bitter, as Farthing's thorough history shows. However, it would be hard to argue that the sexual inequalities in pay and promotion which are found in school teaching and in teacher training institutions today are a legacy from that struggle. Rather the rapid spread of coeducation has, as Zimmern (1898) Davies (1937) and Clarke (1937) feared, closed the main career and promotion path for the woman teacher – in the girls' school – without providing equality in the coeducational one. Some 30 years after the principle of equal pay was gained, women teachers are clustered in the lowest-paid sectors of teaching and, within each sector, in the lower-paid parts of it. The HMI (1979) survey found that 20 per cent of senior teachers were women, 22 per cent of those on Scale 4, and 58 per cent of those on scale 1. It looks as if the sex balance is roughly equal among scale 2 teachers, and men become the majority in each promoted grade above scale 2. The NUT/EOC (1980) survey revealed a similar point when they compared the percentage of all male and female teachers who had reached promoted posts.

The everyday, and lifetime, experience of men and women secondary teachers are different. The typical man is likely to gain a promoted post; many women never rise higher than scale 2. Although today most secondary teachers in LEA schools work in coeducation, their career prospects are different. The ILEA,
Sex roles and the school

which maintained many single-sex schools, offered more career prospects for women teachers. Thus in 1981 the ILEA had 22 per cent of their mixed secondary schools headed by a woman, as well as 98 per cent of their girls’ secondary schools—although not one boys’ school had a headmistress. The 22 per cent of headships of mixed schools held by women in the ILEA was unusually large (see Wells 1985, Davidson 1985). The percentage of women who have been promoted to senior positions, especially headships, within any one LEA is an important factor in the promotion prospects of other women candidates for headships there. Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1983) found that there was a vicious circle which could prevent women becoming heads in areas which had few women headteachers already. The authors report that, in England and Wales, in the early 1980s ‘the selection of headteachers is carried out in an arbitrary and amateur way’ (p. 145).

A substantial part of the selection involves committee members matching candidates against stereotypes of heads they have encountered. ‘Many more models of men headteachers are available to selectors, as a basis for stereotypes’ (p. 77). Three LEAs were studied which had a larger proportion of women heads than the national average already, and also had ‘officers who reported a more favourable attitude to women candidates’ (p. 75). If there are women around to provide the selectors with models, or stereotypes, of women heads, more possible styles are available for future candidates to be matched against.

The research team had detailed data on 56 headships being awarded between 1980 and 1983 (table 4.1). Women got appointed in exactly the proportions in which they applied. There are, therefore, grounds for accepting the complaints that not enough women apply. Morgan et al. (1983:67) conclude that the LEA officials went through three phases when considering women candidates for headships:

(1) at the first stage of sifting the applications they welcomed any from women;
(2) at the stage of getting ready to interview they expected women to be of a higher quality than men to make the same shortlist;
Table 4.1 The fate of applicants for thirty-six headships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Appointments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total candidates</td>
<td>2,753</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of women</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) at the final stages they anticipated hostility from the lay people among the selectors to appointing women to mixed or boys' schools.

Morgan et al. (1983) call for more systematic, and job-related, selection procedures, not only to make the appointment of heads more equitable and efficient, but also to allow women a fairer chance.

Sandra Acker (1983) has demolished most of the sociological work on teaching, revealing it to be unscholarly, based on unexamined, circular arguments, and riddled with sexism. The literature on why so few women apply for headships is equally flawed. Researchers, as much as practitioners, make assumptions about the promotion and careers of women teachers which have a basis in staffroom folklore rather than in evidence of any kind. There is a distinct lack of data about men applying for promotion, and particularly about the dynamics of decision making and the financial arrangements in their families, but this has not stopped assumptions being made. The following assumptions are offered as 'explanations' for the small proportion of women teachers reaching promoted posts, especially headships, and have been offered for at least two decades, in that Hilsum and Start (1974) report them from teachers surveyed in 1971, while Davidson (1985) found them among teachers interviewed in 1983.

(1) Men, as breadwinners, need to strive for more money, whereas women, who are only providing 'extra' income, do not.
(2) Men can, and do, expect their families to move house in search of better jobs, which women should not, cannot, or do not.
Sex roles and the school

not, do.

(3) Men are more persistent in applying for better jobs, and have more self-confidence or ambition, than women.

(4) Men want promotion, women prefer to be classroom teachers rather than do administration.

(5) Women are less well qualified than men.

(6) Women have fewer years of experience than male teachers of the same age.

(7) Women are always leaving to have babies.

(8) Women are more frequently absent from work for inappropriate reasons.

(9) Men are better teachers, and pupils prefer men.

(10) There is discrimination in favour of men, and/or discrimination against women, by heads, appointments committees and the like.

Two kinds of investigation need to be carried out on these beliefs about male and female teachers. First, it would be desirable to discover whether they are true statements about the lives of male and female teachers. Secondly, it would be useful to know how far teachers, heads, advisors, HMIs, education officers, governors and members of local government education committees believe all or any of them to be true and act on them. In the absence of such data we can only treat them as a series of myths or folkbeliefs, which are probably having long-term consequences for the lives of women teachers. If, for example, women teachers believe point 10, they are likely to be discouraged from applying for promotion. Similarly if school governors believe points 1 and 9, they are likely to promote men rather than women.

Our lack of data on the accuracy or falsehood of these statements, and on whether or not they are widely held by educational personnel, is striking. The first nine points, taken together, would form a convincing mythology to hinder the promotion of women in the occupation, and if they are widely believed, evidence to challenge them would have to be extremely powerful and well argued. As a ‘mythological charter’ for promoting men they could be hard to dislodge. Davidson (1985) presents counter arguments, but they have not reached
staffrooms or LEA offices. One possible explanation for women's lower success in reaching higher posts or salaries is that women do not apply. Hilsum and Stark (1974) found that in both primary and secondary schools men were promoted faster, and that the number of applications for posts was much higher for men. In a sample of 133 secondary schools that had headships advertised in 1972 there were 4,712 applications from men and only 276 from women. The authors suggest women might not apply because they were convinced they would not get them, but their data show that men apply for posts of a specific status many more times than women. In other words, men who have decided to try for a particular status will persist in applying for such posts, while women do not. Thus male respondents are quoted who made up to 100 applications for a headship, while women respondents who received three or four rejections gave up and stopped applying.

The research by Morgan et al. (1983) a decade later reveals that persistence can be rewarded. They actually observed (pp.62-5) one man eliminated from one shortlist being interviewed and rejected elsewhere, and then gaining a headship in a third school during their research. Another man they came across had made 102 applications for headships before being appointed to a large school. Given the arbitrary and irrational selection procedures that LEAs were using, and there is no reason to suppose that others are different, continued and sustained application is rational. In different LEAs, and in the same LEA at different selection meetings, the same criteria were used positively and negatively. In other words what was a disqualifying factor for one job could be a positive benefit for another. Among the comments recorded by Morgan et al. (1983: 54-62) for and against applicants for headships are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points made to support a candidate</th>
<th>Points made to attack a candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He's had experience in an independent school</td>
<td>Too long in private education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This brief extract from the rich data in Morgan et al. reveals that what one selection group regard as a good quality may be
Sex roles and the school view negatively by another – and so anyone wanting promotion should persevere, and persevere, and persevere.

In the 1970s researchers such as Hilsum and Start (1974) claimed that women teachers were less ambitious than men. Subsequent studies have found more ambitious women teachers.

First-class science teacher
35 – the right age
Got an OU degree
I have a naïve belief in the quality of a first-class honours degree
He comes from this part of the world and therefore has sympathy with the kind of children we have to educate
Good at sport
Attended my college 6 years after I did
and he's a physicist
A shade on the young side at 34
A chap who only passes at the OU hasn't done much
Don't want anyone with a first because they're too clever to employ
Works in Blanktown and wants to come back to work here – I don't think that's sufficient reason
His interests are squash and drama
Anyone based at LSE has to be very left in their outlook

The NUT/EOC (1980) research and Davidson (1985) found little difference in the goals of male and female teachers. The women Davidson interviewed were less optimistic that they would reach their goals, but they were ambitious to leave their low-scale jobs for senior positions with administrative duties.

The final two myths – that men are better teachers and that there is sex discrimination in the promotion procedures – are the hardest to gather evidence about. A substantial number of men believe that men make better teachers. Given the difficulties of researching such an issue (see Delamont 1986,
The teachers surveyed about coeducation by Dale (1969:48) included women teachers opposed to coeducation because of poorer career opportunities for women. The teachers sampled by Hilsum and Start (1974:15) were asked to rate a list of factors which were thought to influence promotion. About 60 per cent of the 5,794 teachers thought that being a graduate, specialising in a shortage subject, and 'social contacts', were important (respondents could choose up to five factors). 'Being male' was chosen by only 12.8 per cent of the sample. However, among the primary teachers, 16.5 per cent of women but only 6.0 per cent of men thought it important, while among the secondary teachers 20.2 per cent thought being male an advantage. Hilsum and Start followed up the belief that 'social contacts' were important for promotion in their interviews with 135 teachers, and found 75 per cent thought them a significant factor. The kinds of contacts which were mentioned were: Freemason, Church, sports club, political organizations, professional associations, councillor, social club and 'knew the head' (p. 122). It is noticeable that, although the authors do not discuss the point, many of these are male-dominated spheres. Only men can be Freemasons, and far more men are likely to be active in politics, the local council and sports clubs (see Derr (1986) for a discussion on women's participation in voluntary, religious and political activities), and men are in the dominant positions on appointment committees, whether as heads or as LEA staff or local councillors. If the teachers are correct in suggesting that social contacts are important, and it is those kinds of contact which matter, then there are signs of the type of informal male circles which de facto exclude women reported for other occupations and professions. Cynthia Epstein (1983) drew attention to the ways in which women in law were excluded from other lawyers' informal circles because these met in bars and clubs closed to women, or at times when women could not attend (see also Atkinson and Delamont 1990, Dale 1987 and Lorber 1984). Hilsum and Start (1974:122) say actual sex
discrimination seemed as nebulous as the claims that being promoted meant having the right connections in such organisations as the Freemasons or the Rotary club. They found that there was a 'hearsay grapevine' (p.188) among teachers about such unfair practices, but very few respondents had any direct, personal experience of them.

The study by Morgan et al. (1983) found that patronage was a factor in appointments to headships, and that all three groups involved (governors, LEA committee members, and officials) sometimes sponsored particular candidates for reasons to do with non-task matters. In their data there are examples of religious, golfing and party political connections, leading to support for particular applicants. The membership of appointing committees is predominantly male – especially the education officers who have considerable influence over shortlisting – so the authors remark that:

it is mainly men who are responsible for making decisions about whether women are as capable of being successful headteachers as men. (p.68)

If promotion in school teaching depends in part on meeting brokers, councillors and LEA officials at the Freemasons, the rugby club, the Conservative party headquarters, or the golf club, then women are at a considerable disadvantage in school teaching as in other male-dominated professions. The married woman with children has little leisure to be active in politics or sport, as well as manage her job, even if she can enter the relevant premises.

The career in the women's teacher training college has also been changed out of all recognition by the coming of coeducation, and then the closure and merger of colleges. Sheila Fletcher (1984) has chronicled the changes in the Bedford women's PE training college from a cloistered total institution (see Walker 1983) of the type described in Miss Pym Disposes (Tey 1947), to a mixed multi-site institute of higher education. There are few studies of those college principals and their careers. Howson (1982) has written a biography of Elizabeth Williams (Principal of Whitelands and Homerton) but we have little information about Williams' coevals or her successors. A
The whole career avenue for women has been swept away without any public debate, and without any ‘rescue archaeology’ on the lives of women who chose that career. Browne (1979) has written a history of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education (ATCDE) from 1945 until it was absorbed into NATFHE, and as the ATCDE was formed by amalgamating the Training College Association (founded 1891) and the Council of Principals (1913), her book includes data on women college principals this century. Women were in a majority in the Council of Principals, and between the wars there was an abortive move by a few men to form a separate association to escape a perceived female dominance (p.9). In the period 1918-39, lecturing in a college of education, though a respectable occupation for women, was not a highly paid one, for the salaries were the same as those for teaching in elementary school (p.26). Even the principals did not receive generous salaries, because until 1963 there was no agreed, national salary scale for them. As Browne comments wryly:

before that the salaries were based on gentlemen’s agreements in each college. As the majority of the gentlemen on the principals’ side were ladies, they did not do very well. (p.134)

Lecturing in a teachers’ training college, or being principal of one, was not a well-paid occupation, but it was a career, and gave women autonomy. In 1957 there were 108 two year teacher training colleges: nineteen for men, fifteen mixed, and seventy-four for women only. Many of these had women principals. However, after 1944 the criticisms of single-sex colleges grew in strength, so that gradually they became to be seen as anachronisms. In 1969 one retiring principal of a women’s college told Browne that her generation were the ‘last of the lay abbesses’ (p. 134). They were, and a whole career path went with them.

Thus, in 30 years two career paths for women were lost, and nothing was done to replace them with alternatives in the new coeducational schools and multi-course tertiary colleges. Similar analyses can be made for nursing, librarianship and social work, where reorganization and bureaucratization have led to senior posts increasingly being held by men. As Heath (1981) pointed out:
Sex roles and the school-teaching, nursing and social work... the helping professions provide a definite channel of upward mobility for career-orientated women. (p. 120)

If the senior posts in these occupations are becoming monopolized by men, then women will be trapped in the lower-paid grades of these occupations with little chance of promotion. The sociology of education and professional socialization has not yet begun to focus on the consequences of this for these occupations, for social mobility, for women's lives and careers, and for the ways these workers handle male and female clients. As far as pupils are concerned, the lack of women in top educational jobs is glaringly obvious. Eileen Byrne (1978:212) sees the resulting absence of women in leadership roles as disadvantageous to males and females. She argues that:

> It is crucial that both girls and boys actually see women in leadership, management, government, making decisions in their daily lives, if we are to break the cycle of underachievement. As long as children see men taking the top posts, decisions, and higher pay... children will believe what they see and not what we say...

Byrne wants to see "both men and women evenly represented at all stages from pre-school to professors, primaries to polytechnics..." (p. 213). The evidence we have shows that this is far from being achieved. However, even if Byrne's ideal balance of the sexes were achieved, the evidence on recruitment to teaching and the 'reality shock' which hits recruits suggest that it would need more than an equal balance of the sexes to change the sexist nature of the occupational culture. There are strong historical reasons for the occupational culture of teachers being a conservative one where sex roles are concerned.
5 Strategies for change

Sichelgaita was cast in a Wagnerian mould and must be appreciated as such. In her we came face to face with the closest approximation history has ever dared to produce of a Valkyrie. A woman of immense build and colossal physical strength, she was to prove a perfect wife for Robert, and from the day of their wedding to that of his death she scarcely ever left her husband’s side – least of all in battle, one of her favourite occupations. (Norwich 1967:117)

Sichelgaita married Robert (the Norman ruler of Apulia) in 1058 or 1059 and bore him ten children as well as riding into battle with him. We know about her partly from the writing of Anna Comnena, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Alexius, ‘an intelligent and very well-educated woman; and she was a conscientious historian, who tried to verify her sources’ (Runciman 1951:327). The majority of British schoolchildren and students have never heard of either woman, and leave formal education without realizing that any female wrote chronicles about wars or (other than Boudicca) ever fought in battle.

Sichelgaita and Anna Comnena may seem remote from the history that contemporary British pupils need to know. Yet British undergraduates are equally ignorant of women such as Mary Seacole (the black nurse who served heroically in the Crimea) and Prudence Crandall (who was firebombed out of Connecticut towns for trying to teach negroes to read), whose existence and exploits are bursting with contemporary relevance. The funny book by Kate Charlesworth and Marsaili Cameron (1986) written because most British histories include
Sex roles and the school

'about 3% women,' including Boudicca, is designed to redress the male bias of the history curriculum. In this chapter the focus is on attempts made at national, local, school and individual level to change the ways in which schools have reinforced conventional sex roles (cultural reproduction) rather than challenging them (cultural interruption).

Since the first edition of this book there have been a good many projects designed to reduce sex stereotyping in education. In a book this short there is no room to discuss all of these, so the chapter takes one such initiative – Women’s Training Roadshows – examines it, and then draws some conclusions about all the attempts.

One initiative discussed

In June 1987 over 2,000 female pupils, mostly between 12 and 18, visited the Cardiff Women’s Training Roadshow, an exhibition, filmshow, careers convention and workshop designed to widen their horizons about non-traditional jobs (Pilcher et al. 1988, 1989a, b). This was the eighth in a series of such events held round Britain run by the Women’s National Commission between 1985 and 1987. Roadshows are unusual compared to most of the other programmes designed to challenge sex-role stereotyping in education because they were a national initiative. Venues included Cardiff and Glasgow. The Cardiff Roadshow was the only one to be evaluated, and the researchers’ conclusions are a useful starting point for thinking about initiatives since 1980. The full results have been published (Pilcher et al. 1989a, c) so the issues raised here are brief and selective. Overall the Roadshow was a great success for sponsors, exhibitors, participants and visitors. However, the benefits were unevenly spread in the locality and among the schoolgirls who visited it.

A Roadshow costs a good deal of money (raised from industry, commerce and government agencies) and involves many people in a vast amount of work. For a school, visiting a Roadshow is a cheap and easy way to do something about sex equality, because the costs fall elsewhere. All the secondary
Strategies for change.

Schools with female pupils in three local authorities in South Wales were invited to send parties of pupils and teachers to the Roadshow. Many did not even reply to the invitation, which indicates how little importance most heads attach to female careers’ advice and equal opportunities. There are, for example, four Welsh-medium secondary schools in the area, but only one accepted the invitation. A few schools were enthusiastic and sent large numbers of girls, but many others were uninterested in the opportunity.

There were also noticeable differences among those schools which did send pupils in the amount of preparation for the visit that had been done, the plans made about what pupils would do there, and hence the benefits for staff and schoolgirls. For example, the adolescents were given an activity booklet to structure their use of the Roadshow (schools had been told about this in the precirculated materials), yet almost all schools allowed the young women to come without pens or pencils! In following one pair of young women as they ambled around the exhibition hall (who had drifted past most of the stalls without engaging in conversation with the staff or taking part in activities) this lack of preparation in their school was apparent to me. When they went to the area containing role models (real live women who were bus drivers, engineers, dentists and carpenters), the girls appeared to be unaware of the purpose of this part of the Roadshow. I intervened, saying ‘Have you found a role model to talk to?’ and steered them to the veterinary nurses. One girl commented ‘We haven’t been told anything about this’, and followed up a talk with the veterinary nurses by speaking to the women bus driver and inspector. They had had no idea of the active part they were supposed to be playing.

Few staff used the exhibition themselves to collect materials or talk to employers and role models; the typical teacher made sure all the pupils got off the bus and into the building and then vanished until it was time to leave. Exhibitors and role models both said afterwards that the pupils had not been properly prepared to gain from the event; they did not know what to ask about or look for. Pupils reported later that many of the exhibitors and role models were not keen to talk to schoolgirls, but were self-absorbed. Orian McGann (1987) wrote:
Sex roles and the school

presentation varied considerably between displays, on the one hand some participants showed enthusiasm and attempted to attract students to their stands, on the other hand, however, a number of those observed seemed to be doing the opposite and I got the feeling these presenters were hoping that they wouldn't be approached! (p.7)

McGann found that people staffing the stalls were not necessarily volunteers and/or interested in promoting sex equality at all. For some, it was just a job. As Guttentag and Bray (1976) showed, half-hearted attempts to challenge sex roles are not even half-effective: attempts that are poorly done or done by non-believers tend to reinforce conservatism in pupils.

As a 15 year old complained:

Some stalls were only there to advertise and not to speak to the girls.

The research on the VISTA (women scientists and technologists visiting schools to explain their jobs) element of the Girls into Science and Technology (GIST) project (Whyte 1985) makes it very clear that the role models only work if they are properly prepared and briefed, and the 'lessons' to be learnt by pupils are made explicit.

Of the 2,000 schoolgirls who had attended the Roadshow 500 were subsequently visited at their schools and asked about their responses to it. There was a wide range of attitudes according to the young women's ages and the type of school attended. A sixth former at a private school who had been exposed to WISE (Women into Science and Engineering Year), been on a work-shadowing programme, done three sciences to O-level and planned to be a doctor told us almost wearily:

Being at this school, everyone is told that they can do anything. We have had it all.

In contrast, younger pupils—those of 12, 13 and 14—were surprised to discover that women 'were allowed' to be plumbers, bus drivers and solicitors. As one said

It was very interesting. I didn't think there was so many jobs available to women.
One of the role models, a chemical engineer, reported two younger women asked her three times if she was 'really an engineer'. She enquired why they doubted her, to get the answer 'because you've got a handbag'. These pupils were still at primary school in 1984 - WISE Year - and held precisely the attitudes that it was designed to change. One lesson from this is that all these initiatives have to be done for every generation of women: the first-year pupils do not 'know' what the fifth form were taught about sex roles 4 years earlier.

One of the striking findings of this evaluation was the young women's surprise that important national companies - such as BP - thought they were worth putting on an exhibition for. Many of the schoolgirls were flattered that firms thought they justified such effort and expense.

The Women's Training Roadshow aimed to give girls and women information about the opportunities available to them in non-traditional female occupations. The general message of the Roadshow did get over to its audience - perhaps especially so to the younger pupils who enjoyed their involvement in the participatory activities. Each schoolgirl's visit to the Roadshow lasted less than 3 hours. The follow-up visits to the schools took place some 4 months after that. The impact that made on the girls can be judged by their recall of the event, which was detailed and vivid, and by the level of support for future events.

Our analysis of the girls' attitudes towards women and work and issues of childcare reveal that they generally hold egalitarian and non-stereotyped views. Yet, however egalitarian and non-stereotyped the views of the girls might be, this does not mean that they are considering attempting non-traditional occupations themselves. The occupational aspirations of the majority of the schoolgirls are safely within the well-established realms of 'women's work', and they were not doing physics and CDT after 14 (see Pratt et al. 1984).

The girls in our study maintained that their decisions about which subjects to study to examination level were made on the basis of their interest and ability and whether a subject would be useful for a job that they had in mind. However, from comments that were made in the discussion sessions in relation to physics and other non-traditional subjects, it is clear that a
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The 'hidden agenda' is in operation involving their perceptions of the subject matter and their consequent ability to do well in it. The girls described physics as a subject which was 'boring' and 'hard'. They explained that boys are less likely to view the subject in this way because the subject matter, as the girls perceived it, is more likely to appeal to them. A sixth former, from a private school, told us: 'Boys are encouraged in these things from an early age with toys'.

Many girls also believed that physics teachers, who were invariably male, had a negative attitude towards girls, who were most often a minority in their classes. It was explained to us frequently that physics is a subject which 'leads to male careers' and that this is a further reason why girls choose not to study it. The 'hidden agenda' in relation to physics thus involves the girls' perception of the subject matter and their ideas about its occupational implications. It is the subject matter of physics, or, more probably, the way it is presented, that needs to be addressed if the numbers of girls choosing to study the subject are to increase.

We asked about the girls' own plans and hopes, both expected and desired destinations after leaving school. There is a large literature, both international (Kovlesky and Bealer 1972) and local (Cowell et al. 1981) showing that adolescents separate their ideal jobs from their occupational expectations which are more conditioned by local labour market conditions. Table 5.1 shows what the pupils hoped and expected to do after leaving school. The sample included a wide range of abilities yet a large proportion of the girls (35 per cent) hope to go to university after they leave school, 30 per cent of the schoolgirls hope to get a full-time job whilst just over 20 per cent hope to train in a college. A comparison of their expectations for the future rather than their hopes is revealing.

Aspirations to attend university and to get a full-time job are greater than expectations. Getting a place on a Youth Training Scheme, getting a part-time job or training in a college are expected more frequently than desired. An examination of the explanations for the gap between these expectations and their hopes reveals a concern about the young women's ability to gain appropriate qualifications (59 per cent) and unemployment (19...
Table 3.1: Hoped for and expected destinations after leaving school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Hope Number</th>
<th>Expected Number</th>
<th>Differential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University or Polytechnic</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time job</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in a college</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying GCE</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time job</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a family</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help at home</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add up to 100 because of some respondents naming more than one destination.

Other explanations include changing their minds (11 per cent), financial concerns (4 per cent), the responsibilities of marriage and family life (4 per cent) and that achievement of aspirations requires determination (4 per cent). It is clear that the girls view barriers to achievement of aspirations in personal and individual terms, expressed as failure to obtain appropriate levels and types of qualifications, or a lack of determination or conviction on their own part. Societal or structural barriers are mentioned less.

Most of the young women wanted secretarial jobs (10 per cent), or to enter nursery nursing (10 per cent), hairdressing and beauty (10 per cent) or teaching (9 per cent); a smaller percentage chose medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and accountancy. Very few girls aspired to non-traditional manual occupations, such as plumbing. Only 1 per cent of the sample favoured engineering for themselves. Overall, the girls were aiming to enter occupational areas which are safely 'female', with a minority aiming for 'professional' occupations, such as law and medicine.
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The main effect of the Roadshow, and any other sex-equality information the young women had received in the past, was to make them aware that women could do non-traditional jobs, not to change their own preferences for traditional female ones or the professions of law and medicine.

An initiative such as the Roadshow provides a wealth of data, far more than can be discussed here (see Pickles et al. 1989a, c). Action-research programmes that last for longer periods – such as Girls into Science and Technology (GIST) which ran for 2 years – generate enough material to fill whole books. It would be foolish and boring for the reader, to present a compressed finding of all the projects that have run since 1980. Instead, I have extracted some key issues from the Roadshow evaluation which are also applicable to other studies, and used them to raise the central topics which need to be thought about for the 1990s.

Since 1980: what have we learnt?
The Roadshow has many features in common with other national and local attempts to reduce sex differentiation and stereotyping in education. If the next decades' efforts are to be consolidated and extended there are four groups of features from which lessons can be learnt: locational, directional, 'vocational'/'cultural', and psychological.

The locational issues are that Roadshows and other initiatives are:

(a) concentrated in England rather than Wales, Scotland and Ireland;
(b) in urban rather than rural settings.

The directional issues are that Roadshows and other initiatives are:

(a) aimed at girls and women not boys and men;
(b) directed to secondary and tertiary sector students not nursery, infant and primary school pupils;
(c) aimed at school pupils rather than parents, trade unions, employers and teachers.

The 'vocational'/'cultural' issues are that Roadshows and other such initiatives are:
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(a) focused on science and CDT, not humanities and aesthetic subjects;
(b) based on an assumption that schools and workplaces are sites for labour, not primarily places for socializing;
(c) concentrated on the serious rather than the pleasurable.

The psychological issues are that Roadshows and other initiatives are:

(a) focused on what adults believe will change pupils’ ideas, rather than starting from what pupils actually believe (their ‘folk models’);
(b) sanitized to avoid all discussion of sexuality, orientation and sexual politics.

These are explained as they are discussed below.

Lost horizons? The location of initiatives

The Women’s National Commission Roadshows were held around Britain not just in England. Most of the initiatives which have taken place since the first edition of this book have been English and localized in a few LEAs. Burchell and Millman’s (1989) useful collection on projects and policies being implemented to bring about gender equality has nothing from Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales; neither do the volumes in the same series by Weiner (1985) and Wickham (1985).

The Weiner volume is particularly narrow in its geographical coverage: twelve of the seventeen contributors work in London, none north of Leeds, and all in cities. All the Roadshows were held in urban areas, and this pattern is typical of most sex-equality projects. Clwyd County Council’s appointment of a sex-equality advisor, and their translation of Genderwatch into Welsh, are a rare example of a rural initiative. Taylor (1980) has pointed out how the government reports on the Scottish secondary curriculum in the 1970s ignored sex inequalities completely, and how male dominated the administration of Scottish education was. Too much of the effort to make schools less sex stereotyped has been concentrated in a few English cities. Only the national data which are collected to evaluate the
national programmes such as TVEI will reveal whether all LEAs are working equally hard to reduce sex differentiation. Byrne (1978) claimed that girls in rural areas suffered more than those in towns from sex differentiation, so the impact of initiatives throughout the whole UK is particularly important. TVEI, which started in England and Wales in a small way in 1983, reached Scotland in 1984, and now covers 100 LEAs. In Scotland, TVEI had become widespread by 1987 (Bell and Howieson 1988). Nationally, local authorities signing up for TVEI have to accept the criterion that:

equal opportunities should be available to young people of both sexes and they should normally be educated together on courses within each project. Care should be taken to avoid sex stereotyping.

(MSC 1984)

It is not clear that this is recognized at school and classroom level. In South Wales, the TVEI course at Brynhenlog involved boys doing ‘keyboard skills’ in one room, while girls did ‘typing’ in another, not because either sex would benefit from being in a single-sex class but because typing used to be a ‘girls’ subject, and the TVEI ‘keyboard skills’ had just been added for boys (see Upton et al. (1988) and Delamont 1989a for details of this research). Away from the self-consciously anti-sexist schools in some LEAs, such reinterpretations of TVEI are probably all too common.

As well as being geographically restricted, most initiatives have left out one sex altogether.

Lost boys? The directional issue

The Cardiff Women’s Training Roadshow, and the others in the WNC series, were for females. Schools were asked to send parties of girls, and the publicity was aimed at women. The stallholders, role models and workshops were designed to challenge women’s ideas about the labour market. This is typical of the majority of initiatives designed to change the sexual division of labour in Britain. Few projects have been aimed at discovering why boys avoid foreign languages and home econ-
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omics, choose 'masculine' jobs and plan to stay in the labour market rather than stay home to rear their children. The research that has been done receives less publicity, and generates less concern, than that on girls. Powell (Powell 1979, 1984, 1986, Powell and Littlewood 1982, 1985) has been voicing concern for a decade about the small numbers of boys gaining a foreign language qualification, but there has not been a single project like GIST aimed at boys. Noticeably, Powell's research is not even cited in the Burchell and Millman (1989) collection, or that on boys edited by Askew and Ross (1988). In 1973 only 8 per cent of male sixth formers in English LEA schools were taking A-level French compared to 24 per cent of girls. Yet nowhere in the DES documents produced in the 1970s was this raised as a problem. While the shortage of female scientists and technologists has generated research and action, the shortage of male linguists has been ignored. No one has suggested that all soldiers stationed in Germany should seize the chance to learn German, or those in Cyprus be taught Greek, yet these are wasted opportunities to reach young men.

The wider issues of gender and science are being debated in the 1980s as never before, predominantly by women authors (e.g. Roosier 1982, Mancherle 1982, Burridge 1983, Keller 1985, J. Harding 1986, S. Harding 1986, Harding and O'Brien 1987, Dobrery 1987, McNiel 1988). Debates about the extent to which scientific activity is inherently an aggressive combative activity are pursued in feminist scholarship, although they were not taken up in sociology of science or science education. Alison Kelly (1985a) presented this debate to the sociology of education audience, and Mancherle (1982) raised it for science educators, but it has not been rehearsed in the journal read by historians and sociologists of science (Delamont 1987b, 1989b). Despite that neglect, the general level of interest is massive compared to the silence on men and languages. The problem remains acute. Jones (1989) presents the A-level entry figures for Wales by sex comparing 1967, 1977 and 1987. In 1987 women were 23 per cent of all the A-level physics candidates and 83 per cent of all the French entrants. The English statistics are similar. In Europe men expect to learn other languages whatever career they plan to enter, yet in the UK they do not,
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and studying languages may even be seen as 'sissy'. A series of Roadshows for schoolboys on the need for fluency in many tongues, and a FLAMES (Foreign Languages are Men's Sub-
sjects) programme are clearly called for.

This particular sex differentiation may be changed by the introduction of the National (national here meaning only England and Wales) Curriculum. It is too soon to say how the National Curriculum will work out in practice. Those com-
mentators who were alarmed by the small percentage of women doing any science after 16 and the shortage of females studying physics after 14 welcomed the compulsory science (although it is not clear whether there will be enough teachers to instruct them). Initial enthusiasm for the central place for science became suspicion when the 'two tier' science curriculum was proposed. Research on how pupils are allocated to particular subjects (e.g. Woods 1979) is currently of crucial importance in science education given the proposal that some pupils should have only 12.5 per cent of their time occupied by science, rather than 20 per cent. Edwyn Jones (1988), then chairperson elect of the ASE (Association for Science Education), rightly enquired who would decide which pupils received the 12.5 per cent. He feared that girls, or the brightest arts specialists, or the less able, might be allowed to take the reduced provision. Anyone who has read Keddie (1971) might fear that unexamined teacher assumptions about 'natural' talent will be used to allocate pupils to the 12.5 per cent 'stream'. Research into the possible existence of processes and policies that Keddie (1971) claimed to have found in humanities is needed among science, maths and CDT staff.

The focus on female pupils rather than males is not the only directional issue that needs comment. Many employers still do not have any interest in recruiting, training and retaining workers in non-traditional occupations; many trade unions have yet to take sex equality on board at a workplace, everyday level; and many parents, teachers and even careers staff have very stereotyped ideas about male and female behaviour. Roadshows were sponsored by major national firms, and some local ones also supported the Cardiff one. Many other employers showed no interest. The local commercial television station (HTV) did
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not reply to the invitation to join the Roadshow, yet the training officer visited it and complained that she had not been asked to participate because HTV were keen to recruit women as technicians. We explained that HTV had not answered the invitation they had been sent – which had never reached the training officers. It is inconceivable that an offer of a Royal Visit or a trip to the Cup Final could get lost in a British firm, but all too easy to believe that a letter offering a Roadshow stall would.

Rees et al. (1989) report that many employers in South Wales, studied in 1986 and 1987, held stereotyped beliefs about differences in the technical and social abilities of men and women... (and) such stereotypes were further consolidated by cultural assumptions about the gender-appropriateness of different jobs – and where men or women... entered 'inappropriate' jobs, it was often the employer who guided them away... into other work.

Encouraging young people into non-traditional occupations is pointless if their employers are going to redirect them away from those jobs. Cockburn (1987) has shown vividly how hard it is for an adolescent who chooses an unconventional job to sustain it under pressures from adults and peers.

Projects and initiatives designed to challenge sex stereotyping have to be aimed at males and females, employers and workers, teachers and taught, parents and children, advisers and advised. If they are not, the initiative suffers the Lake Wobegon effect. Lake Wobegon, Mist County, Minnesota, does not appear on any map of the USA. As Garrison Keiller (1986:90–2) explains, four teams of surveyors began from the four corners of Minnesota, working towards the centre:

The southwest and northwest contingents moved fast over level ground, while the eastern teams got bogged down in the woods, so that when they met a little west of Lake Wobegon, the four quadrants didn’t fit within the boundaries legislated by Congress in 1851. The legislature simply re-proportioned the state by eliminating the overlap in the middle, the little quadrangle that is Mist County.

Ever since 1866, therefore, Lake Wobegon has not been on any map.
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Educational reforms tend to vanish in the same way. Gillian Parsons (1981) found this when researching how teachers, university lecturers and public examiners felt about the choice of O- and A-level set texts for English literature. She interviewed heads of English in comprehensives, who told her that the choice of texts was dull and predictable, and they wished that the universities and the examiners would be more adventurous. The representatives of the exam boards reported that the choice of texts for O- and A-levels was dull and predictable, but that neither the schools nor the universities were prepared to accept more adventurous selections. Staff in the universities told Parsons that the choice of texts was dull and predictable but the exam boards and schools were not prepared to accept more adventurous selections. Literature by women, from the Commonwealth, and Anglo-Welsh texts were all excluded from the lists year after year, while all three sets of participants agreed the status quo was dull, yet blamed the other two groups for blocking innovation.

The same Lake Wobegon effect occurs in the area of reducing sex stereotyping. Teachers blame parents, pupils and the labour market; parents blame schools, pupils and employers; employers blame schools, parents and young people; young people complain about adults. No group admits that they can change the status quo, and the educational equivalent of Mist County (sex equality) stays missing from the centre of the map.

Science or sculpture? The vocational/cultural issues

The musical Salad Days featured a magic piano which made everyone who heard it start dancing, even a killjoy cabinet minister. The initiatives designed to reduce sex segregation and differentiation desperately need such an instrument. The programmes and innovations have been serious, prosaic and leaden footed: Apollonian not Dionysian. There has been very little joy, gaiety and dancing. The thrust of the initiatives has been towards science and technology, towards vocational subjects, and towards the intrinsic rewards of work. Very little has been done about sex equality in the humanities and the aesthetic
curriculum, in leisure activities, as a way of having a more pleasurable life, and to the social and emotional aspects of working. There are no programmes designed to enthuse girls with the ambition to be poets or sculptors, to get boys enjoying ballet or petit point, or to encourage the sexes to practice working together and sharing hobbies and recreational charter. Tickle’s (1987) collection on the arts in education does not include a single report (in eleven chapters) of any initiative to challenge sexism in these areas. There is a desperate need for projects that focus on all areas of the curriculum, and those which stress that liberation from rigid sex roles makes life fun for both sexes. The schoolchildren studied by Raphaela Best (1983) were quite clear at 15 that:

they could do and say what they wanted, they were indeed egalitarian, they were indeed non-sexist, they could indeed relate to one another on the basis of common interests — as friends — without resorting to macho aggression or female wiles. (p.178)

Elaine told an interviewer ‘we had a fun time’ in Best’s anti-sexism programme. Such fun is too often missing.

The lack of gaiety in the programmes to reduce sex differentiation in education is closely related to a second characteristic they share: Initiatives are heavily biased towards the view that life in schools, further education colleges, and workplaces is centred on the work that goes on there, which should be intrinsically satisfying. This is contrary to the experience of most pupils in their schools and at their part-time jobs, and to research on workers; it therefore makes the emphasis of the programmes seem irrelevant and rarefied.

There is ample evidence that many pupils value school as much or more for the social life — seeing friends and catching up on news — as they do for the lessons or eventual qualifications. As a Scottish school leaver put it:

Once I left school I thought it was great, then you miss all of your pals, you miss all of the laughs. (Walford 1989:260)

Margaret Gibson’s (1987a,b) research on Punjabi high school
students in Northern California reports that they are deviant because they concentrate on academic work even when they are not in the college-preparatory track. The local 'Anglo' students outside the college track do the minimum necessary to get a high school graduation certification.

There is an assumption, shared by Valleysider parents, students, and teachers, that the more advanced academic courses are only for college-bound students. Those students who do not expect to go on to a 4-year college see little point, therefore, in taking maths, science, and English classes beyond those required for graduation. Thus for the last 2 years of high school, the typical Valleysider student turns his or her attention to part-time jobs and social activities. (Edeson 1987b:307)

The Punjabi students were seen as deviant failures because they did not join in school clubs, dances, class picnics, etc. They are viewed as unassimilated because they take schoolwork seriously.

In the labour market, the same criteria apply. Carol Buswell's (1988) study of fifty-five adolescents in YTS placements in clerical and retail workplaces reveals how important for the trainees the social relations were. The intrinsic nature of the work was dull and repetitive, but a good placement resulted from friendly, supportive colleagues. Buswell (1988:170) quotes a girl on a clerical placement whose workmates 'invited me to the dinner-dance and paid for me and everything', while one in a shop said hers were 'very helpful and nice' and treated her 'like an equal'. Most of the research on the types of work that the majority of the population does shows it to be undemanding, uninteresting and repetitive. (See, for example, Blackburn and Mann 1979, and Pollert 1981.)

Blackburn and Mann pointed out that most of the men they studied used more skill when driving to work than they needed to perform their tasks at work. It is the social relationships that differentiate good and bad jobs, and the lack of them is one reason why unemployment is so depressing (see Coffield et al. 1986; Walford 1989). Few people are privileged to have jobs that are intrinsically absorbing or satisfying. A major problem
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for young people who try to enter non-traditional jobs is the lack of supportive, enjoyable friendships in the workplace. (See Cockburn (1987), for example, where this lack affects both boys and girls on YTS.) Too much of the effort put into reducing sex differentiation is based on a model of working life where intrinsic satisfaction is enough, ignoring the realities of the jobs young people actually face. It is no use persuading a girl to get an apprenticeship in a garage if none of the men is able to be workmates with a female.

Advice about choosing non-traditional occupations will be ‘written off’ if it is offered in careers lessons riddled with misapprehensions about the world of work the adolescents already know. In 1985 I watched a careers lesson for remedial and mildly learning-disabled pupils in a Welsh comprehensive school, Heol-y-Crynwy, taken by the Deputy Head, Mr Despenser.

The lesson is centred round a book about starting work. Frank starts his first job, and does everything wrong: he is late, he hasn’t brought his NI card, etc., he is cheeky and does not radiate keenness etc.

His boss is angry with him. The pupils read the story aloud and then discuss it. They all side with Frank, and regard the boss as quite unreasonable for shouting at him.

Mr Despenser tries to refocus them onto their responsibilities, such as punctuality and politeness. He asks for their ideas on what happens when a young person starts work, and then disputes all their ideas. Frederick said the worst thing about starting work was that it ‘would be a new place, wouldn’t know nobody there’.

Mr Despenser said that was irrelevant, and asked what time a shopworker has to start work in the morning.

Claudette said ‘7:00’, and Mr Despenser told her that was too early, shops did not open that early in the morning. She tried to tell him about shops that do, but he ignored her.

The shop at the end of the road outside the school, a newsagent and general store, announced on its door that it was open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Too many of the initiatives fail to use the knowledge pupils have and face the realities they face.
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Who's headed are we in? The 'psychological' dimension

At first glance school physics, smoking in pregnancy, a proper roast dinner and Basque cheesemaking have nothing in common with each other, and no place in a book on sex roles and the school. In fact all these topics have been the focus of research on how ordinary people think about the world around them and the everyday things in it. Experts frequently despair because people do not follow good advice or behave in self-damaging ways or fail to learn what they are taught. Doctors, nurses and midwives, for example, are distressed when mothers smoke, drink and take tranquillisers even in pregnancy. In a range of areas, researchers have decided to start at the other end of the problem: to find out how ordinary lay people understand their everyday worlds, and then compare their 'lay' or 'folk' models with those held by experts. Frequently, it transpires that the people in the street have a clear logically consistent folk model which is quite, quite different from 'scientific' or 'expert' models. When a folk model conflicts with expert argument, the former usually wins out: because it was developed over a person's lifetime, in their home, school, job and family setting, and works there, it is more powerful than the abstract 'theories' of outsiders.

A concrete example from the area of food and eating will illustrate this. Anne Murcott (1983, 1988) studied the folk models of food and nutrition held by women in South Wales. Although her respondents had learnt about vitamins, minerals and protein in school, and could describe food in those terms, it was not the model they used when planning menus, shopping and cooking. When actually getting food on to the table, the model used was one of 'meals and platefuls'. For example, everyone had an idea of 'a cooked dinner' or 'a proper dinner', consisting of roast meat, roast and boiled potatoes, a green vegetable and another vegetable, plus gravy. This was contrasted with snacks, salad meals, chip-based meals, curries, Chinese take-aways and so on. When organizing their family's food, the lay model of types of meal, plus the likes and dislikes of family members, plus the constraints of time, money, availability and, importantly, the views of the husband, gov-
erned what was cooked and eaten. The dietitians' model, though known, was not relevant compared to the folk model of what a good wife put on the table in front of her family.

Exactly the same findings come from science education. Even people who have done A-level sciences still have 'folk models' or 'misapprehensions' about how scientific phenomena (such as gravity) work. If you ask 15 year olds a science question framed like a school science task, they use their school science to answer it. If they are asked a question needing the same scientific information to answer it, but phrased like an everyday enquiry, commonsense lay models are invoked. So, for example, the same pupils who can answer a science question about expansion of heated metals correctly, fail to explain why sausages burst their skins when cooked. The scientific information does not displace the folk model, it merely sits in a compartment alongside it. The research on this topic (e.g. Driver 1983, Gilbert and Watts 1983) is mostly read within science education, but there are implications beyond that. Aggleton et al. (1988, 1989) have shown how adolescents' understanding of AIDS is based in folk biology which often conflicts with official health education information. Some of the folk models about biological phenomena are unaltered descendants from the ideas of Aristotle: the Basque shepherds studied by Ott (1986) for example still have Aristotle's theory of conception.

Many people reject, or compartmentalize, scientific theory, because it conflicts with their deeply embedded folk models. People also balance information from each model they have, which explains why people 'damage' their own health. Mothers knew smoking was bad for them, but also knew if they did not smoke their families suffered because they were tense and stressed. Relaxing by smoking led to benefits for the health and welfare of the rest of the household.

The consequences of accepting that pupils have their own folk models of how the world works for designing teaching are potentially far reaching. In school science the proponents of the misapprehensions approach want teachers to discover what pupils' folk models of, for example, weights, mass and density are, and then design a series of experiments to demonstrate that the folk model is not sufficiently robust or universal to explain
all phenomena relating to weight, mass and density. Pupils would recapitulate parts of the history of science as they moved from their models to scientific truth which would displace the folk originals. Measor (1989) has argued the same point in relation to sex education, although she does not refer to the science education authors at all.

The lessons for initiatives designed to change sex roles in schools are clear. First, it is important that such programmes start from the target group’s current lay beliefs about science, or CDT, or sex roles, or engineering, or childcare. Most of the initiatives that have been tried in Britain have ignored the ideas that teachers and/or pupils may have in their heads already. If teachers believe that sex roles are genetically determined (women are naturally more patient with small children), or pupils that any adolescent girl who takes an apprenticeship in a garage is ‘boy mad’ and any boy interested in fashion design is gay, programmes to change their ideas and practices have to start from those premises.

Conclusions

The attempts to challenge sexism in education, and to raise the aspirations of female pupils, have been enormously successful given the small numbers of enthusiasts and low levels of funding available. The criticisms given in this chapter stem from a desire to see the next wave of programmes reach further and be more successful. The shortage of school leavers in the next few years is a golden opportunity for young people of both sexes to choose jobs that suit them untrammeled by sexist prejudices, and the schools will need to prepare them for that world.
Conclusion: the way forward

How do I feel about walking two steps behind a black man?
Side by side, baby, or nobody walks at all.
(Terry Babb, a black woman graduate student at Columbia, talking in Harrison 1973:109)

Terry Babb is describing the complex relationships of black American men and women, where issues of race, class and gender are inextricably linked. Her comments will, however, serve very well as the motto for this final chapter. There are three sections in the chapter: on the future for research, for schools, pupils and teachers, and for the whole education system.

The future for research

There are three issues which need to be addressed here: 'feminist research', the agenda of necessary research, and the dissemination of those findings. Since the first edition of this book there has been a rapid growth of studies conducted with feminist methods and discussions of what such methods might be (e.g. Roberts 1981, Stanley and Wise 1985, Bowles and Duelli Klein 1983, Burton 1984, Roberts 1984, Harding 1987). Clegg (1985) is an excellent summary of the claims for and against feminist methods, and Eichler (1988) is a practical handbook for doing non-sexist research. This book is not an appropriate place to examine all the arguments (see Delamont 1991), but a brief excursion into the debate is necessary.

At the end of J. E. Flecker's play Hassan (1922:189) the 'great summer caravans for the cities of the Far North East'
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(Samarkand and Bokhara) leaves Baghdad. It is an all-male affair, made up of merchants, pilgrims and camel drivers, who march out of the city singing joyfully. The women of Baghdad argue and plead that the men should stay at home, complaining that:

They have their dreams, and do not think of us
while the gatekeeper comments:
What would ye, ladies? It was ever thus,
Men are unwise and curiously planned.

The wave of enthusiasm for feminist methodology in the last decade among some male and female scholars presumably stems from a desire to integrate the golden journey, and discover what women's dreams are. The debates over the theory and practice of feminist research seem to have left educational research untouched, just as they have yet to appear in some of the methods textbooks. The third edition of Cohen and Manion's (1989) otherwise excellent book of educational research techniques does not contain any discussion of, or reference to, feminist methods, or even any consideration of non-sexist approaches to research.

There are several different arguments put forward about what feminist methods are. One line of thought is that feminists should only use qualitative methods, because qualitative ones are part of a patriarchal pseudo-scientific 'malestream' culture. Arguing that quantitative methods are unsuitable or unacceptable for feminist research insults researchers who use them; ignores the fact that policy makers are often more influenced by numbers than accounts; and makes unduly optimistic assumptions about qualitative research. (The first two arguments can be followed up in Jayaratne (1983), the last in Lofland (1971).)

The argument should not be about whether to use quantitative or qualitative methods, but about how to use methods reflexively (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). That is, to be self-conscious about the whole research process, and to use research to make the familiar problematic. Feminist methods are fine if 'feminism' does not become another unexamined, taken-for-granted perspective on the world rather than a less...
for making that world unfamiliar. This argument is made eloquently by Stanley and Wise (1983) and permeates Dorothy Smith's (1987) work, and there is no space to elaborate it here. Readers who want a clear guideline on how to do non-sexist research should consult Eichler (1988:11) who offers robust commonsense:

a study may be entirely non-sexist and still be trivial or otherwise bad research. However, a study cannot be sexist and constitute good research.

There is still a dearth of serious scholarship on many aspects of gender and education, particularly research done by dispassionate, disinterested, ideal researchers of the type described by Morris (1981:163).

The ideal researcher. Somewhere there is someone who is totally objective, has no preconceived notions and who collects data unsullied by selective perception. We seek out this paragon for every project but always find that she is already employed on another project and will not be free for two years.

Among the research areas that need to be studied by such an ideal scholar are many relating to masculinity and education. Research on boys and men in education has now become a paradoxical topic. On the one hand we have educational research on social mobility (Halsey et al. 1980), history (Simon 1974a, b), grammar school streaming (Laury 1970), delinquency and school ethos (Rutter et al. 1979), medical student socialisation (Becker et al. 1961) urban street gangs (Parker 1974) and public school parental choice (Fox 1985). Yet in all these projects the male samples are not studied as males who might have different perspectives from females, but as representatives of the UK population, the rise of the working class, the inhumanity of the grammar school, the importance of a good school ethos, the learning environment of medical school, life in an inner-city slum, and the social role of private schooling in modern Britain. When we need to know something about men's different experiences compared to women's, we typically have no available data. In a society where most people live in a mixed world,
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and where most educational institutions are mixed, this is distinctly odd. There are many areas of research where data on males as males would be of considerable educational value.

Much of the force of feminist critiques of existing educational research has come from pointing out that only half the story is being told. Thus Brian Simon’s three-volume history of education in Britain fails to deal with women’s education at all (Simon 1965, 1974a, b); the philosophy (Martin 1984); psychology (Seyers 1984) and sociolinguistics (French and French 1984) of education have all been criticized on similar grounds while sociology of education has been particularly censured (Acker 1981). There is no doubt that women and girls have been neglected, and that the accounts offered by the various disciplines are thereby impoverished. Educational administration research has equally neglected women. Casanova (1985), for example, found that no research had been done on school secretaries and they were not even mentioned in most administration textbooks. As feminists fill these gaps in our knowledge the lack of work on males as males in education becomes more apparent.

The 1980s saw a series of initiatives in Britain to encourage girls and women into science and technology. Apart from Girls and Technical Education (GATE), Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) and Girls into Science and Technology (GIST), which are well-known attempts to challenge the ‘masculine’ image of science, there has been a series of Women’s Training Roadshows, and a continuing use of WISE buses to visit schools. TVEI and the National Curriculum in England and Wales are also explicitly intended to keep young women involved in scientific and technical subjects at least till 16. The initiatives by engineering organizations to increase awareness of the activity among school pupils, such as Insight courses, Opening Windows and Neighbourhood Engineer, include some programmes directed particularly at young women. Much of this activity has gone without evaluation or monitoring and the impact is therefore unknown. The GIST project was subjected to internal and external research (Whyte 1985), one Roadshow was evaluated (Pilcher et al. 1989a, b, c) and TVEI is being scrutinized (Gleeson 1988). However, WISE year, WISE buses,
GATE, Insight, Opening Windows and Neighborhood Engineer have not been evaluated by trained researchers. A proper evaluation programme of all these schemes is needed.

There is also the problem of small samples. Many of the most famous pieces of research (e.g., Stanworth 1983, Okely 1975, Spender 1982), indeed the bulk of the works cited in this book, are small-scale studies of a few pupils done single-handedly by one researcher. As I have argued elsewhere, the sample sizes are too small to support the conclusions drawn from them (see Delamont 1994c). Our knowledge about class inequalities, or teacher-pupil interaction in primary classrooms, or attitudes to chemistry at 14, is based on much larger databases collected by teams of scholars. It is a priority for the 1990s to have data on sex, gender and education gathered on large samples by groups of researchers. This is not a straightforward proposal. The climate is not favourable towards large-scale research on anything educational, there are very few trained researchers dispassionate about sex roles in education, and the studies would have to be conducted carefully to avoid schools trying to present themselves as they thought the research team wanted them to be rather than as they are away from the scholar’s gaze. Despite these problems, we must have adequate statistical data.

Finally in this section there is the question of dissemination. Most educational research never reaches educational administrators or teachers, and almost all of it is unknown to parents and pupils. Indeed many researchers do not read enough of the available scholarship. In the 1990s attention has to be paid to disseminating the findings we have already. The best way to reach teachers, pupils and parents would be TV soaps. Grange Hill should regularly feature boys facing cries of ‘poofter’ when they opt for childcare, and girls using physics to meet people. Neighborhood needs a glamorous woman chemist, and a male nurse who does his own mending. For adults, a series set in the staff common room of a college of higher education or a polytechnic or university with all the bite of Hill Street Blues and glamour of LA Law would provide powerful drama about sex roles and education, and stories could raise issues and dilemmas stemming from educational research. In such a series women scientists and engineers, and male textile designers and
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home economics experts, would add to the drama. This may seem frivolous - but in the 1990s some equally
dramatic ways must be found to spread the findings of the research of the 1980s to the wide world.

The future for teachers, schools and pupils
The teacher who wants to rethink the sexism in his or her subject, the pupil who wants to pursue an unusual option and the school which wants to run an in-service day on gender all have a more sympathetic climate and more materials available than they did when the first edition of this book was published. In particular, the Genderwatch pack, available in Welsh as well as English, is a marvellous resource for individual teachers and whole schools. There are some books for girls to widen their horizons, and perhaps there will be some for boys too in the near future. However, there are three dangers. First, the enthusiastic minority may be visible, but there is no evidence that the majority of teachers or pupils have seen any problems with the sex-role regime of schools. Secondly, once an in-service day has been 'done', gender may be regarded as 'last year's topic', and so new angles will have to be sought constantly. Thirdly, the shortage of school leavers in the early 1990s may appear to have loosened barriers between women and 'male' jobs, but they are likely to reappear when young men are available again (along with the creches, job sharing and career break schemes currently being lauded). Affirmative action needs to be enshrined in legislation while there is a shortage of male school leavers, so the gains are not lost.

The future for the education system
The impact of the many changes in educational systems and practices introduced during the 1980s is not yet apparent in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales or England. Nor is it feasible to predict the changes that may come. Northern Ireland might abandon single-sex schools, and there may be new Islamic girls' schools opened all over the UK. The interrelations between SCOTVEC and gender in Scotland are yet to be seen and will
need study. If TVEI actually achieves its own aim of challenging
gender stereotypes in vocational education the consequences
would be considerable. England and Wales are about to see
national testing and a National Curriculum (not applicable in
Northern Ireland and Scotland or in fee-paying schools or City
Technology Colleges (CTCs) in England and Wales, so the term
'National' is odd) and the implications of these for gender
inequalities, stereotypes and segregations will need careful
monitoring. If the national curriculum means that boys cannot
abandon foreign languages and girls drop science and
technology until they are able to appreciate their vocational
importance, then it may reduce sex differentiation. We have to
watch with some suspicion how the national curriculum works
out in practice.

Afterword
In 1987, women's cricket celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of
test matches against Australia and played at Lord's for the
second time this century. While men earn large sums of money,
and sponsorship provides large prizes, the women paid for
themselves, and the trophy was a crystal bowl (Rheinberg
1988). Perhaps in 2001 equal opportunities in schools will have
made women's cricket as important and well rewarded as men's
Further reading

The boom in research and writing on women and education has yet to be matched by much work on men and education in which masculinity is treated as problematic rather than taken for granted. This section is divided into two parts: first books for the general reader who wants to explore the issues, then ideas for anyone wanting to do their own research.

For the general reader

The most interesting books on education and gender are still fictional ones. Three novels remind us about how restricting the ideologies governing women and education were before the Second World War, and are salutary reading: W. Holtby's *South Riding* (1936), Ruth Adam's *I'm Not Complaining* (1938/1983), and Dorothy L. Sayers' *Gaudy Night*. Both the first two focus on teachers trying to enlighten the working class and face up to spinsterhood, the Sayers is about sexuality and scholarship in higher education.

Amanda Cross has written a series of books featuring a female don (Kate Fansler) all of which raise issues about gender and learning. *The Theban Mysteries* is about a girls' school; *A Death in the Faculty* and *Sweet Death* deal with women in universities and the rise of women's studies, while *The Question of Max* and *No Word from Winifred* are reworkings of those issues among earlier generations of women.

Further reading

Rings. From Australia Bob Connell and his colleagues have produced Teachers’ Work and Making The Difference which deal with sex roles both among staff and pupils and reveal class differences in sex-role patterns.

Research sources

Bibliographies

Kay Wilkins (1979) Women’s Education in the United States is a bibliography of 1134 items on women’s education in the USA.

Gaby Weiner and Madeline Arnon (1988) Gender and Education is an excellent UK bibliography, available from The Open University, London Region, Partful College, 527 Kincobly Road, London NW3 7BG for £3.00.

David Ford and Jeff Hearn (1988) Studying Men and Masculinity, University of Bradford, Applied Social Studies. This has sections on childhood and schooling, though they have fewer items noted than this book!

Women in Scotland: an Annotated Bibliography. This is prepared by a group who welcome suggestions for additions. Available from: The Women in Scotland Bibliography Group, c/o The Open University in Scotland, 60 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7TH.

There is no equivalent source on Wales, but Contemporary Wales vol. 2 (1988) has a paper by Peter Ellis Jones on Welsh secondary education with a short section on gender.

Steven Walker and Len Barns (eds) (1983) Gender, Class and Education has three excellent bibliographies at the end, on the USA, on Australia and New Zealand, and on Europe.

Books on research

In Britain, Rosemary Deem and Gaby Weiner edit a series called Gender and Education published by the Open University Press. These are good on English (but not Welsh, Scottish or Irish) issues and cheap. So far eight titles are available: Askew and Ross (1988) Boys Don’t Cry, Brown and France (1981) Ongoing...
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Longmans publish a series of large booklets reporting Schools Council work and thinking on gender. These include:

Rosemary Stones (1983) Pour Out the Cocoa, Janet (children's books)
Judith Whyte (1983) Beyond the Wendy House (primary schools)
Oliver Leaman (1984) Sit on the Sidelines and Watch the Boys Play (PE)

Aker et al. (ed.) (1986) Women and Education (as this is a world yearbook, it covers a wide range of societies)

On research methods

Harding (1987) Feminism and Methodology
Stanley and Wise (1985) Breaking Out
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Monitoring/changing your own institution

Genderwatch, devised by Kate Myers for the SCDC, is splendid. It is full of ideas for examining your own workplace and thoughts on changing it. (It is available in Welsh from Clwyd CC, and in English from SCDC, Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3JB for about £3.50.)

The NUT have published a resource pack Towards Equality for Girls and Boys available from Hamilton House, London.

For primary schools particularly Dorothy Walker (1986) Gender Equality has lots of exercises and splendid illustrations of milkwomen and men making beds.

TVEI Developments 2: Equal Opportunities. Free to teachers from TVEI Information Point, 236 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8HL


Journals and periodicals

There are several journals devoted to scholarship on gender:

Gender and Education (volume 1, 1989) is a new British journal; Signs is the classic American journal of feminist scholarship which includes some educational material; see also Women’s Studies, International Forum, Sex Roles, and Gender and Society (volume 1, 1987) the official journal of the American group Sociologists for Women in Society.

Many educational journals have had special issues on gender in the past decade. For example, Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education vol. 5 no. 1 (1989) is a special issue on gender and geography, British Journal of Religious Education vol. 12 no. 1 (1989) is on women’s studies, and the International Review of Education vol. 33 no. 4 (1987) is on women. Sociology of Education vol. 62 no. 1 January 1989 was a special issue on gender, and the British Journal of Sociology of Education regularly contains articles on gender issues.

It is worth scanning the journals in your particular area, such as geography, or music or maths, to see if there has been such an issue in the past 5 or 6 years. If there hasn’t, write to the editor and suggest one!
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SCHOOLS FOR THE BOYS?
SCHOOLS FOR THE BOYS?
Co-education reassessed

PAT MAHONY

Volume 72
Schools for the Boys?
Co-education reassessed
Pat Mahony
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For co-education at secondary school level to be realistically assessed, it has to be put in the context of the historical debates, philosophies and practices about education. To ignore this background is to obliterate the efforts of many people, including women, who genuinely believed that co-education would provide girls with access to some of the educational privileges dispensed to boys. To enable girls to be educated with boys was and still is seen by many as a progressive if not radical move: one which lifted girls’ education out of the kitchen and into the modern unisex world. But to be critical of a domestic curriculum for girls and to support co-education are two entirely different things. My research, the techniques and findings on which are discussed in this book, led me to conclude that mixed-sex groupings constitute a disaster area for girls: in what follows I shall try to explain why.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that what survives as ‘the history of western political thought’ or ‘the history of education’ contains three rather astonishing features. First, it is the history of men’s views: we learn a great deal about John Stuart Mill’s general political views, but little if anything about Harriet Taylor Mill’s, and this is despite the fact that, on his own admission, much of ‘his’ work was written together with her (Kosel 1970). It becomes evident that there is nothing very unusual about this example: women have consistently been ‘written off the record’ because what they have had to say has often posed a serious challenge to male dominance (Spender 1982), and it is men who control what survives as mainstream knowledge. The problem is not that women have had nothing to say, but rather that what they have said has either been ignored or actively suppressed (Spender 1982).

*Full references quoted in the text are contained in the Bibliography beginning on p. 113.*
Second, the content of that male history of ideas on education has for the most part been concentrated on boys, where girls have been addressed the commentaries tend to ignore it. Rousseau's reputation as a champion of liberty, for example, rests on his ideas about boys' education - his views on what is right and proper for girls being seldom reported. By the added devices afforded by he/man language (that he means she) the myths are perpetuated that Rousseau was committed to a progressive ideal of education for children. But as we can see from the passage quoted below this is not so.

The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times and what should be taught them from their infancy.

In my own teacher training I feel that had it been clear that 'man' meant male in the recommended reading on Aristotle on education, or Plato on education, or Herbert Spencer on education, I would have at least been in a position to inquire after females. What I would have discovered might have dramatically altered my attitudes (Okin 1980). This is because what is written about girls' education by these 'great men of ideas' is mostly downright offensive (Mahony 1982).

This brings us to the third feature: that of the specific proposals and general ideology of girls' education. Much excellent research has revealed that a central part of girls' education has always been reserved for their training as wives and mothers within a changing conception of femininity (Dyhouse 1978). The proposals for this training have differed according to the social class of the girls being considered. In the middle to late nineteenth century, middle-class girls were clearly being brought up to perform the managerial task of administering a household. As with the commander of an army, or the leader of any enterprise, so is it with the mistresses of a house. Her spirit will be seen through the whole establishment; and just in proportion as she performs her duties intelligently and thoroughly, so will her domestics follow in her path. (Beaton 1860.) Working-class girls, on the other hand, received training that prepared them for their future roles as domestic servants. Both groups were being trained for wife and motherhood, although the predicted
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social class of their future husbands not only made a difference to the nature of that training but also froze a possible social mobility through marriage for working-class girls. Although the norm, this conception of girls' education was resisted by some women:

... a girl's education needed to do more than train her for what Maria Grey... acidly referred to as the 'button-sewing, soup-making, man-pleasing mission of woman'. As early as 1871, Mrs. Grey had argued that girls needed to envisage goals other than marriage in life if they were to take their schooling seriously. (Dyhouse 1978.)

Despite this opposition, the fact remains that although girls' education has not been homogeneous and although there has been active resistance to the whole model from some (mainly women), nevertheless, within state education since 1944, girls' education has been seen largely in terms of their alleged social function. Some government reports have been more explicit than others.

We try to educate girls into becoming imitation men and as a result we are wasting and frustrating their qualities of womanhood at great expense to the community. ... In addition to their needs as individuals, our girls should be educated in terms of their main social function - which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home and to be mothers. (Newsom 1963.)

It would be simplistic to see Newsom's ideas as having been worked out in any homogeneous way across social class. The 1960s' grammar school girl did far less home economics than her 'less able' peer, though more than her male counterpart who probably did metalwork and woodwork instead.

It is against this historical background that the 'progressive' arguments in favour of co-education have to be understood. **If girls were educated with boys, it was argued, there would be a greater chance that more of them would have access to a decent education which could provide them with more chances to become independent autonomous individuals (Lavigueur 1980). In view of the lamentable lack of facilities in many girls' schools even today (which often only comes to light in the process of amalgamation - schools suddenly find there are**

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*S Superior figures refer to the Notes beginning on p. 111.
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no CDT workshops for example), it is not difficult to appreciate the progressive intent of the argument.

Achievement or normality

Where there has been any discussion about the educational environment that best suits girls the debate has tended to be set within the parameters of a dilemma. On the one hand, it is often claimed, girls perform better academically in single-sex schools, on the other the world of the co-educational school benefits them socially because it is more 'normal' (Dale 1975).

More recently, doubts have been raised as to whether girls' academic achievement is determined by the presence or absence of boys. It has been suggested, for example, that the social class composition of many girls' schools is more relevant in explaining good results. The research carried out at Banbury School (Postlethwaite and Denton 1980) between streamed and mixed ability co-educational groups adds another dimension. It was reported that there was a marked swing to sciences by the middle ability girls in the unstreamed groups. From this it would appear that ways of grouping girls for learning (independent of any obvious factors relating to social class or single-sex schools) can affect them.

An experiment carried out at Stamford School produced results which suggest that single-sex grouping has an important effect on girls' achievement ("A Question of Equality", BBC2 1981). Girls who were taught on their own in maths for the first two years of secondary schooling performed significantly better than girls of the same ability taught with boys.

But whatever the truth is about the factors contributing to girls' achievement, the preoccupation with the provision of a 'normal' educational environment (for 'normal' read mixed-sex) has figured large even for those convinced of the academic argument. This kind of reasoning sets up a model of the co-educational school as an institution in which girls underachieve academically, but which benefits them socially. In my view, neither of these are true though I shall leave the social arguments until later (see Chapter 2).

The current preoccupation with the underachievement of girls can be questioned on two counts. It is now fashionable to talk of the underachievement of girls, black pupils and working-class pupils as though
Preparing the ground

these were discrete categories. However, this way of conceptualizing the issue is both racist and sexist for it assumes that girls are white and that black and working-class pupils are boys. Furthermore, this global notion of girls as underachievers is far too simplistic to account for the facts and certainly does not match teachers' experiences. Rather than asking why girls underachieve, which presupposes that they do, whatever the subject and whatever their context for learning, a more sensible line of approach would be to ask: in relation to whom do which girls achieve, in what areas and why? If the question was phrased in this way then perhaps anxiety would begin to be expressed about boys' underachievement (in home economics).

Achievement, though of crucial concern, is not the only index by which we ought to be measuring the quality of educational life for girls. The messages girls receive about themselves, and the role school plays in their growth into women are also of vital importance in determining how far girls utilize their abilities both in school and afterwards. It is with these issues in mind that I turn now to review the existing research on girls' schooling which is depressing because it amounts to nothing short of a catalogue of the pressures on girls to become marginal to the educational process.

The content of education

It is not difficult to show that across the whole range of schooling, the content of education as measured by textbooks and other commercially produced material is male, white dominated. If one reviews the many studies that have now been carried out on a range of children's literature, the following picture emerges: in the text and pictures three-quarters of the characters and images are boys and men and one-quarter are girls and women. Lamentably, little of the research reveals that racism is also operative in that of the proportion of females represented, the vast majority are white, living stereotypically white, middle-class lives. Men are depicted in four times as many occupations as women and express themes of achievement and ingenuity; women and girls express dependence and nurturance (Butler and Paisley 1979). This general claim can be confirmed by looking at any specific subject area of the secondary curriculum (apart from home economics). In modern languages, for example, a recent study of examination papers revealed the following:
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In the course of various papers from all boards, men and boys appear as doctor, teacher, headteacher, policeman, swimmer, soldier, concierge, airline pilot, jeweller, thief, train driver, explorer. They climb mountains, attempt to break records, catch thieves, fish, row boats, almost get drowned or save others from drowning, visit Paris with father, run away from home or get kidnapped. Women and girls ask their husbands for money, make sure the man has a good job before marrying him, prepare food, lay tables, walk quietly because father is working, play the piano and receive orders from men for food and services. (Moys 1980.)

In science, the example quoted below exemplifies a general pattern:

. . . sexism ideology plays its part in terms of illustrations as well as instructions to the students. . . . A picture of Madame Curie with her hand on her husband's shoulder, while he looks down the microscope and she looks at the photographer, allows her contribution to science to be trivialised. (Spender and Sarah 1980.)

In a widely used maths textbook this example was found:

Are you a boy? Yes? Turn to the opposite page.
No?

Here is a flow diagram showing you how to mix concrete.

What is at issue here is not just the assumption that boys are interested in mixing concrete and girls in knitting pullovers, but that for girls their identity is negatively defined in terms of being not boys. One almost expects the text to read: Are you a boy? No! Never mind, we can find something for you to do too.

In poetry, conventionally understood as being of greater interest to females, Margaret Sandra (1982) documents the number of female poets in the anthologies used in her school: twenty-four out of a total of 138.

To cut a very long and tedious story short, the same point can be made whichever subject we choose to analyse (Whyld 1983). That point is that girls are trivialized by and marginalized from the official curriculum to an enormous extent. Moreover, many teachers have found that it is very difficult to challenge this state of affairs in mixed-sex
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schools (Griffiths 1977; Spender and Sarah 1980). Teachers who try face the prospect of boys' misbehaviour and girls' reluctance to put themselves in the way of humiliating ridicule from boys. A drama teacher writes:

The problem of finding roles which girls can identify with became an acute one for me on Teacher Practice and when I did manage to do so and cast a girl in an important part which might normally have been given to a boy, I found myself feeling guilty because I had denied a boy a plum role. Possibly I was also afraid that my choice might cause disruptive behaviour from the boys. Sometimes the boys challenged me, 'Airline pilot? A girl can't be an airline pilot Miss!' Each time this happened I saw the girl hesitate, waiting for my judgement, waiting to be sent back to her seat. 'Of course she can,' I would retort, thinking at the same time, 'Can she?' Each time I did this particular lesson, three in all, I cast girls as the pilot and navigator and the boys as the co-pilot. Each time the girl playing the pilot approached me privately, when the others were busy and whispered was I serious? Could women be pilots? Everytime I reassured the girl that it was perfectly alright and would she please go back to her controls before the plane crashed. (Brina 1981.)

But the content of the textbooks to be studied is not the only means by which girls are marginalized. The language used to express that knowledge also tells us that the world is male unless proved otherwise: I am referring of course to the use of 'he' and 'man' to mean 'she' and 'woman'. Dale Spender (1980) has already documented the history of this piece of linguistic skulduggery. She explains that the rationalization that man includes woman is a relatively recent one in the history of the English language. In 1553 a Mr Wilson argued that it was more natural to place the man before the woman, and in 1646 a Mr Poole went further by claiming that the male gender was worthy and therefore deserved priority. In 1746 a Mr Kirkby invented his 'Eighty Eight Grammatical Rules' with rule twenty-one stating that the male gender was more comprehensive than the female. Finally in 1889 an Act of Parliament was passed and 'man' was legally proclaimed to stand for 'woman'. If the argument supporting this act were so self-evident why was an Act of Parliament necessary at all?

In June 1981 a notice appeared in the staff bulletin of a London college entitled 'Rules as to Gender'. It read thus:

Members of Academic Board and others who have raised the question of the
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use of 'he' in College regulations and publications will know that the Dean of Admissions relies for guidance on the Interpretation Act 1889. For those who are unfamiliar with this piece of legislation the relevant section is given below:

In this Act, words imparting the masculine gender shall include females.

(Teacher's Testimony 1981.)

It would be difficult not to see this as a deliberate attempt to write females out of existence, and in spite of the fact that they are apparently in the majority in the college it is unlikely that this situation would be represented on the body to which the Dean is answerable (just as there were no women MPs in 1889). We may be told by men for the next 2000 years that 'man' means 'woman', but nothing will convince me that sentences like 'man is an animal who suckles his young' are sensible.

For a group so renowned for its logical prowess this is a sad case of it, for if 'man can suckle his young' (because man includes woman) then man can give birth, become Pope or inseminate man. But this is nonsense, only women can do some of these things and only men others. It is no accident that 'man' does not include 'woman' when men's interests are at stake, i.e. a woman cannot become Pope. As the 9-year-old daughter of a friend said, 'it's a trick to pretend they're not leaving us out.'

What this amounts to from the point of view of girls in school is that whatever subject they pursue, the language in which that subject is taught actively excludes them. In view of the sensitivity on the part of most teachers to the issues of language as a potential barrier to the education of working-class children it is deplorable that when asked to consider the same issue from the point of view of girls the most common reaction (in my experience) is to nod and then ignore it or to accuse us of triviality. But of course it is not trivial: for women there is always a decoding exercise to be done to find out whether or not we are included. The he/man language always includes men; women are only included some of the time.

Furthermore, it would seem that young children are unaware that 'man means woman', so for them the world is being represented as more male than it actually is. Studies involving older students have shown time and again that when asked to design a book cover for 'Man and His World' they drew men, whereas when asked to do the same task for a text entitled 'People and their World' both sexes are represented (Nilhen 1972; Hacker and Schansfield 1972).

The fact that there is space available in girls' schools to at least
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partially rectify what amounts to a gross distortion of reality does not mean that nothing can be done in mixed schools. The DASI Project co-ordinated by Annie Cornbleet and Sue Sanders (see p. 77), funded by ILEA and the EOC, gives clear guidelines as to the kind of things that might be done in co-educational institutions (I shall discuss this later when I consider 'strategies').

One further point must be made about content before moving on to other aspects of the curriculum. Distorted and offensive though it may be, riddled with he/man language though it still is, despite the information on the subject (Spender 1980), no straightforward links can be made between biased, sexist material and girls' alleged underachievement. First, the same textbooks are used in single-sex schools and the contents are not always challenged by teachers. Second, it is not true that girls underachieve across the board in education. Relative to boys they achieve highly in English and modern languages, yet as we have seen the curriculum in these areas is no less biased in favour of males. As I have suggested, girls' underachievement in schools is neither a useful nor accurate way of theorizing the problem, as we shall see in the next section.

Who does what in schools? — pupils

Figures 1–3 show that the problem does not begin with who achieves in what, but rather with the subjects that the pupils either choose or are entered for. These figures reflect the national picture and speak for themselves. Figure 4 shows that at all levels in London a greater proportion of boys take physics and chemistry and a greater proportion of girls take French and biology. At A-level, more boys take maths and more girls take English. The division is even sharper in technical subjects (see Figure 5).

In achievement, however, the situation is rather different. As far as we can tell from limited data, girls achieve better grades than boys at all examination levels (ILEA 1981, see Figure 6). In English, the situation regarding girls' achievement is even more startling:

White girls, on the basis of examination results, are judged to do badly in the maths, science area, little attention has been paid to the excellent results achieved by girls in English. Over 45,000 more girls than boys passed O. Level in 1979 and they repeated this success in Literature O. Level by just under 40% extra passes. This was on an entry percentage difference of approximately 9% in both examinations. (Sandra 1982.)
Figure 1. The percentage distribution of boys and girls in CSE (all modes) entries (1980)
Source: The GATE Project, Chelsea College.
Figure 2  The percentage distribution of boys and girls in GCE 'O' Level entries (summer 1980)
Source: The GATE Project, Chelsea College.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic subjects</td>
<td>5,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious knowledge</td>
<td>4,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>24,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English literature</td>
<td>61,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>4,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>40,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>39,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account</td>
<td>3,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>26,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>40,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>40,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>39,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComPos music</td>
<td>2,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>50,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other science &amp; technical subjects</td>
<td>3,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td>3,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork &amp; metalwork</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 The percentage distribution of boys and girls in GCE 'A' Level entries (1960)
Source: The GATE Project, Dulles College.
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Figure 4 CSE entries in England (1979)
'O' Level entries in England (1979)
'A' Level entries in England (1979)
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Figure 5 'O' Level entries in technical subjects (1979)
Source: ILEA 1981.

Figure 6 ILEA examination results (1980)
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Three main issues arise from these facts. First, girls' ability is clearly not at issue. The Inner London Education Authority reports that:

Female candidates did well in those subjects where the proportion entering was small. In Physics for example, although girls accounted for only 15% of C.S.E. entries a slightly greater proportion than boys achieved grade I at 'O' level where only 29% of entries were female, almost identical proportions of boys and girls gained grades A to C. (ILEA 1981.)

Second, the patterning of girls' subject 'choices' and the extent to which, in relation to boys, they are not entered for public examinations in certain subjects is the issue. Third, whatever accounts for these patterns, the Stamford school experiment suggests that the presence of boys is a relevant factor in girls' performance in maths (Figure 7). One of the factors at work in this division of the curriculum is the obvious contradiction for girls between femininity and academic success: '... femininity and individual achievements which reflect intellectual competence or leadership potential are desirable but mutually exclusive goals' (Horner 1972). This contradiction is sharpened by the labelling of some subjects such as maths and science as 'masculine' or 'hard' subjects in comparison with others such as English and modern languages which are defined as 'feminine' or 'soft' subjects (Deem 1978; MacDonald 1980). But again these general factors are not sufficient to explain why there is greater rigidity of subject choice in a mixed-sex school: why 'Girls are more likely to choose a science and boys a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test marks (per cent)</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Feb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All girls set</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls in equivalent set</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys in equivalent mixed set</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 Stamford School Experiment
Anne-Marie Wolpe's research (1977) suggests that one factor in this is the ridicule which pupils fear from each other if they make unconventional choices. Left to 'choose' they will play safe in line with traditional sex-role expectations. This may suggest that the pressures on girls and boys are equal and similar (a highly questionable assumption!). In terms of my own experience in classrooms I would expect the majority of the pressure on boys and girls to come from boys. Furthermore, a girl wanting to do carpentry rather than cookery is operating out of gender role whereas a boy choosing cookery may do so in terms of realistic career ambitions – he may want to become a chef.

What is at issue on this point is not that we are obsessed with trying to make boys and girls the same (an accusation which is often made) but rather that what is 'chosen' by boys gives them access to a wider range of more highly paid jobs. For example, girls tend to cluster in biology, boys in physical sciences, but as Diana Leonard (1977) points out:

Unfortunately biology as a single science at Ordinary level is not very useful, either as a qualification for further education or for general use outside school. And you certainly can’t go on to higher level science or medicine or whatever without physical sciences.

At this point in the discussion it is necessary to assess the relevance of the debate concerning girls’ achievements. The matter is not straightforward.

First, it is relevant in the face of any argument which supposes that girls as a group underachieve (especially if this assumption leads to questions concerning the size of the female brain). Second, it is relevant to show that girls’ achievement in mixed-sex schools varies with the subject they do and is not entirely dependent on the presence of boys. It is important to do this because it is not good enough for science and maths staff to attribute the problem to the unchangeable nature of girls’ lowered expectations in mixed-sex contexts. Third, it must be acknowledged that over and above the mixed-sex/single-sex issue a very complicated network of factors operate when we try to analyse girls’ achievement; specific conceptions of femininity which may vary with race, social class and culture and definitions of subjects as ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’.

However, there is a danger in girls’ achievement becoming the issue...
with which we become preoccupied. This would be a mistake because
the social issue also needs to be assessed. Here we need to ask not only,
'why is co-education socially desirable, what do girls learn from it?', but
also 'what do they do with their qualifications once having left school?'
For example, are the expectations of girls educated in mixed-sex
schools different from those of girls educated in single-sex schools?

Who does what in school? — teachers

The position of women teachers in schools is not exactly conducive to
girls being given role models which might challenge their lowered
expectations; and as more schools become co-educational the position
women. Women represent a high proportion of teachers compared
with other professions: 59 per cent in 1978, but are grossly under-represented at the top of the profession. In 1983 4.4 per cent of women
were head teachers as against 10 per cent of men. On the lowest scale,
however, the situation was dramatically reversed: 39.2 per cent of
women as compared with 19.2 per cent of men (EOC 1981). Although it
was not revealed by the research, it is undoubtedly the case that the
majority of women who do gain promotion are white; thus for black
women and women of colour there are two discriminations at work —
sex and race.

According to conventional wisdom, the explanation of the domi-
nation by men of the top of the profession is that promotion is available
but women are not interested in it. However, a recent report suggests
that:

There is absolutely no evidence for the myth of the 'strikingly low promotion
orientation' of women teachers. The majority of our respondents considered
themselves to be career oriented and would welcome the challenge and wider
responsibilities that promotion would bring. There was no evidence what-
ever that marriage and/or the acquisition of a family alter this attitude. Those
supporting a family single handed were, naturally, particularly concerned
about the financial rewards of promotion. Nonetheless, despite their overall
career orientation, women teachers do have difficulties in gaining promotion.
Our analysis of the experiences of our respondents in applying for promotion
led us to the inescapable conclusion that a fair measure of discrimination does
indeed exist. (EOC/NUT 1980.)

There is evidence to show that the situation is becoming worse. The
Women's National Commission recently produced a report which demonstrated that the proportion of headships filled by women has dropped from 25 per cent to 16 per cent over the last twenty years. Among the eighty-six local education authorities who responded, eight had no women heads at all and in another twenty-nine less than 10 per cent of heads were women. The decline is mainly ascribed to the diminishing number of single-sex schools. A woman is much less likely to be appointed to head a mixed school than a man, the report says, although men are quite frequently appointed as heads of girls' schools (TES 1983a).

A survey by Inner London Education Authority (TES 1984a) found that another factor contributing to the lack of promotion for women teachers was that "women were more likely to have been refused permission to attend courses." As an Education Authority with a current record far better than most, ILEA is not without its critics. A male head said: "It's a definite advantage to be a woman at the moment. We will be watching the situation closely and obviously we'll be worried if there is an imbalance in any way." (TES 1984b) It is revealing that this head does not see fit to worry about the imbalance of the last 2000 years or even of the current overall situation in which women do not enjoy equal promotion with men. It seems that if attempts are made to make opportunities more equal, men perceive them as discriminatory.

It becomes evident that although girls in single-sex schools are not free from the constraints imposed by the biased content of education, from the he/man language in which it is framed, from the contradictions between femininity and academic success, or from the models of status, power and authority generated by the structuring of female and male career patterns, their situation is consistently better than that of their counterparts in mixed-sex schools. With this in mind I turned my attention to the research which has been done on mixed-sex groupings.

If the situation seems worse I asked, what is it about co-education that makes it allegedly more desirable? Unfortunately, in my subsequent search for an answer to this question, I was unable to discover anything advantageous for girls, although I found a great deal that was beneficial to boys.

Boys' monopoly of physical space

An obvious place to begin a review of the research on mixed-sex
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situations is with an analysis of the amount of physical space occupied by boys, in relation to girls. In a study in 1977, Anne-Marie Wolpe found that the playground was monopolized by boys.

What happens in the mixed playground is that boys monopolise almost the total area by playing football, while the girls sit around on benches or wander round the periphery. Some, at great risk, pick their way across the football pitch, but few would dare to do so. There are in fact no chances for girls to participate or to be physically active during the school breaks. Their own quiet playground precludes this as all balls are banished from it. . .

Even though a number of girls during the course of their interviews expressed a desire to join in, when asked why they did not do so they laughed at the stupidity of the question. It simply was not feasible – they would be howled down by the boys.

Seven years later, a group of student teachers investigating the use of physical space in one mixed school arrived at similar conclusions:

We decided to take these photographs after being somewhat shocked through our own research at the stark truth of Anne-Marie Wolpe's research. We think they represent the appropriation of space by boys. Not only are the original observations confirmed, but also the situation has not changed despite awareness amongst staff. In fact, we were able to find no counter instances.

From our observations we offer the following conclusions:
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Girls tend to spend their lunch hour in small groups of two to four tucked away where they are inconspicuous.

Boys can be seen to walk directly into or across large open areas, while girls walk around the footpaths which hug the buildings.

Boys occupy large areas of physical space in the playground while the girls sit around the edges.

Girls are often found in the role of spectator; they sit and watch the boys' activities.
Boys' activities commonly involve large groups and are of a faster and more violent nature.

When girls play 'active' games they use less of the available space than boys.

When girls are in a group, they still take up less space than boys.

Boys regularly appropriate space by climbing on each other and structures other than seats.
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We are not saying that these roles are natural, because before the boys arrived at the site of this school, the large open spaces were used by the girls. Boys have monopolised and taken spaces which they feel to be theirs. Girls have not resisted in this instance other than by forming small groups and moving away. (Wildy, Howe, Crosbie, Collins and Berman 1984.)

My own impressions of the situation inside the classroom correspond with these observations. Although I have not checked with a tape measure, it does seem that the space assumed by boys to be theirs is far greater than that occupied by girls. Boys not only 'spread' into gang-ways and spaces around their own desks (which are often the ones most central to the teacher), but they also appear not to notice that space is already occupied by girls. It is not uncommon to find a boy leaning across a girl's desk in order to 'flick' another boy, crumpling her work in the process. Neither is it uncommon, when this behaviour is challenged, to encounter a reaction of amazement and incomprehension from the boys. It is apparently usual for them to not notice the physical presence of girls, nor to consider it important to do so.

Boys' monopoly of linguistic space

A second area of considerable concern, given the importance of pupil talk in the learning process, is the way in which linguistic space is dominated by boys. Research undertaken by Zimmerman and West (1975) showed that in male/female conversations nearly all the interruptions (94 per cent) were by men and that females were more silent than males. Dale Spender (1978) found that girls and boys receive different messages about themselves through the processes of linguistic interaction. These are that it is:

1. normal for the teacher to ignore the girls for long periods of time, but not the boys;
2. normal for boys to call out, move from their seats, push each other;
3. normal for girls to be addressed collectively, boys by their individual names;
4. normal for boys to dominate classroom talk;
5. normal for boys to talk rough and girls to talk soft.

Jenny Gebh (1980) found, in addition, that girls are more likely to offer support in discussion. Four years later little had changed. Louise
Horrocks (1984) found that men dominated mixed-sex talk not by quantity alone. She analysed the discussions of seven student teacher groups engaged in a code cracking exercise. She found not only that men talk more than women but also that women: 'pause more often and do not exclude others by occupying time. If a person wished to contribute, s/he would have more room to do so where there is a greater amount of pause'. And: 'Men seemed to occupy “centre stage” much more readily than women. The longest time of any of the tapes that a woman spoke uninterrupted by a man was 49 seconds. The longest time a man spoke uninterrupted was 2 minutes 28 seconds.' Lengths of between twenty and forty seconds were consistently recorded for male speech whereas female sequences lasted very often for only one or two seconds. She goes on to explain that:

It seems to me that men establish their “right” to talk longer by leading the conversation from the beginning and in the process establishing its framework. . . This sense of natural and automatic leadership that men have pervades all the tapes. On the solving of the code in one group a male voice is heard to say “Well done team!” We can only suppose that the man in question consciously or otherwise saw himself as the leader of the group and in a position to praise the others for their efforts. It was in fact a woman who did most of the code cracking.

She continues:

A man says “That’s the system, I’m telling you, that’s the system”. Not only do the words themselves subordinate, but the tone in which they are uttered is enough to prevent this particular woman from participating much more – a shame because the system that this man had constructed was totally wrong.

**Boys’ monopoly of teacher attention**

It has been found that the boys in a mixed-sex class get roughly two-thirds of the teacher attention (Spender 1980). This situation does not always follow from a lack of awareness of the problem. Vivienne Griffiths (1977) writes:

I am fully aware that during my own lessons, I frequently treated girls and boys differently: it is remarkably difficult to break through behaviour seen as the norm. For example, when a group of loudly disruptive boys threatened to reduce a whole class to chaos it often seemed simpler and less wanting to focus
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attention and commit on them and try to persevere further disturbance than to
stick to principles about 'not paying more attention to the boys'.

This experience is not peculiar to secondary school teachers. In her
research on primary schools, Katherine Clarricoates (1976) found a
similar situation: 'The boys are more difficult to settle down to their
work . . . they don't seem to have the same self-discipline as the girls
do, so it's important to direct the subject at them.' And: 'It's important
to keep their attention . . . otherwise they play you up something
awful.' Since the professional competence of teachers is partly judged in
terms of skills in class management and control, the dilemma about
whether to opt for equal attention for boys and girls or whether to risk
upset, is a very real one.

Teachers' attitudes to pupils

Michelle Stanworth's research supports the findings outlined in the
previous section. She goes on to investigate teachers' attitudes to girls
and boys. She presents data which show that for every four boys who
participated in classroom discussion, there was one girl. For every two
boys who asked questions there was one girl: three boys to one girl
received praise and encouragement, and in these classes (A-level
English) there were more girls than boys. Both the girls and the boys
stated that teachers are more concerned about boys, that they consider
the boys more conscientious and capable, that they get on better with
the boys and that they are twice as likely to consider boys as the model
pupils.

In the light of what educationalists claim about the importance of
teacher expectation in the educational process this constitutes a serious
situation from the point of view of girls. Of a girl considering a career in
law, a teacher said: 'I can imagine her being a very competent secretary.
She looks neat and tidy, her work's neat and tidy, she's perfectly
prompt at arriving.' (Stanworth 1983.) Of another girl who intended to
qualify as a psychologist: 'I can imagine her being a nurse.' And by way
of a final straw:

Interviewer: 'What course might suit her then?'

Teacher: 'I can't really say. I don't really know about jobs for girls.'

Michelle Stanworth goes on to show not only how some teachers view
pupils but also that girls know what their teachers think of them. More worrying still is the suggestion that the teacher's view is internalized:

Female Pupil: I think he thinks I'm pretty mediocre. I think I'm pretty mediocre. He never points me out of the group, or talks to me, or looks at me in particular when he's talking about things. I'm just a sort of wallpaper person. (Stanworth 1983.)

For anyone not committed to the slow demise of half the population there is nothing which could remotely be described as socially desirable for girls in the findings above. Quite simply they do not get their fair share of teachers' attention or of educational space and they receive messages suggesting they are less valued than boys.

In the light of this evidence, the only remaining way in which co-educational schools could benefit girls is in the interaction of the peer group. Some existing research concentrating on boys' attitudes to girls suggests that it is not a promising line of inquiry. Jenny Shaw (1977) has argued that boys in mixed-sex classrooms seek to emphasize their masculinity by being as unlike the girls as possible: they use the girls as a negative reference group. Michelle Stanworth's documentation of boys' comments about girls confirms this suggestion:

In reply to the question, "Who would you least wish to be like?" all of the boys named the girls (and only girls). It must be emphasised that the characteristic of female pupils most vehemently rejected by boys is the apparent marginality of girls in classroom encounters. The term 'faceless', used time and time again by boys (but by none of the girls) to describe their female classmates, seems to sum up boys' feeling that silence robs the girls of any claim to individual identity and respect.

Two other pieces of research were available to me prior to my beginning the more detailed inquiry into the interaction between boys and girls in school. Neither disposed me to think that I would find in that interaction those features which allegedly make co-education desirable for girls. One piece of research was conducted by a drama teacher who monitored the content of her lesson:

There is a good deal of abusive language used mainly by boys towards girls in their improvisations. In one day I collected the following insults, used while acting and with no doubt considered by the boys who used them as essential to the action. In fact, looking back at the notes which I made at the time, I realise that
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these insults now essential to the action. How else could the boys have conveyed what they felt about women?

'this bird who can't get a boyfriend'

'you dopey cow'

'you're a woman arn't ya' (to a cowardly boxer)

'you tart' (the boy was acting beating up the girl prior to raping her)

'she's not even pretty' (one girl to another about a third who was supposed to be stupid)

(Brins 1981.)

The teacher subsequently documented the activities chosen during one lesson

... in which the brief was to work out a physical trick which depended on careful timing and group work:

1 woman being 'touched up' at the bus stop and subsequently hitting the wrong man;

2 a boxing match, in which there being no role for the girl in the group, she simpered around playing a heroine;

3 two women being 'touched up' in the park by the same man;

4 a bank robbery which failed because one of the robbers (a girl) broke her fingernail and delayed everyone;

5 yet another woman being 'touched up', this time on a train.

She comments on this:

I did not hear any of the girls use any corresponding terms of abuse for a boy. But what pejoratives are there which can be used against a male which are equivalent of 'cow', 'bitch', 'tart', 'bird', and 'scrubber', all of which I heard at some time in my lessons. There is one which the boys assured me that girls sometimes used against them and which I knew they used against each other and that is 'poof'. It is apparently the worst insult to compare a boy with someone who is considered femininity.

In the other piece of research, which was conducted by Carabin and Dodd (1982), boys were interviewed about their attitudes to women teachers as part of a wider study on the sexual harassment of female staff. Time and again boys complained that if they were in a mixed school, women teachers 'wouldn't get it'. Whether or not women in mixed schools are subject to less sexual harassment than women in boys'
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schools is hardly the point. Rather it is that if the boys interviewed
assumed that the absence of girls caused women teachers to be harassed
then this could only mean that if girls were present they would become
the primary targets. The boys saw it as a problem only in as much as
they felt teachers to be inappropriate targets and since this was a
situation not of their making they resented any criticism.

In case it is assumed that all this operates at the level of boys’ fantasy
(which would be bad enough) there are a growing number of reports
which illustrate the reality of the situation:

Obscene comments varied from a first year boy saying ‘Miss is this your last
day, can we feel you up’ to boys making lewd comments if I was ever seen
walking out of a room with a male member of staff. One fourth year boy spent
every lesson drawing obscene pictures of me – this was laughed at not dealt
with. (Student Teacher 1983.)

In the course of my own teaching I asked students how the lecture on
‘Sexism’ could be improved and I received this reply:

While I was on Teaching Practice a female member of staff was sexually
assaulted by six 4th year boys. Three of them were suspended for a few days
and now they are back in school. Many times boys warned me not to push
things too far – ‘you know what happened to Miss T . . .’, they would say. I felt
last term’s course probably did not stress enough how to handle situations of a
more serious nature. What do you do if a boy calls you a slag, assaults you,
makes obscene suggestions? Why is the higher authority referred to always a
man? Why do women teachers feel scared of some of their pupils? Why are
they forced to be aware of them as a physical threat? These are some of the
questions in my mind now. (Student Teacher 1983.)

So it was, with this primary research behind me that I began to
investigate the interaction between boys and girls in co-educational
schools. This was the only feature of the system left that could be
beneficial to girls. I did not expect to find a paradise of blossoming
egalitarian relationships given the information I already had, but
neither was I prepared for what I found.
2 A can of worms: the sexual harassment of girls by boys

It is difficult to define the exact period of time during which the research was conducted. Since one of the most significant features of the whole venture is the process by which the material was gathered it is perhaps worth telling the story in full.

I began observing the interaction between boys and girls while supervising students on teaching practice. Although over two full terms this provided a rich source of information (at one time I had over 300 diagrams of seating arrangements in classrooms) and enabled me to derive some organizing categories for the material, I was uneasy about gathering data in this way. It raised questions about the ethics of using my legitimate access to schools and classrooms for quite another purpose. First, I felt that I was not giving my full attention to the students although, for some, their responses, had I sought them, may not have been wholly negative! More fundamentally, having become interested in the matter I could not help noticing what went on and I felt very uncomfortable about using such information since I had not gained permission to gather it. Schools are quite understandably sensitive about the practices of researchers, having had their fill of distorted and inaccurate representations which make the teaching staff appear as a bunch of incompetent buffoons. Because I felt it very important to obtain permission to undertake my research, I burnt the notes I had made. This left me with a framework for a research project.

Equipped with this framework I approached several schools in different parts of London. Typically as co-educational schools they all had male heads and, in going through the list of schools in London, I was struck by the fact that many had men's names but hardly any were named after women.

I chose three schools that I regarded as being fairly representative of their kind: one on the outskirts of London was a purpose-built co-educational comprehensive school with a high proportion of white...
middle-class children; another was a small inner-city ex-grammar school with a wide racial and social-class mix; and the third had originally been a girls' school which many of the staff remembered. I spent time in each school (with the Head's permission), observing classes, talking to teachers and to students. I found a marked difference in awareness of and concern for the girls in the school which had previously been all girls. The staff, in general, recognized the changes that had occurred in girls' access to education and many did not like what they saw. The concern, which at times was expressed with considerable emotion, is best communicated by the head of science:

'Before we went mixed the girls used to be really interested in science, they used to love doing the experiments and working out why things happened. Now they don't get a look in, the boys rush in and collar all the equipment. I waste hours hauling them off. Now the girls just hang around. I just don't understand it. I wonder if it's biological or something.'

Int: 'How can it be though? You said it didn't used to be like that.'

Teacher: 'I know, I'm really confused about it, it makes me so angry to see our girls going this way.' (My emphasis.)

This teacher, having experienced the girls' behaviour when the school was single sex, perhaps continued to see the school as a girls' school and thus was not typical of male teachers who generally seem to regard the situation described above as normal (though faintly undesirable). For him it was the change which he perceived as having occurred in girls' learning which made the difference.

After having visited the three schools fairly regularly over a number of weeks 'the research' as an activity carried out on a limited sample over a quantifiable time came to an abrupt halt. This was because I began talking about my findings to other people: during workshops at conferences, in seminars at my own and other colleges in different parts of the country, at teachers' centres, and informally with colleagues and friends. Whenever possible I taped these discussions and I always asked to be sent any relevant information. The response over a period of about six months was literally overwhelming: diaries of 'a typical week' (or in some cases a day was enough), tape recordings of discussions between groups of girls and descriptions of isolated incidents were sent, mainly by women teachers and girls. The original framework collapsed under this deluge and with it my neat plan of points to be made and evidence to back them. It was when I began to receive correspondence from
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Hungary, Holland and the United States of America that I realized things had got out of hand. Assuming that a lack of information is always a problem in research, the other extreme of being drowned in it is equally difficult.

What follows then is not 'my research' but an attempt to group into themes a great deal of information from a large number of people, some of whom I have never met, some whose full names I do not know. The account is in no way meant to be an exhaustive description of mixed-sex schooling. Rather it is an alarm bell to which teachers may respond by talking to girls, keeping diaries and discussing with each other as a preliminary to developing strategies for change.

The mixed-sex classroom

On the face of it boys and girls seem to pay little sustained attention to each other in the mixed-sex classroom. Rarely did school students report friendships with members of the opposite sex and where they did express a liking for each other and even a desire to be friends it was often felt that other pupils would interpret this as more than friendship. Sometimes boys expressed their anxiety that their masculinity would be threatened if they showed interest in having a girl as a friend in school, although for older boys masculinity was enhanced by having a girl friend provided she was a girl popular with other boys (here the emphasis was more on competition with other boys than on the relationship with the girl). The younger girls did not express any loss of status by being friends with a boy, although many said they had little interest in developing such relationships and preferred the company of other girls because: 'Most boys act stupid', and 'Girls talk about things better.' Younger girls often resented what they perceived as an accusation that they 'loved' particular boys. Evidence that this is not confined to secondary schools came from this 9-year-old girl. As a budding gymnast she was described by the teacher as being much 'admired' by the boys. Her interpretation was somewhat different:

"The boys keep on about which one I love but I don't love any of them and I tell them but they don't take any notice. It's really embarrassing, I don't like it. Ben bought me a Christmas present but I wouldn't take it because they would have said I love him and I don't. I think Miss P. is cross with me for being rude because I heard her talking about it with Ben's Mum. Now they're saying I look like a boy."
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Int: "What do you say to that?"
Girl: "You look like a skunk."

Older girls were careful to avoid 'going out with' boys who might give them a bad reputation but on the other hand many felt that not dating a boy at all could be equally problematic in raising questions and comments about their sexuality. One girl whose main interest in life was horse riding reported a number of crude comments concerning her preference for the animals' company to that of the boys. There is already much documentation of the complicated manoeuvres which girls have to practice if they are to even begin negotiating the 'slags and drags' dichotomy (McRobbie and McCabe 1981; Hemmings 1982).

Although this material is not the central concern of this study, it forms the background to the situation in which teachers perceive there to be little interaction between girls and boys. This assumption that girls and boys inhabit separate worlds in the mixed classroom is not surprising when one looks at diagrams of seating arrangements. Over and over again, examples can be found of boys dominating the teacher's field of vision and of girls occupying marginal positions. Thus what is at issue is not just the marked physical separation of girls and boys but also the fact of boys' dominance in the class. However, the assumption of separateness, though in this sense supported by the evidence, turned out to be totally false: there is a great deal of interaction in the mixed-sex classroom. Despite the fact that many boys reported that they 'don't bother with the girls' and although boys do not consider girls when ranking themselves academically (Stanworth 1983), there is in fact a great deal of 'bothering'. An enormous amount of time and energy is expended by boys in what amounts to the end of the social control of girls. There are numerous examples which differ slightly in detail, but a number of recurring themes emerge from the material.

**Style and gesture in the classroom**

Often boys do not have to say anything in order to convey to the girls in class that their participation in the lesson is unwelcome:

Fifth-year girl: "It's very subtle really – whenever a girl speaks in more than one-word answers the atmosphere gets tense, the boys don't really like it."

Int: "How do you know?"
Girl: "Well they put their pens down – you know – time for a break. If she
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...they fold their arms, lean back in their chair and—sort of—look deliberately bored. Do you know what I mean?

Sometimes 'acting bored' is accompanied by sound:

Third-year girl: 'The boys always act bored whenever a girl says anything in class. It doesn't matter what she says. She's soon drowned down with groaning and sighing.'

Many girls were defensive about admitting their difficulties in participating in lessons. Comments like: 'I could talk if I wanted to', or 'I prefer to get on with my work', were common. One problem is to disentangle girls' 'choice' not to participate in discussion from a more general phenomenon in which school students fail to see discussion as work.

The initial interviews which I conducted were very tortured. In order not to ask 'leading questions' I asked more general ones, but in doing so I repeatedly found myself engaged in a fascinating dialogue about the relationship between thought and speech. In the end it was easier to simply ask students what they thought of the claim that 'Boys prevent girls taking part in class discussions' or to show a clip of a video in which girls say that 'Boys put girls down in class.' Avoidance of ridicule was cited over and over again in these sessions as the girls' reason for not participating in lessons. They did not always specifically cite the boys as the source of this ridicule:

Second-year girl: 'I always think twice before I say anything in class because the others laugh at you.'

Int: 'Which others, is it always the same ones?'

Girl: 'Well mostly, it's David and Michael T. who make fun of you but the other boys grin.'

As has already been indicated, many of the younger girls saw the behaviour of the boys as less controlling:

First-year girl: 'I think some of the boys are really stupid. They don't like girls being good at their work and they try to laugh at you but I don't take any notice of them—they're stupid. My Mum says they won't be laughing when they can't get a job.'

Apart from the support which this girl had from her mother who apparently regretted leaving university to get married (the girl told me), her comment seems to confirm what many primary school teachers say...
about girls having no hesitation in 'giving as good as they get'. It is also interesting to consider whether younger girls experience pressure to express their femaleness through particular versions of femininity, which are at odds with qualities of 'intelligence' or 'cleverness'.

There is little automatic support among the girls for each other, a situation which some female teachers have sought to redress by setting up girls' groups (often with considerable opposition).

Fourth-year girl: 'You must be joking Miss. I never open my mouth. Anyway no-one's interested. The boys start chit-chatting between themselves and the girls start getting edgy that any minute one of the boys is going to start getting furry.'

Sometimes an even stronger claim is made, that boys' behaviour is provoked by the girls. The next comment is uncomfortably close to the kind of 'blame the victim' model in which women are ultimately held responsible for male violence:

Third-year girl: 'No, I don't think boys and girls are different in class - it's just a certain group who make fun of everyone.'

Int: 'Who are they?'

Girl: 'Mostly it's Gary, Roy and Denis - sometimes Peter T. but he's away a lot.'

Int: 'Who do they make fun of?'

Girl: 'Well not me because I don't say much but Angela's always going on and so is Tracy. They think they're it, they ask for it.'

This comment does, of course, raise other questions. It is not clear whether the boys mentioned make fun of everyone as she suggests at the beginning or only of Angela and Tracy whom she specifically mentions at the end. Nor is it clear to me that it is solely in virtue of being girls that Angela and Tracy are made fun of. Some research suggests (Willis 1977) that boys who are 'always going on' and 'think they're it' receive similar treatment from their classmates. In some girls' schools, too, the pupil culture of 'cool' which does not permit enthusiastic engagement in school life, makes for some very difficult negotiations on the part of those girls who are interested in working and yet who do not want to be identified as 'teachers' pets' or 'crawlers'. Issues of culture, social class (McDonald 1980) and questions concerning what ability means in this society are also important. However, in spite of these complications what
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is worrying about this girl's comment is that it makes reference to the notion of girls 'asking for it'. I wonder whether any boy, however much he was perceived to be an 'earole', 'swot' or 'brain-box' and however much he was 'teased' by his peers (a euphemism if ever there was one) would be considered to have 'asked for it'.

Girls' perceptions of teachers' strategies for dealing with the potential disruption of boys whenever girls speak were remarkably accurate:

Third-year girl: 'The teachers don't give you a chance even if you do decide to say something. They're too worried about the boys starting to play up so they don't let you say things properly. You don't get time so it all comes out wrong. They let boys work things out and we don't get fidgety. It's not fair. I always feel I have to hurry up'.

What is being denied to girls is the public space to engage in exploratory talk which requires a particular kind of trusted group atmosphere so that ideas can be voiced, tested and retracted. As teachers, we ought in my view to be concerned that girls do not have this space but not surprised if they choose silence as the alternative to the risky business of thinking aloud. Silence in the circumstances, is a sensible response. It has often been said that girls have a civilizing effect on boys: 'The boys' natural inclinations to "push and shove and barge about" are curbed by their girl co-workers'. (TES 1984c). This role is not unproblematic for girls because their efforts to control the boys often rebound on them:

Second-year girl: 'Some of them are alright but when we're watching the video they make too much noise and we can't say anything to them. If you tell them to shut up they give you the fist and if it looks like we're interested in the programme they think we're trying to be it.'

While many girls seemed to arrive at an awareness of how boys behaved through the process of discussion with other girls or with teachers there were some who were remarkably clear from the outset. These were girls who had known both mixed- and single-sex schooling. A fifth-year girl who had transferred from a girls' school to a co-educational one said:

"When there are boys in the class it makes a difference. It's not only what they say and how they make you feel – like you shouldn't say anything in the lesson but just sort of how they are."
Int: "What do you mean?"

Girl: "Well, they spread out. If you get up for anything their legs are always sticking out and you have to climb over them."

Int: "Perhaps they're bigger than girls."

Girl: "No, it's not that - they try and make themselves bigger. They lean back on their chairs and stick their elbows and knees out - they take up room on purpose."

A sixth-year girl who had transferred from a mixed school to a single-sex sixth form wrote about her perceptions of the differences, and non-verbal behaviour of the kind which has already been revealed figured large in her memory:

The most obvious put-downs in the classroom were always the audible tuts and expressions of impatience when a girl asked a question which had become a fairly rare event by the fifth year. If it was an intelligent question which the teacher was interested in answering then they would grin and nudge each other and giggle nervously as the teacher answered. If it was a silly question on a point which the rest of the class understood then they would laugh derisively until the girl was embarrassed into silence or turn to her and make critical comments after the teacher had replied. When the boys asked questions, everybody would usually wait quietly until they were answered unless it was a particularly stupid question in which case they would giggle a little.

Outside the classroom

Outside the classroom a wide range of non-verbal behaviour directed by boys towards girls was very much in evidence. Sexually appraising looks, many types of threatening gesture, boys holding their noses when girls passed in corridors and pretending to talk about them in a very obvious way, imitating their steps and mock fighting to impress, all had their counterparts in girls avoiding groups of boys if possible, sometimes without realizing they were doing so. Many teachers reported that girls found it difficult to begin any discussion of this because they had come to treat the situation as a normal part of day-to-day life (which it is). Again those girls who had experienced both mixed- and single-sex schooling had no difficulty in analysing life outside the classroom.

Sixth-year girl: "Yes I do notice the difference being with all girls. If you'd asked me two years ago when I was at A... I would have been rather
annoyed. I like to see myself as quite strong so I wouldn't have admitted to being affected by the boys — anyway you don't notice if it's happening all the time.'

Int: "What would you say now?"

Girl: "Well there's so much really — it's like being in a different world. You don't have to worry about where you go for a start. At A ... you would walk another way rather than go past a load of boys. It's the way they look at you, you feel subdued or they make obscene gestures. Sometimes they pretend to be talking about you or they hold their noses. One of them might follow you either imitating your walk or doing a hulk behind you and the others would laugh. Or they just nudge each other as you went by or not even that, just staring at you. You know all the things — like when there's a group of blokes on the pavement and you cross over and walk on the other side.

Both the boys and the girls claimed to have little to do with each other outside the classroom:

Second-year girl: "We don't have much to do with the boys at break — they're stupid always showing off and showing how tough they are."

and

Second-year boy: "Boys don't hang around with girls — they're boring — they don't do anything."

But the girls' perceptions of the boys' behaviour was rather different. They did not feel that boys ignored them:

Int: "Do you agree with the boys when they say they ignore you?"

Third-year girl: "Yes, well no, well it's difficult — they pretend to — they try to — like we're not worth bothering about but they're always mucking up what we're doing. It's a group of us are just having a chat they'll barge right through us."

Int: "So do you think they are interested in you?"

Girl: "Well I can't explain it. They don't treat you like a person in school — it's not like being friends with a girl because we're interested in each other. In school it's like we're nothing but they are always on at us, like we're servants and like they're saying "look how tough we are" — they do karate punches and things."

Int: "Would a boy on his own do that?"

Girl: "Not really no, they mostly do all the karate and stuff when there are other boys to impress. G.R. and me live in the same road so we sometimes walk the last bit together. He's like a different person, quite normal then."
It is not clear from this whether boys gain courage from each other to try to impress girls or whether the girls are merely instrumental in boys displaying their prowess to each other. Girls' comments sometimes support one view and sometimes the other. Boys' comments are consistent in maintaining that girls are not worth bothering with but when presented with the evidence of what girls said it gradually emerged that boys do 'hassle girls' – or rather that 'other boys' do. Again both explanations (to impress girls and to impress other boys) figure in the interviews:

Int: 'You've said that boys do hassle girls, why do you think they do?'

Fourth-year boy (a): 'To make sure they toe the line, so they know who's boss.'

Fourth-year boy (b): 'You're really primitive J . . . You make me sick with all this caveman stuff.'

Boy (a): 'It's me me I'm just saying why they do it.'

Boy (b): 'Yeah and you love it. Anyway it's got nothing to do with that. It's a way of proving that you're one of the lads. You know no-end to it a right lad, a real man, boys do it to each other, girls are irrelevant.'

What seems to emerge from this is that, contrary to popular myth about the independence of boys, they are in fact highly dependent on others. Yet there seems to be two sorts of dependence at issue. John Stoltenberg (1977) suggests that: 'A man's comfort and well-being are contingent upon the labour and nurture of women, but his identity – his "knowledge of who he is" – can only be conferred and confirmed by other men.' If this is the case, boys' attempts to impress girls are not the same as their attempts to impress other boys. In the one case girls are needed to provide servicing; whereas in the other boys depend on other boys for their identities as men. Shows of strength to other boys are about proving the legitimacy of a claim to be a 'real man'; whereas to girls perhaps they indicate the possible use offeree if servicing tasks are not performed. The theme of servicing is one which emerged strongly through the material and one to which I return later (p. 50).

While body language, what I have called 'style and gesture', has a life of its own, independent of verbal comments, it also occurs in conjunction with what is said.
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Language

A great deal of what is said by boys to girls inside and outside classroom constitutes verbal abuse and in my view a form of sexual harassment. Both sexes reported very little equivalent behaviour from girls to boys which confirms the research quoted earlier (Brina 1981). 'Stupid' is a term which girls use against boys but it seems to refer to behaviour not to academic ability. Comments made by boys seem to fall into two broad categories. The first kind are a form of insult having a non-sexual content, the second contain overt sexual meanings. Inasmuch as both are directed predominantly at girls by boys in a mixed school, both constitute a form of sexual harassment.

The first group of comments is clearly meant to depress girls' achievement: they form a constant attack on girls' intellectual and academic abilities. Along with the sighs and groans when a girl speaks for any length of time many instances were recorded of comments like "turn it off", "here it goes", "pull its plug out" and so on. The way girls were referred to as "it" was felt by a number of women teachers to be particularly offensive. There was ample evidence to show that girls are aware of what boys will say if they make themselves too visible in lessons:

Fourth-year girl: 'Girls often complain to each other about the assertiveness of the boys during lessons but rarely say anything about it. I think they are afraid of being labelled "bitch" or "bod" or "intelligent" or "unfeminine".'

Girls are also careful about revealing their marks to boys, for similar reasons. It is no surprise that boys' comments include both an attack on girls' academic ability and on their femininity since being "intelligent" is considered to be at odds with displaying appropriate characteristics of femininity:

Sixth-year girl: 'When my friends did well in tests or essays, they would put it down to luck whereas the boys were always immensely pleased with themselves. I was the enigma. I really put good marks down to luck and I didn't understand why my friends always did until I had thought about it carefully. The boys always over-reacted to my good marks, rolling about in their seats laughing and calling me "bod" and "boffin". My marks became the class joke and yet when any of the boys did as well or better than me the others reacted with genuine admiration. Because I was fairly intelligent,
because I asked articulate questions, because I didn't think with embar-
sament when the attention of the class was focused on me they de-sealed me in
some way. After a time the boys would come to me for help with a maths
question or an essay but they would make jokes together in the classroom
about me "getting off" with someone or looking pretty as if these were
events which were never likely to happen.

If there are over 200 ways to verbally abuse a woman then most of
them appeared in the information gathered. In one report a teacher
asked a group of girls to make a list of names they knew boys used about
them. After half an hour seventy-two names had been collected. When
the activity was repeated with another group over eighty words had
been collected and more than half were different from those which had
been listed by the first group. In the circumstances, it seems best not to
 reproduce them as they were sent to me, because they are generally
appallingly graphic and foul, creating images of women's bodies that
are no less than pornographic. If I ever felt tempted towards the
unspeakable sin of reacting in an 'aggressive' or 'extreme' way it is
now, as I look at these words. On a number of occasions women
teachers have commented on the lists: 'They hate us, this is the lan-
guage of hate.' Leonard Schein (1977) agrees:

For men to become fully human, to liberate ourselves from forced sex roles,
and to fully understand ourselves, one of the first things we must deal with is
our hatred of women. We have to understand the origins of our misogyny and
the full significance of the fact that we live in a patriarchal society. Patriarchy's
foundation is the oppression of women. The cement of this foundation is the
socialization of men to hate women.

But it may be objected, girls use the same words to insult each other:
 go into any girls' school, the objection continues and the same insults
might be heard being hurled by one girl to another. This is both true
and false. It is false in claiming that the same words are used for there is
nothing that even approximates to the range of abusive language used by
boys. However, it is true that girls insult each other with words from
the milder end of the continuum. What this shows is not that there is a
simple, albeit softer, equivalent state of affairs in which boys sometimes
abuse girls and sometimes girls abuse each other, but rather a much
more complex situation.

First the language of abuse is by and large female. There are no male
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equivalents of tart', 'scrubbers', 'bitch', 'cow' and 'slag' (to mention but a few of the milder epithets). As the language of abuse it can be directed at anyone by anyone: in being female it speaks volumes about how women are valued in this society. In this sense when a boy calls another boy 'cunt' he not only insults him but does so in a language which degrades women. When a girl insults another girl by calling her 'slag' she too uses a language which is pejorative of women so that in abusing another girl she also, in being female, degrades herself. Second, boys' and girls' relationships to the language of abuse are very different: both degrade women when they use it and girls degrade themselves in a way that boys do not.

A number of girls expressed the belief that particular forms of abuse are restricted to certain groups of boys. A black girl writes: 'They offend you through abuse strictly used by black boys and in slang, using words like "crusty", "fusty", "tight" and "fit" that will not only offend you but put you to shame.' (Spare Rib 1983.) Yet the information gathered shows first, that the same words are common currency among white boys and that there is also a tendency for white girls to believe (falsely) that such forms of abuse are peculiar to white boys. Thus, from the evidence available, I would suggest that 1) no particular group of boys indulges any more or any less in this behaviour than any other, and that 2) girls falsely tend to locate the problem as stemming from boys in their own racial, cultural or social class group.

Other comments were recorded which, without overt abuse being used, also made girls self-conscious of their sexuality and of the fact that they were continually being objectified by boys:

Fourth-year girl: 'They don't have to even speak to you for you to know that you're being judged as a sex object. They make comments about other girls' bodies, they talk loudly about what they've done so as you can hear, they compare girls in their hearing and worse of all they discuss how great this video is or that one. Just yesterday I told F.H. to shut his filthy mouth when he was describing how this bloke in this video stubbed out his cigarette on a woman's breast. It doesn't do any good they just do it more if they know you're affected.'

And: 'continual talking about periods, asking whether you were on or not or wearing a Dr. White etc... .' (Spare Rib 1983).

I am not claiming that all boys engage in this behaviour or that what has been revealed so far is a total description of relationships between
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boys and girls in school, but rather that for every girl in a mixed-sex school it forms a significant part of her experience, either directly or indirectly. As well as all this there is also pupil solidarity. One girl already quoted who was very critical of boys’ behaviour was also busy at the time of interview organizing a petition on behalf of a boy who had been threatened (unfairly she thought) with suspension.

No all boys abused girls; some were described by the girls as ‘quite civilized’. A number of boys thought that ‘what girls have to put up with is bad’ and this led them to the conclusion that ‘I’m glad I’m not a girl’. This tends to suggest that there was an assumption of inevitability in operation. One boy did not agree:

Fourth-year boy: ‘Of course it’s not natural, it’s part and parcel of the way men try to dominate women in this society. I don’t think it’s any great shakes being male, sometimes it’s an embarrassment.’

A few boys were similarly critical of the ways other boys behaved towards girls but said they would have a hard time ‘going public’ on it. One case emerged of a third year boy in a single-sex school who had actively challenged a male teacher’s sexism. The teacher had suddenly announced to the class: ‘Quick lads there’s a naked woman running across the playground.’ All the boys with the exception of S . . . leapt up and rushed to the window. Then he said: ‘Alright you can sit down now, I was just checking you were normal.’ S . . . said: ‘I think that’s sexist sir.’ A number of obscene comments were made amidst a general atmosphere of derision. The teacher made no attempt to quell the noise and when quiet had returned to the class he commented: ‘Thank you S . . . now we know who isn’t normal.’ After school S . . . was threatened, comments such as ‘poof, S . . . is a woman’ and worse were shouted and as he got on his bike a pump was repeatedly jabbed into his rear. He said that after this he kept a low profile in class because whatever he said, even in reply to a question about verb tense, brought forth sniggers from the other boys. Many features of this incident are similar to those experienced by girls and he reacted similarly, with silence.

Physical molestation

Examples of sexual harassment do not stop at verbal insult. The following situations can be viewed as themes rather than isolated incidents:
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boys grabbing girls' breasts, dropping things down their blouses and pinching their bra straps, looking and slipping their hands up girls' skirts and boys exposing themselves. More subtle forms of 'touching up' were reported as having been done under the guise of boys looking at girls' work and getting closer than was necessary when lining up or when class organization was other than in rows of ordered desks. Less subtly, boys' preoccupation with girls' changing rooms and toilets seem to take on another dimension. As well as the fact that boys try to get into these areas of girls' space a disturbing amount of graffiti appears. In one school it was reported that tomato ketchup had been poured round the toilet seats the significance of which seems particularly horrible.

Many examples confirm as commonplace these already published reports: 'In science lessons we had to sit on stools with holes in the actual seat. . . . The boys used the holes to stick rulers, pencils etc. up them, when the girls were sitting on them.' (Spare Rib 1983.) And:

T.B. was sitting next to me and he kept putting his hand up my skirt. I told him to stop, but didn't and finally I slapped him round the face. The male teacher said something to the effect 'That's it Ros don't let him get away with anything'. It was accepted as a joke as though he was a right lad for trying it on. I was showing a little bit of hesitance like a girl should. (Ibid.)

What is unusual about this case is that the teacher was aware of the entire scenario (though his response was indefensible). Many girls complained that teachers, oblivious to the reasons for a girl's apparently 'unprovoked' attack on a boy, would then punish her and accuse her of being 'anti-social'.

In the corridors and other spaces outside the classroom the situation is worse. Some girls in newly amalgamated schools resented the policy of being let out of school ten minutes before the boys to allow them time to get clear of the building. They complained that they were being deprived of lesson time through no fault of their own. Others with a more cynical attitude to schooling made comments like:

I don't care if I lose school time, it's the principle of the thing I object to. If this work is supposed to be worth doing then we're missing out. Anyway did you hear about that second year? She was sexually assaulted by six boys last week and that was at break - how are they going to stop that, lock us up?

Many single-sex schools amalgamate for sixth-form work. Often girls, mostly those doing science and maths, have to go to the boys'
school for their lessons. As a way of avoiding harassment girls were advised to maintain a seclusion in their common room for as long as possible:

At the very beginning of our course we were constantly having our bums pinched and more unansweringly held, calmly and with no hesitation whatsoever. We reported this and it was suggested that we wait for five minutes after the beginning of lessons before moving from the common room and leave a couple of minutes early. This meant us missing between five and ten minutes of our lessons.

But corridors and stairways cannot always be avoided; girls do have to change lessons and move between sites:

'There was one event last year which sticks out in my mind. Two of us were leaving the boys' school by an outside stairway at the beginning of lunch time. We were walking along talking when a couple of boys aged about fourteen began edging towards us. One passed unnecessarily close and growled to his mate, 'Cor I'd like to squeeze her tit'. Amazed, we turned to the boy and told him how disgusting his attitude was. How dare we speak to him like that!... 'obviously slags, slags, slags.' He continued to shout loudly at us as we continued out of the school.

One of the things which shocked many women teachers who spoke to girls is the extent to which they, initially at least, regard sexual harassment as a normal part of daily life. Perhaps this is because 'Intimate violation of women by men is sufficiently pervasive in... society as to be nearly invisible.' (McKinnon 1979.) Even in the junior school, those who should know better appear to have little by way of respect or sensitivity towards girls. Commenting on the impact of computers in school one HMI said at a conference:

'Children get to school before eight in the morning and don't go home until the caretaker throws them out. It's marvellous. . . . The ribs of the girls are bruised by the boys because they are being pushed out of the way in the rush. In one school special girls' nights are being held to compensate for this. (TES 1983b.)'

This statement is in my view quite outrageous and beyond comment. Note also that what would seem to amount to any access at all to computers for girls is described as 'special'. Next we may expect to hear the familiar cry 'But what about something special for the boys.'
Some girls were very clear that sexual harassment in the co-educational secondary school was not a new phenomenon in their lives: at the time I never regarded sexual harassment as a really major problem. It was more like a game which had developed from the infant and junior school with 'kiss-chase' and boys pulling up your skirt ... I only really began to get annoyed when it became more than a joke and started to happen all the time. I suppose the embarrassment annoyed me more than the act itself. If you're seen with boys continually chasing you, then you get a reputation for 'liking it'.

One strategy that women have always used is to laugh off such incidents. This is because there is always a dilemma about whether any challenge will result in even more humiliation. However, such events are never a joke even though we may have learnt that it is safer to treat them as such. That girls learn so young that violation of their person is a game says a great deal about the extent to which it is a 'normal' feature of women's lives. Sexism (to put it mildly) is no more of a joke than any other form of oppression. But while few in education would dare to openly take issue with say, an anti-racist stance, many deny that there is anything humorous about sexism. This testifies to little more than either a gross or a deliberate failure of imagination as well as denying the experiences of black girls.

Servicing

Boys' behaviour towards girls not only controls them but is also used to extract an enormous amount of servicing from them. In class girls provide boys with an endless supply of pens, pencils, rubbers and other equipment. Outside the classroom there is a further extension of it: recent female school leaver: 'At break times the gap was even more evident ... the girls sat on the benches in the playground and the boys played football in the winter and tennis in the summer. The girls would go out to the shops with lists of the sweets and crisps required by the boys who would also hang around begging sandwiches. I found the way that the girls in the top set mothered the boys quite incredible: they helped with homework and excuses and even sorted out arguments and disputes.'

The next writer is very clear in her explanation:

The black girls in this school have to just play along with the boys. For example they clung on to their arms making them feel 'nice' and 'outstanding' as they
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walk down the corridors. They 'lend' them money to buy food and 'fags' or even do their homework for them. The black boys don't even have to say please, they just spell out what they want in plain and sometimes unmanly language with a hint of a smile and why do we black girls put up with it? Well again everybody wants to have a good name, image and reputation by everyone and if this can be gained from a black boy your troubles are over. (Spare Rib 1983.)

It would be pertinent at this point to know how many readers have assumed that the comments before this last one were made by white pupils and whether, because the last quote specifically mentions black boys, any different response was initiated. At the same time as discussing this we might take issue with those involved in 'multi-cultural education' who spend hours debating which is worse, racism or sexism. Instead, we might concentrate on who benefits from such abstract and academic debates? Who gains from the competition? Certainly not black women whose lives are not changed in any way by such speculations and who are often rendered invisible by assumptions that 'all the women are white and all the blacks are men' (Hull, Scott and Smith 1982). Even the separation of racism and sexism is for black women sometimes unhelpful:

We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial not solely sexual, e.g. the history of rape of Black women by white men as a weapon of political repression. (Moraga and Anzaldua 1981.)

However, in other contexts such separation is clearly necessary: 'We struggle together with Black men against racism, while we also struggle with Black men about sexism.' (Ibid.) It stands as further evidence of the racism and sexism of British schooling that while many have heard of William Wilberforce, few know of Sojourner Truth. As one who simultaneously experienced race and sex oppression she represented in her presence and her speeches her position as a black woman without the right to vote over a century ago:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles or gives me any best place. And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arms! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me. And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as any man — when I could get it — and bear the...
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I have borne thirteen children and seen most of them all sold off to slavery and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (Hooks 1981.)

While it would be wrong to assume that all issues are the same for all women (for example, while white women may campaign for the right to abortion, for black women or women of colour the issue is often enforced sterilization or contraception (Roberts 1981)), it is equally mistaken to assume that what has been described so far as the experience of girls in co-educational schools is the experience of white girls alone. Neither is it the case that any one racial group of boys is in the lead in harassing girls. It is necessary to emphasize this point, since on a number of occasions in workshops on this material a disproportionate amount of interest had been shown in the behaviour of black boys and the welfare of white girls. All girls are vulnerable and all entitled to equal concern.

The individual and the group

So far, in presenting the material gathered, I have perhaps given the impression that what is at issue is simply a case of an individual girl being silenced by an individual boy or group of boys. The effect however is wider than this. Whichever individual boy is involved in what one commentator described as 'being beastly', he does not just gain greater space for himself but for all boys. This is because not just one girl is humiliated into silence, for example, but rather all girls in being girls are equally vulnerable to similar treatment. His gain is not just her loss: her humiliation affects all girls and benefits all boys. Perhaps this is why girls 'get edgy' when one of them is talkative in class. She breaks the rules not just for herself but for all girls. The effect of this is that in a class of thirty pupils fifteen are eliminated from the competition for teacher attention and other resources. Perhaps it also sheds light on recent complaints about single-sex groupings in mixed-sex schools: '...the sheer scale of discipline required to teach thirty-three second year boys.' (TES 1984c). Furthermore, boys who do not display sufficient evidence of masculinity, or more rarely those who actively challenge the sexist behaviour of other boys, are prime targets for a good deal of what is called in their case 'bullying'. Therefore it is doubly in their interest to adopt dominant patterns of male behaviour or at least to pretend to. The question here is when does the pretence...
A can of worms become so like the real thing that it is the real thing. The point is in any case that all boys benefit from the 'ethos of male' whether they want to or not.

In my view it is indisputable that boys benefit from their behaviour towards girls: we have seen how and why they are serviced by girls, how their access to educational resources is maintained and how they are active in structuring relationships of dominance and subordination. In this sense we begin to see that there is a political dimension to co-education: that of men's power over women.
Before moving on to explore the political dimension of co-education one other explanation for the difference in behaviour of boys and girls has already emerged: the head of science in wondering whether 'it's biological or something' was merely more explicit than many. That biology explains or causes differences in gender is a pervasive notion in education. Katherine Clarricoates (1980) reports this comment made by a male junior school teacher: 'I think boys tend to be a little more aggressive and on thinking about it the male is the same in the animal world. We are animals basically.'

Comments made in the process of this study carried similar explicit assumptions concerning the causal role of biology – 'there might be a hint of biology in all this, different hormones and things', or 'women give birth after all'. But mostly assumptions about biological determinism were implicit – 'boys will be boys' or 'well they're boys aren't they?' Again many of the proposed strategies, in placing the onus entirely on the girls to find ways to 'cope with the attitudes of the boys' (TES 1984c), seem to assume that such attitudes and behaviour are in some way an unchangeable fact. In the light of all this it is time to assess the assumption that a difference in biology explains, because it causes, a difference in behaviour.

To discover that human beings can be divided into two groups, one has only to visit a nudist beach. Biological sex, it would appear, can be attributed quite straightforwardly on the basis of what we see in a person's physical appearance. Even those with a more scientific orientation to life than most of us, like doctors, have no difficulty in asserting with confidence that the baby just born is either female or male. However, in reality the matter is a little more complicated. Biological sex can apparently be ascertained accurately only by analysis of chromosome structure – the primary sex characteristics. The secondary sex characteristics – absence or presence of body hair, possession
or otherwise of breasts, uterus, clitoris and so on - have more to do with
the presence or absence of certain hormones (Raymond 1980). Thus
anomalies can arise - persons thought to be women can turn out to be
chromosomal men and this may be discovered by 'girls' turning into
boys at puberty or by 'women' seeking to discover reasons for their
infertility after marriage ('Horizons', BBC2 1979).
Furthermore, it seems that the very criteria which we may use on the
nudist beach turn out to be culture specific:
Again the degree of difference between male and female somatypes
varies between ethnic groups. In one small-scale ('primitive') society for which there
are good photographic records - the Manus of the Admiralty Islands - there is
apparently no difference at all in somatype between males and females as
children, and as adults both men and women tend to the same degrees of
mesomorphy (broad shoulders and chest, heavily muscled limbs, little sub-
cutaneous fat) which is not found to the same extent in American and Western
European groups. In Bali, too, males and females lack the sort of differen-
tiation that is a visible sex difference in our culture. Geoffrey Gorer once
described them as a 'hermaphroditic' people; they have little sex differential in
height and both sexes have broad shoulders and narrow hips. They do not run
to curves and muscles, to body hair or to breasts of any size. (Gorer remarked
that you could not tell male and female apart, even from the front.) Another
source informs us that babies suck their fathers' breasts as well as their
mothers' (Oakley 1972, p. 30.)
The implication of this is that our claim to know that someone is female
or male can be problematic. However, the demands of academic rigour
aside, few of us would think it necessary in our day to day existence to
include with our lesson plans for the day a chromosome testing kit
before being prepared to ascribe biological sex to boys and girls. The
criteria we use may not be perfect, but by and large we get by with
them. Our concepts of gender, and more specifically the models we use
in explaining gender difference, are quite another matter. Before mov-
ing on to discuss how adequate (or inadequate) the biological model is in
explaining the difference in behaviour between males and females, it is
necessary to give a rough definition of what is meant by gender and to
sketch those differences that are being referred to by the term 'gender
differences'.
By gender, I mean those characteristics of behaviour or personality
said to be true of, or appropriate to, a person's biological sex or, more
'scientifically', the 'norms of masculinity and femininity' (Terman and Miles 1936). On a common-sense level it is easy to list the gender differences between boys and girls: associated with masculinity are traits like dominance, aggression, strength, objectivity, decisiveness and so on; we would, on the other hand, expect characteristics such as nurturance, dependence, weakness and subserviency to be given as features of femininity. However, this whole area is fraught with difficulty, and this can be illustrated by mentioning just two difficulties which arise for women. First, although strong and pervasive assumptions about gender do operate in social life (we have specific words for children whose biological sex is not convergent with their gender—'tomboy' and 'cissy'), these assumptions are in fact totally incoherent. There is no way, for example, as Sue Sharpe (1976) has pointed out, that one can actually be a woman if what that means is to be adult and feminine. This is because to be adult (e.g. independent) and to be feminine (e.g. dependent) stand in direct contradiction. Second, in the case of women it seems that we could compose at least two lists which would apparently contradict each other in the terms of the kind of value judgement being made. The first might begin something like this: vain and self-absorbed, manipulative, purveyors of gossip, unable to concentrate; and the second like this: other directed, supportive, cooperative, patient, devoted. On closer inspection, it turns out that the second is an account of how women ought to be and the first a description which not only discloses how we 'really' are but often justifies our inferior social position.

Having made a distinction between biological sex (and here a further distinction between primary and secondary characteristics) and gender, which has more to do with actual or expected behaviour, I shall move on now to the main point, which is to attempt to answer the question How adequate is the biological model in explaining gender differences (differences in behaviour such as we saw in the last chapter) between girls and boys?

The biological model

The assumption that it is biology which determines gender remains a pervasive if not altogether popular notion. The reason why it is not popular with some people is that if men are biologically determined to be dominant and aggressive and women to be 'submissive and weak'
then the struggle to change women’s position in society or girls’ position in school is a waste of time (‘But you can’t change human nature’). How the biological model explains the existence of strong women who are clearly not ‘submissive and weak’, like many whose comments appeared in the last chapter, remains something of a mystery. As El Saadawi (1980) says: ‘However, to be contradictory is the essence of all logic based on exploitation.’ The postcard (below) neatly reveals that contradiction:

Despite these contradictions, the biological explanation remains a pervasive one: as we have seen, educationalists constantly refer either explicitly or implicitly to a biological ‘something we know not what’ to account for the fact that boys are as they are. The fact that it is sometimes unclear what sense of ‘biological’ is meant and that sometimes it is clear that there are several senses of ‘biological’ in play (Janice Raymond cites six), presents us with something of a nightmare. There are, however, some recurring themes: that hormones affect gender, that chromosomes do, or that the function/construction of our biological bits do. I shall take the first two together.

Much of the evidence (e.g. the work of the socio-biologists (Wilson 1975)) that aggressive male behaviour is biologically based and that it arises from hormone/chromosomal structure is based on animals, particularly other primates. However, this is not a promising beginning for, as teachers have known for a long time, whatever the biological
similarities between rats and children, there are very great differences. Children are born into a social world where the environment is structured through language and symbols and as far as we can tell rats are not. The argument is not that "nature not nurture" is the determining factor in the moulding of gender difference, merely that in using animals to support their biological claims, scientists are not comparing like with like. For example, the fact that women may share with other female mammals the necessary equipment to breast-feed their young does not mean that they necessarily choose to do so; neither is it clear that there is any ape equivalent of Playboy in which breasts have other fetishized meanings. Therefore the animal world does not provide us with good evidence. But even if it did, it would seem that the evidence has been carefully selected. Numerous counter examples can be found of male and female animal behaviour that contradicts human gender stereotypes (Fisher 1979), and in one study by Rose a rather startling conclusion was reached:

Female rhesus monkeys infected with androgens show an increase in the 'male' practice of 'mounting' but only if they are dominant members of their group to begin with, before they are infected. If subordinate females are infected, the incidence of mounting behaviour remains the same. Likewise, when dominant male monkeys who secrete testosterone in excess are placed in a social environment where their dominance is not recognised, they become inferior members of the group and their testosterone output lessens considerably.

Thus it can be seen that the role of sex hormones in generating signals that are relayed to the brain and converted into sexual arousal is clearly outweighed by environmental factors. In the latter example of the male monkeys (to reverse the Freudian adage), it is destiny that determines anatomy, or at least determines hormone levels. (Raymond 1980, p. 54.)

This example is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the very confused nature of the subject. Female mounting is already invested with the same meanings as male mounting and there is an implicit link between this and dominance within the social group. Yet such a link is not explored and we are left wondering what the connection is between sexual behaviour, how that is to be interpreted, the animal's position within the pecking order and its general gender identity.

Thus, in conclusion, it would seem that fascinating though animal behaviour might be and instructive though it is in some circumstances,
for the purpose of understanding human behaviour and its determinants, evidence based on animals is not a great deal of help since

1. It is partially selected and so makes false claims about the universal connection between female/male and certain types of behaviour.
2. It is irrelevant because whatever mice, rats and pigeons do when injected with hormones does not imply that even if humans engaged in 'similar' behaviour, we could infer the existence of hormones as causal agents. Perhaps, as Rose suggested, it is the other way round.
3. The comparison is not legitimate since human behaviour is learned and acted out in a symbolic, social setting (Jackson 1978).

Perhaps the next step could be to compare humans with humans. However, to understand this as a task in which individuals were compared with other individuals within the same society would be fruitless. However many individuals were compared with other individuals and however many correlations discovered between hormone levels and certain sorts of behaviour, several problems would arise. First, no behaviour can be labelled with appropriate descriptions. Deciding that someone is, for example, aggressive is not done merely on the basis of what they do, but also on the basis of how they do things. Therefore, we need to be able to give very rigorous criteria for picking out instances of aggression from those of social ineptness or over-enthusiasm, for example, and we cannot do this in any precise way. All kinds of interpretive categories and assumptions come into play when we describe someone as being aggressive. Second, even if this problem were overcome and a correlation were established between aggression and hormone levels, we could not conclude that the latter was responsible for the former - it might be the other way round. The nature/nurture debate is not resolvable at this micro level because nature and nurture are impossible to separate. Third, it would be even more difficult to explain gender differences between boys and girls using these kinds of procedures because what counts as aggression in girls is very different to that in boys. A girl who swears is often judged to be aggressive in a way that a boy is not (Spender 1982).

What all this demonstrates, I think, is that femininity or masculinity, and the whole range of behaviours which fall into these categories, are not just behavioural categories with or without social or biological determinants, but also social, cultural and political categories. Therefore, in order to compare humans we have to look at humans across
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cultures and not within them. This is a shift of emphasis from the individual and her/his behaviour to the gender system or ‘sex role plan’ (Sanday 1981).

Margaret Mead is one of many anthropologists who conducted precisely this kind of inquiry. She looked at three very different groups in New Guinea – ‘. . . the gentle mountain-dwelling Arapesh, the fierce cannibalistic Mundugamor and the graceful head-hunters of Tchambuli’ – and found that:

Each of these tribes had, as every human society, the point of sex difference to use as one theme in the plot of social life, and each of these three peoples has developed that theme differently. In comparing the way in which they have dramatized sex difference, it is possible to gain greater insight into what elements are social constructs. . . . (Mead 1935.)

Among the Arapesh, gender was constructed around our stereotype of femininity – ideal adults were gentle, passive and cherishing. On the contrary she reports the gender identities of both men and women among the Mundugamor approximated more to our notion of the masculine pattern. The women and men were 'assertive' and 'vigor- ous'. Both sexes detested bearing and rearing children and both sexes were reared to be independent and hostile. In the third group, the Tchambuli, there was a differentiation of gender by sex, but this was reported as the reverse of ours. The men were skittish, wary of each other, interested in art, in the theatre, in a thousand petty bits of insult and gossip. Hurt feelings are rampant . . . the pettiness of those who feel themselves weak and isolated. The men wear lovely ornaments (the women shave their heads and are unadorned) they do the shopping, they carve and paint and dance. (Mead 1990.)

Of the children she comments:

This is the only society in which I have worked, where little girls of ten and eleven were more alertly intelligent and more enterprising than little boys . . . the minds of small males, raised, pampered, neglected and isolated, had a fitful, fleeting quality, an inability to come to grips with anything. (Mead 1990.)

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss in detail the implications of Mead's evidence for issues such as power, dominance and the alleged universality of patriarchy (Rubin 1975). What it does show is
that the biological model is inadequate in explaining gender differences between the sexes.

This is important because often in discussions about education the subordination of girls is justified on the basis of gender characteristics, which are alleged to follow from female biology. All we need to show is that gender identity of human beings varies from culture to culture and the 'natural order' ceases to have quite the degree of necessity which is claimed for it.

But, it might be objected, anthropology is notoriously fraught with difficulties, the relevant one in this case being the problem of interpreting cultures from the outside and within the anthropologists' own categories and framework. Taken to its logical extreme, the sceptical view (that nothing can be said about another culture which is not infected by the values and beliefs of the researcher) ends in a position of absurdity, for nothing can be said about anything which is not 'infected' by a theoretical framework of some sort. This is because even our perceptions of the natural world are mediated by a conceptual framework -- to experience at all, as opposed to being the subject of a tide of happenings, is to operate with categories. However, the objection is well put if what it does is to add a cautionary note and it is one which Mead herself might have heeded before using such extremely value laden expressions as 'skittish', 'gossip' and so on.

But if this does not satisfy those disposed to be suspicious of anthropological evidence, now might be the best time to turn to a different sort of evidence: transsexualism. In this case, biological sex and gender go in opposite directions: 'Transsexuals reject the gender that the culture has assigned to them and gravitate toward the gender assigned to the opposite sex.' (Raymond 1980.)

The mere fact that a great deal of money is spent and a great number of people (apparently mostly men) are physically mutilated in the most horrible ways and then kept on damaging drugs for the rest of their lives demonstrates, I think, what is an issue. The maintenance of the gender system as constructed in this society is obviously of crucial importance to someone; more so than the health of its non-conforming casualties. Individual biology (secondary characteristics) can be rebuilt but our notions of masculinity and femininity cannot. Why? Perhaps it is because the social control of women by men can only be maintained if women and men are constructed very differently. If we accept that one of the instruments of control of women is male sexuality, outward and
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predicated as it is on 'objectification, fetishization and conquest' (Snodgrass 1976; Achilles Had 1982), then parameters are drawn within which certain gender identities are appropriate and possible for men and others are not. Similarly, femininity must have its limiting parameters as the reciprocal other half of these. However, if this were the direction in which to seek answers how could the phenomenon of male-to-female transsexualism be accounted for – after all, what I have suggested is that gender is linked with power in the particular way that men exercise it over women in this society. Are male transsexuals to be thought of as men who joined the front line in the struggle against male power? One is not inclined to think so given the often offensive and caricatured notions of femininity which they express (Morris 1974). Various suggestions have been made: Mary Daly sees it as a very new version of a very old idea running through religion of men giving birth to themselves; Janice Raymond (1980) offers this thought:

As female energy, spirit and vitality have not proved conquerable . . . so too has female flesh been difficult to mould and manipulate according to patriarchal standards. Perhaps male flesh will prove more malleable.

This letter from a transsexual confirms her suggestion:

Free from the chains of menstruation and child-bearing, transsexual women are obviously far superior to Genneys in many ways. . . . Genetic women are becoming quite obsolete, which is obvious and the future belongs to transsexual women. We know this and perhaps some of you suspect it. All you have left is your 'ability' to bear children and in a world which will groan to feed 6 billion by the year 2000, that's a negative asset. (Raymond 1980.)

I have argued that not only does transsexualism demonstrate that gender does not follow from biology (seen as chromosomes or hormones), but that it may also give us a clue in understanding gender as central to the politics of patriarchy. I have not attempted to argue this position at this stage, merely to suggest a possible alternative theoretical framework.

I want now to turn to the issue of anatomical sex as determining gender. Shulamith Firestone (1979) has argued that women’s oppression is a direct consequence of the fact that we bear children and (less explicitly) that our femininity arises from this and some of the associated features (lactation) of our biological lives. There are several objections to this view, which is one rather popular among teachers. The fact
that men and women have different 'reproductive functions' does not automatically demonstrate that power must be unequally distributed between them. This is because if women are rendered dependent while child-bearing, it is not self-evident that this dependency must be on men rather than on other women, or that it must be one man in the form of marriage. Neither is it the case that child-bearing is a continual state for all women or a state at all for some. Third, the argument assumes that men have some innate drive to exploit women's reproductive capacities. The fact that they may do and do exploit us stands in need of explanation and cannot be used as axiomatic. Again, I would want to argue that far from femininity following from child-bearing, the very reverse is true. The construction of femininity (in this society at least) structures child-bearing and links it with child-rearing. If female biology is not helpful in understanding gender difference what of male biology? While not rejecting the influence of social factors in shaping gender identity ('female psychology') Janet Sayers (1982) argues that (male) biology cannot be totally ignored:

... these liberal feminists underestimate the part played by biology, and by sexuality, in shaping psychology. ... They neglect to mention that the penis also has psychological significance because of its biologically given erogenous character. Neglect of this factor has led such writers (e.g. Thompson 1945) to suppose that in a society that was dominated by women rather than by men breast envy would simply replace penis envy. But in any society, the relative significance given by psychology to the breast and to the penis must be determined ... among other things by the different degrees to which biology has endowed these different parts of the body with erogenous potential ... any account of female psychology that neglects the influence on psychology of this latter biological factor will necessarily be an incomplete account of psychology.

There are several problems with this argument. First, the mere fact that the penis has erogenous potential shows little if anything: the clitoris has it too. Is the same potential being used to explain the contraction of two very different notions, masculinity and femininity or are there different potentials? If they are different, how can we know - how can a potential be investigated? If, second, the argument is that the penis has more erogenous potential than the breast, then this may be true or false, but in either case it is irrelevant. Why not on this argument compare the clitoris with the tip of a man's nose. If comparisons
are to be made between male and female biological bits then the same items must be compared. Third, if it is claimed that the penis has psychological significance then the question must be raised – for whom? If it has significance for women’s psychology then this could only be because men have made it so – because they have power to make what is significant for them, significant for women. The female body has erogenous potential but the public significance of this has been minimal in the past. Fourth, this account makes it impossible to understand why transsexualism should exist at all, let alone on the scale claimed for it because the organ in question is the very one which is removed.

Having argued that the biological model used to explain gender difference is inadequate, I do not think that biology is irrelevant – it is crucial. Without it the gender system in this society would collapse, for it is the only aspect in which men and women differ. In order to create a social division between two groups some actual difference is needed as a legitimating explanatory category. Biology and difference in biology, far from explaining differences in behaviour between boys and girls, is used to give legitimacy to them. Gender differences do not flow naturally from biology but must be seen as rooted in politics. The appeal to biology is merely an excuse and as such must itself be seen as part of the rationalizing ideology of the politics of male domination.
4 Parasite and host: 
capitalism and patriarchy, 
which is which?

If the social control of girls by boys is not to be explained by biology but by politics, as I have suggested in the last chapter, then the question arises as to what this might mean. Obviously, what is not meant is that such behaviour is recommended in the Conservative Party's manifesto; numerous though their sins are, this is not one of them. Neither do I mean 'of or affecting the State' (Concise Oxford Dictionary). As I shall go on to argue, the social control of women by men is much wider than the parameters of state control. What is meant by 'political' is simply 'involving power'. This is hardly new: there is an entire sociological tradition which looks critically at the role of schooling in reproducing power divisions in society. Sometimes empirical studies have set out to discover whether schooling promotes social mobility (Halsey, Heath and Ridge 1980); sometimes the work has been more abstract in its attempt to theorize the relationship between social divisions in school and those in the wider society. Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, point to the ways in which authority relations in school 'mirror' those to be found in the workplace. Although there has been much debate concerning the best way to characterize the relationships between school and the wider society, the central claim has been that schooling is political in so far as it selects and prepares children for their place in society as adults. More specifically, it is argued that school reproduces the social structure, which in our case is capitalism. There is nothing particularly unusual about this: within any society schools are subject to social policy which attempts to ensure that future citizens are imbued with knowledge, values and beliefs necessary to the maintenance of society (Nicholas 1983). In the light of this we may feel less inclined to have much faith in the 'indoctrination/education' dichotomy and although what goes on in Chinese schools tends to be called 'indoctrination' (as opposed to 'education' in the West), when it comes to it we are all involved in the same business preparing the young to take their places in the future as conforming citizens.
Thus, there is nothing new in the claim that schooling is political if this means that through it the structure of society is reproduced. However, although it is undoubtedly true that in Britain capitalism is reproduced, that is not the end of the matter. Other inequalities are reproduced that are not reducible to the demands of capitalism. Arguments which explain the oppression of women by men in terms of the needs of and benefits to capitalism are, in my view, inadequate. So, too, are theories which explain what girls experience in mixed-sex schools in terms of capitalism. Yet, these are the claims that are predominant in the political critiques of schooling. To be more explicit, Marxist explanations of girls' positions in education are inadequate and, more generally, Marxist explanations or analyses of women's oppression are inadequate. This is because all varieties of Marxism, whatever their internal differences, see the oppression of women as ultimately following from our relationship to the economic system: they see our oppression as following from our connection (or lack of it) with production. Thus, our subordination to men is not theorized in terms of the benefits which accrue to them and the vested interests they have in maintaining those benefits, but in terms of the benefits to capitalism. Zaretzky (1976), for example, in acknowledging that women reproduce the labour force and provide psychological and emotional nurturance for workers amidst a sea of alienation, argues that such activities are required by capitalism and are of benefit to it. Capitalism, Marxists argue, requires the population to be structured into performing certain functions: it needs a private female domestic sphere and a public male sphere – the world of paid work – it needs a stable male labour force and a reserve female labour force which can slot in and out of work at low pay depending on the state of the economy. The point which is never explained is why those divisions have to be sexual divisions or why, within those sexual divisions, women are subordinate to men. Capitalism, to put it crudely, may need someone to scrub the toilet for free so that a worker is kept healthy, but why should that someone be a woman? It was once explained to me that women's noses are less sensitive than men's but this seems to be little more than an extreme case of biological barrel scraping. Heidi Hartmann (1979) states the objection a little less crudely:

Just as capital creates these places indifferent to the individuals who fill them, the categories of Marxist analysis, 'clan' 'reserve army of labour', 'wage-
Parasite and host do not explain why particular people fill particular places. They give no clue about why women are subordinate to men inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way around. Marxist categories, like capital itself, are sex-blind.

Nobody could accuse Heidi Hartmann of academic flamboyance when she concludes: 'Marxist analysis of the woman question has suffered from this basic problem.'

With this in mind, it is perhaps worth returning for a moment to Bowles and Gintis's influential analysis. This can be regarded as typical in arguing that schooling is political in that it embodies structures which function as selective and allocating devices for the social reproduction of the class structure. According to their argument the school produces a differentiated, trudged and conforming workforce, equipped to occupy positions either in the primary labour market (high salaries, career structure etc.) or in the secondary labour market (low job security, low wages, little training etc.). In this secondary labour market are: 'Blacks . . . women, the elderly, youth and other minority groups.' (Bowles and Gintis 1976; my emphasis.) Apart from reducing half the population (women) to a 'minority group', Bowles and Gintis offer no explanation of what other selecting devices are operative in ensuring that it is some categories of people and not others who occupy certain places in the hierarchy.

Furthermore, the objection that Marxism fails to explain why women are subordinate to men in the sexual division of labour or why a sexual division of labour is necessary at all (why not have some people in the private domestic sphere and other people in the public world of waged work?), is not the only problem. Male control over women pre-dated capitalism, so how can it be responsible for the oppression of women because, at best, it has made use of an already existing social division, the basis of which remains a mystery. Neither is women's oppression currently confined to capitalist societies: in China the Women's Federation found not only that their liberation was not automatic upon changes in ownership of the means of production and land but also that patriarchal attitudes were particularly resistant to change. As women began to make demands over such issues as marriage, divorce and male violence they found that, in threatening men, their views were very often suppressed on the grounds that they threatened the unity of class interests (Croll 1978). Another problem of Marxism is that by occupying
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a central role in production, women ought to enjoy greater equality with men. But this is not the case as empirical evidence shows. For example, Haleh Afshar (1981) comments that:

According to traditional Marxist analysis the subjugation of women can be understood in terms of the economic base. Their emancipation will only be possible when women are included in socially productive work and there has been a corresponding rise of economy and culture.

However, her analysis of the position of women in Aniaaback, a small village south of Tehran, shows that even when women do become involved in socially productive work (making carpets) there is no corresponding improvement in their position. If anything, it would seem as though women's position has worsened:

Women receive no payment for spinning and weaving. The carpets are sold by men in Isfahan where they also buy yarn and dyes. Women have no access to the sphere of circulation and do not own their product or their means of production. Neither are they able to sell their labour power. Their ability to weave carpets has enslaved them even further in an archaic mode of production which is kept separate from the money economy of the men. (Ibid.)

Furthermore, it seems as if women's entry into production, although widening the range of activities open to them (or forced on them), may actually increase the extent to which they are tightly structured under the control of men (Deere and de Leal 1981).

In the light of all this it seems reasonable to make a plea at this point for a theory of patriarchy, rather than a theory of social class, to account for the oppression of women by men and the oppression of girls by boys in school. It will not do for this theory of patriarchy to be understood as 'ideology' as some writers have suggested:

The sexual division of labour involves a close relationship between the ideological system and concrete form exhibited in the predominant beliefs concerning the role of women. . . . Ideologies are socially constructed 'systems of representations' comprising of images, ideas and concepts. (Wolpe 1977.)

This is because patriarchy involves more than sets of ideas: rape, male violence and sexual harassment are all very material ways in which men control women. But this could be conceded, ideology it could be claimed is material and hence the Marxist bacon is saved.

This, however, is not a satisfactory explanation because it does not
Parasite and host

explain the material base of ideology. It is no help to point us back in the
direction of the economic base since ideology has already been wheeled
in to cover the gap left by the explanation which gives analytic primacy
to economic determinants. Thus, the account is circular. Ideology is
introduced to explain patriarchal relations because crude Marxism
cannot explain why capitalism needs men to dominate women rather
than the other way round, yet when we look for the material base of
patriarchal relations we are referred back to the mode of production.
But, then, if patriarchal relations are material why call them ideologi-
cal? Only, I suggest, because Marxists need to retain the analytic
primacy of economics (mode of production) as the determining factor
of other material practices. However, once it is acknowledged that there
is not necessarily any connection between patriarchy and particular
kinds of economic systems, a new material base for patriarchy has to be
found.
Thus, with a sense of relief we may be forgiven for feeling excited that
at last an analysis of girls' education is about to sock the sex-blind
sociological world squarely on the jaw. Educational analysis is incom-
plete without an understanding of patriarchy which is, says Madelaine
MacDonald (1981), "A set of social relations with a material base and in
which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity
among them - which enable them to control women."
However, there is disappointment in store. Just as Heidi Hartmann
criticized Marxism for its concentration on the sphere of production,
but saw the solution to the problem in terms of understanding male
control of women's labour power, so MacDonald sees patriarchal rela-
tions as being maintained in the interests of the sexual division of labour
which benefits capitalism. This theory is inadequate. Why should men,
particularly working-class men, engage in practices which subordinate
women for capitalism? Men do so because they benefit from it, a fact
omitted from both the definition and the analysis. Therefore, although
MacDonald's work represents an advance because it considers girls at
all and because it details certain aspects of schooling as expressive and
reproductive of patriarchal relations, in the last analysis it is inadequate
in stating that the material base of patriarchy is in the last instance
reducible to the economic and in its claim that patriarchy is maintained
solely in the interests of capitalism. As Marxists, Hartmann and Mac-
Donald have to give analytic primacy to the mode of production as
ultimately determining social relations, but in doing so they never
explain why men control women. What then is the material base of patriarchy—how do men control women?

They do so through their control of women's access to production, and by their control over biological reproduction, but this is not sufficient. A crucial third element which has been omitted from the Marxist account is male control of women's sexuality through a particular form of heterosexuality. The construction of male identity and in particular the social construction of male sexuality is crucial in the maintenance of male power and it is this which we have witnessed in the mixed-sex classroom. I am not arguing that men's control over production or biological reproduction can be reduced to their control over women through the exercise of male sexuality. In practice there seems to be a highly complicated matrix of these three in operation. For example, women's economic position is controlled by sexual harassment at work (McKinon 1979), but on the other hand the extent to which women are vulnerable to harassment on the street depends on whether we can afford to own cars. Again, our control over biological reproduction is greater or less depending on our economic position; abortions can still be bought and contraception and sterilization without a woman's knowledge or consent are features of white working-class and black women's lives (Roberts 1981). On the other hand, the organization of biological reproduction in this society, with the assumed connection between child-bearing and child-rearing, affects women's access to paid work. The connection between male sexuality and reproduction can also be seen to be operating both ways. The way male sexuality is organized in terms of a model of 'normal' heterosexuality involving frequent coitus makes women vulnerable to pregnancy, especially if they are aware of the damaging effects of many forms of contraception. This model, however, is not universal. Heider (1976) described the Dani of Indonesia as having a low level of sexual interest. After childbirth there is no sexual intercourse for between four and six years. Boys' initiation ceremonies do not emphasize masculinity as we know it and within the society as a whole there is a low level of sexual stimulation as compared with our own sex obsessed culture. On the other hand, in Western society having children pressures women into continued relationships where they are vulnerable to a male sexuality constructed against the interests of women. This pressure (exemplified in the treatment of lesbian mothers) is made explicit by proposals to give fathers rights of access to their children irrespective of the circum-
stances in which they were conceived, such as rape (Sutton & Friedman 1982). What is striking about the oppression of women by men is that women are pressured into individual relationships with their oppressors. As such the power relations involved are masked by the ideology and language of love, romance, pleasure and desire. This is not to deny that women love men: the structuring of the 'boy meets girl' scenario creates feelings which are real. The point is not to deny that such feelings exist but to point out that they mask the fact that there is a power dimension to such relationships. I have already argued that the explanation for the differences in masculinity and femininity lies not with biology but with politics. It is now time to explain this view. I shall argue that it is the social construction of masculinity or social maleness, central to which is the construction of a particular form of male sexuality, which contributes to the continued oppression of women to the material benefit of men and that this way of looking at things helps us to understand mixed-sex classrooms.

Ethel Spector Person (1980), an American psychoanalyst, has suggested that an obsessive sexuality is central to male identity. Men, she argues, feel driven to 'act out sexually' because that is how they assure themselves of their identity as men. There are some common assumptions about male sexuality. There is the assumption that men have a high sex drive and that this is biologically based, so that if frequent coitus with women is not achieved then they will suffer discomfort or physical damage. This assumed biological need is often used to excuse men from their sexual abuse of daughters and to blame women in the family for failing in their duty of sexually servicing their husbands. Sometimes this biological imperative erupts in the form of rape. Uncontrollable urges, in being seen as a natural part of male sexuality, also function to excuse men's behaviour and again attention becomes focused on 'the provocative' behaviour of the rapist's victim. (The fact that men are highly selective when it comes to choosing the time and place to rape seems not to undermine the assumption of uncontrollability.) This then is the conventional wisdom concerning what is normal, healthy and biologically inevitable about male sexuality, assumptions with which we are all familiar and may even have believed.

Feminists, however, have known for at least a hundred years that this is all claptrap. Although writings and campaigns organized around the turn of the century have been 'written off the record', much recent energy has gone into rediscovering earlier feminist struggles and in
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mapping the way in which particular forms of male sexuality have been promoted as responses to these campaigns by the so-called progressive sexologists (Jeffreys 1984; Jackson 1984). What this means is that the construction of male sexuality as well as being a material force in the oppression of women, also has a history which reveals on investigation the changes which have occurred (Jeffreys 1983).

There is now a vast feminist literature on this subject and it seems that at long last this has persuaded a small number of men to examine for themselves the nature of male sexuality. We are told by John Stoltenberg (1977) that the so-called biological imperative is a lie and by Jack Litewka (1977) that male sexuality is organized around three basic notions:

**Objectification:** From a very young age, males are taught by everyone to objectify females. They generalize the female, in an almost platonic sense. This generalized woman is a concept, a lump, a thing, an object, a non-individualized category. The female is always 'other'. Males learn to objectify through a process of 'definition'. We identify, and have identified for us, many female attributes. It starts simply: girls have long hair, wear ribbons on it, have on dresses, and like pink and yellow things. And, of course, they play with dolls... When it's time to learn practical living skills, they sew and bake while we use tools and build. They are easily recognized as different. There's them and there's us. And who'd want to do a silly girl's thing anyhow?

**Fixation:** Part of male sexual initiation is learning to fixate on portions of the female's anatomy: at first breasts... And in movies, on TV, in advertisements, where else can we look when the camera's eye focuses on breasts? So our eye is trained and we fixate. Emotionally too. We learn that if we do that, we will eventually get pleasure and have fun. And be men. Be seen as male. Be reacted to as male.

**Conquest:** To conquer is a highly valued skill in our society. We are taught to alter the enemy into subhuman, to convert the beast into a stuffed head and rug, to gain power and rule. Male initiation rites and activities always require trophies (e.g., sports) and the more numerous and advanced your 'awards', the more of a man you are. In sexual matters, the male conquers when he succeeds in reducing the female from a being into a thing... Conquer... follows Objectification and Fixation. I mean, after all, what's the sense of objectifying and fixating if you're not going to get off your ass and do a little conquering? And when we do conquer, what is the trophy? In the old days it
might have been a lock of hair or a garter strap. A ring can also announce your achievement. But always your own knowledge of what transpired is your reward - being pleased with yourself and being able to say to yourself, 'I am a man.' And if others have knowledge of your conquest, your knowing that they know is as great a reward as any.

In teenage boys it is an exaggerated form of these elements which seems to constitute masculinity. Julian Wood (1982) says that for the boys he worked with...

... it was clear that learning to inhabit their form of masculinity inevitably entailed, to a greater or lesser extent, learning to be sexist: being a bit of a lad and being contemptuous of women just went 'naturally' together. The boys saw all women as existing primarily in and through their physical bodies (face, legs, tits, etc.). There are precedents for this dissecting attitude just about everywhere.

There is also a price to pay for the power gained over women and girls: boys... are encouraged to measure their masculinity via a woman-hating rapacious sexuality. This pressure to be a sort of Tarzan-cum-Ripper is sedimented into the history of how to be male. Learnt as a style it may harden into a cramped emotional range which cannot be softened. (Ibid.)

These accounts make perfect sense of what we have witnessed in mixed-sex schools. The objectification of girls is both exemplified and achieved by sexually appraising looks, by the reference to them as 'it' and by physical forms of sexual harassment, to mention but a few examples from Chapter 2. Evidence of fixation, what is sometimes called in the literature 'fetishization', appears in the way that particular parts of girls' anatomy become the focus of boys' attention - breasts, legs, buttocks - and in the way that the language of abuse includes a large number of obscene references to particular parts of girls' bodies.

Conquest is rather more complicated: girls, like women throughout history, have numerous strategies of resistance and to this extent are not passive victims of boys' behaviour. Often though, such resistance, particularly if it is overt, merely means that boys redouble their efforts (remember the girl who told 'F. H. to shut his filthy mouth' and then went on to say 'It doesn't do any good, they just do it more'). Thus, there is a dilemma for girls: they either overtly challenge boys or ignore them in a way of refusing to participate at all. If boys are aiming at
conquest it is difficult to know whether they have succeeded when girls become silent or whether, in mentally switching off, girls do in fact achieve their removal from the arena. Much depends on how far girls are conscious of what is happening, how far they identify as a group and how far opting out is a self-chosen strategy – a refusal to be controlled as opposed to an individual response following the internalization of low self-esteem.

Conquest is not an all-or-nothing business. Women are involved in a continual set of negotiations: go along with it in this instance, object on that one (and know that self-preservation is a tricky business!). This means that a girl might continue to service a boy in class but refuse any further relationship:

Fifth-year girl: 'I told him, I don’t want to see you any more. You’re really nice when we’re together and you’re a pig when you’re with your friends. He still comes to me for pens and stuff though.'

Int: 'Do you give them to him?'

Girl: ‘Yes usually, it seems petty not to. Anyway I don’t want outright hostility.’

A great deal more could be said about the construction of social maleness in this society and its use as an instrument in the social control of women, affecting where we go, how we behave, what we do and when (for a much fuller discussion see Coveney et al. 1984). However, for the purposes of this study enough has been said to suggest ways in which we might begin to understand mixed-sex schools. The ‘problem’ is not girls or ‘the system’ or capitalism but what I have called, for want of a better expression, ‘social maleness’.

A central part of the social growth of boys into men involves the social control of girls and women and as such boys’ behaviour towards girls does not just reflect an imbalance of power between men and women but actively reconstitutes it. We have seen how girls may choose one boy to ‘protect’ them from the rest and how individual boys who do not support social maleness are punished along with girls who become too obvious in refusing to accept their place. As such, co-educational schools are one site among many where an identity of maleness is learned, practised and endorsed. Central to this is a particular form of male sexuality which, I have suggested, constitutes one material base of women’s oppression. It is now time to consider the implications of all this for equal opportunities work and anti-sexist teaching.
A great deal of work on equal opportunities and anti-sexism has already been done both inside and outside school. Women teachers (for there are lamentably few men) have worked exhaustively in re-writing materials, making videos and re-structuring ways of teaching so that girls have more space in schools. It is now not difficult to gather together lists of contacts and places where further information can be gained about the sorts of initiatives underway (Whyld 1983; WEIDG 1984a). There are also groups of women outside schools who campaign against rape, pornography, violence against women, media images of women, sexual abuse of girls, sexual harassment at work and so on. Attempts have often been made to silence what amounts to a feminist fight-back (Wilson 1983). As the forefront of this counter-movement are the usual accusations of totalitarian censorship and prudery. Carol Jones (1984) speaks for many of us when she says:

By focussing only on ‘censorship’, writers who wish to defend ‘video nasties’/pornography seem to insist on aligning feminists who are critical of male violence on the screen with the increasingly alarming ‘right wing’ ideology of a Tory Britain (Reynor 1984). I see this as an attempt to silence women who are angry at the butchering of women yet who are also disturbed by the increasing power of the right. It needs to be made clear, here, that feminists campaigning against male violence do not share any political sympathies with the Mary Whitehouse campaign or ‘moral majority’ (in fact quite the opposite) but that does not mean that we must keep silent about the mutilation of women.

But, despite the fact that a great deal of work has been undertaken on general issues of sexism in schools, much remains to be done with respect to male violence. The first step is to insist that there is a problem.

* Thanks to Frances McGee for this chapter title.
and this may sound easier than it is. Many people still feel that it is not "nice" to talk about such things (this is true). Studies such as this one will come under attack for their lack of 'objectivity' without it ever being acknowledged that the so-called standards of objectivity, had they been observed, would not have revealed the information gathered. In my experience it is difficult to raise such matters in mixed-sex groups of student teachers because even when the men are in the minority they can control the conversation with aggression, persistent refusal to treat the discussion seriously or by the accusation that the course is biased because "it's not a core problem" (Mahony 1983). All of these examples operate as silencers and ways have to be found to negotiate our way through them.

Having established that there is a problem the next step is to understand the full nature of it. This again sounds easier than it is. However, as our understanding grows we will begin to see, for example, the contradiction between, on the one hand, the way we smile fondly as our infant boys 'rough and tumble' in the playground and, on the other, our complaints ten years later about how adept they are at violence. Elizabeth Wilson (1983) quotes this comment in the Guardian:

'Boys will be boys' is one of the most insidious phrases in our language and covers a multitude of sins. Boys are brought up to be aggressive and competitive, to 'get into mischief' and generally to behave destructively with only a minimal thwarting of their so-called instinctual drives. In brief, most boys are brought up to be selfish pigs.

Just as we may arrive at new understandings so also we may interpret old knowledge in new ways. For example, if girls choose to work with each other and not with boys in a group we may no longer be surprised. To accuse them of being sexist is to miss, as some teachers do, that they work with the boys to remove one of the strategies they use to resist male dominance. Neither should we be surprised, as some staff have been, if girls resist attempts to organize them separately from boys. What they resist is the implication that they are the problem in being too weak to be able to cope with the boys (remember the girl who said "If you'd asked me two years ago I would have been rather annoyed. I like to see myself as quite strong"). This does not mean that we should not organize single-sex groupings in mixed schools but that we should be sensitive about how we do it. At present our sensitivity can be very easily dominated by a concern for the reactions of the boys, which is
understandable when attempts to organize women-only groups with
student teachers tend to bring forth the wrath of the (male) gods and
elicit deep preoccupations with irresponsible spending of tax-payers
money which fade abruptly at the rugby club door.
Sensitively managed, however, the provision of single-sex groups in
mixed schools can be of enormous benefit to girls, as these comments
from the DASI project (Cornbleet and Sanders 1982) show:

Being in the girls group
Every Tuesday the girls only go to foundation with . . . . and on Mondays
with . . . . . that is P.E. In the foundation lesson we talk and there is less
arguing and less noise and the work I liked was watching the adverts and acting
them out and reading books, writing stories and playing games like fruit bowl.
The lesson we have with . . . . . and . . . . . are very noisy and more
arguing, and the boys are always calling the girls names or each other.
The work we do is all right but when there's good work I really do enjoy
myself. In the girls' lesson I enjoy myself and it is much comfortable and I
know the lessons are very good.
Surbjit Kaur
First Year, Clissold Park School

Being in the girls' group
's lesson is fantastic. It's really a lesson where it teaches you how to
understand girls' feelings, and helps you cope with your problems.
It's a lesson where it's just one sex. Girls: Girls from 1M.
We have one lesson every week which is teaching you about racism and
sexism. It's a lesson where you know how girls really feel about sexism, it's a
lesson where we're trying to tell you it's just not fair, you haven't got the
opportunity boys have, like you get funny names, or should I say horrible
names if you ever did design and technology, woodwork, football, because it's
known as a boy's subject.
If girls didn't do anything like this, it would be impossible for them to carry
on in later life. All we're trying to do is fight back, fight back for sexism, to get equal with
boys. Writing this is very important to me and the teacher because it means
really a lot. It's going to be very boring for all of the girls in 1M because we will
not be having this lesson next year.
So what I'm trying to say is that I think every mixed school should have this
very special and understanding lesson, because if there's any lesson in schools
that is important, it's this lesson.
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This lesson shows you that you can trust the girls twice more now than you did before. You know how they feel about the whole lesson, because I feel the same.

The world would be wicked if these lessons weren’t invented.

Victoria McIntosh
First Year, Clissold Park School

Being in a girls’ group

When I first came to this school I expected that everyone, including boys, would be friendly, but after one or two lessons, I realised that boys were just bad and aggressive. Every lesson was the same. The boys were noisy and troublesome and we all got the blame. After a while we started having single sex groups.

I couldn’t believe how quiet it was and how much more work we got through without the boys.

The single sex lessons were definitely my favourite foundation lessons. We learnt a whole lot more about boys and men dominating women and girls. For instance, if a boy has had sex with a girl he is thought of as hard but if a girl has sex with a boy she is thought of as a slag.

Recently there was a D.A.S.I (Developing Anti-Sexist Initiatives) festival. There were many stalls and workshops and self-defence classes and things like that. In the evening there was a brilliant play about being a black girl in a racist and sexist community. It was very good.

I am sad that this project is over.

Rachel Bosall
First Year, Clissold Park School

Despite girls’ responses, single-sex groupings have come in for some criticism recently. Sue Jeffery (1984) analyses the opposition:

In a recent report (TES 1984c) it was stated that: “Single-sex teaching is not the way to get more girls to take up maths and science, according to the very teachers who have pioneered the so-called “withdrawal” strategy.” The article cites many criticisms made of the single-sex teaching. These boil down to the following points:
1. The strategy is not enough in itself.
2. There can be organisational problems.
3. Teachers do not like it, especially because of discipline problems with all boys groups.
4. Boys do not benefit from the strategy.
5. A lot can be done for girls within the mixed sex classroom.
6. The evidence for the strategy’s success is ‘confused and difficult to interpret’.

Let us look in more detail at what is actually said in the article and consider how valid these criticisms are.

1. The strategy is not enough in itself because
   (a) ‘The strategy could lead to girls getting second-class provision.’
   Possibly true, but this is a failure of the overall school structure and not an indictment of the strategy itself.
   (b) ‘Single-sex groups have a limited effect if the school overall remains sexist.’
   True, but this does not mean that the strategy is no good, simply that sexism should be tackled throughout the school. More anti-sexist action is needed, not less.
   (c) ‘Single-sex classes, in isolation, will not attract more girls into physical science, and it is wrong to encourage teachers to think this is all they need to do.’
   True, but this is not an indictment of the strategy itself. Teachers need to understand that other measures are also necessary.

2. There can be organisational problems because
   ‘Schools can run into the problems of what to do with pupils in the fourth and fifth years, after they have been split lower down the school.’
   This is another spurious objection. Why not keep the groups single sex in the fourth and fifth years?

3. Teachers do not like the strategy because
   (a) ‘Problems can arise within a science department when teachers disagree about the value of segregation, and between the departments when other staff in the school oppose the move.’
   Again this says nothing about the educational value of the strategy itself except that some teachers do not like it (and perhaps may wish to sabotage it).
   (b) ‘Teachers are often unprepared for “inevitable” problems such as the sheer scale of discipline required to teach 33 second year boys, or the apathy that can be found in an all girls class at times.’
   What exactly is inevitable about apathy in an all girls class? Is the suggestion that girls are ‘naturally’ apathetic? Or could it be that teaching materials and methods in science are inappropriate for them? At any rate, the subject should be worth investigation rather than simple assertion and
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does not necessarily negate a single-sex teaching strategy. If all-boys classes are harder for teachers to control, this still does not affect the educational value of single-sex teaching for girls.

A Tameside school achieved 'a remarkable improvement in the girls' scores in the second year science exam' after a single-sex teaching experiment. However, we are told rather enigmatically in the article that after some years some staff who had been 'deeply committed' to the scheme had 'turned against it totally'. Why should teachers, who are after all in the business of education, turn totally against a scheme which appears to have 'remarkable' educational success? Again, this situation should be a cause for concern and not simple assertion as if it were an understandable reaction.

The former deputy head of Stamford High School ('This school is the most quoted example of a single-sex success story'), currently on an EOC research grant monitoring the results of mixed versus single-sex teaching, is reluctant to draw 'premature conclusions'. Nevertheless, he admits that girls trail behind the boys in mixed groups. However, the staff at the school are not 'sold on' single-sex teaching, which has raised problems of classroom discipline, and that he quite understands anyone who is suspicious of the technique. This is a fine example of trivialization, an educationally important initiative when involving girls becomes a 'technique'. Furthermore, why should it be acceptable to be suspicious of initiatives which attempt to remove impediments to girls' learning?

Boys do not benefit from the strategy.

Single-sex groups 'do not appear to offer any benefits to boy pupils'. Now we are getting down to the real objections - boys don't get anything out of it. The strategy was not designed to offer special benefits to boys. The claim was not that boys underachieve in science and maths. The strategy should be judged in terms of the benefits it can offer girls - the original aims.

A lot can be done for girls within the mixed-sex classroom.

Our teacher claims that both boys and girls benefit from working in mixed sex groups in science. These benefits are: The boy's 'natural inclinations to push and shove and bug about' are curbed by their girl co-workers in doing experiments, while the boys rush heedlessly in, the girls concern themselves with correct procedures. Boys learn a lot from girls about setting out their work. You very rarely see a girl leaning over a boy's shoulder to see how to write things up. The teacher speaking seems to give
any examples of how girls benefit from mixed-sex groups, though boys apparently benefit from having mature and responsible pupils (girls) in their class, who service them and curb their 'natural' inclinations. The same teacher declares that girls' participation in physics at the same school has increased, though it appears to be solely due to her example as a female teacher of the subject.

(b) Simple strategies can 'do a lot' to help girls in mixed classes. "They include asking questions of individual pupils and making sure there is no "girls' ghetto" at the back." Again the evidence of interaction in mixed-sex classrooms suggests that asking girls questions and putting them out individually is equivalent to setting them up for ridicule from the boys, since whatever they answer, they will be 'wrong'. Similarly, girls may tend to sit together as a positive way of resisting harassment from the boys. Splitting them up reduces their confidence even further. Even supposing these strategies can 'do a lot' (and where is the evidence for this claim?) can they do as much as single-sex teaching groups? If not, then why settle for them. Do teachers ever refer to 'boys' ghettos'?

(c) "It's no use encouraging the girls if they can't cope with the attitude of the boys or if the boys cannot appreciate the ability of the girls in "their" area." The assumptions underlying this statement appear to be: it is not worth encouraging the girls as an aim in itself; boys' attitudes are immutable and girls must learn to cope with them; in mixed-sex groups boys appreciate girls' work. But we already know that the last thing that boys do in mixed-sex groups is appreciate girls' work. The attitude of the boys is not questioned or seen as something to be worked on and changed. Again, none of this criticizes the single-sex teaching strategy, except to say that encouraging girls is not in itself a worthy aim!

6 The evidence of the strategy's success for girls is 'confused and difficult to interpret'.

(a) At a Tameside school results in the second year science exam improved dramatically after single-sex teaching for girls:

In 1981, 24% of girls scored less than 50%.
In 1982, 11% of girls scored less than 50%.
Between 1981 and 1982, the proportion of girls scoring over 75% more than trebled.

So what is so confusing about these results? Well the 'complicating' factors are
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1 The school changed from being selective to comprehensive. Why should going comprehensive push marks up so drastically? Popular 'wisdom' has it that standards fall when schools go comprehensive.
2 There were several changes in the science staff. This could be a contributing factor, but did boys' results show such dramatic improvements when they were taught by the new staff?

These factors are not so 'complicating' as to suggest that the strategy has failed. If anything they suggest that the experiment should continue to be monitored.

(b) The second piece of 'confusing' evidence comes from Stamford High School where a single-sex experiment in maths began in 1978. Here, the girls taught in mixed-sex groups averaged only 43.9%, while the girls taught in single-sex groups averaged 54.7% in second year. What is so confusing and difficult to interpret about that?

Well, 'the results will not be known' until summer 1985 when a single-sex set has gone right through the school. But the results so far are known and since they demonstrate an improvement for girls then why is this not worth saying?

Sue Jeffery concludes her analysis with this comment:

There is a question as to whether we should exert any energy at all on refuting these very bad arguments, not least because the academic achievement of girls is not the only matter at issue. On balance, I think it is important to analyse in detail and every so often, what is being said. We need to remind ourselves that these are merely some in a very long line of spurious objections to girls being provided with a reasonable context for learning where their primary role is not one of servicing the boys. Isn’t it astounding that an article, the whole tenor of which is against single-sex teaching, should produce no evidence that the strategy has failed in its original aim which was to tackle the underachievement of girls in maths and science? But the real issue being dealt with is not 'Does the strategy achieve its aim?' but 'Is it worth the trouble?' The answer is 'No, girls' achievement in maths and science is not that important.'

Thus far I have argued that we need to name the problem, understand its nature and origin and be prepared to defend girls' groups from the sort of spurious objections we have just witnessed. We also need a specific policy on how to deal with the incidents of sexual harassment occurring in school. Carol Jones's (1984) suggestions include:
1. Anti-sexist initiatives in mixed Comprehensive Schools have included single sex groupings for certain subjects (for example the DASI project) so that girls are able to develop an awareness and confidence together, be in a stronger position to support each other against the boys and create strategies for change.

2. Each school should set up women's groups for teachers, parents and ancillary staff for mutual support, sharing of experiences and discussing action. Girls' groups should be set up and both groups work together on strategies for dealing with sexual harassment. Possibilities include keeping an 'incident book' in which girls/women record sexual assaults. This not only serves to validate girls'/women's experience but may also be useful as 'proof' should the school need convincing. Girls should take responsibility for dealing with sexual harassment, to show that women are a powerful force.

3. A room for girls to spend time together is essential so that they do not have to seek refuge in the girls' toilets (many girls do this because it is the only place that is theirs – boys take up the majority of space in the school).

She goes on to add a mild note of caution: 'Men/boys are not likely to take well to these changes and may become abusive to women's/girls' groups. Discretion is, of course, very useful when under this kind of pressure.'

Incidents of sexual harassment do not of course, happen in a vacuum. They occur in the general context of the school ethos and therefore cannot be adequately challenged unless we pay attention to this general context. This requires that we build into the entire curriculum a critical attitude to the presentation of women as sex objects; that we demand that the proper treatment of women becomes a feature of the total school environment. It is not possible to be very specific about what this would entail since institutions differ so much in the ways in which they convey messages about women. For example, in one London college pornographic calendars are a general feature of the maintenance workshops, yet this particular example would not be relevant to schools. However, what would be relevant is the prevalence of 'pin-ups' adorning the insides of boys' lockers and the kind of images of girls and women portrayed in art work displayed around the school (to say nothing of graffiti). So, despite the fact that specific examples differ, there is nevertheless a general question which can be asked: 'What images of and attitudes to women are presented in the general environment of the institution?'

A second question we might ask about the general context of the
school concerns language: 'What values about women are embedded in and perpetuated by the language used?' Again this differs from institution to institution. As a Senior Lecturer and in marked contrast to my male colleagues I am variously referred to by male ancillary staff as 'little darling', 'pet', 'love' and 'sweetheart'. In a local junior school on the other hand, the fourth-year girls in asking a male teacher for help with their work are often 'steered' about their subtle attempts to get physically close to him. In both cases the primary concerns of the females in question, whether to fulfil their teaching duties (worker to worker) or to learn (pupil to teacher), are over-ridden by a dynamic of male to female. This dynamic is one in which men patronize women and is all the more difficult to challenge when it arises from friendly, warm, social relationships.

Third, we need to look critically at the written materials used in school. Often this is understood as a task in which we note the absence or invisibility of women, but this is only half the story. Where women are present in texts we must also ask 'How are they portrayed?' 'Is it only as sex objects and in other servicing roles?' A secondary school library could be bursting with books about women and girls but if all the heroines ever do is to swoon while waiting for Prince Charming, then one might argue that this is a kind of visibility that we could well do without.

What might be done about sexist books varies from school to school and depends on resources. One junior school has recently returned 800 library books to the Local Education Authority on the grounds that they were racist and sexist. Another school felt they could not afford to do this as there would be few books left! The staff decided to write critical comments in the texts so that children would see oppressive ideas being challenged. It might be argued that textbooks for use in class should be retained rather than scrapped so the sexist images can be challenged.

Perhaps the most difficult area of all is where children and staff are in social situations. The staff Christmas show is often a glorious example of the superficial way in which anti-sexist work is understood. As a parent, I do not relish the prospect of enduring another evening of 'fun' where various senior male staff caricature 'ugly women' or adorn themselves in all the paraphernalia of sex objectification (suspenders, garters, frilly underwear and the two inevitable over-inflated balloons). While the images of women portrayed are outrageous, these events are very
Having discussed some general ideas about how we might begin to look afresh at schools, the crucial element which needs to be emphasized is the importance of beginning to talk about the issues. Teachers might begin with small group discussions which range over a number of well-researched issues (option choices, careers, content of school subjects), taking it in turns to provide input based on readings. Consciousness raising groups in which personal experience is a central feature are another valuable way in which awareness of behaviour and strategies for change can be discussed. Small groups of teachers can also make studies of their schools; in uncovering what is really happening in terms of pupil perception, timetabling or examination results, for instance, clear proposals for change can often become immediately obvious. Last, small groups could focus on one issue in school. In the case of sexual harassment, I have argued, there is more which needs to be addressed than the specific instances of harassment.

I have argued that talk generates awareness and that awareness in turn generates its own strategies for change. If this is so, then there is a question about the best way to ensure that talk begins. One way is for Local Education Authorities to insist on it either by imposing policy on schools or by requiring schools to submit policies. Another is to regard the making of policy statements as a secondary issue. The mere existence of these alternatives highlights another issue which is that the role and status of policy and its relationship to practice is highly problematic. On the face of it, it could be argued that when a Local Education Authority starts talking anti-sexist policy, the radical changes are afoot. However the matter is not quite so simple as WEIDG (Women in Education Group 1984) point out:

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) has a commitment to achieving equality in education and employment within its education service. An Equal Opportunities Unit was set up by the ILEA in order to translate this commitment into practice. One of the main aims of the Unit is to produce separate anti-racist and anti-sexist Statements and Guidelines for all educational
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institutions within its domain, which it is hoped will form the background and basis for individual school policies. The anti-racist Statement and Guidelines have been produced and distributed to all educational institutions within the ILEA. Institutions have been instructed to formulate policies in line with them. The anti-sexist Statement and Guidelines are still in the process of being formulated, but will probably act in the same way. In the meantime, however, there are a number of schools that already have policies - how, or whether, they are implemented is, of course, another matter. Those schools that do not already have a policy (probably the majority) may, nevertheless, have individual teachers or a whole staff that is committed to anti-sexist practice and who are developing curricula and strategies for change.

As we see it, there are several problems with the way the ILEA's commitment to 'equality of opportunity' (be it on racial or sexual grounds) is being implemented.

The first problem, and one we have consistently been critical of, is that these 'bits of paper', whatever they are entitled, may well become the end product - where they should only be considered as a concretisation of work already being done, or the first stage in a long and probably difficult process of implementation and commitment. A school's commitment cannot be demonstrated by a policy statement alone. What is more, for those feminist teachers who are constantly in the forefront of any debate and change, the battle is hard and time-consuming. There should, at the very least, be the time and space provided, within school time for discussion and planning, as well as policy-writing. What is more, without a review or monitoring structure, the policy statement remains static, it requires a continual process of assessment and change.

A second problem with requiring that a policy statement be the starting point for change, means that the initiative is often forced from 'the top', with little, or no commitment from practising teachers. Teachers are required to formulate a policy and then their commitment to it must be won. Obviously this does not always work. For those teachers who are committed to anti-sexist/anti-racist practices, the statement can provide support for, and validation of, their initiatives - these are usually over-worked and under-valued, committed feminist teachers.

Moreover, where anti-sexist/anti-racist work is already being done, a policy statement could be useful in forcing recalcitrant teachers to take the issue seriously and to make changes in their practice (but in the end, changes have to be made in many areas). A piece of paper is not an end product in itself. What worries us most, is that this piece of paper may come to be seen as synonymous with change, rather than the first step in the process of change.
The third problem with the policy statement approach is, without resources of time, money, materials and indeed adequate, committed teachers to try things out – i.e. back-up - the policy statement won't be worth the paper it's written on. Teachers need time to develop anti-sexist/anti-racist curricula and resources. These two areas need careful consideration, so that they are not dealt with as two discrete areas. Otherwise, an anti-sexist policy can become synonymous with 'white girls' and an anti-racist policy synonymous with 'black boys'. We feel it is crucial that these mistakes are not made. Money might be better spent supporting female teachers and the development of resources, so that when policies are formulated, there is something to back them up – both at the level of resources, and at the level of monitoring. Monitoring should, perhaps be done both by the Equal Opportunities Unit and relevant Inspectors and advisers, and by designated teachers/groups within schools. For a 'commitment' to equality of opportunity to be fully realised, those developing policies, at whatever level, must be accountable for the outcomes of such policies. If they do not work, then they must be re-thought and other solutions must be found.

The London Borough of Brent, on the other hand, has tackled the issue rather differently. Hazel Taylor, Equal Opportunities Adviser for Brent, writes (1984):

In Brent I have resisted any pressure that policy should be centrally formulated by me or anyone else in the education department, on the grounds that policy must be produced by the teachers who will implement it if it is to have any meaning for them. If Equal Opportunities is to be taken seriously then it must have implicit in it democratic control of policy making; centralised imposition of policy clearly denies that.

I have also resisted pressure that the Authority should require schools to produce policy quickly because I have been concerned with developing forums for discussion of the issue at more than a superficial level and with the development of practice that actually works in terms of changing the life chances of girls (and boys). I was aware of the dangers of policy production being seen as the end without sufficient thought or energy going into how policy is implemented. I also think that on a lot of issues we still don't know what to recommend, but if policy is to be useful it must have guidelines as well. Half-baked new practices are worse than old ones if they achieve nothing and lose ground for the issue - we need space to experiment to find out what will work so we need plenty of time before anything has to be enshrined in policy.

However after two years in the post I am now recommending that secondary
schools be required to produce policy statements because a) some schools have made a lot of progress and the Authority can validate their work by requiring policy which they are ready to develop, based on solid preparation and b) other schools are doing little and won't unless it is required of them. We cannot guarantee that making policy will change practice but we can and must be seen not to let schools ignore the issue. Here the concentration must be on providing appropriate support during the policy making to bring about the maximum effectiveness. I would want to see all teachers involved in policy making, with enough feminist teachers spread across departments to ensure that the agenda is properly discussed and sensible recommendations are made. I would much prefer to see a plan of action and review for each school than a policy statement.

This leads me on to the question of monitoring. To be committed to equality, a school must have a series of short and long term aims and actually have conceptualised what a school that does not reproduce patriarchy would look like. It is then essential to decide on time scales for the achievement of change and to monitor progress. If monitoring is not built in there can be no effective evaluation of what is being achieved. In my view, the school should be responsible for monitoring its policy implementation and the Authority should monitor by requiring information on a regular basis about what has been achieved. It is important that this does not become too clinical; some things won't work but teachers will have learnt a lot from trying them, circumstances will vary so much from school to school that priorities will be different and so will speed of action. Also there are very many ways of travelling to the same destination.

This last point raises the question of whether the division between Equal Opportunities and Anti-Sexist education is helpful. In my view it is valuable to be aware that there is a difference in perspective (female access to a male world or changing the world) but to make value judgements about where individuals are at is destructive and uses up energy better spent on dealing with ways of moving people's perspectives. It seems to me that it is necessary to work at all levels with teachers, starting from where they are and moving at a speed they can handle which will be different from individual to individual. That implies that Equal Opportunities initiatives will be right for some people at first. I also think that while we should not judge over our real position – which for me involves the necessity of changes in the power structure which at present makes any attempt at equality a joke – we must support people who are changing. Charges of tokenism are unhelpful and so are criticisms of superficiality. A lot of what is labelled tokenism is done in good faith by teachers denied access to discussion or support. I believe it's very important to have as wide
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support as possible for Equal Opportunities because then there is a more favourable climate of opinion for going further. Attacking Equal Opportunities is a foolish tactic because it finds stereotyped notions of feminists and loses middle ground support. There are a lot of women teachers around whose practice is radical because they are good practitioners but who do not identify as feminists. We need them.

As can be seen from these statements by WEDG and Hazel Taylor there are a large number of issues as yet unresolved and a diversity of opinion between Local Education Authorities and between individuals about the best way to proceed. There is a temptation to feel grateful that the issue of sexism is on the agenda at all, a temptation we would do well to resist when the current initiatives are placed in an historical context.

Moving now beyond the scope of individual schools to more general questions of school organization, it is time to assess whether the information gathered in this study points towards a vote in favour of single-sex education. The answer it seems to me is perhaps, surprisingly, not straightforward (though it has to be said that in the case of my own daughters I had no reservations, all things considered, in opting for a girls' school). While girls in single-sex schools are at least not exposed to the awfulness of boys' behaviour, and this may be an overriding "at least", there are several problems. First, as we have seen, girls' schools can be the poor relation when it comes to resources and facilities. It is amazing the extent to which they suddenly become aware of the facilities they lack when, on amalgamation, they become mixed schools. On the other hand, co-educational institutions may be bursting with resources but if girls never gain access to them then the end result may be worse, for rather than never having had the opportunity to learn certain subjects they may have learnt that certain subjects were not for girls. Second, there is no guarantee that girls' schools are automatically geared towards helping their pupils become independent, autonomous human beings. "Of course, single-sex education for girls can be used, and has been used in the past, to furnish girls with "accomplishments" suited only to a subordinate role in society." (Spender and Sarah 1980.) On the other hand, girls are more likely to see women in positions of authority in girls' schools which must to some extent be a counter to such attitudes: "I went to an all-girls school and most of my teachers were women. They were in positions of authority, they taught science and I never questioned the idea of women having careers and making
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decisions. It seemed quite normal to me.' (Spender and Sarah 1980.)

Third, there is the danger that girls develop a totally idealized view of
boys and are ill-prepared for the realities of life after school. This
argument rests on three assumptions: the only contact which girls have
with members of the opposite sex is in school; that co-education does
prepare girls for the realities of life; and that only in mixed schools can a
realistic view of boys be gained. All of these are false. Girls are sur-
rounded with experience of males, in their families, in the media and in
any public space. Co-education, except where there are specific anti-
sexist initiatives, does not prepare girls – as one teacher said, "It batters
them." Fourth, there is no reason why realistic views of boys should not
be developed in girls' schools; the teacher who sent the lists of abusive
words works in a girls' school. It may even be easier to discuss the
problematic behaviour of boys in a girls' school. None of the arguments
against girls' schools are highly convincing. However, when it comes to
boys' schools the problem is rather more difficult.

It is often said that boys' schools reinforce masculinity much more
strongly than mixed ones. This is hard to believe if it is true that identity
as a male is conferred and confirmed by other males since in both
situations other males are present. What may be true is that in boys'
schools there is a total absence of challenge from girls and most of the
few women staff occupy the lower positions of authority. Boys them-
selves apparently see the advantages of mixed schools as: '. . . less
homosexuality (top of the list), getting on with girls, less pressure to
conform to macho images. Staff would certainly agree that there is less
violence' (EDC 1982; my emphasis). From this it is perhaps possible to
theorize not that boys' schools construct masculinity more strongly but
that it is reinforced in different ways. In mixed schools boys confirm
their masculinity to each other through their behaviour towards girls,
because in the absence of girls they may resort to physical violence to achieve
their position in the male hierarchy. As boys get older and gain kudos
from dating girls, they have to modify their behaviour to be acceptable
at all, and as one teacher said: "They transform macho aggression into a
sort of suavity which is not so obviously violent;" That boys are so
violently homophobic perhaps bears witness to the fact that they only
see each other as masculine if their sexuality is being practiced on girls.

Neither mixed schools for girls nor single-sex schools for boys are
attractive propositions. This is because the basic problem, which as I
have argued is the social construction of maleness, is yet to be tackled.
To argue that such challenge is more possible where girls are present rather gives the lie to their supposed status of passive victims.

The next step is to decide who will work with the boys. In the best of all possible worlds it probably ought not to be female teachers. First, which of us could bear to immerse ourselves for any length of time in what emerged when these men began working with boys: 'The subjects that emerged most strongly as the ones the boys wanted to engage with were those of physical violence. They were clearly very concerned with their own sexuality, and with themes related to this.' (Cornbleet and Sanders 1982.) Second, those best in a position to understand the experience of being constructed into masculinity are men. Third, the physical safety of women teachers might be more at risk than that of men's:

Norman Taylor mentioned three examples of behaviour from the boys' group that he felt might illuminate some of the difficulties of working with boys in a consciously anti-sexist way. Firstly, there were those boys who responded to discussions of sexist attitudes with vehement expressions of misogynistic contempt and hatred. At one session of the boys' group the intensity of emotions was such that a boy started smashing windows in rage. (HOC 1982.)

One wonders what might have happened if a woman had been taking the session. However, although there is a strong case for male teachers to work with boys on an anti-sexist basis there are problems with this proposal. It has to be said that beyond complaining about exclusion from women's groups, male teachers have had a poor record when it comes to actually doing anything. Still, it remains to be seen whether anti-sexist men will take this opportunity to become centrally involved in anti-sexist work. Again, it is to be hoped that this work will be carried out with energy and commitment:

The male teachers did not feel able, within the confines of the school, to actively challenge and question (boys') assumptions. . . . Whilst feminist teachers are actively challenging and confronting pupils regarding their sexist prejudices all the time, it has to be said that the reluctance of men teachers to do the same inhibits the process of change and, on educational grounds, is inefficient. (Cornbleet and Sanders 1982.)

Even when commitment has been given, men may need help initially about how to organize their anti-sexist work with boys:
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But the main constraint was our inability to give the boys access in school to the kind of material which many of them had access to outside school—pornographic magazines, films and internet.

At present these themes of violence and sexuality, and their fascination for sexually maturing boys, are largely ignored within the school. We believe that it will only be possible to tackle such themes when it becomes possible to consider with such boys the material (often of a violent or pornographic nature) which is available to them increasingly outside the school, and then attempting (in an undogmatic way) to deal with the issues such material raises for the same boys. (Cornbleet and Sanders 1982.)

Whatever else is involved in working with boys I find it difficult to stomach the idea that it necessitates the use of pornography in school.

It is important not to underestimate the difficulty of persuading boys to change for this amounts to asking them to give up power which guarantees the maintenance of a situation where: 'A man's comfort and well-being are contingent upon the labour and nurture of women.' (Stoltenberg 1977.) What arguments could be used to show boys that it is in their interest to change? Kate Myers suggests one which is that traditional masculine values are synonymous with physical self-destruction:

1. taking as much pain as possible without giving in
2. being able to 'hold' alcohol
3. not showing feelings/showing emotion
4. being highly competitive and achievement orientated. (EOC 1982.)

The problem with this is that boys could be persuaded to give up the health hazards of being men without this in any way affecting how they related to women. In China a similar problem was encountered in persuading men that changed attitudes and behaviour to women was in their interest (Gell 1978):

If you are indifferent or opposed to women becoming skilled locomotive workers, you just don't know where your interests lie. Are you better off when you keep the women in your families in idleness? . . . If your womenfolk earn their living they both free themselves and you.

Men were further persuaded to the benefits of allowing their wives to work when it was pointed out that with the extra money "their womenfolk" would be able to buy new clothes! Being able to please your man, whether economically or in terms of 'attractiveness', is not from women's point of view the point of liberation at all.
Perhaps it would be better to acknowledge that it is not in men's interest to change, at least in the political sense of 'interest'. This does not mean that they ought not to. There is nothing to prevent men from rejecting on moral grounds a system from which at the same time they benefit. If some white feminists (lamentably few) have worked hard to try to eradicate their own racism, constructed by a racist society in their political interests, why should not men seek to eradicate their oppressive attitudes and behaviour towards women?

In the meantime, if anything is clear it is that co-education as things stand is not more socially desirable for girls because it is more normal. Rather, because it is more normal it is, for girls, highly undesirable. This does not mean that girls' schools, just because boys are absent, have no need to look critically at the messages they convey about women (see Appendix 1). Nor does it mean that boys' schools, just because girls are absent, are inevitably building sites for the macho male (see Appendix 2). Enough work has now been undertaken for us to be able to say that change is possible and that teachers and pupils can make it happen (see Appendix 3). Since the girls and women in this study face the same world tomorrow as they did yesterday, such change is in my view a matter of some urgency. It is in this spirit that it is to be hoped that this conclusion represents a beginning.
Appendix 1

Yvonne Beecham, a social studies teacher and former advisory teacher for Inner London Education Authority, makes the following observations on possibilities for girls' schools (1984):

"Of course we don't need a school policy on equal opportunities, this is a girls' school."

Within the next year all I.L.E.A. schools will be asked to submit their policies on Equal Opportunities re. Gender. Many teachers have already developed policies and guidelines for good practice, in some cases before I.L.E.A. officially recognized this as an area needing specific policy. Most of the work has been done in mixed schools. Girls' schools have tended to lag behind, perhaps because there are no boys around to engage in the many forms of sexual harassment.

In girls' schools it has tended to be classroom teachers who have taken up such issues as sexist curricula. Management, when they have recognized the issue, have focused on such things as providing more science and technical subjects. Science is promoted in the belief that it will help girls/young women get jobs and because it is seen as having high status.

Ideally a school's staff should start from some common understanding of the disadvantages faced by girls/women. This will rarely be the case in reality and those concerned with developing the policy will have to begin with basic discussion around the issues with other staff. Given a common starting point I would see the following issues as crucial in the development of anti-sexist guidelines in girls' schools.

Attempts must be made to remove sexist assumptions in the curriculum, and the dominance of knowledge which is only about men. It is not enough simply to add more male dominated subject areas to the curriculum. The curriculum must also reflect the cultural diversity of Britain today and lead to an awareness of the power relationships between the countries of the world.

This is preferable to introducing women's studies as a subject option. This simply provides an outlet for many teachers to say 'we don't need to change
what we are doing because women's studies looks at the question'. There is also
the issue of ensuring how well girls do on women's studies courses if they are
taught as an examinable or testable subject. What does it mean to 'fail' a
women’s studies course?
I would like to see a policy which re-values traditional women's skills and
knowledge areas as well as encouraging the development in girls of new skill
areas. Needlework, fabric and design, home economics etc. should encourage
young women to enjoy doing things for themselves and to see that their own
health and welfare is as important as that of others. Traditionally such subjects
have promoted the culture of white middle-class families and this bias will need
to be challenged.
In terms of introducing new areas to the curriculum I would like to see all
girls undertake courses in Assertiveness training and self defence. This is
essential to the overall development of positive self-images of young women.
In order that anti-sexist teaching does not simply become a form of compen-
satory education it is vital that teachers have positive views of those they teach.
Women teachers should provide positive role models for the young women
both in themselves and by involving women in a meaningful way from the
community. Strategies must also be developed for dealing with male teachers’
resistance and harassment of girls. This must be backed up by the school
administration, L.E.A.s and teachers’ unions. Women teachers need to sup-
port each other and to encourage girls young women to do the same.
For any school-based policy to be successful parental support and under-
standing is essential. The school needs to develop ways of informing parents of
the aims of the policy and how it is working, and where possible involve them
directly.
For any policy to be successful the school staffing structure should be
assessed in terms of who holds the power, the sexual distribution of heads of
department, senior teachers, etc. and non-teaching staff. If there is an imbal-
ance then attempts must be made to rectify this by the L.E.A. How money is
distributed throughout the school also needs to be looked at, while recognizing
that there will always be dispute between teachers who see their own subjects
as a priority.
Often teachers will complain that they cannot implement an anti-sexist
policy without the aid of new teaching materials, but while some new materials
are required (which teachers can produce themselves if given time), much of
the existing materials can be used from a critical standpoint. Pupils are very
quick to recognize the bias in existing textbooks once they have discussed and
are aware of the issues.
I have not attempted here to provide a blue-print for an anti-sexist policy but merely to raise some background issues which must be discussed before a specific policy statement can be developed.

Fighting sexism in single-sex girls’ schools should be as much a priority as changing mixed-sex schools and must go deeper than simply adding ‘boys’ subjects to the curriculum.
In spite of some reservations about what it means to "lift" school policies out of the contexts and meanings of particular institutions and "freeze" them and in spite of there being considerable debate about policy, it may be useful to have examples of two. Quinton Kynaston is a mixed school and Hackney Downs a boys' school, both in London.

Sex differentiation in school: a programme for change
(Quinton Kynaston School)
This item is based on work done by the Sex Differentiation Working Party over the last four years and on its recent conference attended by 18 QK staff, 3 Institute students, 3 School Council representatives and 1 parent.

1.0 Rationale
Our concern to offer all students the opportunity of equality needs to transform itself from words into action.

1.1 We have made little impact so far on uptake of "non-stereotypical" subjects in the fourth and fifth year. Further when girls do opt for "boys" subjects they are more likely to fail than are boys.

In both 1981 and 1982 we ran an option choice programme specifically designed to help students make informed choices. We placed a lot of emphasis on avoiding sex stereotypes. Results show that intervention at that stage is not very effective.

In 1983 we abandoned "option pools" hoping to create them on the basis of student choice rather than pre-selecting. Initial analysis done by Caroline Lodge indicates, if anything, polarisation.

1.2 Use of resources
Time and money is not equally divided between girls and boys.
More boys than girls get:
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learning support
option support
study centre support

Boys take up more "pastoral" time than girls.

We spend more money on boys (cost of transport for matches etc. for boys far outweighs the costs for girls).

Boys gain more teacher attention and have greater access to talk than girls.

1.3 We have not gone far enough in reviewing our curriculum and changing it.

1.4 While many existing materials present derogatory images of women, too often homemade materials use similar art work.

Women, their experiences and achievements are almost always invisible. How many posters in departments show women at work? (Don't count the recent ones made by the Sex Differentiation Working Party.) How much of what our students learn is about men at work, at war, in the laboratory, the workshop, in politics?

How much value is given to domestic labour and traditional female crafts?

2.0 Focus for change

We could spend hours in meetings telling each other what's going wrong and blaming everyone else for the problem. It's the parents, it's the primary school, it's the attitude of that group of teachers. It's everybody's problem. Everyone, that is, who has a serious commitment to comprehensive schooling and what that means in terms of equal access and support for all students.

What can we do this year? (83/84)

3.0 Recommendations (short term)

(a) Give girls space. They need places to meet and talk without boys. One room on each floor to be allocated to girls. School Council to discuss and help implement.

(b) Involve parents.

School Council have written a brochure "QRK - An Equal Opportunity School". This to be given out at interviews for new students.

Use option choice and agreement sessions to sell the whole of our curriculum to girls and boys.
Appendix 2

(c) Use single sex groupings.
   Already developed in Sex Education units in SE. Extend to option choice programme.
   Trial single sex groups in some options.
   Separate girls’ and boys’ lunchtime clubs/community activities in Maths, Computer Studies, Design Technology, Science – wherever there’s a use of non-class time in a subject which is sex differentiated.
   Trial single sex groups in Maths/Science/DT. Faculty to discuss.

(d) Draw up a departmental policy – publish it and work at it.

(e) Curriculum review.
   Critical question – is this course accessible to all students regardless of initial ability skills (i.e. appropriate for Mixed Ability Teaching)?
   — does it allow experience of success for all students?
   — does its content focus too narrowly on male experience?
   — what changes can we make?
   We have now got contacts with subject specialists experienced in work on sex differentiation. The WP will be offering to arrange workshops to all departments this term.

Materials/image
   What do our rooms, books, materials tell students about who studies this subject? What can we do about that message?

Assessing the questions
   Do moderation and review reports focus on sex differentiation? (Only 2 review reports mentioned the topic last year).

Develop specific materials/programmes
   In each subject area which give value to women and their experience, which show the contribution of women to that subject.

(f) Offer active support to all students. The non-macho boy probably gets more teasing than the assertive girl.

(g) Act on QK policy on sexual abuse – question student attitudes, refer problems.

(h) Extend the debate and action into primary link schools. Build on their progress, share our experience.

4.0 Recommendations (long term)
   Our development of core curriculum in years 4 and 5 is very significant. We should look to that to help us define what is essential learning for all students.
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SE Course development teams should start work across the curriculum on parenthood education.
We should add our voices to current requests for crèches and appropriate paternity leave, as well as maternity allowances.

A policy for sex equity and anti-sexism in Hackney Downs

Introduction
Examples of the promotion of equal opportunities and of anti-racist initiatives within schools have sprung mainly from all-girls' schools or co-educational establishments. Hackney Downs is, at present, an all-boys' school, which collaborates at the 16-19 age level with girls from Clapton and Hackney Free.

While not denying the massive evidence of unequal opportunities for girls in education, nor minimising the seriousness of sexist behaviour, attitudes and language which threaten and assault females in this school, our pupils are also victims of sex-stereotypical roles. Neither the overt nor the covert curriculum of Hackney Downs has yet taken up or acted upon these issues in much depth or consistent commitment.

One major problem which at the moment has been responded to by the Skills for Living working party, is the paucity of provision of education for sexual self-definition, relationships between the sexes, parenthood and domestic responsibility. Socially formed attitudes to women and work are part of the problem; there is a stereotyped male ethos in the school and we wish to encourage initiatives to counter this and set out a clearer statement of policy and positive structures for lines of action.

A policy for sex equity and anti-sexism is a whole school policy, in the same way our commitment to multi-ethnic education is a whole school policy. Just as anti-racism is not the responsibility only of black members of our community, neither is anti-sexism the responsibility only of the Women's Group and the female members of staff.

Fairness to both sexes is the basic principle which should inform our policy and our practice. This involves action which is positive in redressing the rejection of sex stereotyping and sexism.

This requires us:
(a) a shared understanding by all staff of the nature of sex stereotyping and sexism;
(b) consensus among us about the desirability of change and about methods,
commitment to carrying through positive changes over a period of time,
to monitoring and reappraisal;
(d) commitment to continuing anti-sexist action;
(e) resources, particularly time, for all to work out the implications of their
own role and for discussion with others;
(f) the formulation, adoption and implementation of a written policy for
sex equity and anti-sexism which is a whole school policy.

School policy on sex equity and anti-sexism
1 Issues of sexism are taken seriously and are dealt with as we expect issues
of racism to be dealt with. (Our normal procedures include a personal
response on the spot; supporting and being supported by colleagues
who are nearby; discussion with the offenders; consultation with form
tutors, Heads of Department, Heads of House; selection of appropriate
follow-up for individuals or whole classes by those most likely to be
effective – female and male.)
(a) Incidents of sexual violence, verbal and physical, are responded to
immediately, from a sense of collective responsibility.
(b) Expressions of sexist attitudes and opinions do not pass unchallenged. As a
whole staff we make an overt stand on principle against sexism.
(c) To gauge the extent and nature of the problem we keep a record of all
such incidents for at least one term.
2 There should be in-service training available for staff on anti-sexist
education.
3 Departments (including the Library and Media Resources) will
examine materials and resources for sexist content and look for ways to
redress the balance.
4 Positive anti-sexist content will be in current courses, especially in
Careers, Craft, Humanities and Science. The range of extra-curricular
activity will be examined for similar anti-sexist activity; we could try to
organise group activities which include girls from other schools, or
encourage interest in events, outings, exhibitions etc. beyond the
stereotypical 'boys only' ones.
5 Heads of House and Heads of Department will ensure that issues of sex
equity and anti-sexism are on their meeting agendas at least once a term.
This includes form tutor meetings and department meetings.
The Curriculum Study Group will examine the whole curriculum with reference to sex equity and anti-sexism in the courses on offer and selection of options. They will consider ways to redress any imbalance, and report to the staff, parents and governors.

(a) Anti-sexist and sex equitable initiatives will be encouraged and supported. Cross-curricular areas like the Library and Media Resources department may need particular support, but as a whole school we could also initiate moves concerning display material around school, film hire, visiting speakers, and theatre companies, and publishing within the school.

(b) Financial resources will be allocated to anti-sexist and sex equitable initiatives. (As in the past we have funded initiatives on issues of class, race and language, which are continuing.)

Dealing with incidents of sexual assault

Hackney Downs School is inexperienced at handling such incidents. It was felt necessary to focus on the issues and problems separately from other incidents of assault. It is important that we become confident and aware, so that effective action can be taken. These notes refer to cases where the assailant is identified.

Sexual assault is an aspect of women's experience in an all boys' school and some men find it difficult to see any difference between a sexual assault and other forms of assault suffered by staff. It is an act of violence against a person, it is an act of deliberate hostility which focuses on the sexual organs of the victim to demean and humiliate. It is this intention which distinguishes sexual assault from other forms of physical contact – the hostile ones which inflict physical hurt, the friendly ones which communicate caring.

Victims of sexual assault will be supported without question, on the assumption that no one makes up that kind of accusation. Once the victim has reported the incident she will not be called upon to give a public account of it again unless she wishes to do so; the Head, Deputy or House Tutor will intercede for and represent the victim. Should it be a case ending in a suspension and a governors' hearing the Head will represent the victim's case unless she prefers to do so herself.

Members of staff dealing with pupil (and parent) over the case must take great care in discussing it.
1. Do not get into an argument about exactly what happened. A sexual assault is a sexual assault.

2. Pupil and parent must be informed clearly and unambiguously that Hackney Downs School will not condone sexual assault.

3. Discussion must deal with the issues: e.g.
   — a woman's body is not 'fair game' to be grabbed at
   — women are people and workers, NOT inferior beings or sex objects
   — no person has any right to force themselves on another person's body . . .

Those who commit sexual assault will be punished and must be seen to be punished. Although no one standard punishment may suit every case (particularly at this stage of Hackney Downs School getting its procedures clear) the seriousness of the offence must be made clear. At this stage a gentle telling off is not enough; there is a need for the school to assert its values. The problem for the school is that the values which oppose sexual assault also oppose some mainstream values of the stereotyped male ethos of an all boys' school.
Appendix 3

The past six years of anti-sexist work at Stoke Newington School are reviewed by Sue Libovitch and Annie Cornbleet.

Report on anti-sexist initiatives at Stoke Newington School

Introduction
In this report we shall be looking at both the positive and negative aspects of the initiatives undertaken during the past six years. This involves the following three main areas:
1. The History of Anti-Sexist Initiatives in Stoke Newington School.
2. Review of Present Practice and Attitudes based on the Questionnaire, discussion and general comments.
3. Proposals for Staff Policy 84/85 (Green Paper).

1. The history of anti-sexist initiatives in Stoke Newington School
1978/79 The play "It's A Hard Life Being A Girl" - written and performed by fourth year girls and taken into schools and theatres, for both girls only and mixed audiences. Parts of it were used in a film distributed by Cinema of Women entitled 'Taught To Be Girls'.
1979/82 Formation of Anti-Sexist Working Party. Wrote a report out of which school policy was formulated at a staff meeting. Report also went to the Governors and accepted.
1980/81 Single Sex Assertiveness Training Programme for third year pupils. This was in tutor time, for half an hour per week and depended on the goodwill of colleagues.
Single Sex Sex Education and Personal Development Courses for 1st and 2nd years.
Appointment of Senior Teacher for Equal Opps. (Clissold Park School).
Resignation of Anti-Sexist Working Party.
1981/82 D.A.S.I. Project - School Focused Inservice Training Project (Developing Anti-Sexist Initiatives) supported by ILEA and EOC (See Report & Resource Booklet).
Amalgamation of Clissold Park School and Wodberry Down Schools into Stoke Newington School.
Formation of Women's Group S N School.
Removal of Senior Teacher Post for Equal Opps. from staffing structure.

1982/83 Single Sex first year Foundation Course:
'Sex Role Stereotyping Unit' written by Annie Cornbleet and Sue Libovitch specifically for this course. For the first time it was recognised that every new pupil at the school would have one double lesson per week in single sex groups with a teacher of their own sex. Second Unit also written and taught entitled 'Mirrors of Romance and A Touch of Broken Glass'.
Inservice Training for the teachers committed to the teaching of the above unit.
Single Sex Counselling.
Assessment training in third year.
Career/Convention - highlighting the counteracting of sex role stereotyping.
Single Sex Extra Curricular activities.
Option Choices.
Setting Up of Anti-Sexist Resources Room.
Girls Only Space - inside and outside the school building.
Girls Club.
Also Single Sex Groups:
Physics - fourth year
Maths - fourth year
Social Skills - fourth year.
D & T - fourth, first and second year.
Drama - All years.

1983/84 first year - Single Sex lessons teaching the units - fully integrated into the main core of the curriculum.
- Twice weekly optional choice of entering a single sex group for Maths or French.
- Inservice sessions for teachers of above units.
- Some practical subjects in first and second years have all boys group in order to redress the numerical imbalance in the ratio of boys to girls (which is approx. 3 to 1).
An application was made to the Inservice Training Section of ILEA, but funding was refused as work was already on-going. However, an application to the Girls Education Fund was favourably received and we now have approximately £2,600 for resources to further our work. For the first time, departments will have specific resources for girls and there is money available to pass teachers for girls activities after school.

2 Reviews of present practice and attitudes based on the questionnaire, discussions and general comments

This section is subdivided into three main areas:

(a) Subject areas
(b) Pastoral work
(c) General ethos of the school

(a) Subject areas

Most subject areas perceived great problems with the existing materials available. The following are writing and producing their own anti-sexist materials:

English, Home Economics, Learning Development, Maths, French, Business Studies, Social Studies

Single sex grouping was seen favourably by most departments if it could be resourced properly and seen as part of the curriculum. French, English, Science, Social Studies and Integrated Studies all had very strong positive feelings about their single sex groups. This covered the age range from years one to five. The Maths department was divided. Women Maths teachers stated their approval and positive reaction to the all girls groups. The male Head of Department was steering away from this idea as he felt that the resulting all boys groups were impossible and that the girls were alienated by it. He found it
much more successful to team teach with one teacher giving special attention to the girls in the mixed group. The debate continues in this area but school policy which favours single sex teaching must be borne in mind, as well as the opinions of women members of the department. Science and Design and Technology felt that more ought to be done to counter stereotypical choices and attitudes in this area. Both advised single sex work and both wanted more resources for girls. Science does have a policy in this and creates single sex physics and chemistry groups whenever possible. Currently, there is a fourth form Chemistry group comprising seventeen girls, taught by a woman teacher, on the Woodberry Down site.

In general most subjects saw the need to discuss this issue more at departmental meetings and give it a higher status and priority with resourcing.

(b) Pastoral work

The house systems, year sections and mini-schools all complained that it was almost impossible to counteract the dominant ratio of boys to girls within tutoring. One viable solution, at Woodberry Down, was to create an all girls registration group. Each pastoral section made time and space for girls and commented that this gave girls confidence, a chance to explore personal problems with increased trust and made possible more work on option choices and job advice.

For the purpose of this report we are including personal development, tutoring and job advice under the heading of pastoral work. Below are the most commonly expressed favourable comments:

Girls' single sex groups encourage much fuller, better discussion of a whole range of topics.

Some house systems saw a direct improvement in the girls' assertiveness and in their challenging of male intimidation.

In one section at Woodberry Down, after school sessions for girls were held as this appeared to be the only time available for tutors to spend uninterrupted time with their girl students.

The girls were given link courses in Mechanics and Electronics plus work experience in these areas which crossed stereotypical boundaries and gave girls much confidence.

The third year team noted more articulate criticism by the girls about their feelings after single sex work.

Girls were much more reluctant to accept aggressive physical behaviour from boys. Girls were more openly critical in general of the education they are being offered. This may make them a problem in school generally, i.e. their
new assertiveness may lead them into conflict with both individuals and the structure of the school.

The fourth year team reported some tutorial work in single sex groups for option talks, career talks and personal problems. Girls were suspicious at first, but see the importance of single sex groupings. They feel that there is more confidence on the part of the girls although this diminishes when boys are present.

Last year's fifth year team (Clissold Park site) reported a greater response by the girls to the general running and decisions-making processes of the mixed class. Single sex counselling work generated a good bond between women teachers and girls.

Single sex work was particularly good for sex education and job advice. However, there was a recognition that employing single sex groups alone did not automatically result in a solidarity amongst and between the girls.

Girls belonging to minority ethnic groups are being discriminated against because all of us fail to recognize feminism in other cultures. We need to listen, learn and incorporate these multi-faith and multi-cultural ideas of feminism into our anti-sexist teaching.

Most male teachers felt that not enough was being done for the boys although they did not feel that they should be the ones to make the initiative in this area.

Some men (by far the minority) saw that they needed to take a more active role in changing sexist attitudes. Fewer still actively challenged the sexist viewpoints of boy students and did not correct their male colleagues. Some felt they needed to have different kinds of material and discussions with boys but thought that boys only groups were difficult. It is obvious that men who are challenging and trying to change sexist attitudes are isolated and they have considered forming a men's group. The women's group would welcome such a move. Most male teachers only want to react to sexist behaviour, not prevent it.

The boys' behaviour in general was not commented on beyond saying that their attitudes had stayed much the same; only when the girls had demanded a change in boys' behaviour did they consider "sexism".

(c) General ethos of the school

One great failure of the school as a community is in its inability to fully include the non-teaching staff in areas of concern for the pupils and in decision making. This is the fault of the teachers within the school who fail to recognize
the impact that the non-teaching staff have on the pupils in their attitudes towards sexism. It is a fundamental principle of feminism to challenge hierarchical structures and whilst we acknowledge that the position and power of the non-teaching staff is not the same as the teachers, we would hope that in future any groups who form to combat sexism would include a genuine cross-section of all those who work in the school. At the same time, it would be anomalous to have one person 'in charge' of anti-sexist work as there can be no experts and no one individual is responsible for an issue that concerns us all so greatly. Hopefully, there will be a guaranteed commitment from all members of staff and those who feel especially interested would form a new working collective.

Most answers to the questionnaire showed that the staff certainly have a consciousness about language, and about spoken, written and visual material. With regard to sexual harassment the staff saw the need to tackle aggressive behaviour. However, the implicit threatening attitudes of the boys was not readily acknowledged, and a certain collusion operates to the benefit of those members of staff not prepared to tackle this issue.

The following proposals aim to help prevent this process of collusion. They also build on the lessons learnt from our struggles and make solid foundations for the future of anti-sexist theory and practice.

3 Proposals for staff policy 84/85 (Green Paper)

(i) Subject areas
(a) Each subject area should look at their materials for sexism and wherever possible produce specifically anti-sexist resources which also include an active recognition of girls from multi-faith cultures.
(b) Single sex groups should be established to encourage girls to work together and to give them the space and attention denied them in mixed classes. This could be for an examination subject for two years or once a week for any subject area.
(c) Anti-sexist posters and girls' work should be displayed in every teachers' room.
(d) Department should discuss and monitor the progress of girls and of their anti-sexist initiatives.

(ii) Pastoral work
(a) Single sex tutoring groups should be encouraged where the ratio of boys to girls is obviously too difficult to maintain.
(b) Single sex work should be part of the tutorial system.
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(c) Decision making girls' groups should be set up to monitor and to suggest areas of change.

(d) A girls’ space should be created in each pastoral area for work with pupil and teacher and between pupils. A recent demand from girls on a school journey to have single sex activities and time during their time away should be acted upon.

(e) Counter-stereotypical job advice should be given as encouragement to take up options.

(f) Work experience and training should be given to girls wherever possible in non-stereotypical areas.

(g) In-service training should be given to tutors in how to deal with sexist behaviours and anti-sexist initiatives in general.

(iii) General ethos

Stoke Newington School should work towards creating an ethos and atmosphere where girls and women can walk and talk without intimidation. To achieve this end we must ensure that:

(a) Girls’ space is given inside and outside the building and is supervised in the manner of any other break time area.

(b) Male teachers should stop using their voices and bodies to hold power against women and girls.

(c) Sexist language should be acted upon and in the case of male teachers and boys, disciplinary procedures taken where necessary.

(d) The physical abuse of girls should be severely dealt with; exclusion for three days and the parents seen and in the more serious cases of attack, expulsion.

(e) Girls should be listened to and their word accepted when complaints are made about sexist behaviour.

In conclusion

These proposals should be discussed at a staff meeting entirely given over to anti-sexism within Stoke Newington School. Each proposal should be voted on and those with a majority vote should be accepted as school policy. The accepted proposals should be monitored and a new report written at the end of the next academic year.

This report is by no means complete nor is it prepared by an 'authority' on anti-sexism initiatives. It is part of an on-going process which must be kept at the forefront of our minds.
Chapter 1  Preparing the ground: some general observations on sexism and education

1 As Jill Laviguer points out not all arguments in favour of co-education have stemmed from what feminists would regard as a progressive spirit. A belief in the complementary needs of the two sexes is central to the arguments in favour of co-education put forward by R. R. Dale in his extensive research on the subject. R. R. Dale, like all others who have held this view, point out that, however, he sees women as complementing the qualities of men rather than vice versa, the feminine role being the more passive and subordinate one. (Laviguer 1980.)

Chapter 2  A can of worms: the sexual harassment of girls by boys

1 Later I talked to a teacher in a newly amalgamated school. Two schools, one girls' and the other boys' were put together to form one school which was named after a woman. He said: 'The boys hate it - they refuse to use it - they call the school by the old boys' school name.' I asked him what the girls' reaction was. 'Fine - no trouble.'

Chapter 3  Natural predators?: yet another critique of biological explanation

1 Those readers who are at this point experiencing a volcanic yawn, having concluded many years ago, along with much feminist literature, that biological differences per se between girls and boys explain little about the oppression of women, are invited to proceed forthwith to the next chapter.

Chapter 4  Parasite and host: capitalism and patriarchy, which is which?

1 Dale Spender (1981) draws attention to the fact that in common with many other studies, girls were entirely excluded from this one. She goes on:

Notes

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... the responses of some researchers has been to provide 'explanations' for their
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exclusion of women—sometimes in the form of a footnote! If we are to accept the explanation postulated by Halsey et al. then the future looks bleak for women for they gave as their reason for the exclusion of women the fact that they had not been included in past studies. In such a way the structural exclusion of women is used to justify the continued structural exclusion of women.

2 This assumption is not limited to Western culture. Khomeini’s beliefs on this aspect of male sexuality lead him to recommend women as the main object of satisfaction for men though “youths and camels are discussed as secondary sources” (Afshar 1982).

3 There is a problem about what to call it. “Social maleness” or “masculinity” is all too easy; as “something out there” it can all too easily become the subject of academic debate for men without them taking responsibility for deconstructing it, or for its effects on women or for the ways they benefit as a group irrespective of the degree to which they display it. On the other hand in citing the problem as one of “men” often results in a great deal of tedious debate about whether one is or is not a biological determinist (really). Just as the space between “white people” and “white racism” is a space for change, likewise it seems most politic to create such a space between “biological maleness” and “social maleness”.

4 There is a rather persistent question which recurs in relation to this. “Why should men want to control women?” The question is ambiguous; if it means “How did it all begin?” then the answer is we do not know, although Martin Brome (1979) has an interesting thesis. On the other hand if we mean “Why should they want to continue?”, then as Scarlet Friedmann says “. . . why does any group or class of people oppress any other group? That is to say, why is history a history of the domination and subordination of social groups? Why does any ruling class exploit the subordinate class to its own ends?”
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THE 'GIRL QUESTION' IN EDUCATION
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Vocational Education for Young Women in the
Progressive Era

JANE BERNARD POWERS

Volume 73
The ‘Girl Question’
in Education
Vocational Education for
Young Women in
the Progressive Era

Jane Bernard Powers

The Falmer Press
(A member of the Taylor & Francis Group)
London • Washington, D.C.
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Dedication:

For my family
my daughter, Michelle
my sister and brothers, Sue Ellen, John, and Chuck
and my great-grandmother Johanna
who came from Norway,
went through Ellis Island
and then went into 'the service'.
Acknowledgments

Many projects are accomplished with the help of communities. This is particularly true of this work. I am especially grateful to the communities of scholars and colleagues who by their writing and courage give me heart, ideas to ponder, and encouragement to pursue my own work and ideas.

There are individuals who made significant contributions to the project. David B. Tyack has been sustaining in his interest and encouragement and generous with his ideas and finds. Barrie Franklin was the critic for a small part of the project presented at AERA and since then has been consistently supportive. With characteristic collegial generosity he referred me to Falmer Press. Lynda Stone read the manuscript in various stages and has been an extraordinary critic, colleague and friend.

The librarians and collections at Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe, the Education Library, Vanderbilt University and the Cubberley and Green Libraries, Stanford University, were invaluable.

Sue Verhalen helped the manuscript through final steps on my antiquated word-processed system with humor and competence. The editors at Falmer do their work with appreciable grace and patience.

Friends and family have been very generous and understanding. I am especially grateful to Toby Bernstein, Richard Bernstein, Jeannette Hebert, Michael Wheale, Nancy Meave, Pat Gallagher, Cyril Langton, Ray Mills and Michelle who now understand why we have to do 'our work'. I thank you all.
All photographs are reproduced courtesy of the Library of Congress, Photographic Archives Department. They are located in the Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, New York City Schools Collection, Vocational Training for Women (National Training School for Women and Girls) and miscellaneous photographs of boys and girls learning trades in schools.

Cover

Plates 1 and 2
Laundry room and the laundry building at the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, D.C.

Plate 3
Working girls and women in Evening Schools, Boston, MA, circa. 1915.

Plate 4
Young women in a home economics class. Washington, DC Schools, circa. 1900. The photograph was shown at the 1900 Paris Exhibition. Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Plate 5

Plate 6
Introduction

David B. Tyack

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many Americans were bedevilled by what they called the 'boy problem' in education. Basically, the boy problem was that boys did not do as well in school as girls. They repeated grades more often, received lower grades, were more rebellious, and 'dropped out' in droves (the term itself was coined about 1900 by educators). A favored solution at the time was to create a new kind of education for these students: vocational training that would engage the interests and talents of 'hand-minded' boys. Thus from the beginning, vocational education was touted as a way to make schooling more masculine.

With few exceptions, historians of vocationalism have followed the lead of the pioneers in the field by neglecting girls. But now in this insightful and important book, Jane Bernard Powers illuminates the other side of the story, the vocational education of girls. She roots her analysis in the larger issues raised by what contemporaries called 'the woman question', or, as one observer put it, "What ought women to be?". Debates over how schools should prepare young women for their futures became a stage for far-ranging disputes over gender relationships in the larger society, not simply pedagogical arguments. To discuss home economics Americans sought to arrest a perceived decline in the family, and by prescribing new forms of trade education, some tried to correct the gender inequalities of corporate capitalism.

But Powers does not analyze only competing ideologies. She also juxtaposes prescriptions to politics and practices in vocational education. She traces to their rightful place in history, a fascinating cast of women actors who developed and lobbied for vocational education of many different stripes. Here are the clubwomen who testified before Congress or local school boards for programs in home economics, and militant trade union women who argued for equal opportunities for female blue collar workers. She shows that it is a false dichotomy to think of such activists as either feminist or traditional in their views of women's destiny, for such categories are ends of a spectrum, not a forced choice. Here are not passive victims of male domination but women who actively shaped policy and carried out a variety of different programs.

In examining gender Powers draws on a wide variety of sources to demonstrate the quite different fates of various types of vocational training. Hence her book, she argues, never came close to fulfilling the grandiose claims of its...
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more flamboyant proponents. Hopes of social salvation became transformed into
making white sauce, stitching seams, and doing the laundry. When given a
choice, girls mostly elected other subjects. Powers documents that educators used
home economics as one vehicle of class and racial stratification.

Although radical women trade unionists hoped to build, through education,
ladders of skill and responsibility that women could climb within the workforce,
opposition from unions and employers, and other educators sabotaged this plan. A
girl might enter the factory in the age of forty. Parents and students, thinking
that high schools should lead to white collar jobs, steered clear of training that led
to blue collar jobs.

Powers shows that the success in the shadow was commercial education.
Few millennial claims were made for business training, but it did prepare young
women for jobs they wanted, albeit on an echelon that has been called 'pink
collar'. Most of the rhetoric about vocational education and the federal Smith-
Hughes Act of 1917 neglected business education; it seemed too middle class, too
academic, and too female to occupy the attention of the male oriented social
reformers. But girls and their parents thought commercial education a pathway
into responsible, even romantic, jobs, especially when compared to factory work.

And employers, loathe to spend time and money for on-the-job training for
young women (whom they assumed to be temporary workers), readily hired
female high school graduates as secretaries and clerks in the rapidly expanding
tertiary sector of the economy.

Now that people again debate the 'woman question' in the form of equal
opportunity for women, Powers's book is a timely and significant contribution
to the literature of educational history and women's history.
Beginnings

Reform and progress were watchwords of the day in the early twentieth century, and they were synonymous with the Progressive Era in the United States. The vocational education movement was harnessed to both, and like most educational movements, it was full of promise in the birthing. Helen and Robert Lynd reported in their landmark study of middle America that vocational training had become the "darling of Middletown's eye." Vocational education was desired, at the very least, to change the face of curriculum in junior and senior high schools.

All young people could benefit from this educational reform, the advocates argued, however some would benefit more than others. Ethnically diverse adolescents who dropped out of school well before graduation were a special target population. As Helen Todd, a factory inspector in Chicago, found in her interviews with children in factories, many preferred factory work to the harsh conditions of urban schools. Faced with high dropout rates, pressure from industrial and corporate leaders who looked to schools for a disciplined and productive labor force, and a genuine compassion for the poverty experienced by urban families, educators banded together with industrialists and social reformers to improve the vocational destinies of young people. They believed that the "deleterious effects" of industrialization and urbanization would be alleviated and agrarian and industrial productivity increased if Greek, Latin, and other indelicate races in education were drummed out or minimized in favor of more practical subjects and programs. According to the popular vision, students were to be educated according to their presumed life chances or their "vocational destinies." Although the movement successfully united a diverse group of influential supporters including David Snedden, Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts, Jane Addams the social and domestic feminist and founder of Hull House Settlement in Chicago, and President Theodore Roosevelt, who represented agrarian interests in the crusade, discussions and debates, all centered on how and what schools would become factories that produced young workers, while others worried that school people would be alienated by changing and changed vocational leaders. School people worried that class divisions and inequities would result if vocational education was separated from the comprehensive high school curriculum.

While debates over who should control vocational schooling and how it should be structured engaged schoolmen, politicians, and social reformers, as
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equally profound set of issues emerged in discussions about the vocational dest-iiny of young women. Women’s visibly increased presence in the work place disturbed the myth that a woman’s place was the home: woman’s place was now both a question and a problem. Society generally and schools specifically argued about the purposes of women’s education. Should schools provide training for young women who will be employed outside the home or for ‘functional needs of the major group of girls who will be homemakers’?

The ‘girl question’ in education emerged from the ‘woman question’ which was a lively and intense argument over women’s economic, political, and social roles and their psychological, intellectual, and physical capabilities. The ‘woman question,’ which extended across North America, Great Britain, and the Con-tinent, has been characterized by contemporary historians as both a critique of western patriarchy and a central political concern of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The seeds of the ‘woman question’, planted in the nineteenth century, blossomed into a full scale debate in the early twentieth century. The controversy over the role of women in the United States was like a rapidly growing young tree with roots that sprang from and crossed over many issues. These included suffrage, economic independence, the perceived demise of the home, and general demands for equity. The general discussion of a woman’s place became part and parcel of the women’s vocational training movement.

The spectrum of opinion on the ‘girl question’ in vocational training was as wide and diverse as the spectrum of opinions on the role of women generally, and as complex as feminism was during this period. Some people favored an exclusive emphasis on home economics; a vocal minority lobbied for an exclusive emphasis on training for industry; many others supported compromise positions. Other factors such as class, race, and urban-rural differences added to the diversi-ty of opinion on appropriate vocational training programs for young women. Significantly, the United States was not alone in the emergence of prescrip-tions for girls’ and women’s education. Differentiated education was a subject that stretched across oceans and continents, but in each setting the form and arguments were shaped by the particular context. State controlled schools in both Great Britain and Australia were pressured to adopt domestic science as a main-stay of female education.

Moreover, arguments about race suicide that surfaced in the United States were also used to justify a woman’s curriculum in Great Britain. Dropping birthrates and marriage rates among middle class women, coincident with increased levels of education, became the basis for policy state-ments concerning race and national efficiency to the teaching of domestic science.

The vocational education movement in the United States marked a turning point in public education for young women, when sex segregation and the treat-ment of women based on their special characteristics and needs became a formal agenda of public schools. This book is about the genesis and development of the vocational education movement for young women in the United States during the years 1900 to 1930.

Much of the historical work on vocational education written in the seventies and early eighties focused on the qualities and dynamics of the schooling work place as an outgrowth of the liberal vocational debate. Historian historians of the women and structures for reproducing a segmented hierarchical labor force in schools prompted critiques that argued for more inclusive histories that consider...
gender, ethnicity, and regional contexts along with class. Kantor and Tyack's edited book, (1982) Work, Youth and Schooling, and Kantor's book (1987) Learning to Earn, provide examples of histories that broadened the scope of issues to include 'perspectives on changing contexts, attitudes, and institutions.' Work, Youth and Schooling includes an excellent essay entitled, 'Marry, Stitch, Die or Do Worse', by Clifford, and Learning to Earn includes brief segments on the implications of vocational education for young women. Relying primarily on state and federal documents and early writings on vocational education, including periodicals and California media sources, Kantor focuses on the successes and failures of vocational education in strengthening the connections between schooling and work. Comments on the significance of the movement for women is not a major focus of this work which proceeds from the 'boy question' in education. Rury's work enriched the historical picture by focusing on women in his analyses of women in his analyses of labor markets and schooling for women. The Girl Question complements prior work by moving questions of gender and women from the margins to the spotlight and by telling the story from the perspective of women. Using data from state and national government sources, fragment and feminist organizational proceedings and publications, and private papers of advocates who fought for women's rights, this work considers the vocational movement from the perspectives of women and girls. The diverse positions of advocates such as reformers, program developers such as home economists, and students who filled typing classes and boycotted home economics are illuminated by the dynamic social, economic, and political context of the early twentieth century in the United States. This historical work focuses on multiple perspectives and meanings rather than building a unified argument. Thus, an early question that motivated this work, was home economics in public school an instrument of social and economic control?, was abandoned for its simplicity and narrowness. Broader themes and issues, central to progressive-era feminism emerged from the margins of vocational education policies and history to reveal a broadly structured but developed campaign for women's education. This campaign for women's vocational education emerged and challenged maternal understandings about the purposes and strategies for educating young men and young women. Thus it was both a societal and an educational movement. The stories of women and girls who challenged the Progressive Era's women's movements and the divergence women tell about the paths they needed to take and defined to ensure their role in the mainstream of modern industrial society. It is also about the need to create policies governing and defining women's vocational programs and the political forces and organizational politics that were brought to that process. The third dimension is about the power of students, parents, and educators to organize, resist, and shape the prescriptions and the policies. Each section is like a separate picture of the same subject, taken from different angles and using a different lens. Together the complexity of the pattern, the differences in race, class, rural, urban, and feminist-stratified strategies, and politics emerge under the umbrella of gender.

The cross fertilization of women's history, women's educational history, and contemporary education history has provided the conceptual tools that illuminate and explain this history. The first word or line provides the general lighting for the other more specific historical themes. It is the notion that historical
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understanding is best served by avoiding tautologies pre-existing categories and arguments that are mutually exclusive and tightly bounded. As Joan Scott has argued about feminist theory, 'We need theory that will let us think in terms of pluralities and diversities rather than of unities and universals.' In the context of the 'girl question', it is important to view feminism and traditionalism as fluid categories that represent connected experiences. Home economics is both traditional and feminist, it contains continuities and contradictions. For women, the vocational education movement and programmatic outcomes were at once constraining and liberating and the quality of these varied according to the particularity of class, ethnicity, and race in context. The three more specific issues that frame this inquiry are cultural context, myth and reality, and the relationship between traditional and progressive values and attitudes in the face of change. Cultural context plays a significant part in this study of women's vocational education which explains vocational education in its elaborate, intricate, relationship with the rest of society. The history of women's vocational training is very much a product of the Progressive Era and the struggles of women – both individually and within organizations – to define themselves in relation to the family and the workplace and to establish their place in what promised to be a new age. What were the issues of the Progressive Era and how did the movement influence the decisions regarding women's vocational training? How were these decisions influenced by women's individual and organizational responses to these issues?

Students and parent responses both validated and repudiated the myth of a woman's place, as students negotiated their way through the reality of vocational programs and the narrow choices in the labor market. Thus the broad question proposed by this theme is, what was the relationship between myth and reality, and how did it influence prescriptions, program, and practice?

The third major theme is the paradoxical relationship of feminism and traditionalism. The range of opinions, the policies developed, and the programs established can not be understood if they are viewed as either traditional or feminist because they were often both at once traditional and feminist values, attitudes, and behavior co-existed. Neither were those who supported and defended home economics monolithically traditionalists, nor were the trade educators monolithically feminist or politically liberal. The question that emerges from this theme is, how did the intersecting currents of traditional and feminist values and perspectives influence the programmatic outcomes articulated by women's organizations and educators in the policy discussions that preceded legislation and course offerings in schools?

The essential argument in this new is that the key issues and influences in the vocational education movement for young women were not primarily economic, they were a broad canvas of social, political, and economic forces that were
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shaped by specific contexts. The primary purpose of this book is to provide multiple "ways of seeing" this movement in women's educational history so that the richness and complexity of curricular change as social movement is illuminated.¹³

Notes

1 The Progressive Era in the United States generally refers to the years between 1890 and 1920 which gave rise to the Progressive political party, support for women's suffrage and a host of social and political reform issues.


Part 1

Prescription and Myth
Part 1 Introduction – Prescription and Myth

Prescriptions are essentially myths that reflect an idealized state of being and that set standards for attitudes and behavior. Elizabeth Janeway has written that myths are false in fact and true to human yearnings and ... and thus at all times a powerful shaping force'.

For example, the 'cult of true womanhood' in the nineteenth century had more to do with myth than with the reality of women's lives, especially working women. In the context of discussions about vocational education, prescriptions represented the myths about women's roles that individuals and organizations wanted to maintain. For young women prescriptions defined what they were supposed to consider vocationally, not necessarily what they did consider.

In the vocational education movement, discussions about the appropriate courses of study and programs for young women were more symbolic than substantive. They represented the need for middle and upper class women to reconcile nineteenth century ideals and social roles with the challenges of twentieth century life: industrialism, changing political roles for middle class women, and changing opportunities for working class women.

Complicating the discussion from the outset was the problem of women's place. Some people were not sure that the question of vocational training applied to women. After all, they were not going to be the 'captains of industry' and they were not going to furnish labor for the industrial machines that would compete with Germany's growing industrial strength. In a sense women occupied a stepchild status within the vocational movement. Male leaders were ambivalent or opposed to women's role in the work world. Many were not interested in an issue which did not carry a great deal of prestige, and others were reluctant to delve into an issue as sensitive as the 'woman question'.

Alice Kessler-Harris, in her essay, 'Women, Work and the Social Order', characterized the upheaval in this period as a 'tension between the need for labor and the need for social order'. The 'need for labor' grew out of the changing complexion of the work place. The rise of factories and the consolidation of the corporate sector, along with increased mechanization and specialization of tasks, created a place for women in the labor market to perform low paying, low status and seasonal work. Women were welcomed into the labor force by employers who found them to be 'more reliable, more easily controlled, cheaper, more temperate, more easily procured, easier, more rapid, more industrious, more
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careful, more polite, less liable to strike . . .’. The inherent contradiction between the market needs and the myth of true womanhood was not reconciled; it was generally ignored. But, the myth of true womanhood aided in the wages of women and if true womanhood was indeed an economic necessity, then marginalizing women’s work.

What is equally important is that women, especially young single women welcomed the chance to work in schools, factories and offices. In 1890 the number of women engaged in manufacturing, mechanical, and clerical jobs was 89,175. By 1910 the figure had swelled to 2,380,914, an increase of almost 200 per cent. The right to work was a major issue in feminism at the turn of the century and while many young women were compelled by circumstance to work and contribute to the family income, many wanted to work and looked forward to economic independence.

Three were, however, powerful forces opposing women’s growing position in the work force and notable among these were male workers. Women were viewed as competitors who had a depressing effect on the wages of men. One worker contended that, ‘The wage bargaining power of men is weakened by the competition of women and children, hence a law restricting the hours of women and children may also be looked upon as a law to protect men in their bargaining powers’. Some men also complained that working in industrial establishments had dangerous effects on women’s reproductive capacities; that it was likely to unsex women, and furthermore that it led to immorality. The general problem was of sufficient importance to critics that in 1894 Congress called upon the Bureau of Labor to investigate the employment of women ‘and the effect, if any, upon the wages and employment of men’. When the data were collected researchers reported that ‘females are to some extent entering into places at the expense ... of males’. Opposition to the working woman did not diminish over time, and the protests became especially shrill when women assumed the jobs reserved for men during World War I and handily increased production in many areas.

Concerns about the social order were causatively linked to working women. The increasing incidence of working women was linked to higher divorce rates, prostitution, unaccompanied children, and the decay of the family, as well as moral degeneration in general. According to critics, mothers were doing a poor job of rearing and raising the future generation of working men and they were not educating their daughters for their roles as future homemakers. Vocational education was a potential solution to these dilemmas and many more, argued the most visionary advocates of differentiated curricula. Domestic feminists and trade education advocates marshalled their arguments and their resources to grapple with the myths and the realities and to shape the future of women’s education vis-

υ-vis vocational education. Women were primarily responsible for generating this change, and perspectives about women’s education during this period were thus persistently shaped by women’s voices. The hands of men were used to produce legislation regarding the future of women’s education, and the hands of women were used to produce legislation regarding women’s education. Once more, unlike the men’s vocational education movement which produced a handful of spokesmen who were widely quoted, the women’s vocational education movement produced a cacophony. There were no grand architects of women’s vocational education and the elements, as well as the policies and practices, reflect the diversity in perspectives and values that attended the Progressive Era women’s movement.
Part 1: Prescription and Myth

This section of the book is about the prescriptive rhetoric and reality that shaped ideas about the appropriate vocational education for young women in home economics, trade education and commercial education.

Notes

7 Harris, A.K., op. cit., p. 238.
9 Ibid., p. 238.
10 Ibid., p. 123.
The publication of Catherine Beecher's Treatise on Domestic Economy in 1843 signaled the emergence of a "new" field of study and a major curriculum reform in women's education, the art and science of homemaking. By the end of the first decade in the twentieth century, this new field, alternately called home arts, domestic science and home economics, had developed into an organized effort to feminize women's education in the United States. The AHEA (American Home Economics Association) and the GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs) were collaborating to lobby for the inclusion of home economics in school programs at all levels of the public education system — kindergarten through post graduate school. This chapter is about the people and ideas that supported the growth of home economics in the Progressive Era. The basic questions framing this chapter are, why did home economics become a passionate cause, and what did the campaign represent from an educational history perspective?

This early twentieth century drive to put home economics in school programs coincided with perceived revolutionary changes in women's roles and circumstances. The percentage of women entering the paid labor force increased dramatically from roughly 5% in the mid-nineteenth century to higher and record levels; more young women were in high school enrollments, success in higher education, and elevated divorce rates. Even though most young women were in the paid labor force for only a few years, most did not go to school beyond the ninth grade, and the vast majority married; the illusion and spectre of relentless change was disquieting.

Critics began to raise questions about young women's education; not about access which basically had been settled in the late nineteenth century, but about the appropriateness of their academic curriculum. Shouldn't girls be studying subjects that would fit them for their life work? people asked. Arguing that young women's education at all levels should focus on the life goal of homemaking, articles such as 'What Kind of Education is Best Suited for Girls?' and 'Cross-Purposes in Education of Women' appeared in major educational journals.

"Without help from the public school," wrote one educator, "many of these girls will, in a few years, enter homes of their own, untaught and irresponsible, to assume the most sacred duties without intelligent preparation, and to perpetuate a type of home that is a menace to the health and standards of the community." There were critics of homemaking centered vocational curricula as well. One
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contributes to a 1914 volume of Atlantic Monthly severely criticized the system whereby it was assumed that all young girls would be homemakers while boys could pick from any number of occupations. She wrote, 'But why, I beg to ask, does everyone know that the vocation which is sure to delight every girl and in which she is sure to succeed is housekeeping and the rearing of children? It was fundamentally false, wrote this woman, 'that one half of the human race should be “educated” for one single occupation, while the multitudinous other occupations of civilized life should all be loaded upon the other half.'

Home economics advocates included people who wanted women to retreat to their nineteenth century “havens” as well as those who favored increased involvement in public political life. The paradox of the home economics campaign and reform was that it was both traditional and feminist at once and that multiple progressive-era causes and divergent perspectives on the “woman question” were sheltered under its umbrella. If home economics were properly taught in schools, reformers argued, men would be lured from saloons by good food cooked by cheerful wives. Farm women would stay in the country and thus farm conditions would improve. Middle class women’s lives would take on new meaning through scientific homemaking and municipal housekeeping. Girls destined for domestic service would be properly trained and the high standards of American homes maintained. Moreover, social uplift could be achieved for black people. Home economics was a progressive-era cause for the reform of American society that engaged the attention of a remarkable range of interest groups and personalities and reflected a laundry basket of progressive era issues and themes.

Science and business as models, immigration, and the exodus of women from farms were among the issues that fueled domestic science campaigns. Above all else the home economics campaign thrust the issue of education for girls and women into the living room of American people.

And how was this engineered? This early twentieth century lobby for change did not enjoy the benefit of mass media such as television. Instead, the campaign was waged in a variety of settings: in local, state and national meetings of organizations, in board of education meetings, in the growing body of parent-teacher organizations, in the growing body of parent-school associations that were springing up all over the country, and in living rooms. Newspapers, women’s magazines, and women’s club bulletins carried the message of reform.

Professional Homemaking: Science, Business and Domestic Feminism

The rise of home economics and its metamorphosis into a major progressive-era feminist cause had to do with the collaboration between women’s organizations and school people to help solve the “woman question.” The solution to the “woman question” was to professionalize the work of homemakers. The answer was to develop schools and curricula which would impart the specific knowledge and skills of the profession. Boosters of professional homemaking generally agreed that a woman’s place was in the home rather than the work place and that homemaking should be viewed as a profession or a calling. Beyond this agreement, however, there were significant differences among professional homemaking supporters. Ellen Richards emphasized homemaking as a scientific
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endeavor; Christine Frederick's model of professional homemaking incorporated modern business terminology and technique; and domestic feminists focused on social and political reforms aspects of homemaking and housekeeping. All three positions varied in degrees of feminism and traditionalism.

Scientific Housekeeping

One prevalent rationale for home economics was that homemaking and child-rearing were professional pursuits that required study and training. The advent of practical sciences such as nutrition and dietetics, a nascent but growing child study movement and the popularization of scientific management, provided the context and motivation for professional homemaking training. No longer could homemaking be limited to a mother's help in the kitchen. It became (theoretically) such a complex undertaking that mothers no longer sufficiently knowledgeable or capable of training daughters for it. As one advocate proclaimed, "It is no more possible for a woman to manage a household satisfactorily that for a man to succeed in a business he knows nothing about."

The professionalization of housework and idealization of domestic science can be traced to Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher who were leading nineteenth century advocates for women's education. Emma Willard legitimized home economics as an area of study when she included 'domestic instruction' in the curriculum plan for the Troy Seminary.

While Willard made a significant contribution toward the establishment of home economics as a field of study in schools, it was Catharine Beecher who popularized the field and developed the rationale which would eventually lead to a well-developed argument for gender defined curricula in home economics in the secondary school curriculum.

Beecher played a significant role in the history of home economics by advocating the idea of a woman's sphere which was based on scientific management. Beecher's most significant contributions were made in her Treatise on Domestic Economy, published in 1841. There she proposed to her readers a classification of American household practices and provided guidelines for household maintenance, child-rearing, gardening, cooking, cleaning, dressmaking, and the dozen other responsibilities middle class women assumed.

Beecher's ideas were not developed in the home economics movement, away from categorizing the technology and science of homemaking, to establish the idea that women had a role to play in society that was separate but equal to men's. In the domestic sphere they could exert their superior moral influence on their families and thereby influence a social circle that extended far beyond the hearth. Beecher was responsible for designing an ideology that gave women a central place in national life. According to historian Kathryn Kish Sklar, Beecher defined a strong feminist position based on the differences between men and women, rather than on their similarities or "human equality." Beecher's approach to home economics was thus a combination of traditional domestic ideals and a new scientific orientation. The new scientific orientations in domestic economy informed the developing home economics movement and influenced leaders such as Ellen Swallow Richards. Richards was a research scientist and teacher who was trained in chemistry and science while studying at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her interest in the application of chemistry to practical problems such as...
nutrition, clean air and clean water, led her to home economics where she did research to broaden the scientific basis of home economics, and where she lobbied for more and better home economics in school curriculum. Richards subscribed to Beecher's theory that women had a separate and equal sphere of responsibilities as did that required a special education. She also believed that the productive functions had left the household and women's role had lost much of its meaning. Domestic education was her prescription for this dilemma and this meant education in the appropriate sciences—chemistry, biology and physics—with a major emphasis on practical applications to home problems. Richards mobilized support for her perspective among her expanding army of followers in the AHEA. She and her supporters worked for the inclusion of home economics at all levels of education, kindergarten to college, and she worked for the establishment of science based home economics curricula.

Captains of the Kitchen Adopt Management Skills

Whereas Ellen Richards focused on the science of home economics, Christiana Frederick applied business and industrial language and technique to homemaking. Homes were to be thought of as businesses, and homemaking as a management problem that involved knowledge of budgeting and finance, task analysis skills and the ability to look at an entire matrix of household tasks as a management system. Frederick emphasized the ideas and methods of Frederick Winslow Taylor, the celebrated captain of industrial efficiency who devised time/motion studies to maximize production in industry. Frederick adapted time/motion study techniques to homemaking in order to create kitchens that were models of efficiency and productivity, and professional homemakers who were like the captains of industry. For example, she analyzed the motions involved in peeling potatoes which, she said, would consume less than two minutes not counting actual peeling time:

1. Walk to shelf adjacent to sink and get pot.
2. Walk to storage, carrying pot, and fill it with potatoes.
3. Return from storage, laying pot directly on vegetable preparing surface near sink.
4. Pick up knife (from nail above this surface).
5. Pare potatoes directly into pail (soiling no surface).
6. Wash potatoes and fill pot with water.
7. Wash and hang up knife (on nail above sink).
8. Walk with pot and lay on stove.

Frederick believed that scientific management would bring 'industrial efficiency' into the home, thereby dignifying home economics as a management science. She argued that there could be 'applied science' for women as well as for men, and that the laws of heat could be tested by the management of a kitchen stove. Frederick and her followers believed that the application of certain business principles to home management would revitalize homemaking as a profession and influence daughters to avoid the 'unnatural craving for careers.'
which was taking women away from their essential responsibilities. Referring to employed women as her enemies, Frederick maintained a very traditional view of women's roles. She did not advocate efficiency in the interest of freeing up time for the pursuit of activities outside the home; she suggested that women use their spare time to read a book or do a project at home. Thus Frederick espoused a modernized and professionalized version of the 'true woman', mixing traditional ideals and modern technology in her rationale for home economics in the schools.

Science and business rationality were two progressive-era ideals that influenced the campaign for teaching home economics in schools. As the principal of Public School No. 6 in Manhattan wrote, 'It is not thrift in the home, but the scientific management of the home that I want you to teach the children.' By applying scientific and business rationality to home economics, advocates sought to meld mainstream cultural trends and ideals with women's sphere—thereby elevating the status of women's work and ultimately the power of women, theoretically, while maintaining the boundaries of separate roles. Ultimately this separate but equal approach rationalized sex segregation in secondary schools and promoted training for non-renumerative occupations in a society where an increasing number of women worked outside the home. Moreover, this philosophy may have contributed to the dilution of science courses for women, and ultimately to the drop in female enrollments in science courses during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Domestic Feminism and Family Protection

Domestic feminists were women who embraced the idea of a woman's sphere centered on home and family responsibilities but wanted the parameters of the sphere expanded to include public institutions. Modern industrial society, according to domestic feminists such as Jane Addams, had forced home functions and responsibilities out into the community. The sphere of influence expanded out into the community and marketplace. The home going forth into the world, as Frances Willard captured it, meant that domestic feminist interests would include environmental concerns such as pure air, water, and food; social issues such as protective labor legislation for women and children; and education issues such as home economics and industrial training for working class children.

Women needed a special education that home economics would provide; not only because homemaking was a profession demanding specific skill and knowledge, but also because women had to be socialized and trained for their role as municipal housekeepers. Leadership in municipal reform issues such as clean water required an understanding of bacteriology and an understanding of local government structures. Schools were the logical agency and home economics the logical program for teaching young women the fundamentals of municipal housekeeping.

The women of the GFWC and the AHEA constituted the critical core of domestic feminists. They were white, middle class women who wanted public power and influence but who acknowledged Charlotte Perkins Gillman's belief that
economic independence was the key to power for women. Instead the women of the GFWC and the AHEA vied for political power and influence by rejecting suffrage and shrouding the non-traditional caste of their public role under the justification of domesticity. As one woman expressed it in *The Journal of Home Economics*, "Our ideal woman of today has the house-motherly instinct of the past, trained and disciplined, broadened in scope, deepened in power, penetrated with an even more enduring and subtle charm, and she brings this, not in a strident demand for rights, but as her contribution to the upbuilding of the nation's life." Domestic feminists predicated many of their social programs and municipal reform efforts on the importance of women's protective instincts, especially where the family was concerned. Protecting families threatened by urbanization and industrialization, became a major rationale for supporting the teaching of home economics in the schools. Home economics was the agency through which the 'renovation of the home', and salvation of the American family would be accomplished. As one educator expressed it, "I am steadily growing to believe the future stability of our Republic is almost dependent upon it, so closely has our civilization become and so largely have the homes been neglected." Domestic feminism, and its allies, were concerned about a number of issues related to family welfare including, divorce, money management, declining birth rates, infant mortality and the health of industrial workers. Divorce was frequently mentioned as both a threat to and an index of the health and stability of family life. The number of divorces granted in the United States per 1,000 existing marriages jumped from 1.2 in 1860 to 7.7 in 1920, thus precipitating grave concern about the stability of the social order. Rheta Child Dorr called the divorce rate, 'the most important social fact we have had to face since the slavery question was settled.' The reasons cited for the increases in the divorce rate varied. Suffragists and militant feminists pointed to women's revolt against intolerable unions as the major cause. More conservative women and men blamed the divorce rate on women's inability to make men happy. According to a noted sociologist, slack conditions in the homes of employed women lead to unsteady and delinquent husbands. "Bad homemaking leads men to saloons, and presumably away from marriage, stated another critic." Senator Carroll P. Byrnes (R. Vermont), an ardent defender of home economics, argued in Congressional hearings that 'the country is fast awakening to the fact that probably 50% per cent of all divorce would have been avoided had the girls been good cooks, good homemakers, and good mothers'. His solution, and that of many of his contemporaries, was to teach young women how to prepare a tasty and nutritious meal, how to decorate and maintain a house so that homes could compete successfully with the lavish decor of pubs, and how to care for children. "We must train our girls for homemaking", declared Senator Pages. "If we do not, and if we neglect and divorce continue to increase ... our social and moral stability is in danger." Senator Ross agreed that 'Instruction of girls in domestic science and housekeeping' was a viable remedy for divorce. Two other related problems that were viewed as matters threat to the well being of the family were declining birth rates and infant mortality rates. Statistic- al evidence showed that the birthrate among educated people was dropping while the birthrate among the 'least promising' sector was increasing. Unfortu- 22
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charged that the root of the ‘race suicide’ problem — declining birth rates among well born young women — was education for vocations. Young women were being educated away from their true vocation of reproducing a healthy race, into the pursuit of careers such as teaching. As one observer stated, ‘it is probably not an exaggeration to say, that to the average cost of each girl’s education through high school must be added one unborn child’. 

Home economics would eventually lead future mothers — both college women and high school women — back to the nest by convincing them of the importance of their role as mothers.

Infant mortality was another social problem whose solution was linked to home economics. The seriousness of the problem is borne up in statistics: one fourth of all deaths in 1908 were children under five. While unsanitary milk storage, oppressive heat in tenements, general lack of attention to hygiene, and other problems associated with low wages and poverty were recognized as primary causal agents, it was believed that the root cause was the ignorance of mothers. As this was so eloquently stated by leaders of the AHEA: ‘Our problem then is this; mothers untrained for motherhood on one side of the equation, and dead babies on the other side’. One solution to the problem was to require girls and young women to be trained in midwifery and study the AHEA’s Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality was one of the organizations most active in the drive to reduce infant mortality rates through public school education. They proposed that girls and young women be required to study mothercraft.

David Snedden, the Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts and a prominent vocational educator, spoke to this issue at the fifth annual meeting of the AASPIM. Following Snedden’s talk on ‘Some Possibilities of Public Schools in Reducing Infant Mortality’, the committee on public school education submitted a resolution stating:

Research on ignorance of sanitation, personal hygiene and care of infants before and after birth is the commonest cause of infant mortality, and racial well-being requires conformity to laws of physical, mental, and social health that can be had universally only through specific education; Resolved . . . That for young adults and older: Instruction in Home Economics in all high schools, should include in courses for homemakers the care of infants and children.

The health and welfare of industrial workers was yet another aspect of family life that home economics would ensure. Adelbert Bloodner, a prominent home economist in Canada, described the home as ‘the workshop for the making of men’. Similarly, Eva White, a well known home economist in the United States argued that ‘back of our industrial workers must be properly functioning homes . . . no education system can meet the demands of home and industry’. From the perspective of young people, a socially and emotionally efficient system was necessary to prepare them for future careers. ‘The training of young people — physically, emotionally, socially — from early childhood to self-reliant and efficient, considers and encourages them to work by homesteading’. In addition to keeping their spouses happy, women were advised to manage their pay checks efficiently and wisely. AHEA statistics cited in a congressional
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A hearing on vocational education indicated that $1,000,000,000 could be saved every year if America's homemakers were educated properly. We need to pay attention to the consumption of wealth advised Benjamin Andrews of Teachers' College, Columbia University; 'This means education for the "woman who spends" as well as the woman who produces'.

Consumer education included budgeting to stretch slim pay checks, buying the most nutritious foods and purchasing the expanding list of labor-saving devices available to the American home: vacuum cleaners, toasters, irons, and more.

Domestic feminists who advocated education for future homemakers were supported by other progressive-era organizations and personalities, but there were significant distinctions between them. Family protection advocates such as sociologist Edward Ross argued for home economics based on a nineteenth century conception of woman's role. Their concern was that young women were deserting homemaking and childbearing responsibilities and that the social efficiency and stability of society were threatened by these dangerous trends. Women needed to be socialized back into their homemaking roles and taught how to cook nutritious meals, keep attractive homes, and raise children properly.

The rationale for home economics offered by family protectionists such as Ross was based on the idea that women belonged at home doing traditionally defined housework and childbearing. Domestic feminists urged the same concerns about the status of the family, and offered the same solution of home economics, but they were arguing from a feminist perspective which assumed women's superior ability in dealing with social reform problems and which necessitated the empowerment of women to deal with these problems. Home economics was the means by which the next generation of young women would be socialized into their roles as municipal housekeepers and the means by which the science and technology needed to solve the complex community problems would be transferred. Moreover, home economics was the ticket to public life and a legitimate role in policymaking institutions. Domestic feminists, family protection advocates, and proponents of professional homemaking shared a belief in the primacy of women's homemaking and mothering role. They all believed that women should maintain separate but equal spheres of influence and that home economics was the key to teaching the requisite practical skills and to socializing young women for their roles. Beyond these significant areas of agreement, which provided a unity of purpose, it is clear that they differed in their vision of women's role. What seems most remarkable about these personalities and groups was that they were able to organize so successfully under one banner and ultimately influence the curricula of American schools.

Rural Home Advocates

Theodore Roosevelt's appointment of the Country Life Commission in 1908 signaled another significant progressive-era issue with implications for women's education, the rural life problem. Whereas advocates of professional homemaking hoped to stem the flow of women from home into the work place, supporters of rural home economics hoped to stem the flow of young women from farms into cities. Concerns about diminishing rural populations and the decline of
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country living peaked in the first decade of the century. Although in 1910 as many as 54 per cent of the nation's families still lived in rural areas, the rural to urban demographic shift was well under way. Many people were concerned about the 'exodus' of young people to cities. A contributor to Vocational Education wrote in 1914 that 'The constant cityward trend of population on the part of young people, who are born in the country, needs to be checked'.

The shifting demographics was mainly discussed in terms of young men because their absence affected farm productivity, however the exodus of young women was acknowledged as a problem as well. Using 1920 Census statistics the New York Times reported on the flight of farm women: 'Larger numbers of women than of men are leaving farms in search of more lucrative fields of endeavor'. Farms women and men, educators, and legislators asked, how can we keep the girls on the farm? Schools and curricula were drawn into the general discussion with the criticism that school was 'unfitting our boys and girls for the work of their home communities'.

Farm women and men, educators, and legislators proposed that curricula should be revised to meet the special needs of their students and that home economics in particular might help to keep girls on the farm. Home economics was an important means to the preservation of country life according to its boosters. Relentless drudgery was a major complaint of life on a farm as a 1919 survey of farm life indicated; the average work day for women on the farm was 11.3 hours and 77 per cent of women were employed on farms during the year. Moreover, most women were hauling their own water from wells into their homes. Home economics curricula for young farm women included information about labor-saving appliances and methods to lighten the load of drudgery. Theoretically, home economics curricula would help bridge the gap between the quality of life for farm women and urban women. Beyond stemming the flow of young women to the city, and improving the quality of life for farm women, supporters of home economics alleged that the quality of life for men on the farm would be improved as well. Girls and women needed to be educated about nutrition, health, and home nursing to ensure the welfare, and productivity of farm workers. Women were responsible for creating happy serene homes that would serve as models for the next generation of farm people, the children, and that would be places where farm men might like to 'linger'. The Secretary of Agriculture, a key promoter of home economics wrote:

[women is responsible for] Contributing the social and other features which make farm life satisfactory and pleasant. . . . On her rests largely the moral and mental development of the children, and on her attitude depends the important question of whether the succeeding generation will continue to farm or will seek the allurements of life in the cities.

A third objective was to enhance farm women's sense of partnership in the farm enterprise. Farm women's substantial contribution to the family economy was generally acknowledged and recent historical work by Joanne Vanek has validated this phenomenon: 'On the farm, husband and wife were partners not only in making a home but also in making a living'. Without women to run the farm house, raise the children, and administer the kitchen garden industries, farms
were hard put to survive. The following characterization of farm families was a generally accepted view: 'My aunt, busy in and about the house was as strong a prop of the family's prosperity as my uncle afield with his team. Uncle knew it, and, what is more, she knew he knew it."

Home economics programs were supposed to emphasize this aspect of the farm women's role and augment the training for the various cottage industries that farm women engaged in such as canning, poultry and butter making. Smith Lever Agricultural Extension programs such as canning clubs organized in schools were heavily promoted for that reason.

It is significant that arguments for economic independence were conspicuously absent in the rhetoric of rural home economics despite the attempts of some women to broaden women's participation in farm life. Members of the Women's National Farm and Garden Association published articles about the need for women in farming, and agencies such as the NYCBVI (New York City Bureau of Vocational Information) developed success literature to sell the rewards of independent farming to women. I certainly think that agriculture and stock raising is an open field for women. Any woman strong enough to do her own housework can do any and all the work on the farm," wrote one enthusiastic farmer to the NYCBVI. Although much of this literature on the "new profession" for women in rural settings was directed at women who could go on to an agricultural college and who would have access to capital, the argument for economic role expansion had profound implications for high school home economics and agricultural education. Yet the issue was not to be found in the rhetoric of rural life education.

The men and women who were involved in the "Country Life Movement" were primarily concerned with preserving rural life and educating young people to appreciate the benefits of farm life and to assume their sex differentiated roles with pride. Home economics was a major thrust of the movement. In contrast to domestic feminism, however, the rural home economics movement did not envision significant change in women's role. Improving the quality of women's lives so they would stay on the farm and rural life would be sustained was the main goal. As was true for the professional homemaking lobby, advocates hoped that home economics would sustain women's traditional role. Yet a traditional farm woman's role was substantially different from her city cousins. Farm women enjoyed a sense of status and equality by virtue of their economic contributions that were unparalleled in more urban settings, even though "according to custom and law women were subordinate to men." Thus home economics paradoxically represented the maintenance of a traditional division of labor and the more contemporary goal of equality between the sexes.

Rationales for ensuring a domestic education for young black women resembled arguments for young white women but race added a significant dimension to the rhetoric. Black women's clubs were the cornerstone in progressive-era reform for blacks. They were organized and populated by middle class black women who believed that black women had a moral obligation to uplift the race and contribute to the general welfare. Education in a general and domestic science...
specifically, were seen as keys to racial uplift and self-help. Carol Perkins's historical research on the connections between liberal and vocational education for black women focuses on what she calls "pragmatic idealism," the linkages between education, racial progress and home economics. Lucy Laney typified black clubwomen in her belief that, "... race uplift could not be accomplished until "the burdens of ignorance of laws and rules of hygiene in the home" were lifted."

Nannie Helen Burroughs added another dimension to the rationale when she argued for the professionalization of domestic work. The founder of the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington argued that vocational schools were the gateway to household engineering. "If Negro women do not learn the art, they will surely lose out in another occupation."

Thus, the "cult of true womanhood" and the professionalizing of domestic work provided rationales for home economics in young black women's education - echoing familiar themes with particular meaning for young black women and whose job ceiling was clay rather than glass.

Conclusions

The paradox of home economics, that it encompassed both traditional and feminist values and ideas was the key to its appeal. Moreover, home economics offered remedies for many of the important social ills plaguing society at the time. "The mission of the ideal woman is to make the whole world home-like," and home economics was the means. Men would be lured from saloons by good food cheerfully cooked in efficient kitchens; farm women would stay in the country and farm conditions would improve generally; middle class women's lives would take on new meaning through scientific homemaking and municipal housekeeping. Working class women would manage their husbands' pay checks; domestic immigrants would be Americanized; domestic service employees would perform more efficiently; infant mortality would improve; infant mortality would improve; diet would improve; the quality of life for American women would be substantially improved.

Beyond the explicit agenda of the movement — reform — was the underlying and compelling argument that home economics represented a vote for a woman's sphere that discouraged participation in the paid labor force except for domestic service. It was in that sense a strong prescription for traditional women's roles and one that was antithetical to the perspective of feminists such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman who predicted progress for women on economic independence. Moreover, some would argue that home economics represented a form of social control to direct young middle class women out of the labor market back into traditional homemaking roles, and to maintain the economic position of working women at the bottom of a segmented labor market. The home economics movement in general and the campaigns to feminize curriculum in public school mathematics in particular stand in the rhetoric of the movement as the absence of working class women's voices. Yet the movement was far more than a design to maintain the economic status quo. Women were not simply victims of a system that was designed to subdue that of economic independence: the shifting needs of social and economic roles, race,
Home Economics: A Panacea for Reform
demography and class are far too complex for a simplistic casting. Men and
women worked together and separately mediating their own particular agendas
based on race, class and gender in promoting home economics in the schools. For
many women, home economics and the proper retraining of young women
represented an empathetic vision of women’s potential — that of municipal house-
keepers empowered to effect change in the world. For some it was a means to
reclaim the skills and knowledge that were women’s ancient heritage and exclu-
sive domain. For yet others, home economics represented the assurance of a
future supply of well trained domestic labor and the sustenance of a life style. For
farm women and men, it meant the preservation of rural living and values. While
for black women, it represented improved life conditions. In short, the rhetoric
and promise of home economics were as complex and as broad as the scope of
gender, race, and class questions during the Progressive era.

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As a contributor to Manual Training Magazine observed in 1912, "the problem of trade instruction for young women is a new one and a complicated one."

Even though the content of trade education which was generally needlework was not new, the notion of an educational program that would train young women for industrial employment was both new and controversial in the Progressive Era. Florence Marshall, a prominent advocate of trade training for women and director of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls, astutely observed that, "... while industrial training for women is so far as it is applied to the obvious activities of the house is hailed with delight, any specific training to place girls in skilled trades has at present more enemies than friends."

The issue of trade education for young women emerged at a time when women's participation in the labor force was widely debated. Specific issues such as the effects of women's competition on men's wages and the effects of particular industries on women's physical and moral health were argued along with broader concerns about the role of women. The following chapter focuses on the debates over trade education for young women, the progressive-era attitudes toward women and work that gave rise to the debates, and the various perspectives adopted by organizations and individuals who were interested in the issue.

The 'Girl Question' in Trade Education

The key issue in the 'girl question' in trade training was, should young women be trained for industrial employment? and if so, what kind of employment? Many people, including vocational educators and administrators responsible for defining courses and programs, believed that 'Women ought not to be in factories and workshops; they ought to be in their homes.' Some argued that vocational training 'would lead to economic independence and . . . economic independence would eventually destroy the home.' Others alleged that vocational training was a bad investment because women were working primarily for pin money. And yet others believed that work would 'save' women for marriage and motherhood. These allegations and concerns reflected a pervasive progressive-era preoccupation with the changing roles of women and the effects of industrial employment on women and their families. Concerns about women

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were drawn into discussions about vocational training generally and trade training specifically.

There was a concerned and influential network of people—mainly middle class women—who worked to influence the course of trade training in the schools. Representatives from women's organizations such as the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League), social science researchers such as Elizabeth Butler and Mary Van Kleeck, home economists such as Laura Drake Gill of Sewanee College, and settlement house people such as Jane Addams, constituted the core group of advocates. These supporters of industrial and trade training for young women agreed on two major points: first, that schools should be responsible for providing training for women's future vocations; second, that industrial and trade training were primarily directed toward working class children, especially those described as 'motor minded' or not bookish. 'Greater industrial training is not usually the question with the middle class', wrote a prominent social scientist in a lecture series about women and work.

Young middle class women who could afford to stay in school would pursue teaching or commercial work it was assumed, and working class women would drop out of school before high school. Beyond these two given parameters, trade and industrial education was a muddy field that overlapped with home economics. Trade, industrial and technical education was used interchangeably, sometimes referring to home economics work such as laundry and hand sewing, and sometimes referring to training for wage work such as power sewing in a clothing factory. For example, the Lucy Flower Technical High School of Chicago and the Girls' Technical High School of Cleveland emphasized in their vision statements, the teaching of technical knowledge and scientific understanding such as was needed to 'establish and maintain' a well-ordered home. Plain sewing, dressmaking and millinery were taught in both of these schools for the benefit of young women who had to become 'self-supporting at an early age', yet school administrators indicated that imparting technical skills for homemaking was the primary emphasis. In contrast, the Worcester Trade School for Girls, which opened in 1912, emphasized preparation for the trades, meaning gainful employment rather than home industries. Teaching the trades was the explicit purpose of the school although supplemental work would be provided in 'the usual academic instruction, physical education and cookery'.

The central question that educators and advocates wrestled with was, should schools train young women for presumably short term jobs in industry or for their long term careers as homemakers? Moreover, if trade training were adopted by public schools, should it be in feminine industries such as the needle trades, which would be useful for future homemakers, or should women 'claim all of labor as their province', as Olive Shreiner argued? Some people argued from a very traditional perspective that women's industry was homemaking and that schools should train 'homemakers' not dietician. These people tended to be advocates of home economics as the only legitimate content for vocational education courses, and domestic service as the only appropriate vocation for young women who needed to work. Others incorporated both traditional assumptions and feminist perspectives, reasoning that women would have dual roles—short time wage earners and long time homemakers—and that they should
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be trained for both. A third perspective reflected more feminism and less tradition; women should be trained for the job market through trade training comparable to that offered to young men. All three of these perspectives, which translated into concrete suggestions about trade and industrial training, represented prescriptions for progressive-era problems. The assumption that working women and girls needed to be protected from the oppression of workplace conditions was shared by almost all of the advocates of trade and industrial education. However, these three perspectives that emerged indicated quite different visions of women’s lives.

Concern for young working class women, as indicated, was a major precipitating force in the development of trade education for young women. The Manhattan Trade School for Girls and the Boston Trade School for Girls followed the example set by the WEIU of Boston which opened classes in embroidery, dressmaking, crocheting, and millinery to 'make women more self-supporting'. The Boston Trade School for Girls opened with fourteen girls and two teachers in 1904; by 1919 the day enrollment for the school was reported to be 347 and extension enrollment 436. The enrollment of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls grew from its original twenty students in 1902 to a reported enrollment of 1,495 in 1919.

The development and growth of these schools coincided with a period of intense interest in the effects of industrial employment on women and children.

Women and Paid Work

'Woman's invasion of the industrial world', was the way some people referred to women's expanded role in industry. Newspapers and magazines such as the New York Times, and Survey Magazine, and more scholarly publications such as the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences featured articles and research reports about the effects of long hours, low wages, and poor working conditions on the health of the female work force. Ida Tarbell rather plaintively observed that nobody talks about the housekeeper. 'The only woman we ever hear of is the woman in industry, that is, the woman who is earning her living in factories, shops and offices.' Middle class women and men celebrated the fact that high school and college graduates could be architects, farmers, like clerks or teachers, or whatever else they wanted to be. Yet they also lamented the presence of women in industrial occupations. Young women who dropped out of school were the special objects of concern because their lack of education predicted their low position in the work force. Thirty-eight per cent of the female non-agricultural work force worked in manufacturing and mechanical industries or stores.

Something like 70 per cent of these young girls . . . enter the most undesirable manufacturing occupations, those most essential to health, and those often morally disgusting; there are a wages below the proper standard of living even illuminating and in every way blamed for the conditions of the worker,

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educators who were the architects of trade education for women. Jane Addams and Margaret Dreier Robins were among the prominent progressive-era reformers representing settlement houses, women's clubs, labor organization activists, social science researchers and trade school directors who comprised the core group of advocates. They directed the nation's attention to the perceived and real problems of women workers and went on to propose solutions such as trade training for young women.

Documenting the conditions and life styles of young working women was an important strategy used by progressive reformers who lobbied for changes based on the results. Research reports such as Emilie Josephine Hutchinson's study of Women's Wages, Hazel Grant Orsmbee's work on The Young Employed Girl, and Susan Kingsbury and May Allinson's report, A Trade School for Girls, provided evidence of the need for vocational training.

Researchers such as Allinson and Kingsbury were alarmed at the drop out rate for young women; 60 per cent of the young women in Worcester in 1912 left school before reaching 15 years of age. 22 The number of girls under 16 who left school to take jobs was increasing, reported Allinson and Kingsbury, and they were taking unskilled jobs. 23 An investigation of 'working girls' attending the New York evening schools revealed that 56 per cent of the young women dropped out of school before they reached high school, 40 per cent were working in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits and 50 per cent were working in trade and transportation. 24 Young women in these industries were relegated to unskilled positions where they might check, inspect, label, sort, wrap, pack, or fold, depending on the product involved. According to Elizabeth Butler who conducted an investigation in Pittsburgh in 1909 the vast majority of women who worked in the trade were in positions classified as not skilled that required little or no training. 25

There were many elements of the factory system which researchers and investigators focused on. Low wages resulting from the piece system were a particular concern of the middle class reformers who investigated the factory system. The piece system was used as a basis for wages in unskilled jobs which meant that wages were determined by the quantity of goods processed, basted, sewed, counted, etc. This method of linking productivity and wages grew out of the clothing industry where women were paid for each piece of goods they made. For example, Elizabeth Butler found in her research on Pittsburgh, that one young woman spent her entire day folding the ends of boxes for crackers and putting a red stamp on the end. She was paid one cent per dozen and if she could make a hundred dozen in a day, she would get a ten cent bonus, altogether $1.10. This amounted to $5.50 per week if she made her quota. 26 The median wage for young women in factory industries was $6.25 in 1913, and this was not a living wage according to critics of the factory system.

A high rate of turnover among young female workers was another result of the factory system that reformers deplored and frequently commented on. A WEIU investigation of industrial opportunities in some Massachusetts cities found that in one jewelry factory in Sommerville, Massachusetts, '5 out of every 6 workers leave in a year; another 20% every year. For example, a New York state factory investigating committee found that in the confectionery industry in New York City, 40 per cent of the workers stayed four weeks or less. 27 An investigator of conditions in Worcester, Massachusetts re-

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ported that the unskilled beginning worker, "drifts from place to place and never becomes proficient in any one thing." The health of young women was another expressed concern of progressive reformers, feminists and social science researchers. Long hours of standing and doing repetitive work was believed to cause damage to women's reproductive systems. The cotton mills, specifically, and poorly ventilated industrial concerns generally, were responsible for high rates of lung disease among young female workers. The mortality rate for women who worked exceeded that of all men by one-third. The moral health of women, especially young women, was an equally potent issue. While some people argued that women worked only for "pin money" citing the interest of young women in buying clothes and jewelry as their evidence, social science researchers documented the number of women who worked to support their families on paltry low wages. Prostitution and stealing were blamed on the low wages paid to young women who needed a living wage to support themselves and their dependents. As one progressive-era writer expressed it, "There is always the limitless haven of prostitution inviting girls who are underpaid." While historians have appropriately raised questions about the motivations of middle-class reformers and their intense interest in working class lives, the historical record persuasively argues that workplace conditions were not particularly healthful, wages were low, and industry was generally hostile to the advancement of young women. Investigations into the problems of young working class women documented the realities of their lives and provided reformers with evidence that supported intervention. Trade education advocates used the findings to argue for trade training. Progressive-era protectionism, coupled with the reality of workplace conditions, provided the context for discussion about vocational trade training. Although most interested parties agreed that working conditions for young women in industry posed serious problems, they did not agree on the solution.

Perspectives

Protecting and educating "working class daughters" was an explicit goal of the middle-class reformers and feminists who lobbied for and informed the trade education movement. However, trade education advocates held very different ideas on what protection and education meant.

One interpretation was that trade education should consist of training for housework. A small but vocal minority of women who represented the AHEA (American Home Economics Association), the GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs) and the WEIU argued for trade training that was exclusively in the "home industries." Such a scheme, from their perspective, would have solved a number of problems; low wages, unhealthful working conditions, the unsupervised lives that "factory girls" allegedly lead, while providing training and modeling for their future homes. Moreover, the "servant problem," that was often lamented in periodicals of the day, would be helped. The servant problem referred to the fact that household service was considered an undesirable occupation for young women, and the number of available household servants was...
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diminishing. 'Every day the demand for experienced household help grows', wrote a club woman in 1914.

37 The percentage of household workers relative to the total of female wage earners steadily dropped during the Progressive Era from 35.8 per cent in 1890 to 16.2 per cent in 1920.

38 The Boston YWCA conducted a widely quoted study of domestic service which validated what many suspected and feared. Young working women preferred factory and sales work to household employment which they found uninteresting, degrading, and confining.

39 Proposals to limit definitions of trade training to domestic service amounted to arguments for a nineteenth century view of women, protected and excluded from the marketplace. Working class daughters needed maternal supervision because the factories and the workplace would surely take advantage of them, it was assumed. As one GFWC member put it, 'The women, innocent, unguarded, untrained, unprepared, are entering this [industrial] world ... Have you not, the mothers of the race, this great responsibility on your shoulders?' Guidance and supervision were less provided, the advocates urged, to individual homes, where the 'work of the privileged educated woman for her little sisters, can influence the young woman's life and the life of her future family.' The school should 'teach the socially or industrially unassisted how to be young women for her appointed station in life', and at the same time improving the homes she came to contact with, those of middle class families.

40 The proposal to use public education funds for training working class girls for service did not go unnoticed. It was severely criticized as was a similar scheme proposed in Great Britain. Moreover, as national policy, the idea was not popular. Florence Marshall, speaking for the NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education) observed that while domestic and personal service deserved attention, they were not at present systematized or business like in their conduct, standards, and training, and that they had a long way to go before they could be classified as a trade.

41 Guidance and supervision were best provided, the advocates argued, in individual homes, where the 'work of the privileged educated woman for her little sisters, can influence the young woman's life and the life of her future family.' The school should 'teach the socially or industrially unassisted how to be young women for her appointed station in life', and at the same time improving the homes she came to contact with, those of middle class families.

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43 None the less, there were attempts to educate particular populations of young women for domestic service, and this was often done on the basis of class, race and ethnicity.

44 A second and more progressive perspective on trade training was advocated by the membership of the NSPIE. The Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women included such notable women as Jane Addams of Hull House, Mary Morton Kehew, Mary Schenck Woolman and Susan Kingsbury of the WEIU in Boston, Sophonisba Breckinridge of the University of Chicago's Department of Household Administration, and Florence Marshall who served on the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education and then became director of the Boston Trade School for Girls.

45 These women envisioned a trade-education system for young women that would provide good pay, room for advancement, an understanding of the industrial system, and a skill that would serve them well in their eventual role as homemakers. In her role as secretary to the Sub-committee, Marshall outlined its proposals in a bulletin devoted to the topic. She wrote that the young woman should be taught skills that would lead to jobs in the needle trades and food industries and would provide the kind of skill, 'which she can best use in her home later.'

The women who supported...
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the idea of dual roles argued that women must work. As Mary Surratt Woolman stated it:

It is not a time for us to stand aside and say women should remain at home, even if that is an ideal... Let us think for a moment of the situation of working girls in a busy industrial city. They must work for self-support. They must do it immediately. They should have a decent wage. They should have good health.

In addition to asserting young women's right to training, however, they were also saying that it was appropriate that they be trained for marriage, or, at least, that the work skills they were trained in be applicable to homemaking.

Susan Kingsbury was a particularly influential member of the Sub-committee, involved in both research and activism. Kingsbury earned her master's degree in history from Stanford University and then migrated east to pursue a doctorate in colonial history at Columbia University. She became interested in social research and worked on the investigation of early school leave for the Massachusetts Committee on Industrial and Technical Education. This work introduced her to the problems of young women, and she then went to work for Mary Morton Kehew and the Boston WEIU doing research on young working women and surveying the establishment of trade schools. Her most widely publicized work in this area was the study published by the USBE (United States Bureau of Education) entitled A Trade School for Girls, A Preliminary Investigation in a Typical Manufacturing City, Worcester, Mass. In this study, Kingsbury and her colleague, May Allinson, surveyed the positions open to young women in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled work. They made recommendations for training in the Worcester Trade School for Girls which focused on training in the feminine industries: power sewing machine operating, dressmaking, and millinery. Kingsbury exemplified the perspective of her colleagues on the NSPIE Sub-committee. She was genuinely concerned about young working women and believed that effective trade training should be offered in public schools. The proposed solution, training for 'feminine industries' represented a compromise of traditional values and feminism. Unlike the women who opposed women's presence in factories and lobbied for domestic service as trade training, the NSPIE recognized that young women were obviously going to work in factories and moreover, desired training. Some argued that work was a desirable experience for young women because it gave them a sense of independence and self-esteem. Most concurred that in the long run, young women would marry and that they should work in feminine industries, both for the practice industries offered and the protected environments they provided. While these women defended women's right to work, they never challenged the conspicuous sex stereotyping that confined women to low paying jobs.

In contrast to the former two perspectives, the third was the least traditional and the most feminist. The NWTUL was foremost in promoting a concept of training that expanded and challenged accepted definitions of women's employment. In 1911, the NWTUL took a position on the subject of vocational education. In its address, "What should be done for women?" it called for the establishment of schools offering the same subjects in co-educational schools.

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Dreier Robins, Loretta O’Reilly, Alice Henry and Agnes Nestor were among the women convinced that economic equity, which translated into better jobs, was the key to uplifting the status of women. They supported the more traditional feminists in their concern for family life, infant mortality, the health of mothers and future mothers, and the need to protect working women’s interests. However, their solution was to educate female workers so they would have skills, wages and job ladders that were competitive with those available to young men. The women of the NWTUL shared this position with other individual women who were concerned about equity in the workplace. Emilie Josephine Hutchinson, a lecturer in economics at Barnard College wrote:

If vocational education is merely imposed upon the present distribution of industry between men and women it will fail for short ... if vocational education is to be a means to the purpose of its possibilities for women it must be based on a sound analysis of the positions for which training is needed and a generous extension of this training to girls and women on equal terms with boys and men.

The researcher and author of Women in the Trades, Elizabeth Butler, concluded that trade training based on cooperation between trade school and manufacturers was the key to improving the economic status of women. She argued that by trade training she did not mean, 'The sort of training often most in demand, class work in amateur cooking, chronicling, and millinery' - feminized work - instead, she meant 'class work comparable to that of trade-trained men'. She elaborated on this idea as follows:

To be concrete, Pittsburgh women are largely employed in printing and bookbinding establishments, but as feeders, not as rulers. Why not teach them to mix inks, to fill pens, to manage the ruling machines ... Women are employed in machine shops and foundries. Why are they not taught the principles on which sand cores are made, the combinations of sand, the kinds of sand for different sorts of work.

Thus Butler, Hutchinson and the NWTUL women were calling for a radically expanded definition of trade training for young women and ultimately sex equity and integration in the workplace. This third vision of women’s role was predicated on the knowledge that many working class women would be working for a good portion of their lives, and on the belief that economic independence was critically important. Unlike the first two views on trade education, this perspective offered a strong argument for sex-integrated vocational training. These three views of trade education represented different perspectives on the role of young women in the job market, and the differences clearly reflected society’s persistent ambivalence about women in the work force generally and their presence in industry specifically. Some women and men argued from a very traditional perspective that women did not belong in the work force at all, while others asserted that women had always been there; they had merely followed their work out into industry and now they wanted ... flawless and the paying that fits us for labor! As Ann Peterman pointed out however, traditional values and feminist values are not mutually exclusive, especially during a period...
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of change. Thus the women who took the most feminist position on the role of women in the workforce also argued that most women would be mothers and homemakers and that we needed to establish a 'living wage to guard the home'.

The most popular position was a compromise that allowed for women's presence in the workforce while it provided a protective influence over the kind of workplace. Mary Schenck Woolman's Manhattan Trade School for Girls was typical. It provided trade training in trades that were specified as feminine and usually involved traditional needle trades. The associations of school directors and their colleagues in the women's trade education network argued for higher pay, access to other jobs in the system such as cutting and generally better working conditions, but they never seriously addressed the confinement of women's work to needle trades.

Their adherence to a narrower definition of trade training for women probably reflected their own deep ambivalence about women in industrial work. Despite the minority voice of women such as Leonora O'Reilley, who was raised in a working class, union supporting family, the ideal for most of the women in the trade education circle was middle class: women work for a few short years before marriage. Work after marriage was only out of necessity and would reflect badly on the husband's ability to care for the wife and family. Ultimately women's true profession was that of homemaker and mother. For Woolman, in the best of all circumstances, trade education and trade experience should provide preparation for that experience, and at the very least should not detract from that true profession.

Industrial employment of women was believed to cause a host of ills that the trade education lobby could not ignore. Their role, as they saw it was defensive; it was to educate for the eventuality of marriage while protecting women from the possible ill effects of industry. Thus the overriding influence on trade education perspectives was social ideology. As Sarah Eisenstein observed in Give Us Bread But Give Us Roses, young blue collar workers saw work as a temporary way station on the road to marriage, and if 'the tendency to see marriage as an escape from the shop or factory was engendered by the condition under which women worked' there was little in trade education rhetoric to challenge this view of work.

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6 Poyntz, J.S. 'Woman as An Economic Factor - a History of the Woman Movement', Lecture 2, Women in Industry Lecture Series in the papers of the NYCBVI (New York City Bureau of Vocational Information), Box 1, Folder 4, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

7 'Blue Collar' is not an expression that was generally used to describe women's jobs in industry during the Progressive Era, however since then it has come into popular use, especially in industrial contexts, especially those requiring unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled labor. It mainly refers to industrial occupations, although it may be applicable to lower level occupations in other sectors. Occupations that are now referred to as pink collar - clerical work and beauticians work - did not fall under the general rubric of blue collar work as well, even though they may have been similar in some regards. For a discussion of sex-typing in blue collar work see Matthaei, J.A. (1982) An Economic History of Women in America, New York, Schocken Books, pp. 209-218.


9 Ibid., p. 369.


11 Hoodless, A. The Education of Girls,' NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education), Bulletin No. 10, Proceedings, Third annual Meeting, p. 179.


13 Donham, A. 'History of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union', in Papers of the WEIU of Boston, B-8, Unprocessed Collection, Carton 1, Folder 11.

14 See 'History of the Boston Trade School for Girls', in papers of the NYCBVI, Box 7, Folder 33, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.


18 Tarbell, I. (1913) 'What Industrial Training Should We Give the Average Girl?', Bulletin No. 18, Proceedings of Fifth Annual Meeting, p. 132.

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28 Butler, E. Women and the Trades, p. 65.

29 Shientag, B. 'An Argument in Support of Minimum Wage Legislation for Women and Minors in Industry in the State of New York', from the papers of the NYCBVI, Box 5, Folder 75, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.


31 Osgood, I. 'Labor Legislation, Minimum Wage, Working Men's Compensation,' Lecture 13, NYCBVI papers, Box 1, Folder 16.


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44 Ibid.


47 For information on Susan Myra Kingsbury see James, E.T. et al. (Eds) Notable American Women, 2, p. 348.


49 (1911) 'Fourth Biennial Outlines Educational Work', Life and Labor, August, p. 236, in microfilm edition, Papers of the Women's Trade Union League and Its Principal Leaders, Radcliffe College Library.


51 Hutchinson, J. Women's Wages, p. 172; Mary Anderson of the Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, was also supportive of equity in vocational training, see SCHREINER, O. Woman and Labour, p. 132.

52 Butler, E. Women and the Trades, p. 278.

53 Butler, E. Women and the Trades, p. 132.

54 'A living wage for mothers who must earn' was adopted by the NWTLU (National Women's Trade Union League) as a slogan and appeared on a graphic depicting a mother at a sewing machine with a baby in arms. See SCHREINER, O. Woman and Labour, p. 17.

55 For information on Susan Myra Kingsbury see James, E.T. et al. (Eds) Notable American Women, 2, p. 348.

56 For information on Susan Myra Kingsbury see James, E.T. et al. (Eds) Notable American Women, 2, p. 348.
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In this discussion of prescriptions and vocational education curricula, commercial education stands out as an anomaly: it was as conspicuous in its absence from discussion as it was remarkable in its growth. Vocational educators and women's organizations did not lobby for or against commercial education. The NSPVE (National Society for the Promotion of Vocational Education), the organizational voice for vocational training issues, published very little on the topic in its bulletins and did not feature the topic in its annual presentations.

Why did it generate so little interest among the vocational educators and interest groups anxious to define the comparative merits of trade education or home economics for women? There were two related reasons. One is that it was considered to be a middle class vocation much like teaching. Vocational education lobbies focused on the interests of working class students who either would not attend high school or would limit their tenure there. As Kantor explains it, 'in fact middle class career interests were not well respected in the vocational education lobbies.'

Commercial education was a field for students who could go to high school and who could consider a middle class occupation. The other related reason is that commercial education was not linked to broad social concerns as were home economics and trade education. There was no reason to be concerned about the health and virtue of office workers because offices had become respectable places to work. In fact they were considered by some to be good training grounds for marriage. This image of middle class respectability evolved with the development of commercial education. Thus, like teaching which was an occupation that young women aspired to, there were no vocal advocates.

Commercial education emerged as an important field of study during the latter years of the nineteenth century. Private schools and commercial colleges expanded in response to a growing demand for office workers, and enrollment grew from 6,460 in 1871 to 91,549 in 1900. This demand was the product of economic growth: the advent of large scale production where 'the mills grew larger ... and the work processes more minutely subdivided and dependent on machinery.' Moreover, there was the expanding presence of department stores such as Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. With its new method of work the workplace required an army of clerical workers to monitor the changed production system. Private schools and eventually public schools adapted their curricula to meet workplace needs.

4 Commercial Education for the Office 'Girl'
Women were increasingly welcomed into office work as the nineteenth century came to a close. The number of women office workers rose from less than 1,000 in 1850 to 50,000 by 1870 and to 1,000,000 by 1920. These women were employed as stenographers and typists, bookkeepers, auditors and accountants, clerks and private secretaries. They were well paid by the standards of the day; $11.00 was the average wage for office workers in Boston in 1912 as compared to the $6.00 earned by three-fifths of store employees. Moreover, with additional skills learned in night school, for example, young women could advance up the ladder of positions, and theoretically increase their social contacts for husband searching, but there were critics of women's working presence in offices, especially in the late nineteenth century, just as there was criticism of all public domains 'invaded' by women. Office women were characterized as silly incompetents, as in the Harper's Bazaar engraving that showed women 'preening themselves before a mirror, fixing each other's hair, reading Harper's Bazaar, spilling ink on the floor'. Their morality was questioned, as well as their physical stamina.

As the need for inexpensive, able, office workers grew, however, women were more often viewed as uplifting influences for the former male bastions and office women were thought of as good places for women to socialize, as in the New York Times fashion story, 'Wee and winsome clad by side accomplish'. The social desirability is questioned by the work of office worker Mary Smith who stood the new and enlightened view of office work. The girls in the offices do not expose their qualities to contamination, but rather make an office better for their being there. Mary Smith argued, as did many of her contemporaries that office work was good training for marriage, and that 'If every woman in the United States had a year or more in a downtown office that woman would make some a better wife because of her wider understanding.' By 1913, offices were thoroughly redeemed as centers of female employment; social workers interviewed for a survey on office work extolled its virtues as follows:

The office secures the advantages of a refined environment; the work itself has cultural value, awakens responsibility, develops character, and promotes standards of achievement; hours are easier; pay is more generous than in the case of the store and the factory; incentive to advance is quite general; and social standing is better than in any other available form of work open to girls.

Schools played an important role in facilitating women's presence in offices. Janice Weiss argued in her thesis on commercial education in the US that public educators incorporated commercial education into their high schools in order to expand high school enrollments. The number of public high school students enrolled in business education jumped from 68,890 in 1900 to 430,975 in 1924, and the percentage of female students enrolled in commercial education courses jumped from 57 in 1914 to 66 in 1924. Occupational surveys such as Joseph Denburg's and the United States Office of Education's 1916 survey of San Francisco confirmed the
popularity of the commercial course; office work was second only to teaching in the preference for most young women. In spite of a receptive labor market and accommodating schools however, there was very little support for commercial education within the vocational training movement. Almost nothing was written about the subject by vocational educators. The reasons for the boycott by the women's vocational training network had to do with the characteristics of commercial work, and the young women who were drawn to it, as well as the progressive-era agenda of the women who supported vocational training. In a lecture series on women and careers held in 1915, one woman noted that "there is a distinctly social sense that the girl who is in an office is a little better than the girl who is selling." Similarly, David Snedden, the editor of Vocational Education Magazine wrote that "commercial education is more profitable and respectable than the pursuits of farmer and trade workers, to say nothing of the domestic servants and factory operatives." This image of respectability and status clung to commercial education and set it apart from blue collar occupations. Commercial education was a middle class white collar occupation that required some literacy, had a ladder of advancement, through various skills and a position at the top, the private secretary. It was not so much considered an "alternative" to other occupations, as something unique and worked toward, and was in fact an alternative that had the additional advantage of requiring less training, depending on the kind of work pursued, and thus life styles restrictions. Because commercial education was distinct in both the level of training and status, it was not considered an occupation for grammar school or junior high school dropouts, nor was it originally thought of as "a working class job." In fact, in London, where the feminization of clerical work happened at the same time as in the United States, "women office workers tended to come from a different [higher] social class than the men who did the same work and the low pay and, consequently low standard of living, were an embarrassment to them [the women]." The fact that office work had the image of being a middle class occupation for young women who could afford to stay in school meant that the progressive-era reformers who were the backbone of the women's vocational training movement were not interested in it. They did not see it as a subject that fell within their purview, and therefore did not think about it. The vocational training lobby had a fairly explicit agenda. They were women concerned about the welfare of working class women and the maintenance of separate spheres. Commercial education did not fit into these concerns, and therefore was not considered a subject for discussion. The only persons who might have raised the issue were lobbyists for equal access in trade training such as the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League). They however, were very critical of
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'pretentious office workers', and throughout the history of the league showed only the slightest interest in office work. They were mainly interested in legitimizing blue collar work and protecting women workers, and were not inclined to support any issue or program that fostered what they perceived to be class hierarchies.

The case of commercial education illustrates very clearly the difficulties associated with applying an argument of economic control. The dominant factor in commercial education was gender related. While it especially appealed to middle class parents or those who could afford education, it attracted students from the working class and middle class much like teaching did. In Canada as well as the United States, commercial education did not attract reform interest. Without the support of women's organizations who were primarily responsible for ensuring a place for women in the vocational education movement generally, or vocational educators, there was little chance that commercial education would be included in vocational education. In fact it was not until 1963 that business education was included under the rubric of vocational education and thereby provided with federal funding.

Notes

3 Van Denburg, J.K. (1911) Causes of the Elimination of Students in Public Secondary Schools of New York City, New York, Teachers College, Columbia University, pp. 55-57; Department of the Interior, USBE (US Bureau of Education), (1917) 42
5 WEIU, The Public Schools and Women in Office Work, Chapter on 'Wages', especially p. 79.
7 Ibid., p. 58.
9 Ibid., p. 79.
11 Weiss, J. 'Education for Clerical Work', p. 68.
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15 Holmes, M.J. (1915) 'Vocational Opportunities in the Department Store', 16 November, Women in Industry Lecture Series, papers of the NYCBVI, B-3, Box 9, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.


18 (1912) Life and Labor, October, p. 293, in the Papers of the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League) and Its Principal Leaders, microfilm edition, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
By the time the National Commission on Federal Aid to Vocational Education had convened to discuss policy and future direction in vocational education for young people (1914), the curricula, lobbies, and competing prescriptions for young women had been shaped. These prescriptions are historically salient because they reveal the complex attitudes held by and about women in relation to family life and the work world. As Anna Fish found noted, in a period of upheaval and change, complex attitudes reflect various degrees of feminism and traditionalism, often operating side by side. Certainly, within the women's vocational education movement this was true. Women—mainly middle class—represented different agendas formed loose advocacy groups within and between progressive-era organizations to influence the direction of vocational education in the short run and women's place in society in the long run.

Empowered by foot dragging and disinterest on the part of men, women generated the rhetoric and prescriptions about women's place with some interest and some consequences. The women's vocational education movement produced ad hoc coalitions. There were no grand architects of women's vocational education and the rhetoric as well as the policies and practices reflected the diversity in perspectives and values that attended the Progressive-era women's movement. This does not suggest of course that all wings of the larger movement were represented within the women's vocational training movement. The vocational interests of middle and upper middle class women with access to secondary and higher education were essentially excluded. But the people and organizations that continued to support either trade education or home economics, and to ignore commercial education, endorsed common Progressive Era goals and perspectives. They all believed that women were primary wives and mothers, they all lamented the ill effects of unregulated industrial employment, they all believed women had to take responsibility for their own welfare and the welfare of their children and communities. Beyond these basic ideas, however, critical differences in perspective emerged among them. One essential difference defined the controversy between trade education and home economics advocates, and divided the trade education coalition as well. The tension between traditional values and feminist perspectives, most harm
Conclusions

Economics advocates believed that women and men occupied separate but equal spheres and sex differentiation was an important and desirable aspect of life. Women's power rested in this difference because they could exercise power either through their competent superintendence of homes, or the home extended into the community. In either case, women had a critical role to play in national life, although in the latter case women would play a much more public role.

The moderate trade education advocates, of whom Jane Addams was typical, generally agreed with the supporters of home economics. Women did occupy a separate sphere and they should be trained for it. That did not exclude training for a job however. They acknowledged that young women should be trained for their short tenure in industry given the evidence that many young women were forced by economic necessity to work until marriage. In the case of reverses of fortune, they should be prepared to pick up their role as wage earners after marriage.

More militant trade education advocates had a vision of women's role that more closely resembled the militancy of late nineteenth century women's rights advocates. They believed that separate was clearly not equal, especially in economics. The sex segregated work force and women's position in low paying low status work was a root of poverty for many families. The NWTUL motto was, 'A working wage to guard the home'. Although they paradoxically supported protective legislation, they also believed in and lobbied for equal access to all trades for women.

The differences in perspective held by individuals and organizations in the women's vocational training movement were profound because they prescribed very different roles in the labor market, exclusion and inclusion. Beyond the differences however, the fact that women defined the goals and perspectives of the movement themselves is significant. Progressive-era female activists believed that women had to take care of and be responsible for other women. Women defined vocational education issues in terms of their progressive-era agenda with all its attendant problems: it was class biased and it was a general prescription for gender segregation.

Prescriptions provide insights into the way people view themselves. It seems evident that the women who shaped the discussions about vocational training linked the discussion and the potential outcomes to larger social issues. They did not see themselves making minor decisions about curriculum, but instead as having an influence on social roles and the quality of American life in the long run. These prescriptions were visions of 'the way it is "spozed" to be' must be placed along side the politics of policy formulation and the practical dimensions of program implementation for us to see their real significance and evaluate their impact on schooling and young women.
Part 2
Politics
Part 2 Introduction – Politics

Political struggles over the formulation of legislation constitute the second major dimension of the women’s vocational education story. Kliebard has recently argued that vocational education policies are mainly significant as symbolic actions rather than concrete means for accomplishing goals. For the loosely coupled groups who formulated national vocational education policy for girls and women vis-à-vis the Smith-Hughes legislation, the salience was both symbolic and concrete. Decisions made about funding for vocational education paved the way for the development of a home economics empire: a symbolic gesture that cost the American taxpayers a great deal of money.

The quiet battles waged over definitions and organizational training for young women were significant in their implications. Even surrounding the appointment of the commissioners, control of the commissioner’s agenda, and subsequent power plays by the home economics lobby represented open campaigning for a women’s agenda. It was one of the first instances in a national setting where women were instrumental in shaping policy about their own education; they perceived the stakes and called on their well-developed organizational skills to target a very explicit campaign.

In the first round of the campaign to the exclusion of home economics advocates, trade education advocates supporting women’s right to work in industry, secured two positions designated for women on the Commission. On the other hand, home economics advocates were not informed about the Commission and moreover, responded slowly to the legislation when it was introduced to Congress. They were occupied at the time with the Smith-Lever legislation which provided for agricultural extension agents – some of whom could be women – to deliver education and services to rural areas. When the legislation did get their attention, however, they neutralized the trade education lobby’s early gains and skillfully secured the place of home economics in the legislation and ultimately in secondary school curricula.

Domestic feminists expanded their influence in the years when the Smith-Hughes legislation was developed and first implemented (around 1918–1921). They increased their collaborative efforts and became formally organized in the WJCC (Women’s Joint Congressional Committee) under the leadership of the League of Women Voters. The WJCC, called by Smith “the most powerful
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lobby in Washington included home economics education on its legislative agenda. Although the WJCC never succeeded in ushering home economics legislation through Congress, they were a powerful presence and their endorsement of the issue was significant.

Trade education lobby and specifically the NWTUL (National Women’s Trade Union League) was a visible and highly vocal minority who supported economic independence for women and worked to improve the position of women in industry. However, they never enjoyed widespread popular support, and their agenda was generally overshadowed by their domestic feminist sisters’ social legislation.

The development of provisions for women in the Smith-Hughes legislation and their subsequent implementation were controlled by trade-education advocates and home economic supporters. Home economics overshadowed trade education, with lasting consequences for women’s vocational training in the United States. The victory of home economics was symbolically important because it sanctioned sex differentiated curriculum even though the number of women who actually chose home economics was small. The myth that women’s place was in the home was validated.

Notes

The drive to obtain federal aid for secondary schools was a major thrust of the early vocational education movement. Following the failures of the Davis Dolliver Bill in 1910 and the Page-Wilson Bill of 1912, vocational education proponents in Congress succeeded in passing a resolution that provided for the appointment of a national commission. The nine people appointed to the Commission were charged with investigating the subject of national aid to vocational education and making recommendations to Congress on or before June 1 of that year, 1914. The Commission’s hearings, their findings which were synthesized in the proposed Smith-Hughes legislation, and the subsequent floor debates over program definitions and funding, constitute a fascinating and significant chapter in the history of vocational training for women. They were significant because they provided a forum for open discussion between people with conflicting perspectives on appropriate vocational programs for young women. Moreover, the dialogue resulted in funding programs for young women that included vocational education programs in schools throughout the United States. The following chapter explores the Commission’s findings, the programs for young women and the story of the interest groups, personalities, and perspectives that informed the dialogue and subsequent federal policy.

One focus of debate was the issue of home economics in the Commission’s findings. Although home economics had been identified with the vocational education movement from its inception, the commission largely bypassed it in its initial recommendations for funding. Why did the commission limit support for the teaching of home economics when it was enjoying unprecedented support? For the answer to this question and the question of how home economics ended up in the final legislation we need to look at the composition of the commission and the interest groups that lobbied both for and against home economics.

Commercial education was virtually ignored by the commission. In the Commission’s recommendations there was no funding provided, either for teacher’s salaries or teacher training in this area. This is puzzling given the precipitous growth of the female clerical sector during this period. Of all female non-agricultural workers, 9.2 per cent were involved in clerical work in 1910. It is also puzzling given the prosperity of business courses in private business.
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schools and colleges. Interest group politics and the biases of Commission members provide insight into these puzzles.

The prevailing issue explored in the chapter is the significance of gender issues and feminist politics in the Commission's development, in the progress of the legislation through Congress, and in the early days of Smith-Hughes implementation.

Feminist Politics and Vocational Education:
The Trade Education Lobby

There were two progressive-era organizations that influenced appointments and recommendations made by the National Commission on Vocational Education, the NWTUL and the Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women in the NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education). The NWTUL was clearly more committed to substantive change in the industrial workplace than the women of NSPIE. However, both organizations were committed to advancing opportunities for women in trade education.

The NWTUL, founded in 1903, was one of the most remarkable reform organizations to emerge during the Progressive Era. Robin Miller Jacoby, a NWTUL archivist, characterized it as 'unique among social reform organizations of its day' because of its genuine concern for and dedication to working women's issues, and because of the cross-class makeup of the membership. Another recent history notes that, 'League women were committed to changing society by addressing the problems of workers and the urban poor.' Union members made up the bulk of the membership, and according to the League's constitution, one member was to make up the majority of officers in the national and local leagues. The issues that filled the organization's agenda represented an alliance of 'feminist ideals and labor reform'. They included protective legislation for female workers, a minimum working wage, union organizing and strike support, and suffrage, because League women felt that the ballot box in the union hall and the ballot box in the town hall were keys to the improvement of conditions for working women.

Education was another item on the League's agenda and this included the education of trade union women for effective bargaining and organizing and industrial education for 'working girls'.

The League women publicly argued that young women should have access to the same training and educational opportunities as young men because lack of educational opportunity led to no possibility of employment in skilled trades and a depressed status in the labor market. They strongly objected to offering domestic science in lieu of trade training for girls and argued that it was unjust to differentiate on the basis of sex in an industrial education curriculum. In a major speech to the 1913 biennial meeting, Robins described an incident of sex bias, where boys were being taught elementary physics, mechanics and electricity in the science course of an industrial education curriculum,
Feminist Politics and Personalities Influence Smith-Hughes Legislation while girls were being taught the action of alkalies and the removal of stains from clothing. Robins then appealed to the League women to support a policy of equal education in a statement that predicted Title IX of the Educational Amendments:

"Therefore in the interests of our girls one of the first things to be done is to see that women have seats upon every commission appointed to inquire into systems of vocational training, also upon every board, administrative or advisory, which shall help to direct the activities of all our public school systems, whether vocational or academic, or both." 9

In addition to taking formal positions on boards and commissions, the League women systematically influenced school districts on behalf of women's vocational training. For example, Agnes Nester and Emma Steghagen of the Chicago League went to the School Management Committee of Chicago to lobby for gender equity in course offerings and provision of courses in collective bargaining, industrial history, and subjects related to industrial education. 10 They found an ally on that committee in Superintendent Ella Flagg Young, who facilitated community relationships and curriculum development in the form of a course in glove making. Similarly, Leonora O'Reilly, Vice President of the New York League, lobbied the New York school system heavily on behalf of trade training for young women. The Manhattan Trade School for Girls, which O'Reilly was instrumental in founding, was formally incorporated into the New York school system personally as a result of work by O'Reilly and others. O'Reilly's reputation as a teacher of trades and strong support of vocational education also earned her an invitation to sit on New York City's schools' advisory board on vocational education established in 1915.

In addition to lobbying local districts for trade education programs, Robins and women of the League emphasized the value of networking. They established contacts with the NSPIE and contributed to annual meetings and bulletins. It was that fruitful contact building that led to the appointment of Agnes Nester to the Commission on National Aid to Industrial Education. Through successful networking, O'Reilly was also appointed to the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, and established ties with the NSPIE.

The NSPIE was established in 1906 by vocational education supporters for "research, writing and action." 12 The NSPIE included the interests of women from the very beginning: Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House was on the first executive board, and the Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women, which was established in 1907. The roster of prominent women on this commit-

tee included Florence M. Marshall, director of the Boston Trade School for Girls and a colleague of Charles Prosser's in the Massachusetts State Department of Education, Mary Morton Kehew, president of the WEIU in Boston, and Mary Schenck Woolman, director of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls. This Sub-committee, headed up by Florence Marshall, provided continual visibility for issues relating to women's industrial education through organization bulletin, presentations made at the organization's annual meeting and networking with other organizations such as the NSPIE. It did not want to scope 1
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marginal position in the NSPIE's agenda, nor in vocational education generally. Bulletins and meeting programs indicate that while education for young women was definitely a notable issue, it did not receive equal treatment. Thus the committee met together in 1912 to discuss the organization's policies with regard to women. The result was a set of strongly worded resolutions that addressed organizational structure and resources. They are appreciable indicators of the determination and organizational sophistication of the authors as well as their commitment to gender equity.

First, the committee urged that the vocational training of women be confined to areas that would lead to self support, which eliminated the possibility of 'vocational homemaking', but did not exclude employment in feminine industries such as laundries. Second, they argued that since the 'facts of our present industrial and agricultural life indicate that the work of wage-earning men and wage-earning women largely coincide', the society should allow for an adequate representation of women on the Board of Managers. Third, the Sub-committee recommended the appointment of a committee of five, composed of two men and two women from the Board and the Executive Secretary to work out the details of expanding the Society's work in this area, and they advised that a 'woman assistant to the Executive Secretary (Charles Prosser) in carrying out whatever plans', the committee desired. In a fourth resolution the Sub-committee recommended that research on the needs of women in industry and the distribution of women in industry be conducted; that the effects of minimum wage laws be watched closely and that the society establish a 'Vice-relationship with the Women's Trade Union League ..'.

These resolutions set forth a well defined feminist agenda for the organization. What seems remarkable in retrospect, even given the reform orientation of the organization, was that the resolutions were accepted by the managing board and that Cleo Murtland of the Worcester Trade School for Girls was hired almost immediately to promote and manage issues relating to women's industrial education, both inside and outside the organization. The agenda and commitment to back it up represented a significant vote of confidence for the Sub-committee and the general issue of women's education. Murtland turned out to be an excellent choice; Thorp, from the record of her accomplishments, worked with Charles Prosser on a survey of clothing industries in New York City; she wrote and disseminated articles on the subject to other organizations such as the AHEA (American Home Economics Association), and she was instrumental in the appointment of Florence Marshall and Agnes Nester to the Commission on Federal Aid to Vocational Education.

Charles Prosser, the Executive Secretary of the NSPIE, was an important ally to the Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women. He supported the Sub-committee in their goals and worked with them to find the funding to hire Cleo Murtland. He collaborated with Murtland in securing the appointment of Marshall and Nester to the Commission and he conducted research with her on women in industry and trade education. This support for women's trade education was important both for the NSPIE and for the Commission.

It is not easy to discern why some men in the vocational education movement were more willing to support expanded work opportunities for women than others. Yet there seems to be a relationship between interest in social reform and support for opportunities for women. Prosser was a social reformer...
advocate who worked with young people in his role as juvenile judge in Indiana. He later served as President of the Children's Aid Society in New York City, while pursuing an advanced degree at Columbia University. He was genuinely concerned about the problems of working youths, and strongly believed that schools should play an active role in social reform. Moreover, Prosser believed that the school climate should ensure that equal opportunity to learn be made available to all students, both male and female. Given his social reform roots and commitment to equal opportunities for young women and men, it is not surprising that Prosser would have been such a strong supporter of trade education for women, nor is it surprising that he would have found allies in the NWTUL.

The Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women, with the crucial assistance of Murtland and Prosser after 1913, was an effective voice in the NSPIE. Women in the NSPIE supported the concept of trade education for women in the feminine industries such as power sewing for clothing industries and millinery trades. Although they disagreed with NWTUL members about open access to all trades and industries for women, together they were an effective lobby in the campaign to extend vocational education beyond domestic science and homemaking.

Commission Appointments 'Stacking the Deck' for Trade Education

When vocational education leaders celebrated the establishment of the Commission on National Aid to Vocational Education, the question of women's vocational training was not a major consideration. Finding the means to create efficient vocational training without turning schools into factories was the priority, and Commission appointments were bound to influence the scope and categories for funding. The appointments turned out to be a critical issue for women because the original wording of the Commission recommendations decried exclusion of women. That was changed to include the possibility of female appointments, and subsequently two women were chosen to sit on the Commission who heavily influenced the recommendations for women. The orchestration of appointments, of course, was the result of collaboration between the NWTUL and the Sub-committee on Women in Industrial Education of the NSPIE. The story of how the National Commission on Federal Aid to Vocational Education ended up with two women who were trade education advocates, and no women who were home economics advocates is a tribute to the organizational skills of the people involved.

Senator Carroll S. Page (R, Vermont) played a key role in the Commission's composition when he suggested to congressional colleagues that the wording of the resolution be changed. 'Would you accept an amendment making it read, "nine persons" instead of nine men?' he queried. His colleagues assented, the resolution was changed, and two women were appointed. He did that because he had received a letter inquiring about the representation of home economics on the Commission - an issue that he saw as critical - and from his perspective, women needed to formulate that policy, not men.

The next key event was the appointment of Charles Prosser, Executive Secretary of the NSPIE to the Commission. Prosser and his assistant, Cleo
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Murtland, looked to their own organization for one of the appointments and then turned to Margaret Dreier Robins, a prominent philanthropist, feminist, trade education advocate, and founding member of the NWTUL for the second appointment. Prosser had worked with David Heath in Massachusetts as the Deputy Commissioner of Education in charge of industrial education prior to taking the position with the NSPIE. Also he had testified before Congress on previous vocational education legislation. He was a recognized and respected voice in the vocational education movement who was willing to use his influence to support trade education for women by proposing the names of women for the Commission.

Cleo Murtland, the assistant secretary to the NSPIE and an aggressive lobbyist for women's industrial education started lobbying for appointments even before the Commission had been finalized. She wrote to Agnes Nestor on January 5th, 1914, and explained that the wording of the congressional resolution had been changed to read ‘nine persons’ and asked the NWTUL to ‘take steps to interest the President in the appointment of women ... at once’. Margaret Dreier Robins of the NWTUL was approached by Prosser in January as a potential member of the Commission. Dreier wrote to Prosser and thanked him for including her name on the list of potential appointees but declined. She went on to urge Prosser’s support for the appointment of a working woman’s representative on the Commission. Dreier wrote to the President that the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education was lobbying for the appointment of women. She went on to urge that the working woman’s point of view should be represented on the National Commission by a trade worker.

Dreier went on to suggest that the particular working woman who would be suited to the role was Agnes Nestor. The NWTUL was organized for lobbying and they put their members into action on this issue. By January 17, the leadership had decided to support Agnes Nestor and FWU’s former glove maker and president of the glove makers union in Chicago. Mary Dreier, president of the New York NWTUL, (and sister to Margaret Dreier Robins), was instrumental in the organized response. On January 18, she telegraphed her sister, Margaret Dreier Robins, in Chicago, urging her support for Agnes Nestor, by January 19th President Wilson had received communications from the NWTUL and several local leagues including those of Boston, New York, Chicago, Baltimore and Denver. A subsequent letter from Robins to a potential supporter for Nestor stated that the Consumer’s League had telegraphed President Wilson as well, thus indicating that the networking and lobbying by these women extended beyond the League itself.

The two women who were appointed to the Commission were Agnes Nestor, the NWTUL representative and Florence Marshall, director of the Boston Trade School for Girls and a founding member of the NSPIE. Significantly, Marshall was criticized by Robins as a candidate who was too enamored with the feminine trades. Robins confided in personal correspondence that, 'I do not think that Florence Marshall of the Boston Trade School for Girls and women like her ought to be appointed ...' Because they have simply gone off into “grr goo” work and have no conception at all of the needs of women workers or of the fundamental principles of education.

Robins clearly favored a progressive stand on the issue of women in the trades and was hoping to see that translated into legislation and funding.
Charles Prosser and Cleo Murtland of the NSPIE and the leaders of the NWTUL carefully engineered the appointments of women to the Commission who would support trade education. Murtland confirmed the instrumental role that she and Prosser had played in a letter she wrote to Agnes Nestor after the appointments were made. She wrote, "You and Miss Marshall are the women whom the men and women of this Society worked for ... The appointments were a result of a list presented to the President by the Society which I hope to have an opportunity to explain to you sometime."

There were at least three key factors in the successful engineering of Commission appointments. Prosser's leadership in the vocational education movement lent strength to his recommendations. The NWTUL's leadership was well known and influential in progressive reform circles, especially Margaret Dreier Robins. The combined effect of their stature and the very quick mobilization of support from the feminist network were important considerations in the President's choice of appointees.

Although specific historical evidence is elusive, it also seems probable that supporters of home economics and the other major area of vocational education for women, commercial education, were not consulted or asked to submit names to the President for consideration for appointment. Thus, the only two women on the Commission, along with a key male figure, were strong supporters of trade education for women, a fact that would influence Commission recommendations.

Commission Hearings

Florence Marshall and Charles Prosser of NSPIE, and Agnes Nestor of the NWTUL, worked full-time for approximately two months in the Spring of 1914, along with the other two full-time members of the Commission, John A. Kapp, former Secretary of the Indiana Commission on Industrial Agricultural Education, and Charles H. Winslow, a member in 1906 of the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial Education.

Marshall and Nestor's primary goal was to create a workable plan for vocational education that included a strong provision for women's trade education. The basic issue facing them in the commission proceedings was a conflict over the place of home economics in vocational education, from Nestor's perspective:

"Miss Florence Marshall and I foresaw difficulties when we found that some of the men wished to give girls more domestic science than opportunity to learn trades ... We felt that if domestic science were allowed the greater appropriation, it would be too easy to push all the girls into that field and not give them the technical training they were likely to find themselves in need of."

Nestor was committed to absolutely equal opportunity for boys and girls, and she publicly argued that no more technical schools be opened unless the same provisions were made for girls as boys.

In another example of superb orchestration and collaboration, Nestor and Marshall took charge of Commission hearings when the subject of vocational
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training for young women was discussed. Through carefully worded questions they were able to elicit supportive testimony from representatives of three of the four major women's groups in the country who were interested in vocational education, NWTUL, NSPIE, and the GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs). One of the lynchpins of Marshall and Nestor's argument was that all young women would benefit from home economics as part of general education but home economics should not be a substitute for vocational education. Laura Drake Gill, a founding member of the NSPIE, testified that... all women should have an occupation that would provide for self support, and that all women should make their contributions to the world's work. She went on to argue that home economics belonged to the category called general education, and that home economics should include training for household trades that would lead to jobs.

Leonora O'Reilly, of the NWTUL, gave the most colorful and the most passionate statement recorded in the Congressional Hearings. O'Reilly was a second generation union activist, a committed socialist, a friend of Agnes Nestor, and devout supporter of equity issues. She was a charismatic figure who has been described as 'one of the most unforgettable Women's activists' who 'attracted people like a magnet' because of her style of speaking, her impressive language and the fact that she was speaking to some fairly conservative congressmen who believed that women belonged at home. There were a number of important points that O'Reilly made during her testimony to support trade education. She argued that education should not discriminate between boys and girls, stating, 'if a girl can drive a nail better than a boy don't call her a tomboy for doing... And if a boy can sew on a button better than a girl, why, let him sew on his button'. Extending this concept of equity to the workplace, she went on to say, 'why should we not get out of our head this idea that women are made for that kind of work and men are made for the other kind. If a man is a better cook let him cook, and if a woman can do better work on the farm let her do it'.

When questioned by Marshall about the importance of home economics in a young woman's education O'Reilly was equally forthright. O'Reilly responded vehemently that:

So many of us have not anything like homes... and if we do make the mistake to get married we go back to the mill afterwards to help support the children which may come and can not be supported by the wages that are paid in the mills... No, I think it is a very great mistake if you think there should be no special training in this vocational work except to fit women to be cooks for other women who do not want to do their cooking and that is largely what it means.

Marshall knew that O'Reilly and other members of the NWTUL felt strongly about the issue of home economics and in particular opposed to the prospect of young women being trained for domestic work. O'Reilly's testimony was significant because she could speak eloquently from first hand experience about the life and oppression of working class women. Her mother had struggled to support the family as a garment maker and Leonard had left school at age eleven to work in a coal factory.
first attended the Manhattan Trade School and then worked as a teacher she felt strongly that education would help women to take their place alongside men in all phases of industry. She elaborated on this point saying that over specialization in industry had created 'dead end' jobs for women who might be stuck sewing the same seam or part of a seam for a number of years. Vocational training that taught women to make a whole garment or perform a number of functions would help them to compete with men in industry.

The third organization to speak on behalf of women's vocational education, and the only organization representing an alternative to trade education was the GFWC. Mrs Horace Towner, the wife of Congressman Towner (R, Iowa) spoke for the GFWC, and it was evident from her testimony that she had not been briefed on the specific issues involved in the Commission's work. Her comments were vague, and they did not reflect the GFWC's keen interest in home economics. For example, when Marshall questioned her about the GFWC's position on the training of girls who must earn a living, Mrs Towner responded that the, 'General Federation is interested in every thing of that sort'. When she was asked to what extent she thought home economics should be part of general education or vocational education, she replied, 'That is a very big question'. Nestor pressed her further rephrasing the question to: 'Do you not think the home economics ought to be part of a general education?' Mrs Towner finally replied, 'yes'. The significance of Mrs Towner's testimony was that it helped to strengthen the hand of the trade education advocates in formulating the legislation.

Commission members were part of the recorded testimony and there was support for home economics on the Commission. For example Senator Page, a basically conservative country gentleman, testified that, 'the Almighty ... has ordained that woman do the housework and the man do the work which he does'. Although he professed a belief that women should be given equal opportunities with men, he also thought that equal opportunities did not mean 'putting a woman into man's work in the field, in the stable, or in the kitchen'. He made a point of distinguishing between rural and urban needs in the Commission hearings, saying that young women in rural states such as Georgia, Iowa, and Vermont look forward to their roles as homemakers. For them vocational training in the trades would be impractical, whereas home economics for the keeper of the farm home would be very practical.

Unlike home economics which had at least two spokespersons on the Commission, commercial education was virtually ignored. The only person to address the topic was the Secretary of Commerce, William Cox Redfield. He opposed funding for commercial education, commenting that the, 'need is far greater for the training of the mechanic than it is for the training of the office clerk', and that speaking of 'the office man', he preferred to discuss the subject of women into the clerical field or the growth in the clerical work field. Support for commercial education might have come from the Business Education Association. However, the relationship between business educators and vocational educators was tenuous at best. As Janice Weiss explains in her thesis, 'Vocational educators charged that commercial education was not practical and suitable for women'.

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enough to qualify as vocational education. Thus by mutual agreement commercial education was not proposed for funding.

In addition to the omission of oral testimony, the people who sat on the Commission did not address the topic in the published hearings. Neither Marshall nor Nestor brought up the topic of commercial education, and it seems evident that it was a deliberate omission. It seems certain that during a period of rapid growth in the number of women in office service that Marshall and Nestor would have failed to recognize the potential significance of this work. However, it is congruent with the perspectives of the NSPE and NWTUL. They both classified commercial work as 'professional,' similar to teaching. In both of their organizations' publications the subject of commercial education and office work was virtually ignored. Since both organizations were committed to the advancement of women in industry and the promotion of industrial education, commercial education was outside the purview of their stated interests.

Commission Recommendations: A Vote For Industrial Education

Commission recommendations presented to Congress in June of 1914 held no surprises for close observers of the Commission. Funding for home economics and commercial education was restricted while agriculture education and training for the trades and industries were generously supported. Funding for home economics was limited to teacher training, which excluded salaries for teachers and supervisory personnel, except in agricultural education. There was no funding for commercial education for either teacher salaries or teacher training.

The Commission discussed the limitation of funding for home economics and commercial education in its report, stating that the criteria for receiving federal aid would be acknowledged need: 'National grants should be given to the States only for those forms of vocational education where there is an acknowledged widespread need that is not now being met.'

39 The report went on to explain that the Commission's treatment of home economics was based on two key ideas. The first was that home economics would be an important part of every girl's education and thus should be classified as general education rather than vocational, a strategic point for the trade education advocates. The second was that, 'so far as the towns and cities are concerned, general training for the home is being rapidly developed ... in the absence of national grants [it] will not be neglected.'

Commercial education was eliminated from funding based on the same principle of 'acknowledged need.' According to the Commission findings, commercial education was already being provided for in schools. Moreover, there was no great scarcity of trained workers of this kind. Although there may not have been a scarcity of trained workers in this area, it was one of the fastest growing occupations in the years between 1900 and 1910. In the years between 1900 and 1910, the increase was 133.19 per cent.

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Feminist Politics and Personalities Influence Smith-Hughes Legislation

The organizational skills of the women involved were superb. The NSPIE and the NWTUL were organized for legislative advocacy and political action. They successfully bid for seats on the Commission, orchestrated the hearings and testimony and negotiated with the agrarian interests over home economics in the rural schools. What they accomplished, for a brief moment in history, was a symbolic statement about the right of young women to education and work that was comparable to that of young men. In the United States, this issue would not come up in legislation for another fifty years.

The group of women who gathered under the umbrella of vocational education and trade education represents a spectrum of feminist and traditional perspectives. The issue of race, as is evident in this chapter was not raised in the government hearings and was not evident in the published rhetoric of the time. We can conclude, accurately so, that for the women of the NSPIE and NWTUL education for blacks and non-whites was not an issue they were concerned about and the absence of attention was probably based on racism. The phenomenon of middle-class reforms imposed on working class sisters, social protectionism, is a criticism that has been directed at the large sorority of feminine and feminist reformers of the Progressive Era. It is a criticism that fits, and doesn't fit, the women who were forging national policy in vocational training for young women. The concept of equity proposed by the women of the NWTUL was fairly radical for the period. The League women focused their attention on working class girls and hence were proposing a class based reform, yet it was working class women whose roots were in industry and sincerely wanted the lives of their little sisters to improve.

The women of the NSPIE were in general more conservative and found it easier to discuss feminine trades and other compromises which supported labor market segmentation and differential access to education. Yet both groups and the two women who were responsible for the Commission recommendations were immovable in their belief that women belonged in the labor market and that public education had the responsibility to take that seriously. This belief was not widely accepted in a period when women's role in the home and in the work place was considered problematic. The events which unfolded after the Commission presented its recommendations provide historical evidence of the extent to which that was problematic.

Notes
2 US Congress, Public Resolution No. 16, 63rd Congress.
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Jacoby, R.M. 'Introduction', Microfilm Edition of the Papers of the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League) and Its Principal Leaders, p. 11.


Nestor, A. Women's Labor Leader, pp. 144-145; Henry, A. (1914) 'Chicago Conference of Trade Unionists', Life and Labor, November, p. 327, in Papers of the NWTUL.

Letter from Palmer, A.E. to O'Reilly, L., 28 October 1915, in Leonora O'Reilly Papers, Reel 10, Papers of the NWTUL.


Prosser's role in Commission appointments is alluded to in correspondence between Murtland and Nestor in Agnes Nestor papers, Reel 115, Papers of the NWTUL; see also 'Report of the Secretary', NSPIE, Proceedings Seventh Annual Meeting, pp. 251-253.


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Robins' papers, University of Florida Libraries, Microfilm Edition of the Papers of the NWTUL and its Principal Leaders, Reel 23.

23 Letter from Robins, M.D. to Miss Gillespie, 20 January 1914, MDR Papers, Reel 23.

24 Telegram noted in letter from Robins, M.D. to Dreier, M. Dated 17 January 1914, in MDR papers, Reel 23.


26 For information on Robins, M.D. see James, E., James, J. and Boyer, P. (Eds) Notable American Women, Cambridge, Belknap Press, 2, pp. 179-181.

27 Greenwood, K.L. 'A Philosophic Rationale for Vocational Education', p. 179; Members of the Commission Appointed by President Wilson were; Senator H. Smith, Georgia; Senator C.S. Page, Vermont; Representative D.N. Hughes, Georgia; Representative C.A. Fess, Ohio; J. A. Lapp, Director of Indiana Bureau of Legislative Information; Miss P.M. Marshall, Director Manhattan Trade School; Miss A. Nestor, President International Glove Workers' Union; C.A. Prosser, Secretary NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education); C.H. Winsow, special agent, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

28 Nestor, A. Woman Labor Leader, p. 151.

29 Ibid., p. 152.


33 See references in O'Reilly in Commission on Progress of Business, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, pp. 89-134; and Leonard O'Reilly papers in Microfilm Edition of The Papers of the NWTUL and Its Principal Leaders.


36 Ibid., p. 206.

37 Ibid., p. 207.

38 Ibid., p. 208.

39 Ibid., p. 209.


Congressional Politics and the Home Economics Lobby

Whereas the trade education advocates dominated decisions about vocational education for young women in commission proceedings, the home economics lobby took over when the commission recommendations were presented to Congress. The GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs), the AHEA (American Home Economics Association) and a handful of congressmen were instrumental in changing funding provisions for home economics in the Smith-Hughes Bill. This increased funding provision was a significant force in the future of vocational education for women. This chapter will focus on the changes made in the legislation and the individuals and organizations responsible for the changes.

In the commission recommendations presented to Congress by Senator Page, home economics funding was limited and commercial education was given no funding for teaching and training. When the bill went into the House of Representatives Education Committee, however, home economics funding was increased to provide for teaching and teacher training. Representative Fess, of Ohio, a member of the commission and supporter of home economics, reported that when the committee took up the matter of home economics the argument was pretty strongly pressed that we ought to recognize home economics teaching as well as home economics training. He indicated that the change had been made, "upon the representation of a group of women who knew the situation pretty well." These women were representatives of the GFWC, a conservative women's organization dedicated to a number of progressive reform causes that included the dissemination of home economics in schools.

The role of the GFWC in the legislative change was indicated in the 'Legislation' column of the March 1915 Federation Bulletin. The columnist stated that the club women who were experienced along the lines of home economics had advised them that it was a 'matter of some doubt' whether or not the proposed Smith-Hughes legislation met the needs of home economics. She went on to note that the committee was pleased to find that the proposed legislation covered, "Agricultural, Industrial and Home Economics lines in about equal proportions."
One organization that was conspicuously absent in the drive to increase home economics funding was the AHEA. The AHEA position on Smith-Hughes was discussed in the organization's publication, the American Home Economics Journal: two separate articles indicated no intention to lobby for more home economics funding. An April 1916 article attempted to define the difference between general home economics and vocational home economics. A subsequent June 1916 article by the chairman of the legislation committee indicated that from her perspective the 'original commission felt that most states have excellent provision for the training of teachers for the general phases of household economics or household art', and that the funding levels in the proposed Smith-Hughes legislation were sufficient to promote the general teaching of the subject. It seems curious that the legislative department of the home economics professional association would take a stand that was clearly counterproductive to their goals. The evidence suggests there were two possible considerations. One is that the AHEA legislative chairman did not understand the importance of funding. Furthermore, it is evident in the American Home Economics Journal issues of the period that the AHEA was preoccupied with the Smith-Lever Bill which provided for the equivalent of agricultural extension agents for home economics. The Smith-Lever legislation had the potential to affect a large number of farm people of all ages, including young farm women, and the AHEA women concentrated heavily on it.

AHEA's absence in the lobbying process did not significantly affect the outcome of the Smith-Hughes legislation, however. The GFWC was very effective in their drive to influence funding levels. The question of why the GFWC was so interested in home economics leads to a discussion of the organization's orientation and philosophy, and a comparison of the Federation with the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League).

The General Federation of Women's Clubs

The GFWC was an organization that boasted a membership of nearly one million members and forty-six state federations by 1910. The organization was an outgrowth of the Sorosis Club started by Jane Cunningham Croly in 1868 as an alternative to militant feminist organizations seeking suffrage, economic independence, and political power. Unlike the NWTUL, the organization was middle and upper middle class in its composition and unapologetic about its class identification. Articles in The General Federation Bulletin frequently referred to those women who were "less fortunate" as their little sisters. This class consciousness was not lost on the Federation's critics and it was a major issue that distinguished it from the NWTUL, which was numbered among its critics. Margaret Deveril Forbes pointed out that membership in the General Federation was so elite that "the majority of those women working class women was represented in the [1908 NWTUL] Boston Biennial." That the Federation was concerned about working women and their lives is evident in their co-sponsorship of the massive Report on Condition of Women and Children Wage-Earners in the United States, the numerous articles on women in industry included in the Federation Bulletin, and the establishment of its Committee on Industry and Women. Yet, the major emphasis on the GFWC's work was...
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The protection of women from the harmful influences and conditions of industry that destroyed health and forced young women into immoral lives. From the perspective of the GFWC, it was far more desirable for young women to go into domestic service than to pursue a career in industry. The anti-industry bias was so pronounced that the chairman of the Committee on Industry and Women for the GFWC, Rheta Childe Dorr felt obligated to defend her Committee in a 1905 Bulletin, stating:

The general impression seems to be that something ought to be done to check the migration from home to factory, shop, and office. It is not the object of this committee to oppose the idea... 

The Committee and the organization were interested in protecting women and the home from the negative influences which threatened both, and the advent of women into industry was viewed as a problem rather than an opportunity.

The women of the Federation were domestic feminists. Resolving the discussion of domestic feminism in Chapter 2, domestic feminism was predicated on the belief that women's true vocation was homemaking, but that the twentieth century domesticity extended into the neighborhood schools and municipal and federal government. Protecting the home from the harmful effects of industrialization and urbanization was the peculiar province of women:

If the natural guardians of the home pay little heed or give an uncertain warning of the dangers threatening the welfare of our home, school and national life, who shall prepare for battle against evil, in all its hideous forms

Home economics was the means by which young women would be prepared for their vocation; schools were the institutions that were destined to provide it. Home economics, as it was conceived of by Ellen Richards and her predecessors in the AHEA and GFWC, was the mechanism through which the socialization of new generations of municipal housekeepers would be accomplished, and ultimately it held the ultimate promise of uplifting civilization, through the physical, moral, and mental improvement of the race.

Apart from instilling a love of homemaking and an appreciation of municipal housekeeping, home economics also held the key to the 'servant problem'. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of domestic servants declined by approximately 25 per cent. Federation women lamented both the decline in numbers and the low skills that young domestic servants brought to their employment. As this problem was expressed by one clubwoman:

In any discussion of the standards of home life in the Middle West, a vexed and perplexing problem thrusts itself in the front - the homemaking-breeding-domestic-service problem. It is vexed because it includes, especially in the cities, to subdivide apartments in a family home for the old-fashioned home. It is perplexing because, working women are generally unwilling to accept domestic service as a means of...
gaining a living, and, most of all because the women heads of families are doing little to improve the situation.\(^{14}\)

The solution to this problem lay in home economics which promised to raise the status of domestic work by making it more "scientific", providing training for young women who would be domestic servants, especially the immigrants who "brought low standards of living into the American household" and to educate the future homemakers so they could manage their homes and servants more efficiently and ultimately spend their time on municipal housekeeping and child rearing.\(^ {15}\)

The GFWC promoted home economics in public schools with a missionary zeal throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. "Salvation through scientific investigation and cooperation", in the advancement of home economics was the goal.\(^ {16}\) "Everywhere the women have been instrumental in establishing courses and departments of domestic science in all sorts of educational institutions from the vacation school to the university," declared one midwestern clubwoman.\(^ {17}\)

"The advent of home economics into the public schools is in many cases due largely to the assistance of women's clubs," exclaimed a representative of the AHEA.\(^ {18}\) Thus the Federation's interest in the Smith-Hughes legislation and its support for the inclusion of home economics was very much in keeping with their general philosophy of women's role as housemaker, mother, and municipal housekeeper, as well as with their ambivalence about women in industry.

It is clear that many women of the Federation believed that young women's education should differ from young men's. One home economics supporter argued in the Federation bulletin that the curriculum taught in schools was inconsistent with the goals of young women's education. Rather than learning about Greek Art and Latin verbs, young women should learn about hygienic clothing and sterilized milk; rather than learning about the changing republics of Central America, they should learn about household bacteriology, personal hygiene and prevention of disease.\(^ {19}\) Unlike the NWTUL, which extended the concept of equity to curriculum offerings, the GFWC supported equity in funding but wanted young women educated for their future roles as homemakers rather than wage earners; thus it supported sex differentiated curricula.

Congressional Support

The Federation's success in raising the funding level of home economics could not have been achieved without the sympathetic help of some Congressmen who wanted to see home economics instituted in the schools as a mainstay of vocational education for young women. These legislators argued eloquently and persuasively to their Congressional colleagues that the funding of home economics would improve the status of American homes, both urban and rural, and discourage competition from women in the marketplace. Senator Page was a particularly strong advocate of home economics and linked the demise of the American family to the lack of training for young women. His remarks to the Senate introducing the Smith-Hughes legislation provide an excellent example.
of his perspective which attributed incredible results to the teaching of home economics:

The statistics show that 600,000 infants under 2 years of age annually terminate their little span of life and that 5,000,000 people are every year made ill by preventable diseases. With the knowledge which I believe this bill will give, a large percentage of these 600,000 infants could be saved and the physical standards of those who reach mature years be immeasurably raised. Without this knowledge thousands of houses will be wrecked, thousands of lives ruined, and hundreds of thousands made unhappy for no other reason than that the homemakers of our country have no adequate training in that most important of all duties, the making of a well-regulated, intelligently-conducted household... It is coming to be more and more realized that we must give to our girls a training different from that which we now provide them if crime, disease, divorce, and race suicide are not to continue to increase...  

Senator Moore, (R, Pennsylvania) and Representative Towner (R, Iowa) also felt strongly about the advent of women into the work place, especially the industrial work place. They both argued that training for home making was a much more appropriate vocational training than industrial training. Moore stated fervently to an apparently appreciative congressional audience that he 'would not permit a girl to work in a mill' if he could have his way. He continued, saying that, 'many of the girls of this country are being weaned away from the home life, which they ought to love in respect, and encouraged to go into the mills, factories, and foundries with, if you please, the purpose of competing with men...' Similarly, Representative Towner, whose wife testified on behalf of the GFWC during the Commission hearing on federal aid for vocational education, complained:

under present conditions the girls' education is more directed to the making of school-teachers or shop girls than to the making of homemakers... It will benefit the whole scheme of home-making and home-keeping if you elevate the home in the mind of the girl who thinks too much about becoming a shop girl, or a factory worker, rather than of going to the home and becoming a mother...  

In the opinion of these men, and the Congressional audience who applauded Moore's comments, women did not belong in the work place, and schools ought not to encourage their presence by offering them training. Support for teaching home economics in the schools also came from rural life advocates in Congress who viewed the exodus of young women from country to city as a threat to rural life. Their fears were realistic as subsequent 1920 census data reported in the New York Times indicated: 'larger numbers of women than of men are leaving farms in search of more lucrative fields of endeavor.' The solution to this problem lay in providing access for agricultural education that would emphasize home economics and the farm home, as well as crops in the field. Senator Moore of Pennsylvania, for example, suggested that, 'each state should induce its young women as well as young men to stay on  

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the farm', and Representative Sloan of Nebraska argued that young farm women who were trained in home economics could not only become the happy super-intendents of farm homes but would serve as an attraction to young farm men. It is significant that the majority of remarks on vocational education for young women offered during floor discussions in Congress concentrated on home economics. Moreover, after the Federation women voiced their objections to the legislation, (with no funding for home economics teaching), access to the House of Representatives Committee on Education was still available through Representative Towner. Representative Towner was a vocal advocate of home economics for young women as was Representative Fess, another member of the House Education Committee. Both were instrumental in changing the legislation.

The victory for home economics that was won through the cooperative efforts of the GFWC and the interested Congressmen was important for several reasons. It ensured the place of home economics as the main focus of vocational education for young women, and it legitimized the concept of sex differentiated educational programs. Moreover, it served as an indicator that the ideal that woman's place was in the home was still a fundamental premise and social organizer for a large group of men and women. The right for women to work was not going to go unchallenged. The conflict generated over home economics in the Smith-Hughes legislation, and the challenge to traditional definitions of women's place were as important as the victory, however. The position of the NWTUL and the NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education) represented a growing minority of women who recognized and accepted the fact that many women worked in industry and believed that options for advancement, better working conditions, and more equitable pay scales should be guaranteed by educational as well as regulatory provisions.

Offering perspective on the question of vocational education for young women offered the clearest direction that feminism took during the progressive period. The GFWC and the NWTUL shared a belief that social reform must be initiated by women and must be sex differentiated. Both wished to improve the status and conditions of women, yet they shared the conviction that social reform must be sex differentiated.

Their differences, however, were as significant as what they shared in common. The women of the trade education lobby, the NSPIE and the NWTUL, were closely aligned to working class people and their problems. They accepted the reality that many women would work for a substantial period of their lives, that without training they would not earn a decent wage, and that they could not advance from their low level position in the labor force. Economic power through better and more equitable training, higher wages, and union organization were the keys to poverty, infant mortality, and the host of social problems that concerned women. The right for women to work was a critical issue.
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The home economics enthusiasts focused on the home as the center of women's lives. They did not accept women's role in the workforce as a given but as a temporary condition following graduation from high school or in the event of unforeseen reverses. The feminine industries and domestic service were the areas for young women to turn to under those circumstances, where women would be protected from the evils of industry while preparing themselves for their roles as keepers of the home and nurturers of the family. They did not see economic independence as a significant goal, but were more concerned with supporting and uplifting the traditional sphere of women. In terms of sex segregation in education the lobbies supported distinctly separate policies of view.

The trade education lobby felt that the vocational education of young people should make no distinctions based on sex. The Committee on Women's Work of the NSPIE and the NWTUL were both very clear on this point. Cleo Murtland spoke to this point in the Journal of Home Economics, stating, "It is the very strong desire of the women engaged in the vocational education movement to keep the work for boys and girls one strong unit." The NWTUL was equally determined about equity, as indicated in their 1913 resolution which stated:

Resolved. That the National Women's Trade Union League urges upon the educational authorities to establish trade and technical and vocational industrial schools in connection with the public schools, and that the course of instruction in such schools include, besides the subjects necessary to trade training, the history of the trades, the history of the evolution of industry, and that all training in such schools be co-educational, the boy and girl studying the same subjects.

In contrast, the home economics lobby wanted a distinctly feminine vocational education for young women as befitting a woman's ultimate vocation of homemaking. With critical support from Congressmen, the home economics lobby was primarily responsible for the institutionalization of home economics in the comprehensive high school and junior high.

Notes

3 See The General Federation of Women's Clubs Magazine, for the years 1904-1915. See especially January 1905, p. 116 and July 1911, p. 540.
Congressional Politics and the Home Economics Lobby

18 U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, 64th Congress, 2nd Session, 2 January 1917, p. 764.
19 Ibid., pp. 757, 764.
21 U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, 64th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 11626.
22 Ibid., pp. 757, 764.
24 U.S. Congress, Congressional Record, 63rd Congress, 2nd Session, p. 15258.
Following three years of lobbying by vocational educators and other organizations the Smith-Hughes Bill was approved by Congress in February of 1917. Funding for teacher training and teacher salaries were provided in the three designated areas: agriculture, trade education, and home economics. Monies were dispensed on a matching fund basis and the state departments of education consequently set up programs. The home economics lobby and trade-education advocates continued to campaign for programs in their respective areas, and vocational educators reconsidered the exclusion of commercial education.

Home Economics

Fueled by interest groups outside the narrow circle of education, the campaign to promote home economics was particularly intense in the years immediately following the passage of Smith-Hughes. The American Home Economics Association was particularly instrumental in solidifying home economics' place in the curriculum. Public school curricula and the education of future homemakers had been an interest of the AHEA beginning with the first Lake Placid Conference in 1899. For reasons that are not entirely clear, they were not particularly helpful in changing the original Smith-Hughes legislation. Their legislative representative reasoned that home economics was being provided for already and they did not need funds. This position changed in the years following the passage of the legislation, and the interest in curriculum and programs became a serious cause. Working collaboratively with the National Education Association and the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, the AHEA lobbied for expanded home economics programs to service students of various ages and life circumstances. The home economics movement successfully appealed to administrators who readily incorporated it into their programs. Home economics became a standard junior high school requirement in the schools of all large city schools, and departments were established in most public high schools and many collegiate institutions by 1920. The number and percentage of institutions offering home economics courses grew.
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from 3,161 or 26 per cent in 1915 to 8,072 or 44 per cent in 1927-28, and the home economics lobby can take credit for much of the increase.\footnote{1}

Armed with the Smith-Hughes legislation and the cooperation of the NEA, the AHEA set out to ensure that no young woman would advance through the public education system without proper schooling in homemaking, and they attacked their mission with zeal. The campaign to extend home economics to school systems around the country involved three main tenets. One was the employment of a continually expanding army of home economics supervisors at the national, state, and local level. The second was the generation and dissemination of volumes of prescriptive literature and course material for prospective teachers and departments. The third was the launching of a major campaign to increase federal funding.

One important medium for selling home economics to state and local school systems was periodical literature. In a continuous stream of articles that appeared in the Journal of Home Economics, Vocational Education Magazine, and the Vocational Summary, home economics educators argued for more classes, more perfect curriculum, more supervisors, and more home economics in general. Women waged an informal advertising campaign, using their print space to create an image of success. For example, one unofficial publicist wrote in Vocational Summary that,
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administrators responsible for home economics administration in forty-six states along with a staff of four federal agents working under the direction of the Chief Federal Agent, Adelaide S. Baylor. Erecting a permanent bureaucratic structure was a highly successful strategy; the structure far outlived the fervor of the original campaign.

Federal and state agents became their own fields' publicists, writing scores of articles and bulletins, and arranging federal, state and local home economics conferences. Progress in home economics seemed to be measured by the production of these goods. For example the 1923 Year Book of the FBVE reported that there were thirty-five state conferences and forty-seven district conferences held in 1923 with one state reporting that 350 out of 256 teachers were in attendance, and that the number of publications distributed had increased. With remarkable acumen, the home economics lobby discerned the essence of bureaucratic progress; multiple staff numbers and paper output.

The drive with which the home economics lobby approached the task of creating visibility, disseminating information and lobbying for more staff was equalled only by the organization and determination to increase federal funds. At home economic agents were quick to point out, funding for the subject was far below what was actually needed. Funding for teacher salaries fell far short of needs and was considerably less than monies available for trade, industrial and agricultural education. Advocates, under the direction of the AHEA leadership, launched an aggressive drive to increase federal funding. They also enlisted a growing feminist political network, the WJCC (Women's Joint Congressional Committee) with the help of Maud Wood Park, a prominent suffrage leader and first President of the League of Women Voters. In 1921 Congressman Fess of Ohio, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Education, sponsored a bill that proposed to equalize appropriations for teacher salaries. An impressive list of organizations sponsored the legislative drive and testified before Congress, including the GFWC, the Vocational Section of the NEA, the National Society for Vocational Education, (formerly NSPIE), and the NFBPWC (National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs). As a supporter noted, it was the first time a Congressional Committee held open sessions for hearings on a bill drafted for the single purpose of promoting home economics education.

Although the Fess Bill did not pass Congress, the home economics lobby was intact. They launched a second campaign for additional funding in 1928 and with the help of Senator George Reed (D, New York) federal monies expanded on 'vocational home economics', rose from $5,774 or 19 per cent of the monies expended on trade and industrial education to $1,030,398 or 60 per cent. The home economics campaign was extraordinarily successful. Not only was funding substantially increased but the structure of courses and supervisors insured a permanent place for the subject in school programs. Their success was due to the strength of the network, political clout as well as a screening of ideas by the FBVE. The AHEA had many strong organizations that were able to act as a vehicle for their ideas. Home economics advocates had been working with departments within the NEA for years, specifically the Department of Woman's Organizations, established in 1909, and the Departments of Manual and Industrial Training. They also scheduled national meetings to coincide with the NEA.
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such as the August 1915 joint meeting of NEA and the AHEA. Through the 
GFWC they had substantial influence on the House Education Committee and 
moreover, with the growing momentum of the campaign, renewed the support of 
an even larger network of women’s organizations including the WJLC.

\[16\]

While a great deal of the success recorded in the campaign to influence public 
legislation was due to the strength and the organization of the home 
economics lobby, it was also true that they had a receptive audience in public 
education. Administrators and school boards were swayed by compelling argu-
ments: most young women would become homemakers, and homemaking was 
sufficiently complex to necessitate school training. Senator John Sharp Williams 
(R, Mississippi) reflected popular sentiments when he said:

\[17\]

We believe that at a certain stage of progress the pathway for the 
education of men and women diverges, and that there are certain things 
which after that time women ought peculiarly to learn ... Home 
education is progressively a question for the consideration and educ-
ation of women.

He articulated a perspective held by a wide segment of American society and in 
particular the middle class women, legislators and educators who welcomed 
education for the home.

Trade Education

In contrast to home economics, trade education waged an uphill battle. Theoret-
cally, trade education for women had the same potential for success enjoyed by 
home economics: although funding for young women’s trade education came 
out of the same general fund as young men’s did, there was adequate funding 
available. However, trade education for young women never generated the 
backing or enthusiasm that home economics did. In 1919, more than ten years 
after the legislation was passed, there were only 500 women teaching courses 
funded by Smith-Hughes, compared to 229 men, and 283 women teaching comparable courses in home economics. There were 426 
women compared to 2,302 men teaching trade and industrial courses and there 
were 1,463 women teaching all day home economics.

\[18\]

Staffing was a key point in the implementation process and the shortage of 
personnel who were interested in developing programs undoubtedly contributed 
to the arrested development of trade education for women. There was not even 
a federal agent in charge of trade and industrial work for women, in contrast to 
home economics which had two agents established even before Smith-Hughes was passed. Texas was the only state to put a woman in charge 
of women’s industrial work. \[19\] The problem with putting men in charge of 
women’s work, reported trade education advocates, was that the men were not 
interested in and sometimes even afraid of women’s work. "Many men end up 
that they poison practically nothing about the work for girls." \[20\] Even 
though Burdick was committed to trade education for women she was under-
staffed and apparently unable to generate enthusiasm at the state level. As a 
representative of the Federal Board, Burdick could advise state boards on the 

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matter of preparing for the education of this new industrial personnel by estab-
lishing trade and industrial classes for girls and women, but the State boards must
take the initiative in organizing such instruction . . . 

Inertia in trade education was the main concern expressed at a 1919 confer-
rence on Vocational Training for Women in Industry sponsored by the Commit-
tee on Women in Industry of the National Society for Vocational Education,
(formerly the NSPIE and the Sub-Committee on Industrial Education for
Women). The convening of this women's conference indicated that the trade
education lobby was still active and functioning and that trade education for
women had become segregated from that for men. Trade education was suffering
from the 'stigma which social prejudice has placed upon industrial work for
women', asserted the women. Thus 'wage and local communities have not taken
advantage of available resources . . . [and] only the smallest beginnings have been
made in the establishment of systematic vocational education for girls and
women in industrial fields.' The committee called for an organized response in
three key areas: the establishment of day schools for young women, the apportio-
nment of regional and state administrators for trade and industrial education,
teacher training programs that would attract good teachers, and support for
part-time education programs.

Some progress was made in trade education following this conference,
notably in the area of part-time education, but in general the trade education
lobby never succeeded in overcomeg the basic reservations and inertia that pre-
vented the movement. In spite of the efforts of women such as Anna Laylor
Burdick and Mary Van Kleeck who argued that women deserved the same
opportunities for training as young men and that industrial education should not
be confined to the traditional pursuits of women, the vast majority of states never
wrote Smith-Hughes programs directed at women's trade education. The few
that did were not successful in expanding the definition of women's industrial
work beyond the stereotype.

There are a number of factors which contributed to the failure of trade
education. One consideration was the size and makeup of the trade education
lobby. At the 1919 conference, the NSPIE's total membership was 6,000, while
the NWTUL's total membership was 4,700. Both were dwarfed by the home econom-
ics lobby: the total membership of the NWTUL never approached 20,000, while the
NHP's membership never approached the GFWC's one and a half million members.
Their diverse interests which included worker education, union organizing, protec-
tive legislation, and suffrage were reflected in their staff and membership. In con-
trast, their expertise was in political action such as lobbying for legislation. Although
they too had friends in education, they were not part of the education establish-
ment. Home economics advocates were, for example, NWTUL papers and
proceedings reveal no ties with the NEA. The NSPIE trade education supporters
were similarly limited in numbers and resources. The Sub-committee on Industri-
al Education for Women was an active organization, at least until 1921, how-
ever the committee did not increase substantially in size between 1913 and
July 1920. Moreover, with the passage of the Smith-Hughes, home economics became an
important issue in the organization's agenda for women and the influence of the
trade education lobby was subsequently eroded over time. They had been more
consistent in their views on home economics than the NWTUL, but they had
steadfastly argued for training for wage work. With the changes in funding and the
creation of state programs, they shifted emphasis toward home economics.
Suffering from a limited number of supporters, trade education did not gain visibility and was not incorporated into state level bureaucracies as was home economics.

Another possible consideration was the funding provision in Smith-Hughes. The trade education lobby on the Commission proposed a general fund for young men and young women, which was rejected by the Commission, mainly because they reasoned that access to money would be guaranteed. It is possible that a separate budget funded at the same level might have encouraged states to propose programs and appoint personnel to supervisory positions for women.

There are larger issues in the dominance of home economics over trade education that have more to do with the context in which this was all happening. The "ideology of motherhood" was an umbrella issue, of which the teaching of home economics in the schools was only a part. As Sheila Rothman notes in her book, *A Woman's Proper Place*, the coalition of women's clubs and settlement houses constituted a large and very powerful group of women and the rhetoric of the movement of educated motherhood enjoyed an almost universal appeal. The organizational structures that were brought to bear on any single legislative issue were appreciable. The domestic politics machine was set up to move the Houses of Congress, state legislatures, and local boards of education, and the trade education lobby was no match for either the political power or the ideological power of the domestic feminists.

Commercial Education

Commercial education was excluded from state aid in the Smith-Hughes legislation by mutual agreement between vocational educators and business educators. However, vocational educators revised their position on commercial education in the years following the passage of Smith-Hughes. When vocational education leaders realized that they had excluded themselves from the fastest growing field in secondary education, they reversed and began to lobby heavily the federal government and Congress to set aside state aid funds in the Smith-Hughes Act for commercial education under the purview of the FBVE. The National Society for Vocational Education, (formerly NSPIE), appointed F. G. Nichols, a business educator from Harvard, to an Executive Board position and the organization came out formally in favor of federal funding for commercial education and the FBVE newsletter, supported funding and supervision for the field. Despite these intense efforts to incorporate commercial education under the rubric of vocational education, however, the field remained independent of federal funds and federal control up through 1963 due to lack of cooperation on the part of business educators.

Notes

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FBVE (1930) Vocational Education in Home Economics, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 34. It should be noted that FBVE statistics on enrollments included students from all types of schools, specialized vocational as well as comprehensive general junior high schools and high schools that applied for Smith-Hughes funding.

FBVE (1930) Vocational Education in Home Economics, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 34.


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22 "Trade and Industrial Education," The Vocational Summary, 3, November, p. 90.
28 See The Vocational Summary, 1-4, May-July 1919; Vocational Education Magazine, Department of Commercial Education, September 1919 through January 1920.
Part 2 Conclusions

If the political maneuverings to influence federal legislation and subsequent program implementation are to be viewed as a contest between the home economics and trade education factions, then home economics was the clear winner. Home economics advocates who based their support on a more traditional prescription for women's role in society won out over the trade education lobby who supported, in effect, a reconciliation of women's work life with their homemaking role. As Geraldine Clifford points out in her essay, "Educating Women for Work," American society "refused to confront the reality that women worked outside the home."

Beyond the dialogue and the content of the decisions made, it is significant that women's groups from outside education were primarily responsible for defining federal policy. Progressive-era schooling was not unique in the fact that lay women influenced curricula. In 1854 women petitioned the Boston School Committee to introduce sewing into all the grammar schools so that needy girls would be educated. Yet the scale of the decisions to be made were new, the implications far-reaching, and the process of decision making represented a significant statement about the progressivism women's movement.

The role assumed by women in defining educational policy was the outgrowth of several decades of attempts to shape education policy and programs at all levels of schooling. Women had worked for access to decision making and the organizations they developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries advanced their political skills. They learned how to influence decisions at the local, state and national levels and they carefully maneuvered their way into the halls of public power. Ultimately they were the architects responsible for the structure of women's vocational training. Yet, policy and prescription do not stand alone. In education they are put to serious tests when students begin to interact with them.

Note
Part 3
Curricular Programs and Practice
Part 3 Introduction – Curricular Programs and Practice

The high school in Middletown boasted a vocational program for its young women that mirrored programs all over the United States; home economics, which sometimes included dressmaking and millinery, and commercial education were the mainstays. Whereas economics, ideology, prejudice, and feminist politics held sway over decisions about the scope, sequence, and content of federally funded programs, another complex of factors influenced course enrollments and what was actually taught in classes.

School administrators perceived as a mandate for educational change, the burgeoning home economics bureaucracy created a curriculum sufficiently differentiated to meet all students' future homemaking needs and immigrant families', black families', and Hispanic families' vocational needs. Differentiated curriculum was an unself-conscious policy that was designed to provide students with the education appropriate to their backgrounds and perceived life chances. It was explicitly reproductive of social class systems and economic relations. As revisionist historians have pointed out however, it was difficult to implement, and thus not really successful.

For some older female students, afternoon and evening courses were a good thing, for some young black women who were required to take home economics and in particular to study subjects such as laundering, they were a travesty. In general the home economics empire was not able to provide the course structures they envisioned, and they never could inspire enough generations of students to assume the mantle of municipal housekeeping.

A rapidly-expanding and ethnically-diverse student population looked to schools for the credentials or specific skills that would lead to better jobs than their parents had, parents wanted that for their children as well. This vision was shared by many working class parents who were willing to forgo the wages of a daughter while she pursued education for office work, teaching, or more rarely, dressmaking and millinery.

Young women went to school for vocational purposes; it literally paid off in the job market. Thus they voted with their feet about the value of the courses. The choices would seem to be uncomplicated; you could go to work in a factory, laundry, or in domestic service after you reached 14 years of age, or you could go on to school in hopes of getting a job that had higher status and possibly higher pay. Basic English speaking skills, reading, writing, simple arithmetic...
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computation, and the ability to fit in and emulate the social codes of the workplace were fundamental skills. Yet decisions about education and vocation were not as uncomplicated and seamless as they might appear. Students' race, parents' occupation, ethnicity, geographic location, abilities interracted with gender con- straints and job market possibilities to create individual meanings and a patch-
work of different patterns. Many young black women, for example, sought training in dressmaking as an alternative to the less desirable domestic service in private homes, whereas young white Irish women by virtue of family back-
grounds were drawn to domestic service in 'good homes'. The process of decision making can be characterized as one of negotiation. Given women's love affair with motherhood, however one construes that, the reality of women's lives that served as role models for the next generation; the constraints of a segmented labor market that was increasingly accommodating to women; family backgrounds that heavily influenced choice; and the advent of a popular feminine culture that grew up around the image of the working girl; young women accommodated, resisted, and negotiated their way through deci-
sions about work and family. What is surprising about the period is that most
young women looked forward to work and many saw education as a means to
that end.

There are two principal points that emerge in this section. First, there were
different differences between what vocational educators and interest groups in-
tended for young women in schools and what young women actually pursued. Vast numbers of students flocked to commercial education classes despite warn-
ings from educators that they could not find jobs, and elective home economics classes were effectively boycotted. Economic opportunities, or the lack of them, as well as students' and parents' aspirations were more powerful determinants of vocational course enrollments than prescriptive advice from educators. Second, educators and parents were not in accord about the purposes of secondary vocational training for young women. They apparently agreed that vocational education should be age appropriate according to their contemporary definitions. But parents and students, many of whom were native-born of 'foreign paren-
tage', wanted education for white collar work in the short run, and enhanced social and economic standing in the long run. Programs that proposed to educate their daughters for domestic service or blue collar work in factories were unacceptable. Educators, on the other hand, were much more inclined to accept social and economic hierarchies as givens, and they proposed programs based on those assumptions. Working class children were to be educated for blue collar work, according to the prescriptions, because that was where they were most likely to end up. These differences in perspective were significant because they resulted in educators offering programs that young women and their parents were not interested in and would not support, on one hand, and slighting other programs that were potentially rewarding on the other hand.

Notes

Curricular Programs and Practice


Home economics is an excellent example of a vocational program that held little interest for many students and parents but was strongly supported by educators and interest groups. With the help of Smith-Hughes funding, home economics educators built an elaborate curriculum structure and lobbied successfully for supervisory positions in state departments of education and local school districts. They became another fresh story in the bureaucratic 'superstructure' that Robert and Helen Lynd described in *Middletown* that consisted of differentiated programs administered by specialists. ¹ In spite of the funds and human energy expended, elective home economics courses attracted a limited number of students and enthused few parents. The more permanent legacy was the requisite home economics course taken as part of the junior high school or middle school curriculum.

**Differential Curriculum**

The practice of adapting vocational curricula to the needs of students of different ages, intellectual capacities and vocational goals was an ideal that home economics educators aspired to. ² When the Smith-Hughes legislation was passed by Congress, home economics educators enthusiastically undertook the task of designing programs to meet the needs of all women. The curriculum structure was erected and vocational educators praised the efforts. There were full-time, part-time, continuation, and evening courses in addition to special programs for blacks, Hispanics, rural women and school drop-outs. The results of these programs were mixed. Sometimes they served a population well, as was generally true with evening courses for women, and sometimes they resulted in discrimination as seemed to be the case with blacks. In general, however, the structure and the courses did not live up to the expectations of their designers. Students in school systems that availed themselves of Smith-Hughes funding attained courses that were not always available to them. The first category was all-day schools where students could elect a four-year, full-time course. When these courses were funded by Smith-Hughes, it was mandated that home economics work occupy 50 per cent of the students' time. ³ Other students who did not want to pursue home economics full-time could elect a course that would occupy one to five periods per week. The second category established was part-time schools 'intended to reach girls and women, either in the wage-earning
field or at home, who cannot attend school five days of the week. According to Smith-Hughes guidelines, part-time programs were of three varieties: (1) where all the class time was devoted to homemaking; (2) where 50 per cent or more, but not all the time, was devoted to homemaking; and (3) where continuation schools were to promote the civic and vocational intelligence of young women who have left school. Continuation schools frequently included home economics in their curriculums in amounts that varied from one-fourth to one-third of the time.

The third type of vocational home economics school, known as the evening school, is designed to reach the homemaker and enable her to enlarge her efficiency in that occupation. The evening school, which was often held in the afternoon to accommodate the schedules of homemakers, generally consisted of short courses in food preparation, sewing and millinery.

Age, marital state, and status in school were not the only criteria for a differentiated curriculum: intellectual ability, ethnicity, urban-rural differences, and race were considerations as well. Home economics educators tended to agree that all young women needed 'a well rounded-out vocational training', and they occasionally cited research to back up the claim that middle class women had as much to profit from home economics as did working class children. For example, a 1919 FBVE (Federal Board for Vocational Education) bulletin on home economics stated that according to a recent investigation, 'the proportion of undernourished children in well-to-do families is appallingly large'.

Despite the claim that all young women needed home economics, however, home economics educators also argued that some young women needed more exposure to home economics than others and that courses should be adapted to the needs of the students. David Snedden suggested in a 1928 *Journal of Home Economics* that 'girls of less than median intelligence will probably be rearing two thirds of the children of 1940-1970 and thus the bulk of all money put into home economics should be used to serve... girls of this type'. There is little evidence that Snedden's suggestions were acted on, however there is evidence that adaptations were made based on the perceived needs of different groups. Immigrants, blacks and rural women were among the young women singled out for special treatment that varied according to what educators in different geographical regions thought they needed. First and second generation immigrants were a significant target population: home economics would Americanize young immigrant women and they in turn would Americanize their families. Henrietta Calvin, a USBE (United States Bureau of Education) Home Economics Educator, succinctly described the relationship between home economics and immigrant education in a 1917 USBE publication:

"Coast cities with their large per cent of foreign-born, adult population, have peculiar burdens and responsibilities in transforming this great cosmopolitan group into an intelligent American citizenship. Such transformation can not be hastened unless the home life of the foreign workman can be touched by American ideas of good living, sanitary dwellings, liberal education opportunities, and social responsibilities. In the accomplishment of all these changes, there is no more potent means than a strongly organized, well-supported department of home economics."

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To what extent was rhetoric and informal policy translated into curriculum practice? Were young immigrant women and other ethnic groups tracked into home economics classes? Evidence is sketchy because data were not published on special home economics programs. Yet, anecdotal reports suggest that some programs were established for the specific benefit of ethnic groups and young women. A Massachusetts supervisor of home economics reported in The Vocational Summary that home economics and English had been combined in some of their evening programs to produce a successful Americanization program. These programs were designed to keep or attract young women in schools, and once there, to teach them English while instructing them in practical concerns such as personal hygiene, child care (no births before marriage), and basic cooking on a budget.

Home economics for Americanization has been sharply criticized by later day historians as social control at its most severe. It is evident from the rhetoric that young immigrant women who were not expected to distinguish themselves academically were expected to profit more from home economics than other students. Language was a severe economic handicap for young immigrant women and home economics classes may have served to teach English and explain customs in a relatively non-threatening environment using familiar tools. Moreover, as Seller points out in her history of immigrant women, home economics courses may have made school bearable for some young women whose English language skills made sitting through a more academic class tedious.

Training young women for domestic service was an important dimension of differentiated programs for ethnic groups. Twenty-one young Spanish-speaking women were released from their employment as 'maids' for part-time instruction in housekeeping, cleaning, cooking, and food service serving in an Arizona program which was deemed highly successful in training for wage earning and household service.

This special treatment accorded to young minority women meant that they were provided with watered-down academic work, and heavy doses of practical domestic science. Like Americanization programs, the incidence of these special programs for minority women is difficult to calculate; however, a Missouri thesis (completed in 1932 at the University of Southern California) reported that between 25 and 50 per cent of young Mexican-American women in San Fernando Valley high schools were enrolled in special classes that were light on academics and heavy on home economics in preparation for homemaking and household service.

Two other groups who were accorded special consideration were black women and rural women. Much like some of their working class white sisters,
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young black women experienced some subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to consider domestic service as their future occupation. Mary Church Terrell of the National Association of Colored Women and other women associated with the club movement supported the teaching of domestic science. She wrote:

... it is the duty of every wage-earning colored woman to become thoroughly proficient in whatever work she engages, so that she may render the best service of which she is capable ... one club, all over the country are being asked to establish schools of domestic science ...

The question of home economics for young black women is complicated by the fact that blacks were classified as a separate group and provided with separate educational facilities by virtue of legalized racial segregation. Very few young black women attended high school in the Progressive Era. In the year before Smith-Hughes was passed, there were only 47 public high schools in the rural south, and a total of 936 public high schools in the country, an enrollment of 195,800 black students, almost two-thirds of whom were in high schools for negroes. By 1932, this had increased to more than 1,300, yet high school attendance for blacks was still considerably below that of whites. The rate for young white women, most black women went to secondary schools than their brothers. The 1926-28 Biennial Survey of Education reported that 'among blacks there were 82,074 girls and 50,255 boys enrolled in all public high schools'. The payoff of secondary school was great: many young women went into teaching with one or two years of high school education.

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It was difficult to track students into home economics courses without adequate facilities and material resources. In 1923, six years after Smith-Hughes had been passed, only seventeen states reported having 'vocational classes in home economics for negroes', and fourteen reported teacher training facilities.

Several of the federally funded teacher training facilities and all day home economics programs were concentrated in southern states. Louisiana and Texas had 11 of the 28 all day programs. Alabama had an unusually large number of all day home economics programs for black girls alone: 23 of the 28 all day schools were in the state.

The figures suggest that there was outright neglect of programs in general, although some states provided course work and programs.

In addition to a general lack of facilities for home economics, those provided in many communities were inadequate. A survey of Wilmington, Delaware schools found the 'colored schools' to have poor home economics facilities: 'One room in a poor basement is all the provisions made for teaching cooking to colored girls', and 'there is only one room in the building in which sewing is taught. To prevent this from taking place, a sewing machine was placed in the room, and the girls were given a list of articles to make'. During the Progressive Era black women's clubs lobbied for improved home economics courses and equipment for the junior and senior high schools, however they were not very successful.

Potentially more significant than the discriminatory provisions of legislation were nongovernment requirements and standards. A 1931 Master's thesis from Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee reported that in sixty-six schools surveyed...

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The 'Girl Question' in Education in ten southern states, 85 per cent 'make home economics a required subject'.

For example, in Memphis, Tennessee, girls who attended Kortrecht High School (where conditions in the home economics rooms were reported to be deplorable), were required to take home economics whereas all courses for white girls in the high school level were elective.

Blacks were more frequently required to take home economics than their white counterparts, and in some instances they were encouraged to take special courses to train them for domestic service. Home economics was required for blacks in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and when 'the sewing classes were filled and cutting and laundry classes were begging', the School Board decreed that every girl who failed to give the required amount of time to cooking, sewing and laundry would be dismissed. Laundry courses which led to hard menial labor were not sought after by young women who were sent to schools because parents wanted them to escape the drudgery of their own lives; none the less, some schools insisted that young black women take the courses. In view of their presumed future employment as domestic servants.

In an unusual program involving local industry, the 1915 Roanoke, Virginia Board of Education 'turned over to the Roanoke Gas School 87 school children for instruction . . .,' and the community was reported to be very pleased with the resultant 'increased efficiency and contentment of houseworkers'. The Armstrong Manual Training School in the District of Columbia was noted for its home economics curriculum which prepared young women for home duties and 'the service'. Charleston, South Carolina was reported to have an excellent manual training school for 'colored girls' that provided training in cookery, sewing, and laundry work.

This curricular differentiation did not end with high school home economics programs. According to Fritchner's doctoral research, it even extended to the land-grant schools chosen to train home economics teachers. These schools were 'to prepare blacks for their vocational station as cooks, housekeepers, and serv-

It is clear from reports and surveys of home economics that there were many schools in the south that attempted to track young black women into domestic service and menial labor through home economics requirements and differentiated curricula. Yet it should not be assumed that young black women were altogether victims of a racist system. There is evidence of both criticism and resistance. W.E.B. DuBois was an outspoken critic of the limited aims of industrial education for blacks and he clashed openly with Booker T. Washington. In an article about 'Education and Work' DuBois criticized the lauding of black women's success in the household arts, noting that it should be attributed to their perseverance and general perspective and not effective teaching. Another publisher-critic of industrial education questioned the smallness of teaching objectives like laundering, something they had been making their living at for many years.

More subtle forms of resistance were noted as well. Walter Higginbotham described blacks as 'indifferent' or even 'opposed' to industrial education. H.M. Long, writing about secondary education for blacks in North Carolina, observed that teachers do not emphasize the value of such subjects as agriculture, manual arts, and home economics. He went on to say:

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This may appear strange, but these students indicated that these subjects are designed, at least in part, for the purpose of keeping them in their present economic and social condition. A similar feeling seems to be prevalent among many of the principals and teachers in secondary schools for Negroes.

It seems fairly clear that some young black women were being trained for domestic service. This covert tracking took them out of academic classes and subjected them to a strong message about their economic place in society. While the opportunity to learn domestic skills in high schools might have been afforded by a home economics course, like other sex segregated vocational training, there was an inherent collusion with the labor market to keep young black women at the bottom. It is important to point out however, that the percentage of young black women attending day high schools who were enrolled in federally-funded, day, home economics courses was less than that of young white women after fifteen years of federal funding: 9 per cent of young black women as compared to 14.5 per cent of white women. The significance of these statistics is not entirely clear. Not all schools offered home economics; some programs were funded by the state. Some programs for domestic service could be classified as industrial education and many programs were for junior high school level. Nevertheless, the enrollment statistics suggest that, despite the requirements in southern states, the majority of young black women in public high schools were not being successfully tracked into home economics classes.

Rural women were another group singled out for special attention. As indicated earlier, home economics educators and rural life supporters agreed that rural women were leaving the farm in greater numbers than young men, and that the structure of farm life depended on attracting young women to rural life. Theoretically, home economics was the key to keeping young women down on the farm and preparing them for a rich and happy life. Thus an important goal of the home economics campaign was to bring home economics into rural high schools. Rural educators were concerned about the quality of farm homes and where the facilities available for home economics were inadequate at best. Rural equality of educational opportunity compared to urban was an important issue for rural educators and that applied to home economics. Home economics courses in rural schools needed to contain basic sewing and cooking and that was not adequate for the rural woman's education. As a critic described it, 'Homemaking at present means for most of our girls in most of our schools mainly making garments out of cloth and pastries out of flour'.

The reality of life on a farm argued for a different curriculum. A 1915 study of farm homes in Michigan showed that 80 per cent of the living expenditures, as distinct from the expenses associated with producing the principal product on the farm, were met by cash earnings of farm wives. Rural women were involved in raising poultry, bee keeping, fruit and vegetable gardening and many other jobs associated with the farm economy. A home economics course that was simply sewing and cooking would not have met their needs. Miles County Schools in Minnesota were experimenting with this curriculum. Their curriculum included agriculture, business forms and law, and farm accounts for all first-year students in their country high school, in addition to teaching sewing and cooking to young women.
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While home economics educators may have been reluctant to include an agricultural emphasis in their course work, some agricultural educators actively discouraged young women from pursuing their farming interests. In an article entitled, "Who Should Take Vocational Agriculture?" published in Vocational Education, one critic argued that young women in agricultural courses—six per cent of students in day agricultural schools were young women—were taking up space and money that would be better used for young men and that young women really weren't interested in agriculture anyway. The point is that rural women might have profited from a broader curriculum that was more congruent with their potential roles, but gender prescriptions and lack of resources limited the rural home economics curriculum to cooking and sewing. A second important point is that many women in home economics in rural schools approximated those of urban schools: a survey of rural schools in New York State found that 26.5 per cent of young women in full schools in communities with a population under 4,500 were enrolled in home economics. This meant that most young women in rural schools were not taking home economics, and although it certainly may be argued that home economics was not offered in secondary schools in rural schools, the evidence suggests that young women wanted preparation for paid employment. Like their sisters in urban areas, 65 per cent were looking toward teaching, office work, or nursing. The critical question having to do with home economics and the process of differentiation is, how successful was it? Were special populations shunted off into home economics courses that led to domestic service and was curriculum shaped to suit the needs of individual populations? The answer to these is a qualified yes.

Full-time day high schools were not easily diverted from their general purpose. Graduates requirements dictated minimal standards and even students in the full-time, vocational, home-making programs were only allowed to take home-making courses one-half of their academic load if they were funded by federal monies. Thus full-time classes in home economics were not popular with students. In California, for example, when Maude Murchie ambitiously promoted differentiated home economics and compulsory home economics requirements, 0.4 per cent of full-time day high school students in 1930 (639 young women) were enrolled in all day classes in home economics. These all day classes required a substantial time commitment: students had to elect the course for not less than a full year and devote one-half of all their course work to it. This was impractical from the standpoint of young women who were going on to college, unless they were going into home economics teaching. Texas was another state that had a very ambitious home economics program; it housed the third highest enrollment of full-time, home economics students in the United States—79 per cent of their full-time, female, high school population—yet it is evident that the vast majority of young women were not choosing full-time home economics. If teaching young women into full-time home economics courses for their potential role in domestic service and mothers was the objective, it worked to a very limited extent in full-time day high schools.

Clearly the goal of home economics administrators to provide differentiated curriculum to all students based on their vocational destiny, ethnicity, and other characteristics was not a success. These were instances, particularly involving
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immigrants and blacks, where young women were unduly encouraged or even compelled to take domestic science when other coursework might have served them better. But in general the evidence suggests that differentiated curricula were an unwieldy vision and that most students opted not to take home economics.

Curriculum Content

The course of curriculum was a significant topic for home economics educators because it was the medium for reforming society. Homemaking ideals were to be translated into concrete curricula for schools. Curriculum innovations were designed and promoted to reflect those ideals. These included home projects, home management (classes taught in simulated homes called cottages), child care and child development classes that sometimes involved the temporary adoption of children by classes or schools, and the integration of academic subjects with home economics. The four-year domestic science course for Brookline High School in Brookline, Massachusetts incorporated science into home economics to produce a course that was both rigorous and relevant. Few year topics are presented below to illustrate both the detail and breadth in a curriculum considered ideal by the USBE.

First Year -

Chemistry and the physics of heat -
1. Study of flames.
2. Thermometers.
3. Boiling point.
4. Freezing point.
5. Heat: Production, sources, natural, effects, transference, measure.
7. Hydrogen; synthesis of water.
8. Study of air and its principal gases.
10. The common chemical elements present in food compounds.
11. Synthetic, typical acid, and base.
12. Acids, bases, and salts in connection with food works.
13. Some organic compounds.
14. Five food essentials.

Food and Its Preparation -
1. Study of kitchen equipment.
2. Carbohydrates. Sugar cookery.

The Brookline domestic science syllabus also includes a list of study topics suggested for the economics class, and for English themes. Topics suggested for economics included the consumption of wealth, food and its relation to labor power, the housing of the poor and its relation to good citizenship, and municipal sanitary regulations. Home economics teachers and administrators were encouraged to correlate mathematics, art, and science courses with home
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Economics, and vocational education publications were replete with glowing examples of this modern approach. Plainfield High School in Plainfield, New Jersey offered a course in household economics wherein the students studied house-     building, and the advantage of buying in quantity.46 Young women at West Technical High School in Cleveland, Ohio studied household chemistry along with cooking; and students at Los Angeles High School studied chemistry for girls, a course that included 'what we breathe...what we drink...food adulterants, (and)...soaps and cleansing agents.'47 The NEA's (National Education Association) Department of Science Instruction devised an afternoon to topics such as 'Special Science for Girls in Rural Schools', 'Applied Science as the Basis of the Girl's Education' and 'General Science for the First Year of High School', in their 1915 annual meeting.48

The FBVE reported in a bulletin issued in 1930 that 'Related science is now a definite part of the all day vocational program in practically all of the States' and they subsequently issued a Bulletin entitled 'The Teaching of Science Related to the Home' to encourage the adoption of the process.49 A superficial view of these publications would lead one to believe that the drive to adapt science courses to the needs of young women was successful and that indeed the general campaign to influence young women's general education was entirely successful, however, a more careful look at the evidence provides a different perspective.

The adoption of 'innovative' curricular strategies such as cottages, home management courses, child development, home project methods, and feminized science courses was generally confined to vocational homemaking curricula in all day schools. These curricula were designed for young women who were 'vitally interested' in becoming 'intelligent and efficient' homemakers and they generally required two to four years of full-time work in which they had to devote 50 per cent of their time to home economics subjects.50 In 1938 there were 49,801 female students enrolled in all day vocational home economics schools as compared to 1,179,035 female students who were enrolled in regular high schools. This means that approximately 4 per cent of young women enrolled in all day vocational home economics schools were in general science courses. Furthermore, students in day high schools who took home economics courses were enrolled in general elective courses where the sheer limitation of time prevented thorough course development.

A 1936 survey of the senior high curriculum by George Counts provides valuable information about home economics curricula. In his survey of home economics in fifteen cities around the country, Counts discovered that only 4.5 per cent of total class time was devoted to the subject and that the home economics program is comprised almost exclusively of two subjects - cooking and sewing. An average of 30.1 per cent of all home economics time was devoted to cooking and 30.7 per cent to sewing. Household chemistry was accorded 1.3 per cent of available home economics time. Home nursing, 0.4 per cent; and millinery, 0.9 per cent. Counts noted that home management, which had 31 per cent of the total time devoted to it, was sometimes merged with cooking and that the actual percentage of total school time might be even higher. However, it is unlikely that it was taught frequently enough to alter the basic statistics.51 This fact was not lost on home economics educators who frequently complained that, 'homemaking programs in many instances are nothing more than cooking and sewing.'
Home Economics: A 'Definitely Womanly Curriculum' sewing repeated, year after year, almost without change, to the same people. This criticism emerged when Ellen Richards proposed an alternative home economics curriculum which concentrated heavily on environmental sciences; the objection was repeated throughout the first thirty years of the century.

It seems evident that home economics was essentially a failure in terms of its own curriculum goals. Ideal curriculum based on a progression of content such as Brookline High School's course was rare. Even more important, students were not attracted to day high school courses. The Biennial Survey of Education for 1926-1928 reported that 16.5 per cent of the students in 14,725 public high schools were enrolled in home economics for 1927-1928; of these, approximately 18 per cent were required to take the course. As Counts observed in his survey of high schools, "The girls who were supposed to rejoice at the opportunity of being equipped for the responsibilities of the home and motherhood have been interested in other things."

Low enrollments disturbed home economics advocates who frequently commented on it in publications. A USBE survey of Winchester, Massachusetts schools reported that "Winchester has a home economics curriculum and the girls are not attracted to it."

Similarly the principal of Girls Commercial High School in Brooklyn, New York, observed:

"We must acknowledge that our homemaking courses do not hold the girls in school; and that they are entirely extraneous to the commercial work and are only of mild interest to the girl who gets enough practical domestic science at home and knows that she will always buy her clothes ready-made."

The majority of female students in day high schools were not electing home economics, and home economics educators wanted to know why. A Master's candidate at Iowa State reported in her 1932 thesis that her survey of 59 senior high school students revealed that students were not interested in the subject matter. They wanted to meet college entrance requirements, they felt that they could learn the same things at home; they needed to prepare for employment.

Another study reported by Annie Dyer of Teachers College, Columbia University found similar reasons for young women avoiding home economics; scheduling difficulties, college entrance requirements to meet, and the work was already taken in junior high. A survey of Memphis, Tennessee schools found that "The majority of girls in the Vocational High School desire to major in some subjects which will enable them to earn a livelihood immediately upon leaving school; hence they flock into the commercial classes. This makes it impossible to elect anything but the briefest courses in home economics."

Young women went to high school because they wanted to prepare for future employment and home economics did not prepare for desirable paid work.

Some school systems responded to the lack of interest or resistance by proposing compulsory home economics requirements. Counts found in his survey of fifteen high schools that "those in charge of high schools are of the opinion that the great majority of girls sooner or later will feel the need for training ... and many will not enroll in the courses unless they are prescribed."

Home economics specialists, supervisors and city administrators found that 18 per cent of the representative communities required a course in home economics but were not certain that the great majority of girls would take the course. Counts concluded that if there were compulsory courses in home economics, they would not be popular with students and would not meet the needs of those who find them useful. He recommended that home economics be offered as an elective course and that the curriculum be modified to meet the needs of students who are interested in it.
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home economics and Maudie Murchie's survey of 355 high schools in California reported that 27.6 per cent required home economics for graduation. In spite of efforts on the part of some home economics educators to make home economics compulsory at the junior high school level, it never became generally accepted practice. Since home economics was required in 85 per cent of all junior high schools, students could and did argue that they had already had a course. Parents looked on the high school as an investment; thus they did not pressure school districts to require home economics. Some may have even opposed a home economics requirement as in the Nebraska Supreme court case involving a sixth grader where the court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and her father, stating that she did not have to take home economics.

As unsuccessful as home economics was in appealing to young women in public, day high schools, it was very successful in appealing to older women who could attend evening and part-time schools; enrollments in federally aided home economics courses in evening schools far exceeded enrollments in day classes. In 1929 for example, there were 61,986 students in day classes as compared to 93,450 students in evening schools.

Evening school classes held in the afternoon were successful for three possible reasons. The first is that the older students who were often homemakers probably appreciated the chance to get out and socialize. A short course in sewing or millinery was easily worked into the day's schedule because evening classes were often held in the afternoon. The second is that the evening classes, which consisted mainly of sewing, millinery and cooking, (in spite of popular belief) provided some women with resources they couldn't provide for themselves: sewing machines to make clothes for their families and hat frames and materials to make their own hats. The third reason these classes were successful, as compared with day classes, is that they required a low expenditure of time and energy and were voluntary; women could come and go at their leisure and they only lasted a few weeks. Home economics in public, day high schools required a longer commitment than evening classes and the time spent in home economics was time taken away from other academic or vocational classes, such as typing or shorthand.

Conclusions

The relatively low enrollments in home economics in day high schools, which persisted over time, represent a significant statement about the meaning of high school to young women in the years 1900-1930. High school was an investment in time and money and for many students it was essentially vocational in purpose. Most young women in high school were there because they expected to use their education, either to get a job when they left school, or to enter college; for the majority of young women who went to high school, homemaking was something to be studied in junior high, or learned at home; it was not relevant to high school goals. This generalization applied to all women, including black women, immigrant women, and rural women who could afford high school.

Rhetoric about the importance of home economics to the salvation of American families continued throughout the decade of the twenties in spite of the
obvious evidence that increased home economics had no bearing on the divorce rate and the stability of family life. High school administrators were receptive to home economics classes and departments, and some favored compulsory home economics, but they were generally unwilling to mandate home economics in high schools and enrollments remained low. Other evidence suggested that social welfare and social justice objectives for home economics were not achieved. Southern society and southern future housekeepers remained static. There were some exemplary home economics programs that combined child development and correlated sciences courses, and model homes and home projects, but the high school home economics curriculum remained generally static and unchanging, focusing on plain sewing and cooking.

Successes scored by the home economics education movement include building a substantial federal and state bureaucracy, increasing federal funds, and ensuring home economics a place in the high school curriculum which has endured over time. Home economics may have been an appealing addition to schools for adults who took evening school classes and the young women who wanted to escape from academic classes. Ultimately, however, the home economics education movement in the Progressive Era failed to achieve its stated goals and resulted in a remarkable expenditure of public funds.

What is difficult to assess is the influence of the myth of domesticity on young women's aspirations. Home economics in the curriculum reminded students of women's place in the economic and social order.

Notes
2 Differentiated curriculum was an idea that was popularized during the Progressive Era. Simply stated it meant that schools were to develop multiple curricula to meet the diverse needs of students. Intellectually gifted students, the hand minded, those who needed to work following graduation, and women were to enroll in programs tailored to their vocational destiny. D. Tyack described the Progressive Era view of an efficient school as one that would "measure and account for every child, providing different opportunities depending on his or her needs." See Tyack, D. (1974) The One Best System, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, pp. 190-191.
4 Ibid.
8 OBE (1917) The Public School System of San Francisco California, Bulletin No. 46, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 608. See also COE.
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Vocational Education Magazine, edited by E. S. Snedden is a good source because home economics supervisors were recruited to write monthly reports about their programs. See Smith, W.C. and Springsteed, C.B. (1922) 'Homemaking Needs for the Foreign Born Based Upon Location and Nationality', Vocational Education Magazine, 1, No. 5, November, pp. 205


(1923) 'Notes, Home Economics Education', The Vocational Summary, 3, No. 5, September, p. 75.

Murry, L. [1924] 'Training of Mexican Women in Household Service', Vocational Education Magazine, 3, No. 12, December, pp. 120-121; for suggested course content see Ellis, P.I. Americanization Through Homemaking, pp. 242-246.


22 Vaughn, K.B. (1920) 'Some Colored Schools of the South', November, p. 588.

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28 Works, J.A. (1922) The Place and Importance of Short Courses in Agricultural Work, no. 1, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 70.

29 Percentage and number of students enrolled in home economics, grades eight to twelve:

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30 FBVE Bulletin No. 151, pp. 124.


33 Works, J.A. (1922) The Place and Importance of Short Courses in Agricultural Work, no. 1, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 70.

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50 FBVE, Home Economic Administration and Organization, pp. 16-18.
56 Counts, G.S. The Senior High School Curriculum, p. 105.
57 USOE (1924) Survey of the Schools of Winchester, Massachusetts, Washington, DC, GPO, pp. 110-111.
62 Counts, G.S. The Senior High School Curriculum, p. 105.
64 (1914) The Northwestern Reporter, 26, 16 December to 2 February 1914, St. Paul, West Publishing Company, pp. 1057-1064; Porter, P. wrote substantial material on Domestic Science in Queensland schools during the same period, see Porter, P. (1918) The State, the Family and Education in Queensland, unpublished paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, 15-16 November, Brisbane, passim.
Trade education for young women was a profound disappointment to the women of the NWTUL (National Women's Trade Union League) and the NSPIE (National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education). Trade education did not succeed in attracting students the way commercial education did, and it did not engage the attention of administrators and vocational educators the way home economics did. Moreover, it was never adopted into the curricula of comprehensive secondary schools, as both home economics and commercial education were.

And yet, theoretically, trade education seemed to hold great promise for young women. The dropout rate for young women was high: 50 per cent of all students left school before age fifteen according to Thorndike's 1906 study. Even though the retention rate for young women in high school surpassed that of young men, more than half of all girls dropped out before age sixteen. A 1915 study of students in Hartford, Indiana schools produced similar statistics: 60 per cent of the girls dropped out of school by age fifteen. Those who left before they entered high school were likely to end up in unskilled labor, either in domestic service or manufacturing. A study of 'The Working Children of Philadelphia', conducted in 1921 confirmed the fears of progressive-era feminists and reformers: of the 3,312 children surveyed, two-thirds were young women, most of whom were in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. Moreover, in 1920, 25.8 per cent of the female non-agricultural work force was in manufacturing and mechanical industries, exceeded only by domestic and personal service at 29.04 per cent. Students and parents had good reasons to support and participate in trade training programs and administrators who might have increased high school enrollments had incentives as well. However, both the number of programs offered and student enrollments remained low.

The failure of trade education is the primary focus of this chapter, and there are three issues of particular significance treated herein. The first is the influence of progressive-era attitudes toward women's work in industry on the content of trade education programs, the courses which were offered were basically restricted to feminine industries. The second issue has to do with the economics of trade training: did courses in the needle trades lead to better jobs and advancement? The third issue is the response of parents to trade education and what that suggested about their expectations of schooling.
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The Evidence of Failure

Trade education's failure is conspicuously evident in enrollment statistics for high schools. There were 9,575 female students enrolled in all day trade education programs and courses in 1930 which amounted to less than 1 per cent of all female public high school students. The total enrollment for female students in evening, part-time, and all day trade and industrial courses, exclusive of continuation, was 28,089 which was less than 2 per cent of the total enrollment of young women in high school. These figures stand in sharp contrast to commercial education which enrolled 286,984 female students in 1924 and was described in the 1929 Federal Board for Vocational Education Report as a subject which enrolled 'more pupils than all other types of vocational preparatory courses combined'.

Trade education did not attract students and a major problem in attracting students was the curriculum.

Trade Education Curriculum

Trade training curricula in both trade schools and regular high schools resembled home economics. Sewing and cooking, which often included dressmaking and millinery were the essential ingredients in both home economics courses and trade training courses. Moreover, the designations, industrial education, trade education, and vocational home economics frequently referred to courses and programs that were the same. For example, the stated purpose of The High School of Practical Arts in Boston was 'to prepare pupils in the subjects that underlie the practical arts of the household and to provide definite industrial training for those who wish to enter some skilled trade'. The courses offered by this school were: household science, millinery, dressmaking, sewing, and cooking.

The overlap between homemaking skills and trade skills resulted from conflicting expectations. As discussed in Chapter 5, many people, including an influential group of women in the NSPIE, believed that trade training for women should concentrate on, 'those industries which are most closely allied to the home'. Studies conducted in Massachusetts on trade school programs for girls similarly concluded that the most desirable trades for young women to consider were dressmaking and millinery, both in terms of opportunities for advancement and the self influence upon the worker in preparing for right living and spending. Machine operating was a third choice in the Massachusetts recommendations, along with a one- or two-year course in plain sewing.

Many trade education advocates subscribed to the concept of dual roles, that is training women in income producing trades that would apply to homemaking as well. The effectiveness of the principle in influencing trade education is evident in the predominance of dressmaking, millinery, and power sewing in programs for young women. These subjects constituted the core program in all but one of the six day trade and vocational schools for young women in New York City, and they dominated the trade curricula of both well known schools as the Boston, Worcester, Philadelphia, and Minneapolis trade and vocational schools for girls. The ideal trade school for girls, according to a contributor to Vocational Education Magazine, was established in a converted apartment house in Boston in

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The problem with curricula that concentrated on 'traditional female activities' was two-fold. As one female vocational educator expressed it, the problem is that young women are being trained for some vocations when industry is asking for others. Millinery and dressmaking were the two subjects offered most consistently in trade schools, and dressmaking was the most popular subject. In the Boston, Worcester and Cambridge trade schools for girls, 'almost three-fourths of the girls enrolled... in 1915 were registered in the dressmaking course.'

And yet the number of women workers employed in dressmaking and millinery, not as factored, declined remarkably between 1910 and 1940. Together the fields employed 439,640 women in 1910, 253,028 in 1930 and 189,649 in 1940. Milliners and dressmakers comprised 0.22 per cent of working women in 1920 and this dropped to 0.17 per cent in 1940. In short, the millinery and dressmaking careers were inappropriate for the labor market. The number of available positions for the labor market was limited when trade schools were training women in these two subjects. Moreover, with the advent of compulsory education and the reduced market, competition for jobs became stiffer; the median age of dressmakers rose and the period of apprenticeship lengthened. As one researcher noted, '88.2 per cent of all dressmakers were over 21 years in 1910 and the tendency has been to abandon the employment of girls under 16 years.'

The second major point concerns power sewing on straw and power sewing on cloth. Of the three subjects offered most often in trade schools, power sewing was the least popular, and yet the garment trades employed substantial numbers of women. In 1913, Maryland, for example, there were 30,921 women employed in manufacturing and industry, of whom 14,907, or 48 per cent were employed in clothing and hat manufacturing trades. Studies on the monetary returns of trade training conducted at the time indicate that trade school training in machine sewing for factory work was not a good investment; young women profited marginally from a year's investment in trade school.

Researchers from the WEIU (Women's Educational and Industrial Union) in Boston found that, 'the year spent in the trade school... cannot be translated into terms of money as a year's advantage over the come up through the trade.' A recent study of progressive-era wage returns, comparing the benefits of trade school training and on-the-job training found that young women trained for power sewing in trade schools earned only thirty-two cents more per week than industry trained workers at the end of the first year and that didn't account for wages lost in the year's training.

Young women who wanted to take up power sewing found that they could get a job doing unskilled work in clothing factories and learn power sewing on the job. It was common for young women to find a job through a friend who worked in the industry. "Start the girl on the work, sitting beside her" was the advice given to young women by families who sent their daughters to work in industrial settings. The perspective of parental trade school students, who discovered formal classes to be a waste, was the most cost effective way. Families who sent their daughters to work in industrial settings believed that 'investment in a daughter's education beyond...'
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minimal reading and writing skills was unnecessary’, as Miriam Cohen’s research on Italian-American women in New York City discovered.22

Manhattan Trade School for Girls: Case Study in Success?

Trade school education was a failure based on the enrollments cited earlier, and curriculum was a major contributing factor. Some trade schools, however, were considered highly successful, if not ideal, by contemporaries of the period. The Manhattan Trade School for Girls was one such school.

The Manhattan Trade School for Girls was established in 1902 as a private enterprise and adopted by the New York City Schools in 1910. It was one of the most successful trade schools for girls in the United States according to accounts of the period. The curriculum of this school, which ‘…attracted world-wide notice’, was typical of trade schools established for girls in this period.23 Needle trades which included dressmaking, children’s clothing, lingerie, lamp shades, and millinery were taught along with sewing trades and power machine operations, which included glove and shoe hat making.24 By 1923, manicuring and shampooing were added to the course of study and other schools in the United States followed suit.25 These feminine industries were taught in one and two year courses that ran thirty hours a week for forty-three weeks.

The school’s emphasis on feminine industries can be traced to the influence of Mary Schenck Woolman.26 The school was established by Woolman, who was an expert in textiles, a faculty member at Teacher’s College, Columbia, a founding member of the AHEA (American Home Economics Association), and an influential member of the Sub-committee on Industrial Education for Women in the NSPE. Woolman believed that young women should have access to trade training and that they should be lifted out of dead-end jobs with education that would allow them to climb the ladder of success in industry, much the same as young men. However, she limited the definition of acceptable trades to feminine industries such as dressmaking, millinery, power sewing and some typing of women’s clothing.27 O’Reilly, who was an outspoken advocate of equity in trade training, this most successful school remained a prototypical female trade school adhering to the traditions established by Woolman.

Who enrolled in the Manhattan Trade School for Girls? To the extent that the school was successful in attracting young women, many of the students were first and second generation immigrants. Young Italian women, for example, were attracted to and did well in trade schools because they wanted to learn skills they would use in homemaking – sewing and dressmaking – and feminine needlework was acceptable in their sub-culture.28 Dressmaking was a desirable occupation for Italian women, many of whom had worked in dressmaking in their native country, and it was believed to be superior to other work. Thus for example, during a seven month period in 1914, ‘Italians made up 27 per cent, or 142, of the 532 pupils admitted’, to the Manhattan Trade School for Girls where 70 per cent of the girls took up dressmaking.29 Research on The Boston Trade School for Girls found a similar circumstance although they didn’t specify how many.62.6 per cent of the young women trained to be dressmakers were either native white of foreign born parent or foreign born.30

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The Manhattan Trade School for Girls served a very specific population that was interested in the "feminine industries", and thus the school could be considered successful in that specific sense. Enrollment statistics which were often used to demonstrate the success of the school were deceptive. Many young women who were admitted and enrolled stayed for a very short time. As one vocational educator expressed it: 'Like all trade schools that have yet been established, Manhattan finds the question of withdrawals a very serious one.' In 1914-1915, for example, there were 1,196 students admitted; the average attendance for the year, however, including evening school, was 610. An Industrial Education Survey conducted by the city of New York in 1916 found that 'about a third of those who register in the school remain to the end of the course'. The survey went on to say that 'some of the girls who enter the school do so to get a start in some factory, and leave as soon as there is an opening.' Thus, while some young women were enrolled to learn a trade, they were in the minority. Most young women did not complete the course and many used the school as a springboard into the job market.

In the preceding paragraphs it has been argued that trade schools for girls were not generally successful. They attracted remarkably few working-class girls; their curricula based on the needle trades was out of step with the changing labor market; and they were not effective in preparing students to advance up the salary ladder any faster than their sisters trained on the job. Another fundamental problem with trade school education for young women was general ambivalence about women doing masculine blue-collar work. Acceptable blue-collar work for women consisted of domestic service, waitressing, laundring, and factory work that was repetitive, low-skilled, and generally did not involve heavy lifting. Vocational education, including many of the prominent women who served on the NSPIE's special committee on women in industry, argued with conviction that young women deserved trade training, but they were less assertive when it came to expanding the definitions of appropriate subjects beyond traditional women's work. There were, however, two important historical events that promised to expand trade education beyond the narrow categories of the needle trades, World War I and the Smith-Hughes Act.

The Potential Influence of World War I and Smith-Hughes

America's physical involvement in World War I was brief; it lasted from April 1917 to November 1918. However, the creation of a wartime industrial machine to produce weapons, ammunition, foodstuff, uniforms, and transportation for the military resulted in substantial changes to industrial life. The major change that affected women was the remaking of their labor market generally, and their role in manufacturing specifically. There was no great influx of women into the labor market; however, women took over jobs in manufacturing that had been reserved by and for men, and black women moved out of domestic service into unskilled jobs in factories. According to a recent study of the impact of World War I on women, 'The economic growth in the production of aircraft, firearms, and ammunition drew thousands of women from their time-honored employment in domestic service, textile mills, and clothing shops into the area of steel, aviation, glass, and rubber.'
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Moreover, women comprised 20 per cent or more of the workers manufacturing electrical machinery, airplanes, aircrafts, optical goods, motion pictures and photographic equipment, musical instruments, leather and rubber goods, dental supplies, food, paper and paper goods, and printed materials. Writing in The Vocational Summary one observer of wartime industries wrote, 'The question is not what can women do, but rather what are they willing to undertake'.

The entrance of women into new positions in industry during the short war raised the question of appropriate training. As a result training schools for women workers were established, and the future of trade education for women seemed a little rosier. Many of these training classes were conducted in famous war-time training centers. For example, Bethlehem Steel Company operated a school for women workers where the women were taught to use drill presses, gunboring lathes, turret lathes, planners, shapers, milling machines and to do bench work. The Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company held courses for women in drafting, and the Packard (Car) Company trained women to use lathes, rolling machines, and oxyacetylene welding equipment. In addition to factory training there were some instances of public trade schools expanding their curricula to meet wartime needs. For example, the Boston Trade School for Girls taught machine adjustment and repairs for women in power-machine operating, and the Girls Vocational School of Newark, New Jersey conducted a class in drafting and machine-shop work.

These additions to public trade school curricula served as demonstrations of the feasibility of expanding trade school curriculum beyond traditional definitions of women's work and as symbols of progress for women such as Anna Burdick, federal agent in charge of trade and industrial education. She wrote:

'It would be impossible to recount all the instances of all-day, part-time, and evening classes which indicate the possibilities of vocational education for girls and women in wage-earning employments ... they do indicate something of what is happening this wide country over.'

These were short-lived victories however. Prejudice against enlarging the scope of women's work, 'on the part of the employer and of men fellow-workers', led to a return to trade education 'as usual' after the war. As Robert Cooke observed in his 1932 dissertation on trade education for women: 'Although the World War temporarily forced an acceptance of the new situation, many of the prejudices have since been strongly reasserted'. Cooke's study revealed that the vast majority of trade schools for girls were offering millinery, dressmaking, and machine operating with very occasional exceptions in day school programs such as a printing course offered at David Hale Fanning School for Girls in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The Smith-Hughes Act, providing federal aid for vocational education, was another potential source of change. However as indicated in Chapter 7, programs and courses were not developed, and staff was not hired to foster its development. There were few victories and limited change, but there is one area of success that deserves mention. Part-time classes attracted more students and provided more varied offerings than did regular full-time courses.

In 1920 there were 5,913 female students in all day vocational schools and...
programs and 8,859 in part-time trade preparatory classes. Women were reported enrolled in metal trades, electrical trades, chemical trades and printing and publishing.24 Often these courses were initiated by industry such as the trade courses for garment workers in Los Angeles where the employers furnished machinery, the school and the teachers, or they were responses to local industries, such as in Massachusetts, where 'all centers of the shoe industry report numbers of women enrolled in part-time courses.25 These courses were significant for two reasons. First, they were examples of industry's willingness to support trade training for women under certain circumstances. Second, they indicated that some young women were interested in trade training that would advance their position in their jobs or lead them to new positions. None the less, it is clear that the number of young women enrolled in part-time trade and industrial courses was small compared to other fields such as commercial education.

Roots of Opposition

There were a number of powerful forces that worked against the establishment of trade education. One of the most important, as discussed earlier, was the deep-seated prejudice about industrial work and its effect on women and families. Industrial work would 'take them out of the home', weaken 'the taste and capacity for domestic management', and degrade them, critics argued.26 Industrial shops were not regarded as desirable places for young women, and the negative sanctions imposed by society clearly affected the attractiveness of factory work to young women and their families.

Parental aspirations were a second major consideration. Many working-class parents wanted their daughters to move up the social and economic ladder, and they believed that 'opportunities in the trades and in technical callings of civilized life are inferior to those to be had through high school and college education'.27 Factory work did not improve one's lot in life. One illustration of this point comes from a 1922 Vocational Education Magazine survey in which one parent reported, 'I do not want my girl in a factory. Girls should never work in a factory – she'll meet 'raw people'. Another parent reported in the same survey that they 'would not think of allowing their girl to work in a factory'.28 In another example, researchers from the WEIU of Boston reported that the low enrollments in power machine operating courses were due to the fact that 'power machine operating leads to factory work which girls do not wish to enter'.29 Parents were also sensitive to the economics of trade school. Mary Schenck Woolman of The Manhattan Trade School for Girls found that parents felt they could not 'afford' themselves further than the end of compulsory education and needed to send their children into wage-earning positions.30 Whereas need prompted many families to withdraw their daughters from school and send them to work to contribute to the family economy, rather than sending them to trade school, other families chose not to send their daughters because they believed trade education was a 'bad investment'.31 One parent stated that, 'I am not going to waste my money educating my daughter in factory work'. It was not unusual for parents to believe that 'the average parent has yet to be convinced that education for the girl beyond four years and sometimes even up to fourteen is not a waste of time as far as wage-earning position is concerned.'32 The Massachusetts Commission on Industrial Education, for example, reported that it was commonplace for parents to say,
Another major consideration in the failure of trade schools was opposition from male workers who feared advancement from women. Male blue collar workers were opposed to trade education because they feared women coming into the trades would sell for 'one-half to one-third less than the men'. Unions were particularly adamant about training for women out of the presence of women in industry and this, for example, helped unions in San Francisco exclude women from the trade. When printing unions were questioned by Van Kleeck in her surveys for Russell Sage in New York she found that women 'would not be allowed to touch any processes in compositional hand binderies except those they are now doing and these are too limited to justify trade classes in public schools'.

Opposition to women in traditional male strongholds was particularly high following World War I. In Detroit for example, the Detroit United Railway shut women out of their closed shop. A hearing on the issue a particularly passionate union spokesman 'condemned the employment of the women as "a fester and a disgrace upon the fair name of Detroit"'.

This opposition from unions and male employers was an important consideration in the failure of trade schools because without the cooperation of either unions or employers there was no market for women's skills, regardless of how well they were trained.

Conclusion

The NWTUL knew that in order to improve women's position in the labor market, they had to confront opposition from industry as well as barriers to nontraditional trade education, and they worked assiduously in both areas. They were not effective, however, in changing the parameters of women's vocational training. As an organization, trade education advocates were involved in self-help, unions organization, protection labor legislation for women, along with women's groups and political action. They also tried to persuade women to devote the necessary organizational measures to creating a viable presence in national, state and local education structures. Moreover, despite support from women such as Anna Burdick, the federal agent in charge of training, and the Committee on Women in Industry for the NSVE (National Society for Vocational Education), the lobby for women's trade education was never large enough in numbers or resources to lobby efficiently for the establishment of state and local trade education programs. The ideology of domesticity and gender constraints heavily influenced this dimension of vocational education.

While vocational education enjoyed with pride to schools and programs such as the Manhattan Trade School for Girls and the Boston Trade School for Girls, trade education for young women in secondary schools was ultimately a failure. Moreover, trade education failed out of lack of support from the major parties involved in the process, state vocational education agencies were noticeably inactive. There was only one state that established an agent in charge of trade training for young women, and there were relatively few programs.

The lone voices in the wilderness, the NWTUL and trade education advocates in the NSVE were ineffective in promoting trade education among men.
...dents, teachers and parents. Moreover, the NWTUL knew that in order to improve women's position in the labor market they had to overcome formidable opposition from industry and trade unions. They were not effective in changing the parameters of women's vocational training and creating a semblance of gender equity and over time shifted their focus on legislative means for changing workplace conditions.

The bulk of evidence indicates that society, schools, and parents did not want to educate young women for blue collar work. From the parents perspective it was not cost effective, and it was contrary to working class family norms. As Leslie Woodcock Tender's study pointed out, young working class women were sent into the workforce to support their families and to 'wait for marriage'. Education wassecondary to family relationships and loyalties, and for some parents, excessive education was viewed as a detriment. It might make them unfit for marriage, reported some Polish, Italian, and Jewish parents. When students did stay in school it was generally for clean, respectable employment such as teaching or clerical work which justified the sacrifice of wages.

Vocational educators and school administrators were influenced by the rhetoric generated about home economics and the ideology of domesticity. In the absence of any challenges from powerful interest groups, supported by a general societal belief that women belonged in the home, and considering the health and safety problems associated with the industrial workplace, there was no compelling argument for trade education for women.

What is very clear in the example of trade education for young working class women is that they were not compelled to pursue education for blue collar work, there was no coercion by virtue of required course work. But gender identity in the working class family, and an ideology based on women's social role in the family conspired to limit occupational choices.

Notes


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8 Kingsbury, S. Department of Research of the WEIU (Women's Educational and Industrial Union) of Boston 'Industrial Opportunities for Women in Somerville', p. 9, in the papers of the NYCBVI, B-8, Box 7, Folder 59, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. (investigation conducted around 1910)


10 (1923) 'News and Notes', Vocational Education Magazine, September.


14 Out of 2,500 students enrolled in the three trade schools for young women surveyed by the WEIU, 315 had taken courses in power sewing. The researchers commented that 'Power Machine operating leads to factory work which girls do not wish to enter'. Allinson, Industrial Experience, pp. 20-21.


16 Allinson, M. (1917) Industrial Experience of Trade-School Girls in Massachusetts, Boston, WEIU, p. 25.


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24 On courses offered see (1918) New York City Industrial Education Survey, New York, City Board of Education, p. 18.
27 On James, etc., see James, M.S. Woolman, p. 665.
30 Allinson, Industrial Experience of Trade-School Girls in Massachusetts, p. 7.
35 FBVE (1918) Vocational Summary, 1, No. 3, July, p. 22.
40 Ibid., pp. 64-80.
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[1919] 'Women Workers are Trained for Promotion', Vocational Summary, 2, No. 2, June, p. 3.
43 Henry, A. (1973) The Trade Union Woman, New York, Burt Franklin, p. 185 (reprint edition);
47 Van Kleeck, Women in the Bookbinding Trade, p. 214.
52 van Kleeck, Women in the Bookbinding Trade, p. 214.
Commercial education was the vocational success story of high schools in the Progressive Era. Enrollments rose in contrast to home economics and trade education, course and program enrollments grew impressively between 1900 and 1930. The number of public high school students enrolled in business courses rose from 519,000 in 1900 to 4,497,000 in 1934 and the percentage enrolled jumped from 21.7 per cent in 1900 to 57.7 per cent in 1934. These figures indicated the presence of an expanding army of office workers that was increasingly dominated by women. Young women who aspired to office work flocked to commercial courses in public high schools to learn typing, stenography, and bookkeeping, and the population of commercial education courses was steadily feminized. In 1904 56 per cent of students in commercial courses were young women, and by 1924 the percentage had risen to 67. High schools accommodated these students by hiring more teachers, adding more classes, both day and evening, and in some cases building high schools to house commercial education.

The feminization of commercial education in secondary schools was a problem for people who envisioned high schools as training grounds for corporate captains rather than clerical workers. Yet allegations of feminization and loss of status could not change the course of progress. Programs continued to accommodate young women who looked for skills that were marketable in offices, and they remained inapplicable to the influence of visionaries who wanted them to become training programs for general business.

The following chapter focuses on the development of commercial education in secondary schools paying particular attention to expansion, feminization, and the response of students and vocational educators. The main argument of this chapter is that courses in business education were not merely the result of student and parent in high school programs. Given the receptive labor market, young women wanted to be office workers and the public schools responded to the demands of young women, and to competition from private business schools which threatened to lure students, by adding courses and programs in typing, stenography.
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bookkeeping, and business arithmetic. Attempts to change the primary focus of commercial education from basic skill development for clerical work to management training were not successful and thus programs were not attractive to many young men. Moreover, attempts by vocational educators to incorporate commercial education under the umbrella of vocational education were not successful either, the field remained autonomous. Young women flocked to commercial classes because they provided skills that converted to jobs. They voted with their feet, and along with a receptive labor market, were responsible for the success of commercial education in secondary schools.

Growth and Expansion

Accounts of the growth of commercial courses serve both to remind us of their popular appeal and to document the amazement of school leaders over their success. As Janice Weiss noted, surveys of commercial education abounded, especially in the years after Smith-Hughes was passed, and predictably their results revealed growth and more growth. When the WEIU (Women’s Educational and Industrial Union) investigated office work for girls in Boston in 1913, they found that nine of the eleven high schools in Boston offered commercial courses. The reported enrollment for commercial courses in Girls High School, Philadelphia, ten years later, was 687 out of 1,162 girls or 59.1 per cent. George Counts commented on the popularity of commercial education in his 1924 survey of fifteen senior high schools, noting that “commercial subjects have come to occupy a place in the program of studies second only to English based on the amount of time devoted to the course-work.” The appeal of commercial courses was equally evident in evening school work. In California evening schools, according to a survey conducted in 1919-1920, two of the three most popular courses both in terms of the number of schools offering and enrollments, were typing and shorthand. These impressive enrollment figures were not surprising given the aspirations of young women for office work; in many places, the combination of stenography and typing which equipped young women to be private secretaries rivaled all other occupations by 1930 including teaching. Twenty years of vocational surveying in communities scattered around the United States documented that aspirations of young women, batters of eight schools in San Francisco in 1919, others in Baltimore in 1931, Alex Fagan in her study of the occupational choices of young women in schools in the western United States, and again the Department of Labor survey of urban young women in 1931, all proved that teaching was the most popular occupational choice, while teaching listed as the second most popular occupation.

The Problem of Feminization

Commercial education was clearly a success story, however the enthusiasm of female students for commercial education programs was not always matched by the enthusiasm of school administrators, commercial educators, and vocational
The Success of Commercial Education

Educators. Administrators were happy to have their high schools populated and expanding, and the vitality of commercial education served that purpose well. However, administrators such as Frank Thompson of Boston and Alfred Roncovieri of San Francisco wanted to create a strong link between high schools and the exciting and powerful worlds of business and commerce. Roncovieri, for example, argued that the San Francisco High School of Commerce should be training the youth of San Francisco for "wider business occupations in the great mercantile world and not be limited to the narrower field of office employment." It was generally conceded that women did not have an important role to play in the world of finance and business, and moreover their strong presence in commercial education courses and programs was an irritant to men who wanted commercial education to become their link to corporate leaders. Complaints about the "feminization" of commercial courses and the inappropriateness of curricula were common. "Boys should not be preparing for clerical positions in competition with lower-paid women workers," argued Barnhart of the FBVE (Federal Board for Vocational Education) in 1923. "When will our commercial schools awaken to the significance of the feminization of their courses and start to develop courses more suitable for boys? For business men want their sons trained for 'clerical' positions," Barnhart asked the readers of Vocational Education Magazine.

One suggestion for grappling with the problem of feminization was differentiated course work: for girls training for typing and stenography, and for boys a broader curriculum that would include studies of economic geography, law, and economics. The NEA (National Education Association) Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education outlined recommendations for commercial-educators in their 1919 report that included differentiated course work for:

1. stenographers
2. bookkeepers and clerks for general office work
3. clerical work for young women who want to take more responsible positions
4. separate training for young men and young women with an emphasis on a broad commercial education for young men and
5. training for salesmanship, including business principles, merchandising, and the cultivation of taste. The author of the NEA report went on to point out that, "The conclusion sometimes made that commercial education should be for girls only is based on false premises. Commercial education should have a much wider purpose than the training of stenographers." According to Janice Weiss, salesmanship was seized upon by men such as Frank Thompson of Boston who wanted to see curricula for young women and men differentiated and hoped that salesmanship would become a masculine domain. Vocational educators were drawn to the subject as well because it held the promise of an emerging wedge into commercial education, and nonprofit local merchants were interested in promoting it. Macy's in New York, Filene's in Boston, and the Emporium in San Francisco are examples of stores that initiated training programs in cooperation with the local school systems, however the programs fell far short of the lofty visions of men who aspired to training programs that would create a new commercial education for young men.

J.O. Malott, Specialist in Commercial Education for the USBE (United States Bureau of Education), pointed out the lack of progress in critical areas of commercial education in the 1926-1928 Biennial Survey of Education.
problems that he identified were tremendous increases in enrollments, particularly for women; failure to develop a continuous program of education for business; and failure to promote retail selling. Malott's perceptions were accurate; classes in salesmanship were adopted by some communities, but not by others. Failure to develop a continuous program of education for business was a failure to promote retail selling. There was a shortage of students who were qualified to teach the subject because most commercial education teachers were trained to teach the traditional business education subjects of typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, and business machines. Furthermore, the content of salesmanship curricula was vaguely defined despite attempts by various agencies such as the FBVE to systematize it. Thus the classes failed to attract the anticipated number of young men. The lack of interest was not due to rigorous job requirements. Sales clerking required a decent appearance, a fundamental ability to communicate [usually in English], basic mathematics, and the ability to fill out necessary sales forms and follow store procedures. Training on the job by store personnel was the most efficient means of socializing young women for their occupation. This argued for part-time continuation or evening classes held in the stores, not full-time salesmanship courses in day schools.

The feminine underpinnings of salesmanship training was another factor which militated against the upgrading of curricula to training for the world of commerce. Lucinda Prince of Boston was credited with establishing and promoting the field of salesmanship along with the help of the WEIU of Boston and eventually Simmons College. Salesmanship, argued Prince and her contemporaries, was a growing field of employment for women. In 1910, 28.8% of sales clerks were women as compared to 41.2% in 1920. Butler wrote that "no other occupation seems so desirable as "clerking" to the girl with some personal ambition but without the training necessary for an office position." The department store was one of the few places that girls could work and remain attractive. As Giants Brenner and Mary Pickford romanticized the "sexy sales lady" in film. Also it put women in one of the fastest growing institutions in America, the department store. Thus, true of commercial education generally, women furnished an eager, competent and inexpensive work force that resulted in the feminization of the field.

Attempts to upgrade the status of commercial education by adding special course work and increasing the male population, were not successful nor were the bids for federal funding. The business community was generally not interested in the vocational education movement because of its association with young people of presumed lower ability and social standing; and commercial educators saw their purpose in the high school primarily as preparing students for clerical work rather than industrial work. As long as students were engaged in stenography, bookkeeping, and fundamental English skills, the core curriculum remained the same with large enrollments in these courses. The development of clerical work and programs that trained for it increased steadily, despite barriers from business educators.
The Success of Commercial Education

And who were the students who aspired to work in offices and therefore filled the commercial classes in high schools? Students in rural and urban communities and students representing various ethnic groups aspired to work in an office and filled typing, stenography and bookkeeping classes. As George Counts found in his survey of The Senior High School Curriculum in communities as diverse as Pueblo, New Mexico, Lincoln, Nebraska and Detroit, Michigan, commercial education was universally popular. Women everywhere wanted to be office workers, and they showed up at urban and rural high schools asking for it. The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Federal Board for Vocational Education stated that one or more commercial subjects were being taught in almost 75 per cent of the three-and four-year accredited high schools in South Dakota and that 205 of the 301 high schools in communities of less than 5,000 population taught some commercial subjects. The same report noted that 75 per cent of all high school pupils in Montana were enrolled in commercial courses, 20 per cent in New Mexico, 40 per cent in Indiana, and "mainly enrolled" in Wisconsin. The author of this report was critical of the fact that commercial studies were not adapted to the needs of farm youth and suggested that farm bookkeeping and farm arithmetic should be substituted for the usual course outlines. One rural educator commented that stenography was not a desirable occupation for the farmer's daughter to enter; however, there is little evidence to suggest that such advice was heeded.

Commercial education drew students from different ethnic and social classes as well, even though opportunities for jobs were restricted for some young women. Many commercial education students were native born of foreign parentage as indicated in a 1914 study of commercial education. A report that two-thirds of the young women taking classes in the evening commercial schools were of foreign parentage, Italian women, for example, who abandoned their prejudice against clerical work, and sent their daughters to work in offices, showed the need to train them. A group of Hawaiian women in Texas received a similar training. Other groups included Mexican girls generally, and some Latin-American employers specifically, restricted jobs in factories, English-speaking women. Even a small percentage of determined young black women could be found studying typing and stenography although they encountered persistent exclusion from office work; less than 1 per cent of clerical workers in 1920 were black. As the GFWC's Bulletin reported in one article, "There is not a ghost of a chance for a colored girl to get a position as stenographer." Attempts to subvert student and parent goals did not work easily. As a GFWC member observed about young black women in commercial education, they might not have any chance of getting a job but these days it would not be a good idea to suggest that they take domestic science instead.

Income was a fairly reliable predictor of who would enroll in commercial education classes. The 1914 study of office work conducted by the WEIU found that of 5,051 female students enrolled in nine Illinois high schools an average of 64.4 per cent were enrolled in more technical commercial subjects. However, in the poorer neighborhoods — described by the researcher as congested — 80 per cent of the students enrolled in commercial subjects, as compared to 30 per cent in the more comfortable suburban neighborhoods.

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1919–1920 research on high schools corroborated this finding. In Bridgeport, Connecticut, 88 per cent of the daughters of ‘common laborers’ were enrolled in commercial courses, whereas 57 per cent of the daughters of professional men were enrolled in college preparatory courses. In Connecticut, clerical work was perceived as more prestigious and socially mobile, and was seen as a vast improvement over factory work. ‘We don’t want the girls to go into the factory work if we can help it’, wrote a middle class working class parent; clerical work was the answer. Office work was cleaner than factory work, less physically exhausting, and generally better paying. The hours were consistently shorter, the work more varied, and it carried more status than either factory work or department store sales. It was, according to Professor Grace Coyle of Barnard College, ‘the most accessible rung by which many workers may climb “up” on the socially established ladder’.

First generation Americans were among those who wanted their daughters to do better than they had done, and to meet eligible young men, and they were willing to endure sacrifices to make that possible. Schools were entries to the perceived benefits of American society: white collar work, higher status and greater material rewards. As one Philadelphia parent expressed it, ‘we do by our children in school what we can afford’. Commercial classes were afforded by many parents who could send their daughters to high school for one or two years, if they could not afford the three years necessary for a diploma. Commercial education represented an escape from the immediacy and oppression of poverty. ‘For better or for worse, clerking took some young women out of working class ghettos, if only for the time they spent at work. In doing so it fostered ambitions and may have exacerbated tensions between parents and daughters. The following sympathetic view of young Jewish women explains the attraction of clerical work:

At work a girl is high, attractive officer among well-dressed people. She shares important business secrets. She talks and speaks English well. Her parents treat her with respect and speak to her like a countess. She’s called ‘Miss’, and is asked how she feels and what she thinks. But at home, living in dirty rooms, she’s just ‘Beyle’ or ‘Khontshe’. Her parents speak rudely to her. They pounce upon her if she expresses an interest in a new hat. If she mentions a ball, they tell her to dance with the laundry.’

Not all commercial education students were daughters of working class people. The Boston WEIU research on The Public Schools and Office Work published in 1914 reported that 33 per cent of the young women surveyed were the daughters of business and professional men. Given the increases in young women enrolling in commercial courses over the 1910s, by 1922 2,155,000 students were enrolled in business courses in public high schools, the majority of whom were young women. It was estimated that the number who were middle class and well educated increased over time.
The Success of Commercial Education

Secretarial work was included in a series of lectures on occupations for the college woman advertised in a 1916 Vocational Guidance Bulletin. Then a college trained woman makes the best secretary," and "Desirability of field for college trained women," were topics included in the lecture on the profession of secretarial work. Secretarial work was encouraged by collegiate educators such as Miss Beatrice Doerschuck of Sarah Lawrence College who wrote The Woman Secretary, and the women who ran occupational bureaus such as the NYCBVI (New York City Bureau of Vocational Information) and the CCBO (Chicago Collegiate Bureau of Occupations), and there is some indication that recruitment was successful. Twelve per cent of office workers surveyed by the WPWA (Business and Professional Women’s Association) in 1922 were college graduates or had had some college work.

The Attraction of Commercial Education

It is important to understand why young women of all social classes and backgrounds were attracted to commercial education in schools and why so many aspired to be stenographers. One important point is that most young women expected to get married and wanted to marry men who were suitable. The attraction of offices as marriage markets is revealed in the comments of a young woman contemplating her career in the late 1920s. Margaret said, "I want to get married some time. If I'm a teacher I'll never meet any men and so what is there to do except be a stenographer." According to the person interviewing Margaret, "... her friends ... were all stenographers who hoped to become executive secretaries and marry the boss, or failing in this, to some lesser male members of the office force." Offices clearly offered the promise of a pool of marriageable candidates and, if not that, a social circle of office mates.

It can be argued that while office workers could be compared to factory workers given the specialization of tasks and close supervision, office work offered a ladder of opportunity and a variety of workplaces from which to choose. As Coyle put it, "The hope of advancement has always been one of the cherished possessions of the clerical group." The perceived social and economic distance between the lower and higher rungs of the office work ladder was aptly described by WEIU researchers:

The women who work in offices represent a wide variation of education, ability and earning capacity. At one extreme is the secretary with a college education who may have supervision over a large office and many subordinates, who can carry on the business and decide many perplexing questions in the absence of her employer and receive a yearly salary of $1,000 and $2,000. At the other extreme is the girl or woman with only a grammar school education who folds circulars or addresses envelopes to a small salary of less than a dollar or less a day or for only a few days at a time.

In addition to a variety of positions, and a variety of jobs to be done, there were an enormous variety of offices to work in. Medical offices, lawyers, large
The 'Girl Question' in Education

corporations, stores, and factories all maintained office staffs that were increasingly run by women, and although most young women may have occupied the low level clerical jobs that were not highly paid, there were also women in well-paid secretarial positions. Moreover, these secretaries were close to the power figures in the organizations, owners and managers. Given the structure of the work force during the Progressive Era, it was not realistic for the average young woman to aspire to be the president of a corporation, such as the mythical 'Daddy Warbucks'. It was realistic, however, to aspire to be Grace Farrell, Daddy Warbucks's secretary. High school commercial courses were the path to that dream.

In summary, commercial education's success was based on a number of considerations. Students who were trained for office work could look forward to the possibility of moving up the job ladder, even as the ladder got longer. Social mobility was possible by virtue of exposure to eligible men. Employment benefited from the training offered by public schools. Administrators appreciated the high enrollments in their commercial classes and parents who could afford to keep their daughters in school were pleased with a vocational course that produced tangible benefits. Employers benefited from the training offered by public schools. Administrators appreciated the high enrollments in their commercial classes and parents who could afford to keep their daughters in school were pleased with a vocational course that provided tangible benefits. Thus, regardless of the female ghetto that women were forced to navigate, the programs offered by the schools were a product of client preferences rather than something that was forced upon the students.

What also seems important about commercial education is that programs did not begin as sorting devices for young women based on gender and class, even though they ended up that way. The cultural myth/reality of female dependence on male authority and guidance was replicated in offices and commercial education programs as an unquestioned component of the workplace. Neither middle class nor working class women were willing to dispose of the boundaries of their female spheres, but they needed to negotiate them. Concurrent and related to the development of a white collar ghetto and then a pink collar ghetto in offices, was the shaping and mediating of economic realities by gender, ethnic, and class-based expectations.

Notes
3 Commercial high schools were located in Boston, Worcester and Springfield MA, Brookline NY, Washington, DC, Atlanta GA, Pittsburgh PA, Cleveland and Cincinnati OH, San Francisco CA, and Portland OR, see USBE (1919) 'Business Education in Secondary Schools', Bulletin No. 55, Washington, DC, GPO, p. 12.
The Success of Commercial Education


Theodore, F.V. 'Commercial Education', BCE (1915), Chapter 16, pp. 379-379; in Wies, J. 'Education for Clerical Work'.


Leake, A.H. The Vocational Education of Girls and Women, p. 368; (1916) 'Of
The ‘Girl Question’ in Education


16 Retail Selling Teacher Training, p. 20.


18 In New York City, in 1917 there were 205 students in apprenticeship classes which were offered to part-time coop students. The report summary found that apprenticeship programs have not been entirely satisfactory. Not only were enrollments very low, but the classes were dominated by young women, contrary to their original purpose of drawing young men into commercial education. New York City Industrial Education Survey, New York, Manhattan Printing Co. Printers, pp. 183-186.


The Success of Commercial Education


31 There were 8,138 black women in clerical work in 1920, according to census statistics. This number amounted to approximately 1 per cent of the entire clerical work force. Of these women, 1,955 were stenographers and typists, which amounted to .003 per cent of all stenographers and typists. Black women were hampered both by discrimination in the workplace and by lack of facilities for training in the few extant black high schools. 2 per cent of all black high school students were enrolled in commercial courses in 1925. According to E. Krug, 'thousands of black youth' in Southern States had no public high school to attend. On black clerical workers see Hill, J. (1923 reprint 1978) *Women in Gainful Occupations 1870-1920*, Washington, DC, GPO, 1923 Census Monograph, reprint in Westport, Greenwood Press, pp. 186-187; on blacks in high schools see Krug, E. (1972) *The Shaping of the American High School Vol. 2, 1920-1941*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, p. 236; on black women in the workplace see Jones, J. (1985) *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present*, New York, Basic Books Inc, pp. 178-181; Weiss, J. 'Education for Clerical Work: A History of Commercial Education in the United States Since 1850', p. 232.

32 GFWC (General Federation of Women's Clubs), (1913) *The Federation Bulletin*, August, p. 11.


34 WEIU, *The Public Schools and Women in Office Service*, p. 25.


41 WEIU, *The Public Schools and Women in Office Service*, p. 163.

42 Larimer, J. *What's Happened to Our High Schools*, pp. 69, 145.

43 (1916) *Vocational Guidance Bulletin*, II, No. 6, June/July 1916, p. 3 in Papers of the NYCBVI (New York City Bureau of Vocational Information) B-3, Box 1, Folder 1, Papers of the NYCBVI, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.
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48 WEIU, Public Schools and Women in Office Service, p. 2.
Part 3 Conclusions

Gender, intersecting with race, ethnicity and class was a theme in variation in schools. What was possible and what was not possible was profoundly influenced by gender role expectations. Program adoption was accomplished in concert with role definitions and labor market sanctions. Yet as this section has demonstrated students and parents voted with their presence in vocational programs. Serious trade education, such as was conceptualized by the National Women's Trade Union League, was not congruent with sex role norms; administrators did not adopt it and students did not lobby for its adoption. Home economics and clerical education were both appropriate interests for females and thus they were adopted into school curricula. Once there, home economics was virtually ignored while clerical education was an enrollment success.

Using gender as a wash on the canvas, there were three other factors that differentially influenced both the adoption of curriculum and student response; they were politics, economics and ideology. In the area of politics home economics stands out as the most profoundly affected program. A main factor in the almost universal incorporation of home economics into the curriculum was the General Federation of Women's Clubs, rural life advocates and supporters, family protection groups such as the Society for the Prevention of Infant Mortality and the American Home Economics Association were effective in lobbying for expanded programs in public schools prior to the passage of federal legislation. Following the passage of the Smith-Hughes legislation in 1917, the AHEA worked in close cooperation with the National Education Association and the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education to lobby for funds, facilities and supervisory personnel at all levels of public education systems. As indicated in Chapter 7 they achieved remarkable success in erecting and sustaining the home economics bureaucracy.

In contrast to home economics, the trade education lobby, suffered from its lack of political connections. The National Women's Trade Union League was powerful enough to secure the appointment of one of their representatives to the federal commission, however they were not well connected in education.

They did not lobby for representation in the National Education Association and were not found presening at national or state meetings the way the home economics lobby was. They occasionally worked with the National Society for
The 'Girl Question' in Education

Prominent of Industrial Education, which became an active supporter of home economics following the passage of Smith-Hughes, but generally chose to lobby in select urban areas for trade education. The San Francisco Board of Education, for example, contains a letter from the NWCTUL regarding trade education, and the city of Columbus crops was the "glass cutting center adapted by the National Commission on Home Economics. In Boston and New York, its influence on the National Commission, it was not a highly visible or influential force in the education community. The politics of commercial education had felt little effect on its raison although bureau between interest groups did affect federal funding and the extent to which business education aligned itself with the vocational education community. Far more important than interest group politics over design and identity were economic issues, in 1966 6.5 per cent of the female labor force was in clerical work and in 1930 that figure had grown to 18.8 per cent. The consistently growing need for office workers, combined with the social appeal of white-collar work made it highly desirable.

Trade education and home economics were both hampered in their appeal to students by economic factors. Home economics led to a limited number of occupations and in fact was regarded as training for marginal employment or homemaking. There was no appeal of potential remuneration, except for the young women who were training for home economics teaching or perhaps institutional home economics. Young women were far more likely to regard home economics because young women and their parents invested in high school for economic and social reasons: home economics yielded neither.

Trade education, on the other hand, was hampered economically in two ways. First, the feminine industries - dressmaking and millinery - were shrinking and could not absorb all the young women who were potential trade education students. Second, expansion into traditional male areas of trade education was fiercely opposed by unions, and most male employers. This last point is significant because it speaks to the fact that men were willing to hire women as cheap labor under some circumstances such as in offices or under emergency conditions such as war, but expansion into traditional male areas of trade education was firmly opposed by unions, and most male employers.

Apart from the factors that influenced the success or failure of particular programs, there are some generalizations that emerge from the study of practice. One is that neither schools, nor students were easily diverted from their agendas. Thus the home economics lobby was successful in influencing administrators to adopt home economics, and administrators were amenable because they saw it as within the scope of their responsibilities to provide some education for homemaking. However, administrators were not willing to alter drastically their academic agenda of high school. Most were not willing to require high school courses in home economics and most did not lend their full support to develop-
Conclusions

ing the exemplary curricula that home economists and progressive reformers envisioned. Similarly, students and parents had their agendas and they were not easily swayed. The parents who could afford a high school education for their daughter wanted a good job as a result, both for the years immediately following high school when they were likely to be living at home and participating in a family economy and in the event of bad luck following marriage. They also wanted their daughters to meet "nice people," and specifically to meet nice young men to marry. Thus most parents did not encourage their daughters to take up trade education nor did they lobby for expanded definitions of trade education, but instead they encouraged them either to take commercial education which led to office work, or general course work which would lead to teaching. Attempts to subvert student and parent goals did not work. As a General Federation of Women's Club member observed about young black women in commercial education, they might not have any chance of getting a job, but these days it would not be a good idea to suggest that they take domestic science instead.

It is evident that schools mirrored the delicate power relationships in society generally. Complex forces were brought to bear on curriculum decisions for young women. Interest group politics, economic concerns, and social forces were all woven into the pattern of vocational schooling for young women. Yet as stated before, the issue of gender and woman's place in society was the overriding theme.

Notes

2. GFWC (1913) Federation Bulletin, p. 11.
By 1930 vocational curricula had been funded by the federal government for more than ten years, and vocational programs were entrenched in the secondary school curriculum. The vocational function of schools was embedded in the fabric of course work, and the fabric was shaded symbolically in pink and blue. Vocational courses for young women consisted of training for office work, home economics, and some trade education which for the most part was in the needle trades. The seemingly predictable outcome, segregation on the basis of gender, belies the complex history of the movement.

As I have argued in this book there was a constellation of social, economic, and political forces that converged on the vocational education movement for young women in the Progressive Era. The crux of the issue was not simply what programs and courses would be offered in vocational education programs for females, but how they were offered and what would be defined by women from different racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds. Women's vocational education was thrust into a much larger discussion, and the value attached to positions occupied and decisions reached was significantly enhanced. Female institution building that developed in the nineteenth century by women who saw themselves as the instruments of change and the seats of decision making, building on that immediate legacy, a concern of vocational training for young women placed women at the center of significant social and economic change and linked medical change to home economics and preparation for women's trades. Home economics moved beyond rhetoric into the curriculum of schools around the United States, and it became a standard offering in many junior and senior high schools.

Yet, as part of a broad vision to reform society and a more narrow vision to shore up homemaking and women's separate sphere in it, the home economics movement was apparently unsuccessful. While the "new woman" of the twenties returned marriage, the ideal of municipal housekeeping and the passionate rhetoric that accompanied it was not. While the movement was a success, leaving secondary schools with three legacies, the first was the department of home economics which never managed to lift itself above plain sewing and cooking into the hybrid home economics envisioned by the foremothers of the movement. The second, identified by Rutherford in her thesis, Feminism and the Secondary School Curriculum was the impact of home economics on the participation of
Meaning

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women in science and mathematics courses. As the reader will recall, home economists lobbied for practical science and mathematics curricula, such as domestic chemistry and home physics. While the evidence indicates that feminized science and math courses were infrequently adopted, young women's enrollment in mathematics and science courses dropped after 1900.

According to Rutherford, social support for girls to enroll in advanced algebra, trigonometry or sciences was drawn after the beginning of the twentieth century. This was attributed to the impact of domesticized sciences on the secondary curriculum.

The second legacy of the vocational curriculum and the general underestimate and expectation that men and women will pursue different occupations and professions and that the secondary role is to socialize and educate young people for that expectation. Prior to the vocational training movement, women's motivation in secondary schools closely resembled young men's, and after the advent of the vocational training movement held a separate place in the curriculum, symbolically and in the physical space of both home economics and commercial education. Sex segregation in secondary schools was thus a specific result of the vocational movement.

A counter argument would point out that schools were vocationalized by virtue of teaching and commercial work before the turn of the century and that sex segregation was already an operative reality when schools became explicitly vocational after 1900. While the latter argument is accurate, it ignores the power of the rhetoric or myth to shape the way people view their world and themselves. The vocational education movement was a forum for discussions and ultimately decisions about a woman's place in the world. The necessary decisions resulted in the validation of the social myth that a woman's place is in the home and that a woman's place in the work world is marginal. Elizabeth Janeway has pointed out, that social myths exist quite apart from reality; thus even though home economics classes were begging for students and commercial classes overflowed, sex segregation as an ideology was institutionalized.

Social myths can and do influence behavior, even though they may be contradictory to behavior. Commercial education in secondary schools was an example of a course of study that in its formative years contradicted the social myth of sex segregation while at the same time it was influenced by it. Susan Carter and Catherine Puls can be credited with work that occasioned a re-examination of the relevance of secondary schooling for young women. They have argued that young women dominated high school enrollments because schools were vocationally relevant. In fact Carter argues, they were more
vocationally relevant for young women than for young men because they offered training for teaching and commercial work. Young women in rural and urban areas all over the United States flocked to commercial courses in hopes of landing an office job. The fact that schools were training young women (he paid labor did not enter any overt conflict with the prevailing ideology that a woman's place was in the home, even though there was an inherent contradiction. A number of historians have pointed out the flexible nature of our role prescriptions when there is a pressing labor market need. As Carolyn Ware bluntly puts it, "Industry has always accepted and used women when it has needed them." In the case of commercial education in schools, the role prescriptions were either flexed - so that offices were likened to homes and secretaries to wives away from home - or ignored in response to a receptive labor market. What did cause a conflict, however, was the fact that young men and young women were being trained for the same positions. Women sat alongside young men in commercial classes through the 1920s, often training for similar jobs: 28.9 per cent of all male high school students were enrolled in bookkeeping in 1928, along with 47.0 per cent of all female students. Many vocational educators were disturbed about the fact that boys and girls were taking the same courses. The power of the prescription that men and women must hold different positions helped shape commercial education and the role that women assumed in the clerical sector of the job market. As Margery Davies convincingly argued, clerical work was steadily feminized in spite of what vocational educators would have preferred, and the major contradictions that existed between theory and practice in the first decades of the century were eliminated. Clerical work was rationalized as women's work such that commercial education became a feminine ghetto in schools. The population of the ghetto is now both feminine and working class according to Linda Valli's research on cooperative education.

Trade education, I would argue, was never acceptable for women, and the social myth that women do not belong in industrial work has been continually invoked regardless of the reality. Vocational educators in state and local bureaucracies would not accept programs for women's blue collar work in schools, and vocational educators in local schools were not inclined to institute programs that might limit their own positions in the clerical sector. Blue collar work was a significant factor in women's participation in blue collar work, and women who desired for male education were sensitive to the constraints imposed by it. It seems very plausible that women such as Mary Schenck Woolman who were strong supporters of women in industry confined the role to feminine industries and supported a conservative definition of trade education because it was more likely to gain acceptance than a more liberal expanded definition. Margaret Rossiter suggests in her work on Women Scientists in America, that when women were unable to make gains using arguments about equity, the conservatives among them moved in to stress women's special skills, and that between the two strategies, women were able to secure all the available niches for women. In any case, barriers to trade education, both in terms of social myth and the reality of the job market were and continue to be effective, while the feminine "niches" are still extant.
Meaning

... mean that the assumptions which were so explicit in discussions at the turn of the century have been re-examined.

In terms of the revisionist project, this history of the women's vocational education movement both confirms and challenges arguments of social and economic reproduction. Kantor concludes in Learning to Earn that the conceptual linking of school to paid work is a significant legacy of the vocational education movement. For young women the connections are elusive – now you see it and now you don't. Since women's work has not been viewed as real work in terms of contribution to the gross national product or industrial productivity it could not be invited in as the centerpiece of revisionist analyses of school/work connections. Yet, both in terms of social ideology – gender role maintenance – and skills and knowledge that convert into paid work, the vocational education movement and its legacy have been very relevant for women.

The book argues that the relevant models to be acknowledged and analyzed at a number of levels. It is clear that gender differentiation is a powerful dimension of experience in secondary schools, both historically and in a contemporary sense. That the form it takes, as S. Rosaldo argued in her early work on sex roles from a cross cultural perspective, is so variable that the context has to be identified for the generality to have meaning.

The epilogue to this chapter in women's vocational education history suggests that the power of social prescription and the role of schools as both cultural transmitters, and mediators in the relationship between women, work, and families has continued to confine vocational offerings for young women. Congressional hearings on vocational legislation in the early 1960s mirrored prescriptive comments on the dual roles of women from the Progressive Era. Representative Pucinski argued for teaching young women 'the basic structure of home economics and at the same time ... a vocational skill so that when she becomes an adult if fate should cast her in the role of bread-winner as well as homemaker she will be prepared for that'. When asked to elaborate, Pucinski added, 'What I was suggesting was that when we teach a young lady how to sew a hem in her dress it is just as easy to teach her how to use a power machine so if she has to get a job in a dress factory she is not going to be a stranger and she will be able to move right into that job ...'. Home economics was accorded a strong vote of confidence in the 1960 legislation, along with clerical education which qualified for federal assistance for the first time.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibits sex discrimination in education included provisions for vocational education and the Vocational Education Act as amended in 1976 included provisions for eliminating sex bias and discrimination in vocational education, however despite recent efforts, 'sex segregation in vocational education remains high'. For example, a 1983 study prepared by the Full Access and Rights in Education Coalition entitled Their "Proper Place" found that twelve of New York City's vocational schools had primarily male enrollments, and that young women predominated in just

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Five of these schools where the curriculum concentrated on "traditionally" female occupations such as cosmetology and stenography. In short, schools continue to provide vocational training constrained by the social myth of "woman's place".

Notes
Plate 1:
These young women are in laundry education at the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington, DC. This course was a special province of young African-American women.
Plate 2: The sign in front of the building proudly advertises the mission of the program.
Plate 3:

These working girls and women sat side-by-side learning dressmaking in the Free Evening Schools of Boston, Massachusetts. Dressmaking and millinery were popular courses in the evening schools. Library of Congress.
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Plate 4: These young women who look so studious are part of a home economics class in Washington, DC schools. The board diagrams and experiments were seen to advertise the comprehensive nature of the teaching program. Library of Congress.
Plates

Plate 5:
Young African-American women turned to private education for courses and programs that were not very available in public schools by virtue of discriminatory practices. This photograph of aspiring stenographers was taken in the National Training School for Girls and Women in Washington, D.C., around 1925. Library of Congress.

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Plate 6: Sewing classes provided young women with access to sewing machines and the opportunity to learn skills vital to their future. These young women at Washington Irving High School in New York City are making "dollar dresses." Library of Congress.
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GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF THE CURRICULUM
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SHEILA I. RIDDELL

Volume 74
GENDER AND THE POLITICS OF THE CURRICULUM

Sheila I. Riddell

London and New York
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I owe many thanks to the staff, pupils and parents of Millbridge and Greenhill schools, who so willingly answered my questions and shared aspects of their lives with me.

Whilst working on this research, colleagues at Bristol, Edinburgh and Stirling Universities have generously shared ideas with me. In particular, I would like to thank Sandra Acker who supervised my doctoral thesis on which this book is based.

Janet Siltanen and Judith Fewell provided useful comments on an earlier draft of this book and I am grateful to both of them.

This book is dedicated to Ken Sorbie and my daughters Annie and Bella, who sustained me with their love at times when I felt this book would never be completed.
INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this study is the role of the school, the family and pupils' construction of femininity and masculinity in the production of gender divisions within the curriculum. A recurring motif is that of change across a number of interconnected dimensions, in particular the school curriculum, the culture of femininity and the labour market. Let us briefly consider the first of these. In all cultures the curriculum is informed by social values, in the sense that it is an expression of the knowledge and skills deemed necessary for young people to acquire in order to prepare them for their future adult role. It is also a dynamic entity, influenced not only by the changing requirements of the economy and shifting ideologies of political masters, but also by the consciousness of those who teach and learn. At the time of writing, the national curriculum is in the process of being introduced in England and Wales, with very different predictions being made concerning its potential to alter the nature of gender divisions within the curriculum. As well as addressing the question of the effects of this particular curriculum innovation, I also consider more fundamental issues concerning the relationship between curriculum choice and change and the formation of gender identity. This is envisaged as a two-way process whereby pupils' struggle to establish an appropriate gender identity influences their orientation towards particular areas of the curriculum, which in turn furthers the process of gender identity formation. It might well be argued that the interests of girls and women have generally been of only peripheral concern to curriculum planners. Here, I attempt to reverse this precedent by placing these interests at the centre of my analysis.
Although the central focus here is the school, it is important to recognize that the changing backdrop of the labour market inevitably affects pupils' educational experiences and their conception of what it means to be male or female. Schools in the 1990s continue to produce pupils who are ready, if not willing, to take their place in a labour market sharply stratified along lines of both gender and class (Martin and Roberts, 1984; Dex, 1985). But while this pattern of gender stratification persists, changes are occurring in the labour market, with women's participation increasing at a time when male unemployment has grown (Mitchell, 1986; Coyle and Skinner, 1988). In some ways, it would appear that women's and men's roles in the labour market are becoming more similar, with most households now having two wage earners rather than just one. However, the nature of the work carried out by women and men is still very different, with the majority of women undertaking part-time work in the service sector. Although areas such as financial services experienced a boom period in the 1980s, there has been only minimal progress towards the equal representation of women in managerial positions (Ashburner, 1988). The present recession, coupled with the introduction of new technology, has shown that women's jobs in the service sector are highly vulnerable. Women's average weekly earnings are still only two-thirds of the average male wage despite the passage of the equal opportunities legislation of the mid-1970s. So despite the fact that more women than ever before are working, their position in the labour market is still one of disadvantage, since they continue to be concentrated in areas of low pay and low status, deprived of access to positions of power. This book asks questions about the school processes which contribute to this outcome and whether there are any signs of change in girls' gender identity and the choices they are currently making about their future education and working lives.

The book focuses, then, on the interrelationship between the curriculum and the process of gender identity construction which ultimately leads to unequal roles for women and men in both the private and the public spheres. These relationships defy simple causal explanations, but are, none the less, worth exploring in order to understand the process of change taking
place in schools at the present time, spreading out into the wider society.

The layout of the book is as follows. Part I sets the scene in terms of the research questions, the theoretical background and the physical setting. In Part II discuss a number of aspects of school life which tend to reinforce traditional gender divisions. Among these, I critically examine the idea that pupils operate as free agents in selecting their subject options. Part III of the book shifts the focus away from institutions and individual teachers towards pupils and parents, and considers whether constructions of masculinity and femininity appear to challenge or reinforce the gender code of the schools.

I return to the theme of the curriculum and gender divisions in Part IV, considering the possible impact of present curricular developments. Some commentators have suggested that the national curriculum, introduced into schools in England and Wales under the terms of the Education Reform Act 1988, might have the effect of promoting more progressive versions of masculinity and femininity by preventing girls from prematurely rejecting areas of the curriculum perceived as masculine. I consider whether this is indeed likely to be the case, and also consider the counter argument that even if more girls do continue to study science for longer, other damaging aspects of sexism in school may persist untouched by curricular reforms.

Throughout the book, I attempt to convey a sense of the interaction between gender and class codes, although I am very aware of the complexity of these relationships and the inevitability of providing only a partial account. (A more detailed technical account of the research is available in my doctoral thesis, Riddell, 1988.) My central emphasis is on the experience of girls (working-class girls in particular) who are the major victims of the option choice system. Much work clearly remains to be done in unpicking the dynamic relationship between gender and class.
Part I
SETTING THE SCENE: THE PHYSICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY
Social research does not occur in a vacuum, but is a complex result of the researcher's initial interests and motivation, theoretical and methodological preferences, and the various influences encountered whilst undertaking the fieldwork. Burgess (1984) reminds us that knowing something of the biographical as well as the technical background to the research is likely to be extremely helpful in allowing the reader to make a fair evaluation of its authenticity. In Chapter 1 of this book I set the scene of the study by providing the reader with some insight into the concerns which initially prompted my interest in gender and education, the research strategy I adopted and the research questions I developed. I also discuss the theoretical background which has informed the study from the initial shaping of the research design to the final analysis and interpretation of the findings. The methods which I selected were suggested both by my theoretical concerns and my political position as a feminist. Chapter 2 attempts to convey a sense of the physical location of the study, the classroom, staffrooms, towns and villages where pupils, parents and teachers generously offered me insight into their lives. I hope that from these early chapters, the central themes of the study will begin to emerge and take shape.
1
RESEARCHING GENDER AND CURRICULUM CHOICE
Theory, methods and research role

INTRODUCTION
The research which I describe here is rooted in my experience as a comprehensive school teacher in a county lying to the south west of England which I call Westshire. During the period of my life spent in the classroom between 1976 and 1983, I became fascinated by the significance of both the overt and the covert curriculum. Qualifications in particular subjects clearly acted as passports to various areas of work and higher education but also, at a more subtle level, the culture of each subject, even its physical location in the school, ranging from the factory atmosphere of the Heavy craft areas through to the cozy domesticity of the home economics room, conveyed powerful symbolic messages about the appropriate spheres of activity of women and men, working-class and middle-class pupils. In the early 1980s, when I began my research, at a national level the ‘gender spectrum’ in subject option choice was extremely marked. This is reflected, for example, in the secondary schools studied by Pratt, Bloomfield and Seale (1984), as well as in national statistics of gender differences in examination presentation (DES, 1981). Similar divisions were also apparent at Millbridge School in Westshire, a rural area in the south west of England where I was then working. Along with many other comprehensives at the time, Millbridge offered a cafeteria style of option choice, where, within certain limits, pupils in their third year of secondary schooling were permitted to select their own curriculum from a wide range of subjects on offer. In view of this, the question of why so many pupils made such sex-stereotyped choices appeared
even more puzzling, since at least at one level some degree of freedom of action appeared to be possible. Indeed, one of the remarkable things about the option choice system was the smoothness with which the whole process seemed to operate. Particular courses were offered by the school and were generally filled with approximately the right number and type of pupils. But was the whole process as unproblematic as it might at first sight appear? An art teacher commented: Makes you a bit suspicious, doesn’t it? The way that all the courses get filled up with the right number of pupils year after year.

It was the desire to investigate this puzzle which inspired me to embark on the research project which I describe here.

CENTRAL QUESTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Many interesting studies in the sociology of education start out by asking questions which at first sight appear naive, but on reflection reveal important insights into how schools function within wider social systems. Wills (1977), for instance, begins by asking questions about why working-class kids get working-class jobs. More recently, Stanley (1989) introduces her study of comprehensive schooling by asking why fourth- and fifth-year pupils persevere with examinations designed to fail 40 per cent of them. In the same way, the starting point of my research was the following question: Why do girls, and working-class girls in particular, continue to opt for a school curriculum which is likely to lead to their long term disadvantage in the labour market?

Clearly, in order to make sense of gender differentiation in the curriculum, it is necessary to understand both the ways in which pupils are actively engaged in the process of gender identity construction and also the filtering system constructed by the school through which they pass. A range of questions were thrown up by these considerations. Did girls still generally subscribe to traditional notions of femininity and did this account for the traditional choices which they made? Further, was there any evidence of change in the gender identity they were constructing, reflecting the changing nature of the labour market and more radical notions of femininity deriving from the women’s movement? Did the management of the option
choice system by the school channelled them, perhaps unwillingly, in conventional directions? In the context of the introduction of the national curriculum, was there likely to be a reduction in gender differentiation, or was the establishment of male and female curricula likely to continue in a relatively unimpeded manner? Further questions arose with regard to the influence of parents. Did these powerful figures subscribe to versions of masculinity and femininity which were broadly in line with those officially espoused by the school or were points of conflict likely to emerge and if so how were pupils to resolve these conflicting messages from home and school? With regard to individual teachers, could it be assumed that they would all support similar constructions of masculinity and femininity and how might divergent views be conveyed to pupils? By addressing these questions I hoped to discover whether pupils’ apparent compliance in the process could be accepted at face value, or whether the underlying reasons for the outcome of option choice required a more subtle explanation.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

My concern, then, was to analyse the part played by option choice in the cultural reproduction of gender and class and I was aware of the attempts made by earlier analysts to come to terms with these issues. In the 1970s, the most frequently offered explanations were variations of social or cultural reproduction theory. Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) offered explanations of the way in which the school prepared young people to fit neatly into predefined work roles necessary for the capitalist economy. Bourdieu (1977) and Bernstein (1975) approached the issue of reproduction from a slightly different angle, examining how dominant class values, essential to the perpetuation of capitalist society, were reproduced. Researchers such as Willis (1977) rejected the view that the school merely rubber-stamps children in preparation for a particular position in the social formation. Arguing that pupils’ culture represents a vital ingredient in the process of social reproduction, Willis claimed that the lads featuring in his study were far from passive observers of their own destiny. Clearly, there were strong pressures on them to follow their fathers’ footsteps into hard manual labour, but at the same
time it was essential to their sense of pride to feel that they were actively choosing this role for themselves and their adamant rejection of all things educational signified anything but passive compliance. Combining feminist understandings with the type of neo-marxist analysis employed by Willis, Anyon (1983) discusses how the culture of femininity is used by girls in school to both accommodate and resist aspects of the dominant ideology. According to Arnot and Whitty (1982), by stressing the transformative potential of the school, she avoids some of the deterministic pitfalls of neo-marxist analysis. Movement away from traditional marxist accounts of social reproduction theory is also evident in the work of Connell et al. (1982) who provide a rich sense of the scope for individual action which exists within structural constraints.

More recently, commentators such as Weis (1990) have gone even further in questioning the validity of social reproduction theory. She points out that the deindustrialisation of western societies has made it no longer useful for schools to produce boys ready to slot into traditional male working-class jobs of the hard manual variety and girls anticipating a lifetime of domesticity. Given the rapidly changing nature of the labour market, reproduction theory fails to describe adequately the processes at work in school or the wider society. Citing Touraine (1981), she suggests that it is no longer appropriate to envisage the struggle between labour and capital as the fundamental pivot of society. Rather, society is best understood as 'a dynamic set of social movements - as the material accomplishment of conflicting groups struggling for control of the field of historical cultural action' (p. 10). Although noting that it is not yet clear how the traditional working class is to define itself in relation to the rapid process of de-industrialisation currently occurring in the USA, Weis suggests that outcomes may be far less firmly circumscribed than they were in the past. In view of these changes, the task should now be to understand the nature and form of the production of self engaged in by young people in school. To investigate the 'new ideology' of the white working class she utilises a social action perspective.

The theoretical approach which I adopt here incorporates aspects of both social reproduction and social action perspectives. I explore the nature of actors' rational decisions and the
context within which these are made, whilst acknowledging the very powerful constraints on their actions. Pupils' culture is clearly very important in the formation of group and individual identities and the way in which social movements impinge on the process of identity formation is also important. However, whilst acknowledging that individual identities and outcomes are not entirely predetermined, I feel that a danger of the social action perspective is that it loses sight of the structural constraints on action. For example, an important aspect of girls' access to a wider range of jobs is a recognition that there is nothing inherent preventing them from working as a mechanic or an electrician or an engineer. But unless jobs are available in these areas, their aspirations cannot be fulfilled. It is also the case that some interactionist work underplays the importance of class. Although there are undoubtedly major changes currently taking place in the nature and identity of the working class linked to the erosion of the manufacturing base in Britain and many other western societies, this does not imply that class has lost all its power as an explanatory tool. In the following chapters I attempt to shed light on actors' own accounts of their decisions, but also show how these diverge significantly along lines of gender and class.

At this point it is worth commenting briefly on the definition of gender and class which I have used. Oakley (1972) clarified the distinction between sex and gender, pointing out that whereas sex refers to biological differences between males and females, gender is a socially constructed category which may vary in different cultures and different historical periods. Recently, some commentators have suggested that women's experience is now so diverse as to call into question whether the category 'woman' continues to be meaningful (Delmar, 1986). My aim in this book is to explore both the common ground and the differences which characterise the experiences of girls and women.

Since class is one of the major factors differentiating female experience, I have attempted to incorporate it into my analysis where appropriate. The definition I have used is broadly in line with the Registrar General's classification of occupation, but takes mother's as well as father's occupation into account. Thus if one parent reported a middle-class occupation, then the family was defined as middle class. Further details are reported
RESEARCHING GENDER AND CURRICULUM CHOICE

in the Appendix. This clearly differs from the view of class taken by Connell et al (1982). Although acknowledging that some state schools may contain a significant proportion of children from business or professional backgrounds, Connell et al defined all the state schools in their study as working class because this was their predominant character. The private schools, on the other hand, were described as ruling class. Within the context of the Wessex schools where I was conducting my research, this classification would have been too simplistic, and I decided that it was appropriate to distinguish between working-class and middle-class families, although I do recognize that the Registrar General's classification is something of a rough instrument. However, the importance of including some measure of class is underlined by Mitchell (1986). She comments that when she started her research in education in 1962, it was impossible to find data on gender; everything was broken down by class. Today, she says, precisely the reverse is the case. In so successfully focusing attention on the importance of gender, the women's movement may have been complicit in official attempts to conceal the importance of social class. Although the major focus of this study is on gender and subject choice, I have attempted to indicate the salience of social class in influencing the different educational outcomes of girls and boys from different social backgrounds. In many parts of the country the links between race and gender also demand exploration, but in the Wessex schools, the minority ethnic population was almost non-existent, and so this does not feature as a major focus of analysis.

PREVIOUS WORK ON GENDER AND CHOICE IN SCHOOLS

Turning from the macro- to the micro-theoretical background, this section explores the literature on schools and subject choice. My initial survey of the literature suggested that some studies of subject choice offered important insights into the way in which comprehensive schools continued to operate a system of social as well as educational selection, but concentrated on class rather than gender-divisions (Woods, 1976; Ball, 1981). Other studies, such as Pratt et al. (1984), focused on the
operation of option choice systems within schools and failed to look in depth at wider aspects of social reproduction in the classroom and the family.

Some feminist researchers, on the other hand, had come much closer to conceptualising curriculum choice in ways which took account of both the social constraints on action and the propensity of individuals to take meaningful actions within these boundaries. Gaskell (1985), for instance, in her study of Canadian teenagers and 'tracking', pointed out that an analysis of the mechanisms by which young people negotiate their future paths within the school curriculum brings us to the heart of a major problem in social theory. It is not simply a matter of deciding whether pupils choose or are coerced in different situations, but rather of understanding the relationship between individual agency and social structure. Pointing to the work of Giddens (1979), Gaskell reminds us that even subordinate groups have some social power and are more than helpless pawns in a pre-decided game. Applying these understandings to the context of gender differentiation and option choice, I decided that my objective should be to understand the external forces which were shaping girls' lives, also their perception of these constraints and the rational and creative strategies with which they responded.

Within the field of gender and education, it would appear that whilst earlier studies tended to reflect rather rigid notions of the overwhelming power of sex-role socialisation, implicitly adopting a deficit model to describe the behaviour of pupils and parents, more recent studies paid greater attention to the role of teachers, the school and education policies in general (Acker, 1987). Kelly (1987) describes the shift in the analysis of girls' relative absence from science classes, arguing that recent work:

locates the fault at least partly within science, within schools or within society at large. These institutions must change to accommodate girls. Science is not an immutable 'thing', it is a socially constructed process which is produced in schools and laboratories in accordance with societal norms.

(Kelly, 1987 p. 1)

Reports of the GIST study (Whyte, 1986) and Kelly (1986) provide some fascinating insights into the potential of teachers
to sabotage or facilitate equal opportunities initiatives, and I felt that there was a need for further exploration of teachers' attitudes to gender equality policies.

In deciding that subject option choice should be the starting point for my investigation of gender identity construction, it also struck me that I would learn very little from sticking too narrowly to an analysis of what happened at a discrete point in time when pupils filled out their option choice forms, in many cases making decisions which would significantly alter the shape of their future working lives. The choices that pupils made here seemed to me to be a reflection of an ongoing process of identity construction involving the young person themselves and their interaction with parents, friends and school. Since pupils' subject choices appeared to diverge along axes of gender and class (statistics from the two schools where I carried out research confirmed this – see Chapter 3), I was interested in exploring the extent to which their personal curriculum represented a statement of their gender and class identity. Arnot's (MacDonald, 1980; Arnot, 1982) notion of gender code was useful here in helping me to refine this idea. She uses the term 'gender code' to refer to the messages concerning appropriate models of masculinity or femininity which pupils both receive and transmit. The notion of gender code thus encompasses the cluster of behaviours, attitudes, and emotional responses judged appropriate for one sex or the other. Codes 'have varying degrees of boundary strength and insulation between categories of masculinity and femininity' (Arnot, 1982). Pupils are actively involved in interpreting the gender code of the school and also bring with them into the classroom competing gender codes derived from their own and their parents' culture.

At this point it is also worth drawing attention to my use of the term ideology during the course of the book. Ideology refers to the network of beliefs, values and assumptions which individuals draw on in making sense of the world. My use of the term reflects the view that an ideology tends to conceal the interests of particular power groups in maintaining a set of beliefs. For example, an ideology of femininity may well encompass the belief that male dominance over women is natural rather than socially constructed (Deem, 1981).
Clearly, the task of examining the relationship between gender codes and subject choice was not something which could be dealt with satisfactorily by a speedily administered questionnaire, but demanded a longer term and more detailed approach. In the early stages of planning the research, I decided that it would be necessary to carry out parallel studies in two schools. Since I had worked in one of the schools where I was to conduct the research, I was interested in drawing comparisons with another school where I was an unknown entity. Further, the literature on school effectiveness (Reynolds, 1982; Rutter et al. 1979; Mortimore et al. 1988) has alerted us to the importance of the ethos of individual schools in affecting educational outcomes. I was interested in observing whether either school was markedly more successful in fostering an attitude conducive to gender equality.

The ethos of Millbridge Upper School was generally liberal and democratic, characterised by an absence of uniform for pupils and a relaxed dress code for staff. The headmaster had an unobtrusive presence, even handing over the chairing of staff meetings to other teachers. Although great emphasis was placed on meeting the needs of individual pupils, many local parents felt that stronger discipline was required. Greenhill Upper School, twice the size of Millbridge, was much more formal and bureaucratic in style. Among staff, lines of management were clearly defined and strict dress codes were observed by both teachers and pupils. Greenhill was also much more conscious of its public image, ensuring that all school activities were well publicised in the local press. In the local community it was generally regarded as a 'good school'.

What I actually found was that although there were differences between the schools in many respects, the ethos in both institutions with regard to the predominant gender code was remarkably similar. Neither considered gender equality as a high priority, and there were no formal policies in either school or in the local authority with regard to equal opportunities. For this reason, it was not necessary to treat the schools as entirely separate cases in the writing up of the research.

In order to gain some degree of insight into how pupils' curricular paths were charted through the gradual establish-
ment of their gender identities, I felt it would be necessary to spend considerable time observing their daily interaction with their peers and teachers in the classroom, over a period of months rather than weeks. In this way, I hoped to be able to shed light on the central problem of why girls and boys apparently consented to a process which would be to the long-term detriment of many, and was likely to be particularly damaging to working-class girls. I also decided it would be necessary to carry out detailed in-depth interviews with pupils, parents and teachers in the two schools so that my observations could be cross-checked against the pupils' own account of events. However, as well as generating data which would be sensitive to participants' lived experiences, I also required some means of exploring the connections between key variables. I therefore took the decision to administer questionnaires to parents and pupils. School documents and records provided a further source of data. Ultimately, I hoped to use the various types of data in a complementary way to provide a rounded view of the social world. (See Slater (1973) and Denzin (1970) for arguments in favour of using a range of research methods.)

In deciding on the research methods I would use, I was also influenced by debates on feminist methodology (Duelli Klein, 1983; Scott, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1983). Broadly speaking, I attempted to adhere to the principle of reflexivity, making explicit my political and theoretical position and their impact on the process of data collection. I believe that this is necessary to allow the reader to judge the validity of the research account. A further hallmark of feminist research is its insistence on respect for the subjects of the research and an overall concern for the democratization of the research relationship, with the subjects having the opportunity to at least comment on the researcher's interpretation of the data. Mies (1983), in her work with battered women in West Germany, developed a model of feminist action research, where the women who were the subjects of the research were involved in analysing the findings and writing the final report. Although it was not possible for me to engage in such closely collaborative work with the pupils, parents and teachers with whom I worked, it was part of the research contract that I should feed the findings back to the schools, which I did. I also discussed the data with interested teachers and pupils and incorporated their ideas as
much as possible into the analysis. I have written in greater
detail elsewhere about the ethics of feminist educational
research (Riddell, 1989).

THE RESEARCH ROLE ADOPTED IN THE TWO
SCHOOLS

Since the purpose of carrying out research in two schools was
to investigate whether similar findings were produced, it is
extremely important to be clear about the role which I adopted
and how this influenced the nature of the data which emerged.
The obvious advantage of starting the research at Millbridge,
where I had previously taught, was that I brought with me a
knowledge of the layout, timetable and key personalities, thus
it was possible to avoid the frustration, experienced by many
researchers, of spending a whole lesson in a corridor having
failed to locate a particular class. Another advantage of
familiarity was being able to sit unobtrusively in a staffroom
and overhear conversations. Similarly, because my interests
and concerns were already known, I did not have to be quite
so circumspect in discussing my interest in gender as well as
option choice. At first, I thought that teachers might be
reluctant to share their honest opinions with me if they felt
that I might not approve. However, this was not the case, as I
think the interview data in Chapter 4 make clear. Relationships
with pupils at Millbridge proved more problematic, since most
remembered me as a teacher. They were still inclined to address
me rather suspiciously as 'Miss' and I quickly realized that
tries to chat with them in social areas at lunch time would
not be welcomed. Rather than foisting myself upon them, I
decided to concentrate on observation in the classroom and the
staffroom.

At Greenhill, my original strategy was to present myself in as
neutral a way as possible to the staff, emphasizing the subject
choice rather than the gender aspect of the study, to try to
ensure that they were not simply responding to me as a
feminist. Generally, relationships with this group of teachers
were less comfortable than with my former colleagues at
Millbridge. First, I had the tricky task of dealing with the
various gatekeepers, one of whom I felt was constantly shadowing me, asking for an account of what I had discovered.
that day. It was more difficult for me to gain access to various records and documents, which would have been automatically available to me at Millbridge. Further, I felt that I was always regarded as a potential critic, partly due to the fact that the period of fieldwork at Greenhill coincided with the teachers' industrial action, which caused major divisions to emerge in the staffroom. Some teachers clearly resented the fact that I was apparently able to walk round the school observing and gossiping with pupils without any of the responsibility of teaching.

One maths teacher, Mr Johnson, expressed his views thus:

There's never any feedback from research. People make their careers out of it, but things just carry on in school anyway. Like the HMI Report we've just had. They tell you what's wrong, but not what you can do about it.

Relationships with at least some of the teachers at Greenhill improved considerably once I relaxed enough to talk more about the main purpose of my research. A general discussion in the staffroom over dress codes for women teachers opened up a wider discussion about gender issues in the school. The conversation stemmed from the fact that I was wearing trousers, and one of the women remarked that these were not considered an acceptable form of female dress, since they signalled a generally rebellious attitude. By taking part in this discussion I could no longer pretend to be detached and impartial but the incident was ultimately beneficial because it was after this that a number of women teachers talked to me openly about their experiences.

By way of contrast, relationships with pupils at Greenhill were on a more equal footing than they had been at Millbridge. After I had spent several weeks following a group of pupils to their lessons, I realised that I had been accepted as a sympathetic visitor who was certainly not a teacher when I heard one girl telling her friend not to swear, to which she replied:

It's all right, we can say what we like to her. She's not a teacher.

However, my easy relationship with the pupils in itself constituted something of a threat to some of the teachers. Pupils would sometimes remark deliberately loudly to me.
SETTING THE SCENE

This is the lesson which I hate most in the week. I always forget my book.

Or they would offer as an excuse when told to be quiet:

We can't work quietly because the lady keeps on asking us questions.

In general, I found that relationships with girls and women were more open than with boys and men, which confirms what other feminist researchers have reported about their experience of interviewing women (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984). However, I had to be careful not to exploit their willingness to talk by asking for more information than they might wish to disclose. At both schools I respected the right of the girls to decide how much insight they wished to give me into their lives. When they wished for privacy, they generally politely broke off the conversation. McRobbie and Garber comment that:

girl culture is so well insulated as to effectively exclude not only other undesirable girls - but also boys, adults, teachers and researchers.

(McRobbie and Garber, 1976, p. 222)

I did not feel as totally excluded as this statement implies, but was very conscious of the limits which the girls placed on my participation in their culture.

Two main points emerge from this reflection on my research role in the two schools. The first is that my status as teacher or non-teacher made a significant difference to my interaction with teachers and pupils in the two schools, allowing me to be closer to the teachers and more distant from the pupils at Millbridge and vice versa at Greenhill, and I think this emerges from the data which I present in the following chapters. The second point is that I found it impossible to maintain a neutral identity whilst undertaking the research. At Millbridge this was impossible from the start, but at Greenhill cultivating an appearance of neutrality formed part of my early strategy. In practice, this simply caused me anxiety, and it was not until I became more open myself that my relationship with teachers here improved. Clearly there are problems in having a theoretical position and a clear identity in a research environment, but
it is difficult for me to conceive of gathering meaningful data whilst cultivating a bland and unresponsive persona. Maybe those who claim that neutrality is the ideal are either dishonest or naive.

CONCLUSION

This study draws on the tradition of social reproduction theory, since the central focus is the way in which option choice is used by the school to bring about traditional gender divisions in the curriculum. The work is also informed by the concerns of social interactionists, who see people's understandings of social situations as crucial in determining particular outcomes. My concern was not simply to describe the pattern of subject choice, but to explore the meaning attached to particular courses of action by pupils, parents and teachers. The desire to understand subjective meanings and at the same time to make comparisons between groups informed my decision to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Further, my identity as a former teacher and a feminist undoubtedly influenced the nature of the data I collected, in ways which I try to make explicit in the following chapters.
INTRODUCTION
As I have already commented, the 1980s has been a decade of rapid change in the structure of the national economy, with manufacturing industry suffering a marked decline and with sporadic growth in the service sector. At the same time, there have been marked changes in women's and men's economic roles as women have increasingly moved into the public sphere of employment, although generally on worse terms than their male counterparts. The structure of the labour market in Westshire in the mid-1990s was closely influenced by this national pattern, although the area had not been subjected to the rapid process of deindustrialisation common in the north.

This chapter provides an overview of the local economy and its impact on social relations, in turn strongly influencing the nature of schooling. I argue that these shifting economic and social relations are important factors in understanding the complex mixture of conservatism and desire for change which characterise Westshire girls' attitudes to education and work and their sense of identity more generally.

WESTSHIRE - AN OVERVIEW OF THE AREA
Westshire is set in the south west of England and is a predominantly rural area with a few small towns and many villages. The only large centre of population is on the eastern margin, where there is a conurbation, Upton and Mere, with a population of 325,000. This is one of the most rapidly expanding urban areas in the country, its growth stimulated by the
The physical location of the study

Greenhill Seatown Millbridge

Total (Westshire) Great Britain

Source: Department of Environment, September Census, 1981

Figure 2.1 Employment structure by main sectors, 1981

The mushrooming of financial and service industries during the 1980s. Because of its beautiful countryside and coastline, the county is also popular as a retirement area and the age profile of the population is skewed towards the elderly. In Westshire as a whole, the vast majority of people (67.5 per cent) work in the service sector. This is even higher than for Great Britain as a whole, where 58.7 per cent of people work in this sector (see Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1). In the two local employment areas where the research was carried out, Millbridge (population 4,000) and Greenhill (population 8,000), the percentage of employees in the service sector was 67.5 per cent and 68.5 per cent respectively. A much smaller proportion of the population worked in agriculture, 14.2 per cent of the Millbridge population and 8.4 per cent of the Greenhill population. This compares with a national average of 7.7 per cent. From this, it can be seen that although farming employs considerably more people than the national average, it is still a relatively small employer, and the number of people working in this sector has continued to fall over the last decade. The other major areas of employment are construction, minerals and light manufacturing.

National patterns of sex segregation in the labour market also pertain in Westshire, and at this point it is perhaps useful
### Table 2.1: Employment structure by main sectors, 1976 and 1981 (percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>7.3*</td>
<td>5.4*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbridge</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seatown</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowshill</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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### Employment by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>89.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerals</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacture</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Industry</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes:
* These figures are given for the combined categories of agriculture and minerals to avoid indicating the level of employment in individual enterprises.

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### Source:
* "Abstract of statistics for Westshire 1986," Westshire County Council (based on Department of Employment statistics)
decades, there has been a continuous growth in women's participation in waged work. Thus by 1986, women represented 44.5 per cent of the labour force, but many were in part-time rather than full-time jobs. During the recession of 1979–1986, women's representation in the labour market increased by 3 per cent, whilst male economic activity rates decreased from 58.8 per cent to 55.3 per cent. However, although women are now more active in the labour market, many commentators argue that their conditions of work and pay are still less favourable. Coyle comments that:

"It is the combination of occupational segregation and part-time working which has enabled women's pay to be determined at levels significantly lower than men's."

(Coyle, 1988, p. 6)

Weis, discussing the situation of women in Freeway, a deindustrialising steel town in the north west of the USA, also comments on the pattern whereby women increasingly participate in the labour market, but do not enjoy equally favourable working conditions:

"Thus, the move towards post-industrial society has meant that a higher proportion of females is employed in the labor force relative to earlier years, but that females increasingly earn relatively lower wages than males."

(Weis, 1990, p. 25)

A further distinctive feature of Westshire, which may well have an impact on the nature of social relations, is the presence of the military. In the North Westshire district, where the town of Millbridge is situated, 4.3 per cent of the population was employed in the armed forces, and in the Welbourne district where Greenhill is situated, the military employed 8 per cent of the population. This compares with 0.9 per cent for England and Wales as a whole. Unemployment in the Millbridge area and in the Greenhill and Seatown areas is shown in Table 2.2.

At 10.4 per cent for Millbridge and 8.3 per cent for Greenhill and Seatown in August 1986, unemployment was slightly lower than the national average. In Millbridge, more women were unemployed than men, and in Greenhill and Seatown the
reversal was true. This is probably due to the fact that the
service sector is a bigger employer in the Greenhill area, and
many women are employed in temporary jobs connected with
the tourist industry. It should also be remembered that the
actual number of women seeking employment is probably
substantially higher than this, since married women whose
husbands are working often do not register as unemployed.
The pattern of employment in Westshire, then, is very
different from those areas in Britain and elsewhere which have
experienced a rapid process of deindustrialization. The decline
in agricultural employment has been offset by growth in
service industries, particularly those associated with tourism
and light industry. Young people who are not able to find work
in the small towns travel to the nearby conurbation of Upton
and More.

There is considerable debate over whether such a thing as a
rural school exists and how it might be defined. Comber et al.
(1981), a team of researchers based at Aston University explo-
ing the effect of primary school closures on local communities,
defined rural schools as those 'located in areas of scattered
developments as well as free-standing hamlets, villages and
small towns with a population of 20,000 or less.' Within this
definition, Millridge and Greenhill schools could certainly be
defined as rural, but this blanket term tends to conceal the
complexity and diversity of the local communities. Within
Westshire, there are vast differences in experiences and values
between, for instance, the small minority who work in
agriculture and the far larger number who live on new estates
in villages or small towns and commute to work in the nearby
conurbation. In the accounts which I report in the following
chapters, I hope that a sense of the diversity of pupils and
parents emerges, rather than a false sense of a uniform rural
character. This is in line with general developments in rural
sociology. Work in the community studies tradition (Cohen,
1992; Lynd and Lynd, 1964) stressed the social solidarity of
rural communities. Later research (Newby, 1977, 1980 and
Vernby et al. 1978) emphasised the economic conflict which
underlay farmworkers' deference and farmers' paternalism.
The idea that gender and class conflict are peculiar to urban
areas, a view propounded by the community studies school,
would receive little support today.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year to</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>1986</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Greenhill</td>
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<td>Seatown</td>
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<td>Westshire</td>
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<td>South West</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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Source: Abstract of statistics for Wessex, 1985. Wessex County Council (based on Department of Employment statistics)

Notes: (1) The basis of compilation of this data changed at March 1986; the effect was to lower rates. (2) The basis of compilation of this data for the South West and Great Britain changed again in June 1986; the effect was again to lower rates.
In the mid-1980s, the comprehensive upper school at Millbridge catering for pupils aged from 13 to 19 had 770 pupils on roll. Constructed in the 1960s on the site of the former grammar school, its buildings are state-school utilitarian style. The metal window frames are draughty and ill-fitting, and many of the prefabricated panels are leaky. A visitor has to walk to the back of the school to find the main entrance, past maths rooms where the curtains hang in tatters but have not been replaced because some work is about to be done to replace the front facade of the school building. When the visitors’ lobby is reached, very little of the pupils’ work is on display, and the general atmosphere is rather unwelcoming. Elong as the school may be, the view from the playing fields is very striking. Broad meadows in which horses graze sweep down towards the river which runs through the town, and on the opposite bank a deciduous wood surrounds the Victorian Gothic buildings of a well-known and expensive public school. The contrast between the two schools is immediately obvious. Social divisions are also apparent in the town centre, where some shops obviously cater for the needs of the upper middle class. There are, for example, two old-fashioned shops selling hunting and fishing equipment, a small public house, and a delicatessen. These rub shoulders with the supermarket and a shop selling ‘seconds’ clothing. Apart from the Georgian buildings in the centre, much of the housing in Millbridge consists of small Victorian terraces. There is also a large modern housing estate begun in the 1960s which is still expanding. The Victorian brewery producing the local beer dominates the eastern side of the town and is still one of the largest employers of unskilled labour.

Greenhill Upper school is generally smarter than Millbridge. Opened in 1974, it was one of Westshire’s show-piece purpose-built comprehensives, amalgamating the grammar and secondary modern schools of Greenhill and Seatown, a small seaside resort (population 8,500), 10 miles from Greenhill. In the mid-1980s, approximately 1,400 pupils were enrolled. Like Millbridge, it has a well-equipped sports centre and houses the local youth club. The school faces a busy roundabout, and there are open fields beyond. The visitors’ entrance to the school is extremely well maintained, with glass cases full of trophies.
THE PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE STUDY

and pupils' art and pottery work on display. On the first floor, the office of the headmaster and deputy heads lead off a corridor which is not open to pupils and an official visitor to the school in this part of the building would think that there were no pupils present at all. This contrasts with the bustle and crush of other parts of the school, particularly the technology department and the youth centre, which are set well back from the main entrance.

The buildings in the centre of Greenhill, like Millbridge, are Georgian or Victorian, and there are many low-roofed cottages. The shops have a slightly unused feel and it is clear that for many inhabitants the main shopping centre is in Upton or Mere (the large conurbation referred to earlier). The proximity of the larger urban centre, only 10 minutes away by train, means that Greenhill is much less of a self-contained community than Millbridge, and it appears to be in the process of transformation into a dormitory town. Again, like Millbridge, a large estate containing some council but mainly private housing has been expanding since the 1960s. The other small town which feeds the school, Seatown (population 8,500), is much more of a holiday and retirement centre than an agricultural market town. It has a traditional seaside front, with many Victorian hotels, and there is little even in the way of light industry. The Isle of Welbourne, lying between Greenhill and Seatown, with its heathland and downs, is a conservation area, and attracts many visitors in the summer. Because of its position on the tip of the Welbourne peninsula, a ferry service connects it with Mere, and this used to be a main line of communication. Now, it is much quicker to travel between Mere and Seatown by road.

The villages surrounding Millbridge and Greenhill, from which pupils travel to the schools, have grey stone or brick cottages, sometimes with thatched roofs. Some of these are damp and crumbling, lived in by old people who have spent all their lives there. Many of these buildings have now been done up and are well beyond the means of the locals. There is a marked contrast between the cottages, with their Laura Ashley and Habitat style decoration, and the council houses—often on small estates at the edge of villages. Favourite building materials here are concrete and pebble-dash, and financial rather than aesthetic considerations have clearly been in the forefront.
of the planner's mind. Here, rural poverty is very much in evidence. Government policy on the sale of council houses has also affected the nature of Westshire village life. The most desirable houses quickly moved into the private market, making the prospect for young people of achieving a home in the locality even more remote.

During the course of the interviews which I carried out with Millbridge and Greenhill parents, many working-class women living outside the towns talked about the restrictions which were placed on their lives through isolation and lack of work opportunities. Mrs Rennick, who lived outside Greenhill, felt that her life was lonely and boring:

"When you're stuck down here it's lonely — you don't see anyone all day. There's a woman who's moved in next door and they're so busy at the moment getting the house up together, but I say give her a year and she'll be looking for something else. Just being here and having to make your husband's tea — it's dead boring."

Mrs Turner lived in a small village to the north of Millbridge, overlooked by a huge hill. The setting was very beautiful but as far as Mrs Turner was concerned, the advantages were definitely outweighed by the disadvantages:

"These days unless you've got your own transport and a good wage, about £20 a week spare money, there's no advantage at all to being in the country apart from country air. I mean that — it's the only advantage, because public transport is very scarce, so if you haven't got your own transport you're stuck.

Often she did not even bother going into Millbridge for shopping because when she had priced it she had found that Keymarket was only fifty pence cheaper for a weekly shop, so it was not worth lugging the stuff back on the bus.

Mrs Little, who also lived on a rural council housing estate to the north of Greenhill, emphasised how important it was to have independent transport and how being able to drive had made a difference to her life:

"You need a car. I wasn't happy until I could drive, that's what, six years ago. You can feel quite cut off out here . . ."
So if I didn’t have a car, no, I wouldn’t be happy. You get one bus a week, that’s Thursday and it goes into Greenhill about quarter to ten and it comes back about half eleven. And you’re expected to do the whole week’s shopping. There’s no shops here, you’ve got to do everything, bank and that. I mean when I first moved out here we used to live in a caravan up the road, there used to be buses every day, and then of course people drove and it sort of dwindled. You do really need a car.

The question of transport was clearly crucial, not simply to get out to see people, but also to have access to employment. Mrs Little was about to take up a job as a dinner lady at Greenhill School, but without her own transport this would have been impossible. It is interesting to note that in the 1981 census, 25 per cent of households in Westshire did not own a car.

Girls who lived outside the towns talked of the restrictions in their lives in similar terms. This was partly due to the lack of basic amenities like youth centres and other meeting places. Catherine Thomas, whose father was a dairyman at the time of the interview, lived in a remote cottage 7 miles from the nearest hamlet and described her life thus:

You just sit there and watch TV and get square eyes or else read. I’m a bookaholic. You can’t go out . . . You don’t have any self will to do anything . . . I’ve just sat at home and vegetated.

Middle class girls like Bernardette Coles, daughter of a country doctor, also complained of boredom and loneliness:

There’s only one other girl in the village who’s my age and she goes to a private boarding school and I don’t get on very well with her anyway. So apart from my two little brothers, I’m all by myself and it gets really boring during the long winter evenings.

As the comments of Westshire women and girls illustrate, life was far from the rural idyll which some earlier commentators might have led us to believe. Rather, as Newby and his colleagues (1977, 1978, 1980) have pointed out, social and economic conflicts are as real here as anywhere else. And as Chamberlain (1985) and Whitehead (1976) make clear,
patriarchy is certainly not a phenomenon restricted to urban areas. Indeed, Rosenfeld et al. (1985), writing in the US context, argue that even though very few people are now directly employed in farming, the remnants of traditional rural patriarchal relations may continue to affect a wider population.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Westshire is an area which may still be described as rural, but with the recognition that this term certainly does not denote a closed and cohesive community with a shared value system. Traditional rural working-class and middle-class people now live alongside newcomers who are either elderly retired people or middle-class people working in the service sector, often travelling into Upton or Mere to work. The traditional rural working-class is increasingly having to seek work in service, construction or light manufacturing industries and the escalation of house prices and shortage of council housing means that it is difficult for young working-class people to find accommodation in the area. Interview data suggest that women and girls living outside the towns suffered from boredom and isolation, and the existence of rural poverty amidst the affluence was very evident. The distance from London has meant that Westshire has not become a general commuter area to the same extent as parts of Berkshire and Hertfordshire; however, the general population drift to the south of England has certainly changed its population and local economy. The conservatism which pervades the area is informed both by Thatcherite entrepreneurial values as well as old fashioned beliefs in paternalism and deference. Westshire is clearly undergoing major changes, and those who move into the area expecting to find a timeless haven from the modern world would be sorely disappointed.
Part II

SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GENDERED CURRICULUM
This section deals with the part played by aspects of school organisation and by teachers in the reconstitution of gender divisions within the curriculum. I begin by analysing the way in which girls' and boys' curricular paths diverge after passing through the option choice system. A number of writers have considered the way in which the entire fabric of school life is pervaded by particular messages concerning appropriate forms of masculinity and femininity. Kessler et al. (1985) have termed this the school's gender regime and have discussed the central part played by the school in arbitrating between different forms of masculinity and femininity. Arnot (1982), as noted earlier, uses the term gender code to refer to the particular form of masculinity and femininity legitimated by the school. I examine the nature of the gender code transmitted to pupils through the presentation of particular subjects and the treatment meted out to pupils and parents during the course of subject choice. I also seek to analyse the educational ideologies rooted in the option choice system, in particular that of free choice which, I argue, acts as a legitimating device for differing educational outcomes. This is particularly significant for working-class girls, whose future life chances are particularly limited by their choice of subjects. I also consider the view of equal opportunities which is reflected to pupils and their parents through official documents and public statements.

Weiner (1986) suggests that two distinctly different perspectives on gender and equal opportunities may be discerned in school practice. The equal opportunities perspective 'identifies inequality as a pedagogical problem of equal importance to girls and boys whilst the anti-sexist perspective regards the under-representation and under-achievement of girls in schools as part of a far broader pattern of female subordination'. As the following analysis will demonstrate, to the extent that any clear perspective could be discerned, it was certainly of the more limited equal-opportunities variety, based firmly on a notion of female deficiency.

Commentators in Britain and Australia have disagreed on the impact of feminist ideas in schools. Acker (1987) takes the
pessimistic view that: 'In a situation where neither government
dictates nor conventional teacher ideologies nor conditions of
work promote and support anti-sexist innovation, feminist
futures seem grim'. Connell (1986), on the other hand, writing
from an Australian perspective, presents a very different view.
He argues that: 'Feminism has had a significant impact on
teachers' outlooks; conversely, teachers have become an
important vehicle for feminism' (p. 189). This disagreement
perhaps reflects not only differences in the nature and outlook
of the teaching profession in the two countries but also
different degrees of public awareness of feminist ideas and
government support for them. The final chapter in Part II
assesses the validity of each of these views in the light of the
culture of Westshire teachers and the way in which they
mediated the schools' position on equal opportunities to the
pupils. I consider the possibility that individual teachers might
adopt a more radical perspective on gender issues than that
reflected by the general ethos of the school, as well as the
alternative possibility that teachers might minimise further the
already lukewarm attitude towards equal opportunities. My
findings in fact suggest that the latter was more likely to be the
case, and I discuss the range of ideologies and operating
principles which appeared to underlie their resistance to the
pursuit of equal-opportunities policies. I also draw attention to
the diversity of teachers' attitudes to gender equality and the
determination of a minority of women teachers who identified
strongly with the ideas of the women's movement and strug-
gled to ensure that discussion of equal-opportunities issues
entered and remained on the official agenda.
THE MANAGEMENT AND MEANING OF OPTION CHOICE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, I provide a picture of the outcome of option choice in the two schools and, second, I explore the way in which the process of option choice was managed by the schools in order to promote an ideology of free choice and open access whilst at the same time selecting pupils on to particular courses on the basis of sex, class and achievement. Both schools also attempted to nod in the direction of equal opportunities, although I argue that the messages conveyed reveal a weak understanding of the issues, and amount to no more than tokenism. In order to analyse the precise nature of the ideological messages conveyed to pupils through the process of option choice, I examined the official brochures handed out to pupils at the beginning of their third year and attended occasions when parents were invited into the school to discuss their child’s choice of subjects.

Much of the debate in the literature on subject choice has focused on whether the school actively channels pupils in particular directions when they make their subject choices or whether the process is one of self-selection. Ryrie et al. (1979) and Whyte (1986) place greater importance on the capacity of pupils to internalise the school’s expectations, whereas Ball (1982) and Pratt et al. (1994) place more emphasis on direct intervention on the part of the school in terms of rejecting less able pupils from higher status courses. Woods (1976) and Ball (1982) suggest that middle-class parents are more actively involved and more successful than working-class parents in negotiating their children’s entry to higher status courses.
SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND THE GENDERED CURRICULUM

Some studies which have addressed the issue of gender and option choice have tended to adopt a female deficit model in searching for reasons to explain why girls have opted out of science and technology. As I pointed out in Chapter 1, only recently have researchers like Gaskell (1985) begun to explore this problem from the perspective of the girls themselves, taking class as well as gender into account, and seeing girls' subject choices as a logical response to perceived external circumstances. In this chapter, having considered the curricular divisions which emerged as a result of subject choice, I go on to explore the extent to which the school is centrally involved in shaping the pattern of option choice through the ideological messages which it conveys. In later chapters, I consider parents', pupils' and teachers' understandings of the process of option choice.

THE PATTERN OF OPTION CHOICE AT MILLBRIDGE AND GREENHILL

At both Millbridge and Greenhill, the subjects chosen by pupils were analysed by sex and class, and at Greenhill further analysis was carried out by achievement. (Definitions of class and achievement levels used throughout this book are given in Appendix 1.) Tables 3.1 - 3.4 provide detailed analysis of the pattern of option choice at the two schools, and in both cases clear-cut sex and class differences emerged. In general terms, more girls featured in languages, biology, commercial subjects and domestic crafts: boys predominated in physical sciences and technical craft subjects. At Greenhill, it was interesting that pre-catering, a specifically vocationally orientated course, was taken mainly by boys, whereas home economics, textiles and home and family studies, which did not have this vocational bias, remained firmly in the female domain. The way in which sex and class intersected was very interesting. At Greenhill, working-class girls predominated in home and family studies, a course which was presented as equipping girls for a future domestic role, and at Millbridge, needlework, a course unlikely to have high exchange value in the labour market, was taken mainly by working-class girls. Middle class girls, on the other hand, were likely to opt for a second language. Despite the fact that many young women no longer envisage their future in terms of life-long financial
MANAGEMENT AND MEANING OF OPTION CHOICE

dependency and most will return to work after a short break for child-rearing, it appears that such changes have not yet permeated through to the curriculum. Here, a culture of femininity rooted in the past continues to be propagated.

Class as well as sex differences were apparent in the uptake of science courses, with middle-class pupils clustering in pure science subjects and working-class pupils opting for the general science course. Physics is possibly the most elite subject on the curriculum, being taken almost exclusively by middle-class boys. At Greenhill, subjects were also analysed by pupils’ achievement level. Subjects where more middle-class pupils were found were also those where there were significantly more above-average-achieving pupils. These tended to be languages, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, economics and political affairs and music. It would appear that teachers’ exclusion of pupils defined as lower achieving from particular courses also has the effect of excluding working-class pupils, whether this is intended or not.

Subjects on the Greenhill curriculum were grouped into areas, and an analysis was carried out to see whether there were any significant differences in the overall pattern of choice. The categories were as follows; sciences; humanities; languages; applied science and technology; domestic crafts and office skills; aesthetic subjects. The aim was to investigate whether there were any differences with regard to sex, class or achievement between pupils not taking any subject in a particular area, those taking one academic subject in the area and those taking two or more academic subjects in the area. (Non-academic refers to those subjects which offered only a restricted grade at CSE or did not lead to any public examination. Academic refers to those subjects leading to CSE or ‘O’ level examinations.) Table 3.4 gives a list of the subjects included in each area and a summary of data.

The analysis revealed that all pupils took some form of science and more boys than girls took two academic sciences, although this was not at the level of significance. The vast majority of pupils doing two academic sciences were middle class. In the humanities area, a higher percentage of boys than girls were doing two academic subjects and all pupils in the non-academic option were working class. In the area of
Table 3.1 Percentages of pupils opting into different subject areas by sex and class at Millbridge in 1983 and results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent girls</th>
<th>Per cent boys</th>
<th>Per cent working class</th>
<th>Results of Chi-square test</th>
<th>Results of Chi-square test</th>
<th>Group more likely to choose subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 15.31$ p &lt; .001</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>German</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 7.20$ p &lt; .01</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 13.29$ p &lt; .001</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>Social and Economic history</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 16.47$ p &lt; .001</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 16.47$ p &lt; .001</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 8.66$ p &lt; .01</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 13.64$ p &lt; .001</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 5.98$ p &lt; .05</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.51$ p &gt; .01</td>
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<td>Girls</td>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.51$ p &gt; .01</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>Home economics</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>99</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>$\chi^2 = 12.91$ p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Working-class boys</td>
</tr>
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Computer

Electronics

Rural studies

Technical drawing

Woodwork

Metalwork

Combined technical course

Chemistry

Science

20th-century history

Geography

Community service

Use of English

Religious education

Music

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subject</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Chi-sq</th>
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<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1. The total number of pupils is 208, of whom 49 per cent are boys, and 51 per cent are girls. 70 per cent of these pupils are working class and 30 per cent are middle class.
2. Science is a limited grade CSE and Use of English is a non-examination subject.
Table 3.2 Percentages of pupils opting into different subject areas by sex and class at Greenhill in 1985 and results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent girls</th>
<th>Per cent boys</th>
<th>Results of Chi-square test</th>
<th>Results of Chi-square test for class</th>
<th>Group most likely to choose subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 10.80$ $\text{df} = 2$ $p &lt; .005$</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 12.21$ $\text{df} = 3$ $p &lt; .001$</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 8.67$ $\text{df} = 2$ $p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious studies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 14.41$ $\text{df} = 3$ $p &lt; .001$</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Notes:
1. N = 132. 51 per cent are boys and 49 per cent are girls; 71 per cent are working class and 29 per cent are middle class. 2. Science is a limited grade CSE subject.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>High achievement</th>
<th>% High achievement</th>
<th>Above average achievement</th>
<th>% Above average achievement</th>
<th>Below average achievement</th>
<th>% Below average achievement</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
<th>Group more likely to choose subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 11.945, \ p &lt; .01 )</td>
<td>High achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 15.067, \ p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td>High achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 15.067, \ p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td>High achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 15.067, \ p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td>High achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 15.067, \ p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td>Above average achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious studies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>Computer studies</td>
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<td>50.0</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
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</tr>
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<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 16.844, \ p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td>Low achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 8.069, \ p &lt; .05 )</td>
<td>Above average achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 8.069, \ p &lt; .05 )</td>
<td>Above average achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>120.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>120.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics and public affairs</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22.3</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>36.0</td>
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<td>10.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>68.7</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>35.7</td>
<td>36.0</td>
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<td>10.8</td>
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<td>Art textiles</td>
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<td>31.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<td>Woodwork</td>
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<td>35.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering technology</td>
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<td>4.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied engineering and allied graphics</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 132
Table 3.4 Chi-square test applied to Greenhill pupils not taking a subject in a particular area, taking one non-academic subject, taking two or more academic subjects (by sex, class and achievement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Doing 2/3 ac. subs.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. subs.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing non-ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Not doing</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 1 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities Not doing</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 1 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
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<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
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<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of % chi square Working test class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Doing 2/3 ac. subs.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. subs.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing non-ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Not doing</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 1 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of % above % below chi square average average achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science Doing 2/3 ac. subs.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. subs.</td>
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<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing non-ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages Not doing</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 1 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. sub.</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
<td><strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
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Applied Science and Technology
Not doing Doing non-ac. sub.
Doing 1 ac. sub.
Doing 2 ac. subs.
Domestic/office
Not doing Doing non-ac. sub.
Doing 1 ac. sub.
Doing 2 ac. subs.
Aesthetic
Not doing Doing 1 ac. sub.
Doing 2/3 ac. subs.

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<td>Science</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>83.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>38.8</td>
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<td>Not doing</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing non-ac. sub.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing 1 ac. sub.</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing 2 ac. subs.</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>26.6</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Note: (1) N=132. (2) Science = physics, chemistry, biology and science at work (non-academic); humanities = geography, history, biology, economics and public affairs; religious studies and humanities (non-academic); languages = German, French and Latin; applied science and technology = electronics, transport studies, woodwork, metalwork, engineering technology, technical graphics and applied engineering (non-academic); domestic/office = home economics, textiles, art textiles, secretarial studies, keyboarding, home and family studies; aesthetic = music, pottery, art and drama. (3) Non-ac. sub = non-academic subject (i.e. non-examination or restricted grade CSE); Ac. sub = academic subject (i.e. leading to CSE or 'O' level).
School Organisation and the Gendered Curriculum

Aesthetic subjects, there were no class or sex differences between pupils but 56 per cent of above-average-achieving pupils, compared with 52 per cent of below-average-achieving pupils were not doing any subject in this area. Perhaps the most interesting contrasts emerged in the analysis of applied science and technology and office subjects and domestic crafts. Apart from the expected sex differences, significant class and achievement differences were found in the applied science and technology area, with 74 per cent of middle-class pupils and 65 per cent of above-average-achieving pupils taking no subject in this area. By way of contrast, there were no significant class and achievement differences between pupils in domestic and office subjects. This suggests that middle-class and higher-achieving boys are being channelled out of applied science and technology, whereas the same is not true to the same extent for middle-class and higher-achieving girls in domestic crafts and office skills. This finding confirms data gathered from observation of option choice interviews at Millbridge, where even the highest-achieving girls were given strong encouragement to do home economics. The school's stated policy that all pupils should take a craft and aesthetic subject in order to have a balanced curriculum was clearly not being universally enforced.

From this discussion, it is clear that at both schools the option choice system was operating in a highly selective way, creating divisions along class, sex and achievement lines, and producing an elite group of middle-class boys likely to gravitate in the future towards the most prestigious jobs in science and technology. Earlier discussion of changing patterns of employment alerts us to the fact that it is no longer appropriate for working-class boys to anticipate spending their lives engaged in traditional hard manual labour, and girls to expect to spend most of their adult lives as wives and mothers outside the labour market. However, patterns of option choice at Millbridge and Greenhill in the mid-1980s certainly did not indicate that the curriculum followed by girls and boys was responding to these new conditions of employment. The intriguing question which needs to be addressed is the extent to which the school was directly responsible for producing these divisions, or whether they resulted from the gender and class culture of parents and pupils. The following discussion considers whether pupils were indeed being channelled into sex and class stereotypes.
MANAGEMENT AND MEANING OF OPTION CHOICE

typed areas of the curriculum through gender codes implicit in the school's management of option choice or whether more overt forms of coercion were taking place. I begin by analysing the messages conveyed in the presentation of subjects to pupils and go on to consider the implicit understandings of the nature and function of choice itself.

THE PROCESS OF OPTION CHOICE AT MILLBRIDGE AND GREENHILL

At both schools, the process of option choice was treated as one of the key events of the school year. Documents were distributed to all pupils explaining the nature of the curriculum and the content of particular courses, and parents were invited into the school for formal meetings with teachers. Both schools attempted to communicate their concern that all pupils should select just the right course for them as individuals. There were some organisational differences between the two institutions. For instance, at Millbridge, a cafeteria style system operated, whereby pupils were free to choose any subject, with the recommendation that all pupils should study one subject from the sciences, humanities, creative arts and design subject areas. The school prided itself on its ability to timetable almost any combination of subjects. In addition, pupils were advised to continue with a modern language if they were making reasonable progress with it. At Greenhill, on the other hand, subjects were offered in specific groups, and some combinations of subjects were impossible. Pupils who took secretarial studies were particularly restricted. Since this took up three options, it was impossible to fulfil the school's advice to take a science, a humanity, a modern language and a craft or aesthetic subject.

A number of unifying themes ran through the process of option choice in the two schools. First, a great deal of emphasis was placed on pupils' own responsibility for deciding which subjects they wanted to study and accepting the consequences of their choice. Every pupil was treated as an atomised individual, free from the influence of school, parents or peer group. At the same time, it was apparent from the official documents and the various formal meetings with pupils and parents that in reality both schools were exercising a guiding influence. Indeed, it was apparent that the schools had very
clear ideas about which pupils they wished to see in which areas, and their task was to convey this in such a way as to make the message apparent but not so overt as to undermine the ideology of free choice. In the following section, I will first illustrate how a selective process based on sex and achievement, closely connected with class, operated through the official presentation of particular subjects. I will then consider how, simultaneously, an ideology of free choice was communicated to pupils and parents. Finally, I will note how both schools paid lip-service to the rhetoric of equal opportunities, whilst failing to formulate any clear and consistent whole school policy. Clearly, these messages are grossly inconsistent, and I point out moments at which the contradictions became apparent.

SELECTIVE PROCESSES OPERATING THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

We have already seen, through the analysis of patterns of option choice, how some subjects attracted particular groups of pupils with regard to sex, class and achievement. Since science subjects were markedly divided along these lines, it is worth considering the extent to which this may stem from the way in which they were presented to pupils. At both Millbridge and Greenhill, physics in particular was characterised as an abstract, mathematical subject connected essentially with a mechanistic view of the world. Thus, in the Millbridge options booklet it was described as the study of ‘heat, light, sound, electricity, mechanics, waves, radioactivity and atomic physics’. In the Greenhill booklet, it was presented as ‘a detailed study of energy and their relationships one with the other’. We know from the work of Harding and Sutoris (1987) and others that girls are more likely to be attracted to science if it appears to have a clear human and social dimension, but no attempt at either school was being made to highlight these aspects of the physics curriculum. Its vocational applications were presented in similarly masculine terms. The subject was said to be an important qualification for technical apprenticeships, medicine or engineering, all of which, with the possible exception of medicine, are likely to be regarded as male areas of work. No attempt was made to explain the usefulness of physics in...
traditionally female areas of work, which girls might be considering at this stage. At both schools, it is interesting to note that chemistry was described in far less abstract terms and its practical applications, for example, food production and processing, were stressed. This might provide a clue as to why it was not rejected to the same extent by girls. Biology, the science subject in which girls predominated at both schools, was not described as requiring mathematical ability, and its concern with living things was emphasized. So despite the fact that the science departments claimed to operate an equal opportunities policy, the presentation of these courses undermined this objective.

Craft subjects, too, were presented in terms which were likely to encourage traditional patterns of enrolment. At both schools, the description of domestic craft subjects made no concession to the notion of gender neutrality, and whilst not actually stating that these courses were for girls only, constantly emphasized their traditional feminine concerns. For example, the CSE course, which was always referred to as 'host/hostess cookery' but named rather incongruously 'host/hostess cookery in the options booklet, was said to emphasize 'entertaining, personal grooming, clothes and fabric care'. The entire course description was rather reminiscent of the contents of a traditional women's magazine and was scarcely designed to encourage equal numbers of girls and boys into the subject. Needlework and textiles courses focused on the traditional female domestic craft of home dressmaking from printed patterns, rather than the design or production aspects of clothing and furnishing. The only home economics course which was orientated towards the acquisition of work-related rather than domestic skills was the pre-catering course at Greenhill, a vocationally oriented course aimed at and taken almost exclusively by working-class boys. This course dealt with food technology and preparation in commercial settings and it was interesting that one middle-class girl was dissuaded from taking it on the grounds that it was not sufficiently academic. Her reason for rejecting the 'O' level home economics class was that it was 'all to do with families and babies', whereas she was interested in the world of work. It is interesting that both data from observation of option-choice interviews and from statistical analysis of the subjects which different pupils actually took show that whereas
higher-achieving and middle-class boys were less likely to be taking craft subjects than lower-achieving and working-class boys, the same was not true for girls. The domestic role of higher-achieving and middle-class girls seems to be considered just as important as it is for their working-class sisters. Given the changing structure of the labour market, it is surprising that schools should continue to foster this culture of domesticity in such an overt form.

Traditionally masculine craft areas tended to provide fairly straightforward descriptions of the skills which would be covered in the course, and stated that they were open to both sexes. This was despite the fact that at both schools pupils were forced to choose their craft subjects for the third year at the middle school, before having had any experience of the secondary school subject, thus effectively pre-empting any later decision. This is a clear example of the way in which equal-opportunities policies were conveyed in a confused and inconsistent manner, a point discussed further in a later section of this chapter.

Overall, then, in key subject areas it appeared that subjects were presented in such a way as to ensure that gender boundaries would be maintained. There is clearly a marked discrepancy between the cultural understandings inherent in these subject descriptions and the more radical aspirations of some of the girls which emerged from the interviews and questionnaires.

With regard to differentiation on the basis of achievement levels, it was clear that both schools were involved in a sifting process, signalling that some courses were suitable for 'O' level pupils, some for CSE pupils and others for those deemed incapable of attempting any examination at all. However, since this ran counter to the much vaunted principle of free choice and open access, it had to be conveyed in a reasonably subtle way. Occasionally, as in the case of computer studies at Millbridge, a subject was described bluntly as 'not suitable for the least able'. More usually, as in the science-at-work option at Greenhill, vaguer terms were used such as 'this course is intended to meet the real needs of youngsters'. At an open meeting held for parents at Greenhill, the discomfort of the staff was apparent when they were asked questions by confused parents about the content of the large range of science
and technology courses on offer. The deputy head addressing the meeting became almost lost for words when asked to spell out which courses were intended for which pupils. Mr Dewey, the head of technology, was less reticent in his explanation of the content of the various technology options. Engineering technology, he said, was intended for 'the apprentice of the future', whereas applied engineering 'is meant in the same way as home and family studies for the girls. It's meant for those who couldn't cope with the exam.' Staff at Millbridge were briefed at a special meeting about the minimum-achievement groupings for which each course was designed, and some were very unhappy about the covert selection process. A female art teacher commented:

Anyone would think we were still running a grammar school – what exactly are these other poor kids meant to be doing? It seems like they need to be 'O' level material even to do a typing course.

OPTING FOR SUBJECTS - THE IDEOLOGY OF FREE CHOICE

At the start of the summer term at Millbridge, each third-year pupil and his or her parents were invited to the school to meet the tutor and a senior member of staff to discuss future studies. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes, and I sat in on the interviews of all the third-year pupils in two mixed-ability tutor groups. Tutor groups at Millbridge were organised vertically, and there were eleven third-year pupils in the groups I selected. The fact that the groups were mixed ability ensured that I observed an approximately equal number of interviews with girls and boys and higher- and lower-achieving pupils. Because these interviews provided such useful insights into the subtle processes which produced such neat and predictable outcomes, I discuss a number in depth. Table 3.5 provides a brief summary of the interviews as a whole.

The function of the option choice system as a means of controlling potentially disruptive pupils through the ideology of free choice was apparent in the interviews of Emma Martin and Keith Howells, both of whom were identified as troublemakers. Throughout these interviews, both members of staff repeatedly used such phrases as, 'Now you must show...
Table 3.5: Brief summary of data gathered at pupils’ option choice interviews held at Millbridge Upper School, June 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil’s Name</th>
<th>Interviewers</th>
<th>Parents present</th>
<th>Pupil’s stated career intention</th>
<th>Level of achievement</th>
<th>Summary of observation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aimee Smith</td>
<td>Female deputy head and male chemistry teacher</td>
<td>Mother and father</td>
<td>Something to do with science</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Rather vague about career intentions; says she likes doing things; female deputy head tries to persuade her to develop manual dexterity; no mention made of technology as an attractive subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Thorp</td>
<td>Female deputy head and male chemistry teacher</td>
<td>Mother and father</td>
<td>Science and particularly mathematics</td>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>Very clear about career intentions; given much encouragement, despite fact that science grades are only slightly above average; no aesthetic subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Thomas</td>
<td>Female deputy head and male chemistry teacher</td>
<td>Mother and father</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Discouraged from doing academic sciences; discouraged from nursing; no suggestion of alternative jobs; mother thinks home economics very important, whether she gets married or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Additional Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Howells</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Metalwork, technical drawing, physics, chemistry, twentieth-century history, combined technical course</td>
<td>T urns up without list of subjects; shies heavily throughout interview; very clear about the job he wants; suggestion by deputy head that he might do home economics treated as joke by everybody present; teachers stress that he therefore must work at them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Murdoch</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Father only</td>
<td>Chemistry teacher</td>
<td>Social and economic history, biology, chemistry, home economics, needlework, Reserve, typing French</td>
<td>Painfully shy throughout interview; nods or shakes head rather than replying; no idea what she wants to do; nothing suggested; chemistry teacher advises against home economics, needlework and potentially mother says she would like her to do French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise Mellor</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Father only</td>
<td>Home economics teacher</td>
<td>Community services, use of English, twentieth-century history, science</td>
<td>Louise has hearing and speech defects; no suggestions made about possible job she might do; chemistry teacher suggests home economics; mother says her to do home economics for when she gets married.</td>
</tr>
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Table 3.5 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil's Name</th>
<th>Interviewers</th>
<th>Parents present</th>
<th>Pupil's stated career intention</th>
<th>Subjects provisionally chosen</th>
<th>Level of achievement</th>
<th>Summary of observation</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Ballard</td>
<td>Male head of house and male physics teacher</td>
<td>Mother and father present</td>
<td>Secretary or book work, not really sure</td>
<td>Commerce, typing, German, French, general science or French, home economics, twentieth century history</td>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>Father talked a lot during interview; says daughter is no good in science (but she has grade B in biology); wants her to do languages and history because he likes the subject himself; Sarah and mother both worry about making wrong choice; IQ testing decided upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Evans</td>
<td>Male head of house and male physics teacher</td>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>Mechanical engineering</td>
<td>Physics, chemistry, metalwork, twentieth century history, French</td>
<td>Above average</td>
<td>Great emphasis on only choosing subjects which will help him in job he wants to do; mother concerned about unemployment and need for right qualifications; physics teacher says he has potential to do two subjects, but research shows boys' performance improves with age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Emma Martin</td>
<td>Male head of house and male physics teacher</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Art, biology, history, geography, typing, home economics</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Vey clear about what she wants to do - says she has apprenticeship arranged for hairdressing. Mother says she thinks Emma really wants to go to art college. Good emphasis on need to settle down and work because she has chosen subjects voluntarily.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Jones</td>
<td>Male head of house and male physics teacher</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Biology, social and economic history, art, typing, commerce, chemistry, German, geography, art</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Very clear idea of what he wants to do - go to college and then do bricklaying. Only doing history because he couldn't think of anything else - warned by manufacturing teacher that he must work at it.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart Hubbard</td>
<td>Male head of house and male physics teacher</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Use of English, social studies, French, geography, woodwork, general science, chemistry, business studies, combined technical course, art</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Very clear idea of what he wants to do - go to college and then do bricklaying. Only doing history because he couldn't think of anything else - warned by manufacturing teacher that he must work at it.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
commitment to these subjects because you have chosen to study them, no one's forcing you.' Keith conveyed a strong sense of scepticism by refusing to make eye contact with anyone and providing monosyllabic answers to the questions which he was asked. Emma looked angry throughout her interview and there appeared to be considerable tension in the relationship with her mother. Mrs Martin said that Emma might be thinking of going to art school, which Emma promptly contradicted. At this point, Mrs Martin said that she thought her daughter was under pressure from her friends with regard to smoking, drinking and wearing a lot of make-up, and she thought that girls generally had too much freedom. Meanwhile Emma was sighing and raising her eyes to the ceiling, as if to signal complete boredom. Both Keith and Emma had chosen stereotypically masculine and feminine areas of the curriculum and sex-stereotyped occupations, with Emma saying she wanted to be a hairdresser and Keith an engineer. Keith was asked by the female deputy head if he had considered home economics, but this suggestion was accompanied by laughter, as if it was not to be taken seriously. Emma's choice of home economics was not questioned at all. Neither pupil was asked why they had chosen the particular job which they said they wanted when they left school, and if they had considered any alternatives.

During both these interviews, I had a strong sense that the real interests and concerns of these pupils were not being dealt with. The aim seemed to be to slot them into a conventional curriculum package with the minimum of fuss, whilst at the same time persuading them to take full responsibility for the outcome. I suspected that neither of these pupils was going to accept the deal unquestioningly but, none the less, it appeared that the ideology of free choice was being used as a means of controlling these two potentially deviant pupils, and, of course, this raises interesting questions with regard to the national curriculum. If free choice, of however dubious a nature, is no longer to be available as a means of legitimating curricular divisions, then it is likely that schools may have a harder task in controlling their disenchanted pupils. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10, but it is interesting to note that, recently, more emphasis has been placed on the possibilities for free choice within the national curriculum.
The cases of Sarah Ballard and Michael Brown illustrated the way in which pupils' subject choices and educational and occupational aspirations were accepted unquestioningly when these were in line with traditional gender stereotypes. Sarah had mainly B grades and, although she mentioned an interest in office or bank work, it was clear that she did not have a firm idea of the direction she would like to follow. Despite this uncertainty, the interview proceeded on the assumption that Sarah wanted to do office work. Sarah's father took up a lot of the talking time in the interview, and it was he who said that she did not want to carry on with science because it was a bit of a grey area for her. In response to the teacher's question, 'Is it Sarah's considered decision to rule out science?' it was actually Mr Ballard rather than Sarah herself who replied that it was. He and the two interviewers agreed that science at work (the non-academic option) would probably be a better bet than biology. Mr Ballard also said that he would like to see her carrying through her languages and history. 'I'd like her to take history,' he said, 'You know how keen your dad is on history.' Before the end of the interview, Sarah's mother expressed anxiety about the whole process: 'I don't want her to end up like me, full of "I should have done this, that and the other."' Finally it was decided that some IQ testing should be carried out but despite this it was clear that repeatedly expressed fears about sinking into some unfulfilling job were not dealt with at all by the two male interviewers. The promise of IQ testing seemed to hold out the hope that something was being done, but the inertia of the system was clearly propelling Sarah towards some sort of low-status clerical work, despite her relatively high level of achievement.

Michael Brown's interview was in sharp contrast with Sarah's. Although his grades were lower than hers, he was very clear about the work he wanted to do, which was mechanical engineering. The entire interview focused around the qualifications he would need for this job and, despite his rather low grades, mostly Cs and Ds, his choice of two sciences was approved. The argument used by the male physics teacher conducting the interview was a very clear example of how boys' performance in science may be aided by beliefs about their natural ability in this area. Michael was told by the physics teacher:
Your grades are a bit low at the moment to be doing two sciences, but research shows that boys tend to be a bit behind girls at this stage and then catch up later, so you should be all right.

Buswell (1984) describes a similar incident in which a sixth-form boy's poor performance was attributed to laziness and lack of motivation rather than lack of ability.

The contrast in the emphasis given to future work was even more apparent in the interviews of lower-achieving boys and girls. Stewart Hubbard, who had mainly D and E grades, said that he wanted to be a bricklayer and go to college, and his subjects were all chosen with a view to the craft and technology background which he would find useful in his future work. Ruth Thomas and Louise Miller also had low grades in all subjects, but their interviews focused much more on choosing subjects to prepare them for their future domestic role rather than their future working lives. Home economics was seen as a priority in both cases. To quote Mrs Thomas: 'Domestic science is a good thing all girls should learn whether they get married or not.' The interviewers appeared to be in firm agreement with this comment.

It would appear, then, that some channelling by the school was taking place during the course of the option choice interviews, but there was little evidence of parents or pupils actively resisting. The extent to which further manipulation went on behind the scenes was not altogether clear. I asked the deputy headmistress responsible for option choice how often she had to guide pupils away from unsuitable choices. She replied that this did not happen very often because most pupils seemed to have a realistic idea of their own capabilities. This would appear to support the findings of Ryrie et al. (1979) that generally little direct intervention takes place, since pupils have already effectively internalised the school's expectations of their future performance. In my analysis of the process at Millbridge, there was little evidence of teachers intervening to persuade pupils to alter their choice of subject, although some degree of persuasion clearly was used. In interviews, the majority of pupils confirmed that they were able to study the subjects they originally chose.

To summarise, then, despite the rhetoric of free choice, a
process of selection based on both sex and achievement, the latter associated with class, was at work during the option choice interviews. All the boys, whatever their level of achievement, were encouraged to choose subjects in relation to the area of work they claimed they were aiming for in the future. They were also encouraged to take courses which were likely to stretch them, since teachers anticipated that their current levels of performance were going to improve rather than stabilise or decline. The boys themselves all had clear ideas of what they wanted to do. The girls tended to be much vaguer in this respect, or else suggested sex-stereotyped jobs such as hairdressing, and no attempt was made to encourage them to think of alternatives. With regard to non-academic subjects, it was taken for granted that boys would go into technology and girls into domestic craft subjects or office skills. Statistical analysis of option choice data discussed earlier in this chapter shows that the schools' insistence on a balanced curriculum for everybody, which should include a craft and aesthetic subject, was more likely to be reflected in the option choices of girls than boys and of lower-achieving than higher-achieving pupils. This finding was reinforced by evidence from the option choice interviews.

A further major theme which emerged was the use of the ideology of free choice as a means of exerting control over unruly pupils and of legitimating different curricular paths more generally. Reynolds and Sullivan (1981) have identified the individualistic nature of timetabling in comprehensive schools as one of the means by which working-class pupils are prevented from developing a sense of class solidarity. Instead of spending all day with the same group of pupils, they experience the confusion of moving into a different group for each lesson. Because of the fragmentary nature of these encounters, they are prevented from developing a sense of social-class identity and solidarity. Thus the option choice system might well be a means of causing working-class pupils to accept class divisions within the curriculum as manifestations of their own free choice rather than products of the education system. In the same way, pupils may very well find it hard to recognise and challenge gender divisions within the curriculum if they believe that a system of choice rather than selection is at work. They are likely to feel personally responsible for their own failure to
break away from the gender divisions of the labour market, instead of recognising these as structural features of society.

OPTION CHOICE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The preceding discussion illustrates the way in which the management of the option choice system in both schools tended to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. However, although neither school had a formalised equal-opportunities policy, some teachers were aware that this was an issue which they could not entirely ignore. This may have been, in part, because of an awareness of the requirements of the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative (TVEI) in which both schools were participating, which specified equal opportunities as one of its key criteria of success. My overall impression was of a very limited understanding of the issue which was unlikely to lead to any real progress. In the Greenhill options booklet, for instance, physics was specifically described as a course for girls and boys, followed by a course description which emphasised its masculine concerns. As we noted earlier, metalwork, woodwork and technical drawing were described as equally suitable for boys and girls, but with no indication of any practical support to help girls make up for the earlier experience which almost all had missed.

In the various talks given to pupils at the two schools on the subject of options, a female deficit model underpinning the understanding of equal opportunities was clearly apparent. For example, Mr Lill, who was in charge of subject choices at Greenhill, spoke to the assembled third year about the danger of selecting a sex-stereotyped curriculum. As far as he was concerned, there were many opportunities there, and girls were simply not taking them up:

We know that if a girl had earned equal grades with a boy, the employer would take the girl because if the pressure's on them and they've got that far they must be good. Heathland (a nearby atomic energy research establishment) is crying out for girls as technical and electrical apprentices. We try to encourage girls every year but it falls on stony ground. You can do it but you think you can't. Again, go and ask the teachers.
He then went on to tell the boys that they should not reject the idea of doing home economics and textiles:

There is not one hotel in London where the top cook is a woman. There are only three top female hair stylists - the rest are men. This is London fashion week - most of the stylists there are men. Boys say they would be called a poof if they did a job like that. I wouldn't mind being called a poof if I was being paid two and a half million pounds a year for it.

While girls and their parents are characterised as narrow-minded and conservative, teachers and the school are seen as generally progressive and keen to encourage girls and boys into non-traditional areas of the curriculum.

A deficit model of girls' behaviour was also implicit in other comments made by staff on the subject of option choice. Peter Johns, a young softly-spoken woodwork teacher, who gave the impression that he was genuinely concerned about the male dominance of the technology department, ended his talk to pupils on future options in the technology department with a special plea to the girls 'to be a bit more adventurous and choose a boys' subject. Don't have a blinkered view of it.' As an afterthought he added: 'And, of course, the boys might want to think about home economics.' Like Mr Lill, he was blaming the girls for their lack of enterprise in sticking to traditional subjects, without offering them any help in breaking away from this pattern or offering an analysis of the structural constraints in the school and the labour market. Reactions from pupils to these talks suggested that girls recognised the female deficit model which informed the school's conception of equal opportunities and resented it. For instance, after Mr Lill's talk Bernadette Coles commented: 'They don't make the boys do needlework, so why should we be made to do physics?'

It was also interesting to note how traditionally female subjects were presented in a substantially different light to encourage boys to consider them. Mrs Hankin, the female deputy head at Greenhill, told parents that there was no reason why boys should not do the secretarial course:

We've had some very successful young gentlemen doing
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It. If they want to set up their own business, for instance, it gives them a very useful background.

Girls opting for secretarial studies were certainly not told that it was a subject generally leading to low-paid office work, but neither were they offered the promise of their own business as a reason for taking it. In general, then, when the issue of equal opportunities was mentioned, it was in the context of either criticising girls for their limited horizons, or urging boys to move into traditionally female areas where they would soon outstrip their female competitors. This was certainly not an empowering message for the girls who received it, and may account for some of their reluctance to abandon female curriculum ghettoes.

Conclusion

Analysis of subjects taken in both schools showed that selection processes were evident in the option choice system, dividing pupils according to class, sex and achievement. Interestingly, even though the two schools ran slightly different option choice systems, Millbridge offering an entirely free choice and Greenhill requiring pupils to choose from specific groups of subjects, the results in terms of curricular divisions along sex and class lines were very similar. Pratt et al. (1984) suggest that entirely free option choice is likely to lead to less sex stereotyping, but in the case of Millbridge this certainly did not seem to be true. However, the fact that pupils were required to choose their craft subjects before they left their middle schools, thus pre-empting subsequent choice of subjects, undoubtedly contributed to the sex-stereotyping of these areas.

The various talks to pupils and parents and the option choice booklets stressed the openness of the curriculum to all pupils, and the necessity of choosing a properly balanced curriculum. However, further analysis of interviews, talks and printed material revealed the existence of a sifting process based on sex and achievement. Although class did not form an overt basis for selection, the strong association between class and achievement in both schools meant that by discouraging pupils who were below average in their level of achievement from taking certain subjects, working-class pupils were also being discour-
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aged. The option choice interviews at Millbridge also played a key role in this selection process and appeared to be used to promote an ideology of free choice which might ultimately serve to legitimate differential educational outcomes.

There is evidence, then, to suggest that option choice procedures are centrally involved in the production of gender, class and achievement divisions. However, this cannot be regarded as the only, or even necessarily the most important, mechanism involved. What is interesting is how little evidence there is, in, for example, the Millbridge option choice interviews, of parents questioning or resisting the channelling processes. (Parents' roles are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.) Key teachers at both schools maintained that direct intervention was not often necessary because pupils had a good idea of their own abilities, and pupils supported this view. Subsequent chapters focus on possible reasons for parents' and pupils' acquiescence in a process which appeared to be against the interests of many girls and working-class pupils.
TEACHERS' CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter argued that a conservative gender code was reflected in the schools' management of option choice, with firm boundaries maintained between masculine and feminine areas of the curriculum. I wanted to examine whether the gender codes of individual teachers were equally conservative or more progressive than the general ethos of the school, and therefore undertook an extensive series of interviews and observation. Both schools claimed to support the principle of equal opportunities, although no policy statements had ever been drawn up, and I was particularly interested to see how teachers actually interpreted and mediated this policy.

Neo-marxist accounts of schooling, produced in the 1970s, accorded very little power to teachers for good or ill, since they were regarded as the hapless pawns of the capitalist system (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Althusser, 1971). This view of relatively impotent teachers has been radically revised since then. Connell (1986), for instance, argues that "it is teachers' work that is central to the remaking of the social patterns investing education" (p. 4). Despite the fact that teachers have now been elevated to the status of "bearers of educational change" (Kelly et al., 1985), it is only relatively recently that researchers have begun a systematic investigation of their attitudes to issues of gender equality (Scott et al., 1984, Kelly et al., 1985, Connell, 1984). In the first part of this chapter, I explore teachers' explanations of why pupils make sex-stereotyped option choices and in the second part I focus more closely on teachers' construction of femininity as revealed by these attitudes.
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towards the sexual hierarchy of the school. My hope is to gain an increased understanding of what Acker (1987) has described as the puzzle of teachers' resistance to gender-equality policies, which may take the form of hostility or inactivity.

TEACHERS' EXPLANATIONS OF THE PROCESS OF GENDER DIFFERENTIATION

In this section I focus on Millbridge teachers' responses to questions concerning the tendency of girls and boys to make different option choices, and whether positive action to encourage non-traditional option choices could be taken by the school. The purpose of these questions was to see whether teachers attributed the production of a gender-differentiated curriculum at the end of the third year to the transmission by the school of a dominant gender code, or to the extra-school environment. Ultimately, I was interested in the extent to which teachers' perceptions of such issues might themselves play a reproductive role in creating gender divisions. Detailed analysis of patterns in teacher responses to the two questions above is restricted to Millbridge teachers, although Greenhill teachers gave very similar replies.

When Millbridge teachers were asked why they thought girls and boys chose different subjects, their responses tended to fall into one of two categories. The first category attributed different patterns of option choice to factors outside the school's control, for instance girls' and boys' differing abilities, parental pressure, peer group pressure, early childhood socialisation, traditions in a rural area. The second category of responses attributed differences between girls' and boys' option choices to within-school factors - including teacher attitudes, curriculum content, school ethos and organisational procedures. What follows is an analysis of the teachers' responses, which seemed to be influenced by three variables, namely age, sex and position within the school hierarchy. Subject taught also seemed to have some connection with teacher attitudes, although the pattern here was not as clearcut. It is important to note that all teachers felt that the school should treat girls and boys equally, offering them open access to all subjects.
Seven teachers over 40 were interviewed, all of whom were members of the school hierarchy. In this particular school, the hierarchy, or senior management team, consisted of four heads of house, three deputy heads, the director of studies and the headmaster. There were four men and three women. All the teachers in this group placed a great deal of emphasis on socialising forces outside the school. Particular emphasis was placed on the traditional roles of parents in a rural area. Mr Broughton, a male head of house who taught woodwork, had this to say:

A lot of it is role learning from early on, attitudes of parents. ... I suppose there are traditional things that men do to earn a living and women do to earn a living or cope with the home. A lot of them still don’t view the woman as going out to work. They still seem to me to think of the girl being equipped for life in terms of spending time in the home, which to me is wrong.

These teachers seemed to be influenced strongly by models of social learning according to which, traditional gender identities are formed at a very early age. Mr Spiller, the director of sixth-form studies who taught commerce and economics said:

In terms of craft skills, very few girls are given Meccano or Lego to play with at pre-school level, and it’s at pre-school level that it matters. By the time they’re at primary school it’s too late. The prejudices are already formed in the child’s mind.

When asked to consider the role of the school in the encouragement of non-traditional option choices, the older group of teachers often cited the strength of environmental socialising forces as the main reason why the school could do very little to break these long-established patterns. Mr Spiller, the director of studies, felt that nothing could be done because:

the constraints aren’t in the school’s provision ... You’re fighting parental prejudice, very strong, and for the school to try and change that would simply be counter-productive. So I think in terms of school policies you have
Connell (1986) discusses the way in which teachers tend to use the notion of the 'bad home', often synonymous with the working-class home, to account for the problems which schools experience in educating and controlling children. He comments 'this yields an image of the school as a kind of a middle-class lifeboat adrift in a sea of proletarian roughness' (p. 170). Clearly, this view of the pathological family is at the forefront of teachers' minds in accounting not only for class divisions, but also gender divisions.

Pupil peer groups were also seen as a major factor in preventing boys from making non-traditional option choices, as suggested by Mr Ginger, deputy head at Millbridge and teacher of mathematics:

I think boys regard cooking as slightly . . . not the sort of thing you want to tell your friends you're doing at 14 or 15.

Two of the teachers said that the first and middle schools were responsible for enforcing gender stereotypes, and a further three talked in terms of differing abilities or stages of development among male and female pupils. The inference from some teachers was that these differences were innate:

It's also stages of development. You will find so often that a girl will work industriously and produce pages of writing that looks most impressive and when they get higher up the school you look at it and it isn't so impressive, and the boys come on and the ideas are there.

(Miss Maple, deputy head, teaching mathematics)

When it comes to using language, girls score much higher, they enjoy apparently greater success; even though boys may be just as good they don't work . . . A lot of girls shy away from workshop type things because it involves physical skill, it involves three-dimensional perception at which a lot of girls seem to be rather bad.

(Mr Spiller, director of studies)

It is interesting to note that none of these teachers was willing to accord any degree of responsibility to the school for the
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perpetuation of gender differences in the curriculum, and in this they differed markedly from the younger group of teachers. All of the older teachers placed a great deal of importance on the idea of pupils freely choosing the subjects they wanted to study and were concerned that if the school were to become over-active in discouraging sex-stereotyped option choices it would be guilty of undermining this freedom. Mr Appleyard, the headmaster of Millbridge who taught mathematics, said:

I think to take over a child and tell it it ought to do something, that's just not the business of the school... If you try to turn the whole lot upside down then you would be pushing people to do things differently. It's not the school's job to push, it's to make opportunities available.

Miss Maple, the deputy head, made similar points:

It's difficult once you start selling subjects... I would hate to generate anything in school which is artificial and push youngsters to doing things they don't actually want.

The most radical suggestion they made in terms of what the school could actually do to encourage non-traditional option choices was to appoint male and female teachers to areas of the curriculum normally associated with the opposite sex. This policy was endorsed by both the headmaster and the female deputy head, who said they were very pleased to have appointed a female woodwork teacher at the end of 1983:

It's rather nice we were able to appoint a female teacher in the engineering department. She was a very good candidate. I don't think there's any point in appointing a female candidate just for the sake of it - but it will help to confirm there's no reason why women shouldn't be appointed in that department as much as anywhere else. (Mr Appleyard, Headmaster and maths teacher)

The headmaster made it clear that he was expecting this woman to take the entire responsibility for encouraging girls to take technology, and did not consider that any official policy statement was necessary to support her. Overall, Mr Appleyard felt that everything that the school could do in terms of intervention was already being done.
In careers lessons people are shown all the things that are available. Notices are up showing particular opportunities for girls in engineering. If that's intervening, yes, we do intervene.

Mrs Lovell, the female head of house who taught English, also had a very restricted view of action which the school could take to bring about change. She said she did not agree with the idea of an official equal-opportunities policy within the school. If such a policy were to be implemented at all, it would have to be 'by an individual teacher on a personal basis - or perhaps a department might be prepared to push it'.

Teachers' attitudes towards option choice exemplify a number of what Connell (1986) has termed the 'operating principles' which govern teachers' approach to their work. One of these operating principles is the desire to be seen as moderate and value-free, certainly not at the hub of any radical reform which might cause the wrath of conservative parents to descend. A second operating principle which appears to be at work here is the need to limit the impact of educational innovations as a labour saving device. To quote Connell again: 'no matter how attractive a proposal is in principle, if it makes it more difficult for you to manage a classroom, if it increases the emotional pressure on you, if it adds to the workload, then you do not do it' (p. 181). The strategy of sticking up a few posters and claiming that equal-opportunities policy has been fulfilled, is clearly in line with this principle.

These teachers also clearly found themselves in a paradoxical position with regard to the issue of free choice. On the one hand, they were emphasizing the weight of environmental pressures shaping pupils' option choices, indicating that these choices were very far from free. On the other hand, they were asserting that the school should do nothing to influence these choices in any way, because this would be to interfere with the pupils' right to make independent decisions. Pratt (1985) found similar contradictions in teachers' attitudes and criticizes the notion that the school should do nothing to challenge the problem of sex-stereotyping in subject selection. He argues that 'neutrality' means simply allowing the many and powerful pressures on pupils to operate untrammelled upon them. He is also critical of the teachers who point to 'the pervasiveness and
power of the external environment'. They are right, he says, 'only in the sense that they - and pupils - need to know of its existence, but by accepting its power the teachers are making decisions for the pupils, the antithesis of education'.

At least in its early conception, the national curriculum, currently in the process of being implemented in England and Wales, challenged many cherished beliefs with regard to the importance of pupils' voluntarily selecting their subject options, and, implicitly, their future destinies. As I argued in Chapter 3, the ideology of free choice has been used as a means of persuading individual pupils to accept responsibility for educational outcomes which are in reality due to structural forces beyond their control. In Chapter 9 I return to the discussion of the implications of the national curriculum for the principle of voluntarism within course selection, and suggest that the function of free choice as a mechanism of control had not been fully appreciated by the original architects of the national curriculum. The government's later insistence that there will be plenty of opportunity for choice within the national curriculum represents a belated recognition of the dangers of replacing apparent choice with overt coersion.

The stress on the determining forces outside the school led these teachers to ignore some blatant examples of the manipulation of pupils' option choices by the school. For instance, while they were still at their middle schools, pupils were asked to choose their design subjects for the following year. Not surprisingly, most opted for the security of following their friends into traditional areas of the curriculum, which then restricted their choice at the end of the third year of the upper school. All of these teachers justified this practice on administrative grounds. Mr Spiller, for instance, said:

Well, it's a question of resources. To make it possible for everybody to do all of the areas, we would need at least one more workshop, one more home economics room, and we would need extra staffing to give you the extra opportunities and times.

On the question of curriculum content, there was again a tendency to accept what was being taught in each subject area as given and unalterable. Miss Maple, for instance, could see no
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way in which needlework could possibly be of any interest to the boys:

I mean the boys don't do needlework. They're scared stiff of it. It's all making soft toys and learning to use a machine at that age, and it's just not a boy's thing.

Despite their stated commitment to equality of access, then, these teachers were all involved in defending the status quo in various ways. It is also interesting to note that the majority of teachers in this group were maths teachers, and researchers such as Pratt et al. (1984) and Kelly et al. (1985) have also found that teachers of traditionally masculine subjects such as science, maths and technology have more conservative attitudes to gender issues.

THE YOUNGER GROUP OF TEACHERS

In the younger group of teachers I have included all those whom I interviewed who were under 40, and I found greater variety in their responses. There were seven women and six men. Of the women, seven were on Scale 2 and three were on Scale 1. Of the men, two were on Scale 3, one was on Scale 2 and one was on Scale 1. Not only in this sample, but in the school as a whole, women were concentrated on Scales 1 and 2, and men tended to occupy more senior positions. In 1983, out of twelve head-of-department positions at Millbridge, only two, home economics and French, were held by women. Subjects taught by the group of teachers I interviewed were sex-typed - the men teaching physics, chemistry, biology, maths and geography, and the women teaching English, physical education, religious education, needlework and typing.

Like the senior members of staff, the younger group of teachers believed that environmental pressures played an important part in determining the gender-differentiated pattern of pupils' option choices, although men tended to describe these influences in much greater detail. Parents' role models were also seen as an important influence, as were the media, peer groups and first and middle schools. Mr Tiller, the head of maths, and Mrs Marshwood, an English teacher, talked about pupils' perception of the labour market.
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I think one thing is they look at the careers these subjects lead to and you see that the careers that are available are mainly staffed by men. And in biology they see that there are a great deal of women working in that area. I'm sure that some of them see biology as working with animals and think that's nice as well. But really it is this careers thing to a great extent.

Mrs Stonecroft, an art teacher who saw herself as a feminist, felt that sex-stereotyping in the curriculum was related to the construction of masculinity and femininity in western culture:

I think it's not very well accepted in our society that we all have masculine and feminine qualities within us - we are all masculine and feminine . . . In western cultures it's denied and I think a lot of problems arise from denying part of ourselves - I think it works like that for both boys and girls. Particularly in education that part is denied, so we have to reinforce what we happen to be, whether a boy or a girl - we almost have to prove our masculinity or femininity.

Although both women and men mentioned environmental factors in determining option choice, it is interesting that men talked about these factors at far greater length than women, whereas women placed greater emphasis on pressures within school. Only two of the men but five of the women said that they thought the school was actively involved in channelling pupils into sex-stereotyped areas of the curriculum.

The two feminist teachers were the most categorical about the overriding importance of influences within the school, particularly the importance of teacher attitudes:

Certainly there's very much the attitude that typing and needlework will be good for the girls and it's almost unthinkable that boys should do needlework . . . I think the craft department is very male orientated and the men definitely encourage the boys rather than the girls.

(Mrs Marshwood, English teacher)

This was in interesting contrast to two of the men who specifically denied that teacher attitudes had any influence at all:
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I don't think we give physics a male image at all. That is already there in the minds of the pupils.
(Mr Mottram, head of physics)

I don't know why girls tend to do biology rather than physics because there's no pressure put on them from the department in any way.
(Mr Jones, head of biology)

Mrs Stonecroft felt that curriculum content was of crucial importance in attracting pupils to particular subject areas:

In this school I think it's got a lot to do with the way the subject's actually presented. At my last school, the people who taught home ec. had broken down that barrier where it was seen as a subject for the girls. There was the multi-ethnic side - the home ec. was to do with a dietary thing and world-wide food distribution and the idea that we are what we eat.

This teacher disagreed with the idea that peer group pressure was an important influence on the sex-stereotyping of option choices:

We reinforce the stereotypes as adults rather than students themselves. Particularly round about 13 or younger, if they have fun doing it, they'll do it. I don't think it comes from them unless teachers foster it in the first place.

Both the younger and the older group of teachers, then, felt that environmental influences played an important part in the production of a gender-differentiated curriculum, but the younger group, particularly women teachers who identified themselves as feminists, placed much greater emphasis on the importance of within-school factors.

In answer to the question of whether the school should take an active role in encouraging non-traditional option choices, a wide range of views was expressed. In general, those who emphasized the power of environmental forces were pessimistic about the school's potential to initiate reform. Mr Jones, who talked at great length about the importance of parental role models, felt that the school could do little to bring about social change.
I was talking with Gareth Wood (teacher at a middle school) about how we teach sex education and he was saying that even at 11, 12, there is already the stereotyping that the boys are out for what they can get and it's up to the girls to say no... and if you've got that sort of stereotyping at that age then I'm sure it applies to all spheres of activity and you're naive to think the school can change that very dramatically.

Two of the men felt that the school was already involved in countering sex-stereotyping in the curriculum. Mr Mottram, the head of physics, said they did make a conscious effort to make the subject relevant to girls, although perhaps his words suggest a rather superficial understanding of the issue:

> When we're talking about speed increasing gears instead of getting a hand drill I always get an egg whisk or what have you. In some ways you could say it was a sop to the ladies. Having said that, there's no reason why girls should say machines and mechanics aren't for me. It's just an idea that's in their minds.

Whereas all the older teachers had defended the practice of pupils choosing design options while still at the middle school, all the younger teachers apart from one opposed it.

Women made a variety of suggestions about how the school could encourage non-traditional option choices. Miss Jenkins, an RE (religious education) teacher, said that girls were often placed in RE classes not because they had any particular interest in the subject but because the class needed filling, and it was felt that girls would make less of a fuss about it than boys. According to Mrs Marshwood, not only formalistic equality but real enthusiasm from the teachers was necessary for changes to be made. This would probably involve changing curriculum content and subject presentation:

> I think there should be a positive sales technique for the subjects boys are choosing like craft subjects. They should be positively sold to the girls, perhaps with displays and talks, and there should be a policy of positive discrimination to make sure you get a class which is half girls. I mean nationally I'd like to see a policy introduced in

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schools to make sure that boys and girls have equal opportunities in all subjects, not just on paper.

She also felt there was a need to challenge the overwhelmingly male atmosphere of the metalwork and woodwork areas and redistribute scale points more equally. This teacher had clearly moved beyond the liberal concern for equality of access and was arguing that equality of outcome was vitally important. Connell (1986) perhaps rather dismissively refers to teachers' brand of feminism as being that of the married woman, and argues that it is limited in that it does not relate to the experience of working-class girls. Data presented in Chapter 7 do suggest that there was a lack of sympathy between girls who were rejecting traditional constructions of femininity and their female teachers. Never the less, it is important to recognize the courage of feminist women teachers like Mrs Marshwood who were quietly insisting that gender equality was an issue which the school had to address.

To summarise, all teachers placed great emphasis on the power of socialisation to determine the outcome of subject option choices. Teachers in the older age group denied that the school had any control over this outcome because of the power of socialisation forces, and they also tended to place some of the blame on innate differences in developmental patterns between girls and boys. Younger teachers were generally more critical of the role of the school in producing a gender-differentiated curriculum, but it was only the teachers who explicitly identified themselves as feminists who were in favour of the school taking positive action to change this outcome. Among the older group of teachers, women were just as reluctant as men to endorse the idea of radical change in the school, suggesting that becoming members of the school hierarchy makes women less critical of the institution and more willing to defend the status quo. There was also an overall tendency for teachers of arts subjects to be more in favour of positive moves towards gender equality than teachers of maths and technology, but since few teachers in the hierarchy taught arts subjects, it was difficult to separate out the variables of position within the school and subject taught. One of the female heads of house, who taught English, had extremely traditional views on issues of gender equality, and perhaps this again gives some
indication that once teachers occupy positions of power within a school they are less likely to criticise its practices. Another possibility is that it is women with less challenging views who tend to get promoted in the first place. I will now go on to explore the significance of certain teacher ideologies in producing an environment unsympathetic to the implementation of equal-opportunities policies.

There is evidence, not just in Westshire but elsewhere in the country too, that teachers react with hostility or reluctance to anti-sexist intervention strategies (Payne et al., 1994) and, outside progressive local education authorities, the implementation of equal opportunities policies seems to be left to isolated individual teachers. Data from Millbridge and Greenhill teachers indicated that teacher ideologies relating to both education and gender were implicated in sustaining a school ethos which was essentially hostile to gender equality. In the following sections I explore the nature of these ideologies in creating an atmosphere in which it is difficult for positive attitudes towards gender equality to flourish.

RESISTANCE TO GENDER EQUALITY DERIVING FROM IDEOLOGIES OF SCHOOLING

Perhaps the major factor blinding teachers to the role of the school in the production of gender divisions within the curriculum was their overwhelming belief in environmental determinism. This led to scepticism about the power of school intervention strategies to have any impact on received views. At Greenhill, for instance, the WISE (Women Into Science and Engineering) initiative was remembered as having had very little effect. Mick Savage, a physics teacher at Greenhill, commented:

Well, I'm rather suspicious of active policies. Things like this WISE, as far as I'm aware has been a tremendous flop. It's something the school should be aware of and make some efforts. But I think it's a much wider problem, it's society, the parents and television, the lot.

Mrs Alcott, a teacher of English at Greenhill in her late forties, was also puzzled by the lack of impact of such initiatives:
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In feminist years they were almost urged to do science and technology by the media. There were programmes on the media saying, 'You can do this, you can build bridges, you can be a civil engineer.' I remember that very attractive lady talking about bridge building, civil engineering, she was flying to Saudi and things like this. And 'you too can do this girls!' It doesn't seem to have any effect, does it?

She concluded that forces of socialisation, coupled with differences in development, were such powerful shaping forces that there was very little the school could do.

Another danger of socialisation theories is that they tend to blame girls and their parents for the perpetuation of sex-stereotyped attitudes rather than the school. Wolpe (1974) and Deen (1983) have explored the way in which the assumption of the differing educational needs of girls and boys was a central part of the thinking behind post-war educational reports such as the Norwood Report (1943), the Crowther Report (1959) and the Newnham Report (1963). Many teachers, however, seemed to think that girls themselves were entirely responsible for the gender-divided curriculum, and saw the problem entirely in terms of changing girls' attitudes instead of looking at the structures which produced those attitudes. Reynolds and Sullivan (1981) have argued that teachers' world views represent a significant barrier to social change, in that they emphasise the immense power of socialisation forces and deny that the school has any autonomy. Instead they argue that the school does have relative autonomy and is able to influence educational outcomes within certain structural parameters.

There would appear to be much evidence to suggest that teachers' preference for explanations based on deterministic socialisation theories are likely to discourage them from putting radical policies into practice.

Although belief in environmental determinism was the most common educational ideology used to explain gender differentiation in the curriculum, genetic determinism also featured as a likely causal mechanism. There was a tendency to revert to this type of explanation when intervention strategies were perceived to have failed. Commenting on the failure of WISE, Mike Savage commented that this suggested to him that biological explanations were probably lurking in the
SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND THE GENDERED CURRICULUM

background. Kelly (1986) encountered similar reactions to the GIST project. Some teachers, she says, reacted to a report in The Times Educational Supplement that the project had failed to alter teachers' attitudes and behaviour by concluding that 'since GIST was unsuccessful in altering girls' options, the sex differences were clearly genetic, and no more action should be taken to counteract girls' underrepresentation in the physical sciences'. Kamin (1974) points out that the apparent failure of compensatory education programmes in the 1960s provided ammunition for those who favoured genetic explanations of the educational failure of black children. It is interesting to note that in the area of gender differentiation, the apparent failure of intervention programmes may be used to support theories of biological determinism.

Teachers' hostility towards equal opportunities policies was also rooted in their belief that the job of the school was to provide a value-free environment for pupils to exercise freedom of choice. Many teachers at both schools talked about the motivational advantages of allowing pupils this freedom, and clearly felt that there were advantages in getting pupils, rather than the school, to take responsibility for any limitations which might arise later.

Belief in the virtues of child-centred education was used to justify teachers' reluctance to pursue equal opportunities policies actively. Normally associated with primary education (King, 1978; Carrington and Short, 1987), child-centred education encapsulates the idea that teachers should respond to children as unique individuals, and should avoid seeing them in collective terms. Some teachers at Greenhill and Millbridge found it quite confusing when asked to consider questions concerning the educational experience of girls and boys, and made comments such as:

People are individuals. I don't even consciously think of male and female.
(Mrs Lovell, head of house and teacher of English)

I teach characters, not sexes.
(Miss Maple, deputy head and teacher of maths)

Despite these utterances, classroom observation and other comments made by the same teachers showed that gender was
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MANASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

a significant factor in their interaction with pupils. The ideology of child-centredness, however, discouraged them from recognizing the salience of gender and acting on this awareness. This supports the findings of other commentators such as Kelly (1986) and Skelton and Hanson (1989). Kelly (1986) suggests that 'the strongly individualistic element in teachers' philosophy, with its emphasis on helping each child to fulfill her or his own potential, blinds them to their implications of their actions for groups.' Skelton's research on initial teacher training (Skelton and Hanson, 1989) suggests that the ideology of child-centred learning is particularly strong in the education of primary teachers, to the extent that even when teachers are aware of sex discrimination in their own lives, they abandon this knowledge when they assume their professional identity.

To summarize, then, in teachers' reluctance even to contemplate the implementation of anti-sexist measures, a number of educational ideologies seemed to be implicated. These were: their belief in the intractability of sex-role socialisation; an underlying and contradictory belief in biological determinism; and, finally, an adherence to child-centred ideology which insisted that pupils were capable of acting as autonomous agents in choosing subjects. This latter belief also discouraged teachers from looking at differences in outcomes for groups as opposed to individuals.

RESISTANCE TO GENDER-EQUALITY POLICIES DERIVING FROM IDEOLOGIES OF FEMININITY

A very important influence on teachers' resistance to gender equality initiatives stemmed from their acceptance of traditional ideologies of femininity. These were revealed very clearly in the accounts which they gave of women's position within the school hierarchy. At both schools, women represented only a third of the teaching staff and very few occupied positions of responsibility, particularly on the academic side of the school. (The only female heads of department at both Greenhill and Milbridge were in French, home economics and secretarial studies.) An HMI report produced in 1984 had commented on women's underrepresentation in positions of responsibility. At the end of the interviews I asked teachers for their view of why they thought this was the case.
SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND THE GENDERED CURRICULUM

At both schools, women's lack of power appeared to be so natural in many teachers' eyes as to be almost invisible. All the members of the hierarchy (heads, deputy heads and senior masters) said that promotion in teaching was purely on merit, and if there was any discrimination it was probably in favour of women. All the male teachers whom I interviewed accepted uncritically that since women elected voluntarily to have children, they thus made a clear statement about their lack of interest in a career. Mr Mottram, the head of physics at Millbridge, said:

Women do break their service. They can hardly expect to pick up where they left off. Time's gone by and other people have taken their jobs . . . I wouldn't want my wife to go back to teaching when the children are 5 or 6 because I don't think she'd be able to do justice to both, being a mother and being a teacher . . . So in a sense I'd have thought that by having children my wife had compromised her teaching career, but I mean she's quite happy to do that.

This was a view repeated many times by male teachers, and reflects their belief that because women bear children it is obvious that they will be the ones to take full responsibility for their upbringing, and their position in the workforce must be regarded as of only secondary importance. Men's rightful position as breadwinners was similarly asserted. Mr Fison, a teacher of geography at Greenhill, had this to say:

I have to send my wife out to work to survive. She brings up the child during the day and she has to work as a waitress in the evening. That hurts my sense of pride. Not that the work is belittling, but I should at the age of 31 with five years' industrial experience, a joint honours degree, be able to support a wife in a modest house and a child without being this close to the breadline.

Whilst complaints about teachers' low pay are obviously legitimate, Mr Fison justified his dissatisfaction by appealing to a belief in the family wage and the ideologies of masculinity and femininity which underpin it. The fact that this was a widely accepted view was illustrated by the case of Mrs Fleet, a PE teacher in her forties who had previously been head of depart-
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY

men in a large London school. According to her, when she asked the headmaster for a scale point she had been promised for a job she was already doing, she had been told:

What do you want more money for? Your husband's got a perfectly good job. There are plenty of men with families to support who haven't got scale points.

A further aspect of teachers' ideology of femininity was revealed when male teachers discussed women who had been promoted. First of all, it was suggested that only single women could hope to be promoted:

If you're a head of department, you've got to be prepared to work every evening of the week till about 9 or 10 o'clock in my area anyway. That means, as I read it, you've got to be a single woman.

(Mr Straw, head of physics, Greenhill)

Having said this, the sexuality and essential femininity of such women was then called into question. Mr Lill at Greenhill, for instance, said that Joan Mitchem was a typical example of the sort of woman who got on in teaching. She was so totally committed to the job that 'the school's her husband.' Mr Mason, the deputy head, also said that the sort of women who got to the top in teaching were 'rather peculiar'. This was said in such a way as to imply that these women were probably lesbians. He also discussed in turn, in the middle of a tape-recorded interview, all the women who had been promoted, and claimed that in every case this was due to good fortune rather than ability. Cunnison (1985), in her study of a mixed-sex high school, similarly found that senior women were automatically assumed to be incompetent, and Woods (1979) describes the way in which both senior and younger women teachers were the constant butt of jokes about their appearance and mannerisms. As far as Mr Sluggett, a Greenhill history teacher, was concerned:

women if they stay in teaching for a long time tend to become too wrapped up in it, too emotional and much too intense... I don't think they're necessarily as rounded as men.

From these comments of male teachers, it would appear that
women are caught up in a no-win situation. The only women who are fit to be promoted are non-mothers, who are by definition not proper women and who therefore should probably not be promoted anyway.

Young women teachers who sympathised with feminist ideas were highly critical of these sorts of assumptions. Miss Steiner, a probationary home economics teacher at Greenhill, was very angry that all women as potential mothers could be excluded from power:

They say, ‘What about a family?’ and you have to say, ‘No, I’m not interested at all.’ You have to lie because otherwise they’ll have somebody else. It makes me mad, it makes me really sick . . . It’s just as likely that a man could have long-term absence from school.

Mrs Grayson, head of French at Greenhill, who had just come back from maternity leave, was also horrified at the attitudes of some male teachers:

I mean quite unashamedly I’ve heard senior staff going through application forms saying, ‘We need a man, we need a man, we need to balance this department for trips and excursions and that sort of thing.’ And I’ve also seen them go through applications and say, ‘This woman’s been out of teaching for 6 years, she’ll be very rusty; I’m just horrified. Or else, ‘This one’s got young children, she’s not very reliable, she’ll be off every five minutes for chicken pox and all the rest of it, so she’s not the sort of person we want,’ which I think is terrible.

She herself said that she was struggling against the assumption that she would automatically give up work once she had children.

It was also very difficult for women teachers to organise support for themselves within the institution. Chris Grayson told me about the rapid rise and fall of the women’s group at Greenhill, which had met once to discuss issues of common concern:

It actually turned out to be a very constructive meeting and very interesting. We all talked about our own situations and the discrimination we were suffering in our own
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MasculINITY AND FeminINITY

situations and we learnt all sorts of things that we'd never dreamed of before, like allocation of scale points and the way people had been treated, and the headmaster was so furious about this insurrection in the ranks that he absolutely forbade anything like that ever to take place again. It was exciting. It was incredible, and the men on the staff were so upset about it. Yet really we weren't criticizing them personally, we were just trying to assess our own situation. So it sort of petered out.

Ball (1987) quotes a similar incident in which a letter by female staff to the head of a mixed comprehensive school about the distribution of scale points was dismissed out of hand. In this case, the teachers were simply told that the right people had been given the jobs. It would appear that the micropolitics of schools make it very difficult for women successfully to challenge underlying ideologies of femininity.

Not all women, however, questioned the system of promotion and the notion of appropriate spheres of female activity which underlay it. Mrs Prior, a part-time teacher of physics at Greenhill, felt that there was no discrimination against women and they could get to the top just as easily as men if that was what they wanted. She saw her own decision to stop work with the birth of her children as entirely voluntary. Miss Bishop, head of secretarial studies, was adamant that women enjoyed full equality:

I certainly don't think there is any enforced keeping down of the female in this school. Far from it. I think that the women are encouraged to improve their own position and it's up to them if they take it up or not. I don't think they've kept down. In the final analysis they just haven't been as good.

It would seem, then, that women who perceive themselves as experiencing the effects of discrimination are most likely to question common assumptions about work and motherhood. Women who see themselves as having made a free choice to opt out of full-time teaching, or feel that they themselves have not been restricted as women, are more likely to endorse the view that promotion in teaching is purely on merit. These women were not against equal opportunities per se, but felt that no one
of positive action was necessary to achieve this goal. The fact that women do not share a common perspective on male/female power relations clearly makes it difficult for them to unite in challenging their unequal position. In turn, the lack of a unified political stance makes it impossible for individual women to challenge injustice. Mrs Fleet said that when she was refused promotion on blatantly sexist grounds she had considered taking her case to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), but the fact that it was upsetting her home life made her decide to drop it. Another woman, who had been promised a scale point which never materialised, said that she had decided not to push her case 'because it's important for the woman to be joyful in the home', but still wondered if she had made the right decision. Vera Chadwick's account (1989) of her protracted struggle to prove sex discrimination by Lancashire County Council suggests that these women might have been right in their judgement that the anguish of proceeding with the court action could outweigh the benefit of winning. Although Chadwick won her case, the effect on her personal and professional life was devastating and the damages she received were derisory.

To summarise, then, at both Millbridge and Greenhill schools the majority of male teachers and some women teachers subscribed to an ideology of femininity which represented all women as mothers or potential mothers, and therefore marginalised them as workers. The sexual status of women who somehow escaped these categories was called into question. This clearly compromised many teachers' commitment to anti-sectiv measures. Even though they might pay lip-service to the notion of sexual equality, it was clear that their own position within the system of male/female power relations made them reluctant to question its underlying ideologies. To do so would cause them to examine critically their own relationships and family structures, and most were not prepared to do this. On the whole, it was more comfortable to believe that schools were value-free institutions and that any persistent inequalities might be laid at the door of parents, employers or the media. A minority of women recognised the existence of unequal power relations which affected not only themselves, but girls in the schools too. There are elements of my account of teachers' attitudes to gender equality which coincide with Connell's
CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY AND FEMININITY (1986) analysis. He also recognises the fundamental split between teachers who nominally support equal opportunities and those who go further and endorse positive action. There is one marked difference between our findings, however. Whereas Connell 'came across some traces of those contradictory and almost comic figures, feminist men', (p. 187) these characters were notably lacking from the Westshire scene. Had the research been conducted a few years later, perhaps they might have arrived.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I began by exploring the explanations offered by teachers for the production of a sex-stereotyped curriculum and the power which the school might have to challenge this outcome. Differences in teachers' response based on sex, age, position in the school hierarchy and subject taught were all explored. It was found that older teachers, who were all members of the hierarchy, believed in the overwhelming power of external socialising influences. According to them, the school was not at all involved in the channelling process and any attempt at positive discrimination to encourage girls into science and technology would be to undermine their freedom of choice. Younger teachers also emphasised the power of socialisation, but indicated that processes in the school were also involved, and a small number of feminist women teachers said that they thought the school could and should embark on a programme of positive action. There was some indication that teachers of maths and technology were less likely to favour active programmes to counter sex-stereotyping than teachers of arts and humanities.

In the second part of the chapter, the ideologies underpinning teachers' resistance to gender equality policies were further examined. These derived in part from the way in which teachers stressed socialisation rather than structural factors as the main cause of gender differentiation in school, and were willing to fall back on theories of biological determinism when positive action appeared to have failed. Child-centred ideologies which tend to discourage the examination of the position of particular groups further militated against the espousal of gender equality policies, as did a belief in the right of pupils to
School Organisation and the Gendered Curriculum

Teachers' own position in the gender hierarchy was also implicated in their attitudes towards equal opportunities. As beneficiaries of male supremacy in the home and the school, there was little incentive for male teachers to reappropriate their own attitudes. Only a few women recognised the structural nature of their subordinate status, making female solidarity very difficult to achieve. The instant suppression of women's attempts to establish a common understanding of their position indicated that this was seen as a serious threat to the institution.

Some commentators such as Connell (1986) have argued that whilst it has proved difficult for teachers to develop a unified stance, none the less 'feminism has had a significant impact on teachers' outlook; conversely, teachers have become an important vehicle for feminism' (p. 189). It would appear that feminist women teachers at Millbridge and Greenhill had encountered both opposition and apathy, although it might be argued that without their pressure the issue would not even have appeared on the agenda for discussion. What are the chances for more radical developments in the future? Where equal opportunities initiatives have been successful, this has often been due to concern at the grassroots among ordinary teachers rather than the fostering of equality policies from above (Winter, 1986). If this is the case, then clearly work undertaken with beginning teachers to sensitise them to the issue is likely to be highly significant. Unfortunately, there is little research on initial teacher education and that which exists suggests that the current emphasis is not on the development of a critical social awareness, but on technical competence within the classroom (Skelton and Hanson, 1989; Menter, 1989). Menter argues that the guidelines produced by the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (DES, 1984) serve to promote a 'fundamentally technicist view of teaching' in which teachers are certainly not encouraged to consider the implications of their actions for disadvantaged groups. Greater emphasis on students learning through school-based experience may also discourage the serious consideration of social justice issues, for if practising teachers consider these issues to be unimportant, there is every likelihood that student teachers will accept this view. Although initial teacher education may not have a marked effect on raising consciousness of gender issues, it...
would be wrong to be totally pessimistic. At both Millbridge and Greenhill, committed teachers, often spurred on by their own experience of discrimination, were struggling to keep the issue of gender equality alive. A point which emerges with great clarity from this research is that equal opportunities for girls cannot be tackled in isolation from power relations in the entire school. This was reflected most clearly in the position of women teachers. Unless the whole school ethos is one in which equality in its broadest sense flourishes, then piecemeal measures – such as displaying the occasional equal-opportunities poster – are unlikely to have any effect.
Part III

GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY
Part III suggested that the school organisation, whilst ostensibly supporting an equal-opportunities ethos, was instrumental in conveying highly traditional messages to pupils concerning appropriate curriculum territory for girls and boys. Teachers, who are of course the principal mediators of school ethos, displayed divergent approaches to issues of gender equality. Some male teachers were disparaging of feminism and the majority of both male and female teachers were lacking in commitment to equal-opportunities policies. A few women expressed enthusiastic support for anti-sexist measures. Part III explores the relationship between the gender codes of pupils, their parents and the school, questioning whether, contrary to teachers’ expectations, positive attitudes to gender equality might be found in the culture of local families. I ask whether pupils and parents are implicated in perpetuating traditional gender divisions in the curriculum or whether their cultures may exert pressure for change against the more conservative influence of the school.

A theme which emerges strongly from the literature on pupils’ culture is the changing nature of girls’ construction of femininity. Until recently, most commentators have seen these sub-cultures as ultimately reproductive. Valli (1983), in her study of how American high-school students acquire their identity as future clerical workers, has suggested that there are three possible responses to the process of cultural transmission: acceptance, rejection and resistance. ‘Acceptance of specific aspects of culture tends to occur when these messages are congruent with the past and the perceived future. Negotiation and resistance, both of which imply rejection of cultural messages and practices, occur when there is an element of incongruity, when the culture is experienced as imposed, when it does not fit with a sense of self.’ Valli’s young women were generally engaged in recreating their own subordinate culture, seeking protection from the demands of capital by refusing to define themselves as serious workers. This view of female sub-cultures in schools as both accommodating and resistant is
certain aspects of male supremacy has also been advanced by
writers such as McRobbie (1978) and Anyon (1983). However,
as mentioned earlier, a rather different and challenging view
has been put forward by Weis (1990). In her study of working-
class American females in a former steel town with very high
levels of male unemployment, she suggests that 'male and
female identities are currently on a collision path: the boys
envisioning male-dominant relations in the home and the girls
exhibiting a challenge to these relations in some important
ways' (p. 79). In her view, white working-class girls are now
exhibiting a strong feminist consciousness and are resisting
male attempts to control their lives in much the same way that
young black women have asserted their autonomy. Connell
(1986) also discusses the way in which changing patterns of
gender relations are causing pupils to alter their relationships
with teachers. When this is expressed as a greater commitment
to academic study and pursuit of career, then this is highly
acceptable to teachers. On the other hand, if girls' new self-
critique is expressed as restiveness and sexual aggressiv-
ness, as it may well be by working-class girls, then this is clearly
perceived as confusing and threatening (see Chapter 7 on
patterns of classroom interaction).

It would appear, then, the girls' cultures are increasingly
clashing with the more traditional gender codes of parents and
teachers. The following chapters consider the extent to which
girls and their families do indeed appear to support traditional
gender divisions in the curriculum, or whether they are
exhibiting a new critical consciousness. I explore their aware-
ness of the ideas of the women's movement and the variety of
responses to it which they make. The evidence suggests that
the gender codes of girls and their families are characterised by
both progressive and traditional elements with complex under-
lying causes, including their personal biographies and class
positions. Overall, however, it is clear that women's and girls'
understandings of femininity are increasingly critical and
questioning, despite the fact that they may not as yet be taking
action to bring about concrete changes in their lives.
PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

The recontextualisation of gender

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the ideological messages conveyed by the school through its handling of option choice suggested that a process of selection was in operation. Although some parents felt the school played an unhelpful role in channelling pupils in particular directions, there was no evidence of pupils and parents challenging this position. The aim of this chapter is to consider pupils' accounts of why they made conventional subject choices, and the cultural meanings they attached to specific school subjects. The question which particularly concerned me was whether the tendency to make sex-stereotyped choices did in fact signal an uncritical acceptance of gender divisions in the wider society. In attempting to answer these questions, I drew on both quantitative and qualitative data.

PUPIL'S PERCEPTION OF THE GENDER APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICULAR SUBJECTS

As I pointed out earlier, although the schools clearly suggested to pupils which courses might best suit their needs, they did not absolutely dictate their option choices. In order to examine pupils' perceptions of the gender appropriateness of particular subjects, an item on the questionnaire invited them to rate the subjects on the third-year curriculum with regard to their importance for girls and boys. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 reveal clear differences in the ratings of certain subjects for girls and boys, and, apart from a few details, closely similar patterns were seen in both schools. Subjects rated highly for both girls and boys were maths, careers and English. In other areas, large subject
Figure 5.1 Millbridge pupils' mean ratings of subject importance for boys and girls

Divisions emerged. Thus for boys, physics, chemistry, metalwork and technical drawing were rated highly. For girls, the surprising finding was that home economics and needlework were rated next in importance after English and maths. Biology was deemed the most important science subject for girls. Clearly, no ground had been gained at either school in establishing the gender neutrality of craft and technology subjects - metalwork and technical drawing were considered of least importance for girls and needlework was in a similar position for boys. Home economics was apparently considered safer territory for boys at Millbridge.
Figure 5.2 Greenhill pupils' mean ratings of subject importance for boys and girls

Statistical tests showed differences in the rating of craft and science subjects for boys and girls by all groups (boys, girls, working-class and middle-class pupils) were statistically significant (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Girls, then, were not inclined to view the curriculum in a less sex-stereotyped way than boys, nor working-class pupils than middle-class pupils. It is worth noting that pupils' assessment of the gender appropriateness of science subjects in particular was not simply a reflection of their perception of difficulty. For instance, boys appeared to enjoy physics more than girls (Tables 5.3 and 5.4) but the majority of both boys and girls named it as the most
Table 5.1 Wilcoxon test applied to Millbridge pupils’ perception of subject importance for girls and boys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject assessed for boys and girls</th>
<th>Group doing the assessing</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Sex for whom subject rated more important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home economics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each subject, the table shows the Wilcoxon test statistic (W) and the p-value (p) for boys and girls. The table also indicates the significance level (p < .05, p < .01, p < .001) and the direction of the effect (negative or positive).
Table 5.2: Wilcoxon test applied to Greenhill pupils' perception of subject importance for girls and boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject assessed for boys and girls</th>
<th>All pupils</th>
<th>Group doing the assessing</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Sex for whom subject rated more important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>z = -3.708</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.185</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>z = -2.522</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>z = -2.781</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>z = -2.522</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td>z = -2.884</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>z = -3.348</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.230</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>z = -3.468</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.120</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>z = -3.468</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.051</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework</td>
<td>z = -3.468</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.214</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>z = -3.468</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>z = -3.214</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3 Percentages of girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils naming particular subjects as the ones they enjoyed most, and results of the chi-square test for Millbridge pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
<th>% Working class</th>
<th>% Middle class</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.955$ (d.f.) p &lt; .05</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 8.146$ (d.f.) p &lt; .05</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>14.4 $\chi^2 = 5.884$ (d.f.) p &lt; .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 11.666$ (d.f.) p &lt; .01</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.926$ (d.f.) p &lt; .05</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical crafts</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 14.328$ (d.f.) p &lt; .001</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic crafts</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 6.952$ (d.f.) p &lt; .01</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Physical science = physics and chemistry; Humanities = history and geography; Technical crafts = technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork; Domestic crafts = home economics and needlework; Art = pottery and art; Languages = French and German

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PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Table 5.4 Percentages of girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils naming particular subjects as the ones they enjoyed most, and results of the chi-square test for Greenhill pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>% Girls</th>
<th>% Boys</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
<th>% Working class</th>
<th>% Middle class</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.400$ df1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2 &lt; .05$</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical science</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 13.422$ df1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 9.790$ df1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>$\chi^2 &lt; .05$</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical crafts</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 7.840$ df1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic crafts</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 11.823$ df1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>$\chi^2 &lt; .001$</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Physical science = physics and chemistry; Humanities = history and geography; Technical crafts = technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork; Domestic crafts = home economics and needlework; Art = pottery and art; Languages = French and German.

N = 132

Difficult subject (Table 5.5). This suggests that empathy with the culture of a subject is very important in convincing a pupil that the intellectual energy demanded represents a worthwhile investment.

A further interesting point to emerge from this analysis was the tendency of boys to emphasise the importance of stereotypically feminine subjects for girls and vice versa (Tables 5.6 and 5.7). For example, at Millbridge, physics for boys was rated significantly higher by girls than by boys. At both schools, home economics and needlework for girls were rated higher by boys than girls. In these subject areas, then, it appeared that both girls and boys were anxious to maintain gender boundaries for the opposite sex.

Overall, despite the schools' claim that subject choice was a matter of pupils exercising free choice in a neutral environment, this was in reality far from the truth. Rather, many...
subjects appeared to carry powerful messages concerning their gender appropriateness. To investigate how and why these subjects became so closely associated with one sex or the other and whether Westshire girls entirely subscribed to the very traditional gender codes which their subject choice and assessment of subject importance indicated, I turned to data from interviews and observation.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITY AND THE MAINTENANCE OF GENDER BOUNDARIES

Feminist writers on the subject of gender and the curriculum have drawn our attention to the way in which adolescent pupils are actively involved in the construction and maintenance of gender identities (Kelly, 1987; Measor, 1983). Arnot (1984) discusses the way in which pupils recontextualise externally received models of masculinity and femininity into more school-based forms, such as 'doing science' or playing football in the case of boys. One of the aims of the interviews was to consider whether such a process was at work, and if so why pupils should be engaged in such an enterprise. To gain access to this information, I asked pupils why they had chosen some subjects and rejected others. The pupils whom I quote here were from Greenhill.

One of the first points to emerge was the way in which girls' dislike of physics and technical subjects was rooted in a firm belief that there was something intrinsically masculine and therefore alien about these subjects. Physics was singled out for particular loathing by both working-class and middle-class girls who described it as boring and irrelevant. Bernadette Coles, whose father was a doctor, had this to say about it:

'It's a bit stupid really. You're not going to want to know how magnets work. Unless you want to make something that works on magnets. In a factory, say, you're not going to need to know how electrodynamics . . . or magnets . . . work. Circuits and all that. Boring.'

'Boring' was a word used over and over again to express their
PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Table 5.5: Millbridge pupils' assessment of the most difficult and easiest subjects (broken down by sex and class of pupil)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject rated</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>50 (43.5)</td>
<td>17 (33.3)</td>
<td>33 (52.6)</td>
<td>56 (45.8)</td>
<td>16 (38.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>27 (22.8)</td>
<td>8 (16.7)</td>
<td>19 (29.7)</td>
<td>38 (31.5)</td>
<td>9 (22.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>19 (15.7)</td>
<td>12 (23.5)</td>
<td>7 (12.8)</td>
<td>11 (14.9)</td>
<td>7 (17.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>9 (7.6)</td>
<td>7 (13.7)</td>
<td>2 (3.3)</td>
<td>6 (8.1)</td>
<td>2 (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>8 (7.6)</td>
<td>8 (15.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>6 (4.4)</td>
<td>2 (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
<td>2 (3.9)</td>
<td>1 (1.6)</td>
<td>1 (1.4)</td>
<td>2 (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115 (100)</td>
<td>51 (100)</td>
<td>64 (100)</td>
<td>74 (100)</td>
<td>41 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject rated</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easiest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>34 (30.6)</td>
<td>15 (29.4)</td>
<td>19 (32.4)</td>
<td>24 (32.4)</td>
<td>10 (24.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>32 (28.5)</td>
<td>17 (32.7)</td>
<td>15 (24.7)</td>
<td>16 (21.9)</td>
<td>10 (24.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>33 (29.5)</td>
<td>12 (23.5)</td>
<td>21 (32.8)</td>
<td>14 (18.9)</td>
<td>9 (22.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>19 (16.7)</td>
<td>9 (17.6)</td>
<td>10 (16.2)</td>
<td>13 (17.6)</td>
<td>6 (14.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>16 (14.4)</td>
<td>6 (11.8)</td>
<td>10 (15.7)</td>
<td>10 (14.9)</td>
<td>6 (14.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>5 (4.3)</td>
<td>2 (3.9)</td>
<td>3 (5.1)</td>
<td>2 (2.7)</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115 (100)</td>
<td>51 (100)</td>
<td>64 (100)</td>
<td>74 (100)</td>
<td>41 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.

feelings about physics, and it held a wealth of meaning from disinterest to hostility and frustration. Of course there is the possibility that girls were exaggerating their loathing of physics to impress me or each other, although their mass exodus from the subject suggests that this was not the case. Even if an element of sensationalism had been involved, this would have been interesting in itself since boys generally expressed liking of the subject. This, too, might not have been a true reflection of their feelings in all cases, given the difficulty many admitted to experiencing.

Technical subjects were also often seen by the girls as irrelevant to their likely future. Jackie Alcott, whose father worked in a building society, was asked whether she thought it would be a good thing if more girls did technical subjects. She replied:

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Table 5.6 Mann-Whitney U test applied to differences between Millbridge girls and boys and working-class and middle-class pupils in their assessment of the importance of a subject for a given sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups whose assessment is compared (subject and sex)</th>
<th>Girls/boys</th>
<th>Working class/ middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French - boys</td>
<td>u = 950.0, z = -3.587, p &lt; .001</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French - girls</td>
<td>u = 950.0, z = -3.587, p &lt; .001</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics - boys</td>
<td>u = 1241.5, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry - girls</td>
<td>u = 1033.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork - girls</td>
<td>u = 1154.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE - girls</td>
<td>u = 1154.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework - girls</td>
<td>u = 1033.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History - girls</td>
<td>u = 1241.5, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE - girls</td>
<td>u = 1033.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art - girls</td>
<td>u = 1154.0, z = -2.006, p &lt; .05</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) G = subject for given sex assessed as more important by girls; B = subject for given sex assessed as more important by boys; M = subject for given sex assessed as more important by middle-class pupils; W = subject for given sex assessed as more important by working-class pupils. (2) TD = technical drawing; HE = home economics; RE = religious education.
Table 5.7: Mann-Whitney U test applied to differences between Greenhill girls and boys and working-class and middle-class pupils in their assessment of the importance of a subject for a given sex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group below mention is compared (subject and sex)</th>
<th>Girls/boys</th>
<th>Working class/middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 409.0, z = -2.561, p &lt; .01 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 1207.0, z = -2.068, p &lt; .05 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 459.0, z = -2.068, p &lt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 136.0, z = -2.333, p &lt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 236.0, z = -1.487, p &lt; .05 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 528.0, z = -2.143, p &lt; .05 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 1229.0, z = -2.738, p &lt; .01 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 421.0, z = -2.380, p &lt; .01 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 1349.0, z = -2.970, p &lt; .01 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 1363.0, z = -2.350, p &lt; .01 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 475.0, z = -2.370, p &lt; .01 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art - boys</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 1427.0, z = -1.999, p &lt; .05 G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art - girls</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) G = subject for given sex assessed as more important by girls; B = subject for given sex assessed as more important by boys. M = subject for given sex assessed as more important by middle-class pupils. W = subject for given sex assessed as more important by working-class pupils. (2) TD = technical drawing. HE = home economics. RE = religious education.
I don't know. It depends what you're going to be when you leave school. If you're just going to be a normal housewife or just do a normal job it's not worth it, is it?

Girls even expressed these views when their experience of the division of labour in their own homes might have led them to rethink. Yvonne Roundhay, a working-class girl, and Marie Painter, a middle-class girl, had this discussion of why boys got on better with physics than girls:

Yvonne: Well, this electricity bit, the boys are more into it than what we are, like we were doing a plug weren't we, but we already knew how to do it and put a fuse in if we really had to. I know my Dad can't do it. My Mum can but my Dad can't.

Marie: Yes, my Mum usually does more stuff around the house than my Dad does.

Although Yvonne's and Marie's families did not maintain rigid gender boundaries in the division of household chores, they nevertheless designated physics a male subject because of its concern with subjects which they regarded as masculine, such as electricity. This suggests that designation of school subjects as male or female is not a simple reflection of parental beliefs and activities.

THE USE OF BOYS AS A NEGATIVE REFERENCE GROUP

The process of recontextualisation appeared to be linked with girls' use of boys as a negative reference group in the establishment of gender boundaries. Since physics and technical subjects were clearly taken by boys and were concerned with male interests, the assumption was made that moving into such an area posed a threat to female gender identity. Yvonne Roundhay felt that she would not want to take a technical craft subject because of the need to conform with male standards of behaviour that this would necessitate:

Yvonne: Well if you are going to work with the boys, I think you have to act like boys as well a bit. You have got to go along with their stupid pranks.
Girls who ventured into male areas of the curriculum were seen by other girls to be risking contamination, and were described in a range of negative terms, one of which was ‘brainy’. This conversation between Cathy Deare, Chloe Cover and Judith Bargate shows how a girl’s attractiveness and sexuality might be called into question through her association with masculine areas of the curriculum:


Cathy: There’s this girl who likes physics and she’s weird.

Judith: Just because you don’t like her.

Cathy: No, she’s weird because she likes physics. She even looks weird. Her brother’s a weirdo as well.

Chloe: If she likes physics she must be different. She enjoys doing things that hurt people doesn’t she?

Of course, it may be that the girl in question is strange in some way, but liking physics is clearly seen as a central part of her deviance from the normal boundaries of femininity. Comments about boys in domestic craft subjects also suggested that by entering these areas their sexuality was likely to be called into question. According to the girls, a boy doing home economics would be regarded as a ‘bit of a puffter’ by his peers. Generally, girls were keen at least in principle on the idea of boys doing home economics, but textiles was beyond the pale:

Pat Rennick: I reckon it’s all right doing cooking ‘cos I know a boy who wants to be a chef and he’s taking it. I don’t know about textiles. I mean there are men designers but it’s a bit puffy. It’s all right with cooking ‘cos they’ve got to learn how to cook when they leave home.

Boys’ comments indicated that they were also active in maintaining the masculine identity of science. A few said that it would be a good thing if there were more girls in these areas of the curriculum, but the majority attributed their absence to the lack of mental ability or physical strength. One boy said that the only girls who would do metalwork or woodwork were the ones who did not care about their appearance, and another said that he could only...
tolerate girls in these areas if they did not think they were better than the boys.

It would appear, then, that in the same way as boys in co-educational schools may use girls as their negative reference groups (Shaw, 1980), girls may use boys in a similar manner. Kohlberg (1966) argues that 6-year-old children do not have the idea of gender constancy and believe that, for example, a boy may change sex by dressing like a girl. Later on, he says, children learn the difference between biological and social characteristics, and therefore become less anxious about gender deviance. Evidence presented here suggests that many of these pupils believed that by venturing into non-traditional areas of the curriculum, both boys and girls compromised their gender identity. It may well be that, at this particular point of their development, adolescents experience anxiety about their sexuality, and use option choice as a means of consolidating their sense of masculinity or femininity.

MAINTENANCE OF FEMALE SANCTUARIES WITHIN A MALE CULTURE

Girls' resistance to participation in masculine areas of the curriculum was not only to do with their definition of themselves in negative relationship to males. It was also to do with their positive identification with other girls and women. The atmosphere in physics lessons was described by many girls as uncomfortable and alienating. For Yvonne Roundhay, the physics teacher's form of humour seemed to exemplify a particularly male way of relating which she found childish and irritating:

Marie Painter: He always tries to embarrass you, doesn't he?
Yvonne Roundhay: He said to me, 'You've got your left finger up your left nose and your right finger up your right nose' and I said, 'I've only got one nose.' He's really annoying, I don't like him. He mucks around and jokes around and then he blames it on us.

By way of contrast, lessons which were taken exclusively by girls were generally described enthusiastically. Here, it seemed,
PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

girls were able to establish a much more equal relationship with women teachers based on common interests. Pat Rennick, for instance, described how well she got on with her secretarial studies teacher:

Pat: She’s just like your mum . . . She talks to you as if you’re her daughter or something.

S.R.: Is there a nice atmosphere in that group?

Pat: Yeah. She joins in all our conversations and it goes right off the subject on to boys and that. And her little boy. Then she says, ‘Oh, we must get back on to the lesson’.

It was in subjects like this that girls were able to enjoy their friendships uninterrupted, which played a very important part in their lives:

Jackie Rivers: It’s important to have a good relationship with your friends. Being able to trust them - just being good friends.

Jan Ellis: At least you can have a permanent friend then, because with boys you’re always chopping and changing.

The need for girls to find a place for themselves in the school where they could enjoy each other’s company away from the presence of boys was strongly illustrated by their description of the sexual harassment which was an everyday part of school experience. Pat Rennick and Janet Fields described the sort of interaction which was quite common:

Pat: They used to call me dog, and when I was going out with one of their mates called Sean they used to go on to me like mad. Kevin can be a right pig. He comes up to you and says things like, ‘Are you a virgin?’ Really horrible. We were standing round in the snow and these boys walked by and called ‘Ruff’ like that, just like a dog. If we were to say the same to them they’d get mad.

Several girls made comments about the boys’ emotional immaturity, such as:

I don’t think they’ve got much feelings at the moment.

(Jackie Rivers)
I think really girls have got more feeling than boys.
(Debbie Dowland)

This sort of sexually derogatory name-calling is very much like that found by Cowie and Lees (1981) in a London comprehensive school, and from the accounts of girls themselves and classroom observation it appeared commonplace at Millbridge and Greenhill. (See Chapter 8 for further discussion of teachers' manipulation of gender codes in maintaining classroom control.) In explaining why they chose to reject some subjects, a number of girls made it clear that this had to do with an atmosphere of underlying sexuality which characterized the lessons of some male teachers. In view of this, girls felt attracted to areas of the curriculum where they were more likely to have female teachers. Susan Piper described one experience thus:

We've got a bloke teaching us English at the moment and he's very peculiar. He says things to us like, 'Where d'you get your top from?' and 'I like your skirt.' He doesn't say it to any one else. It makes me feel yuck and every time he comes near my desk I get up and walk away.

It is interesting that Susan was one of the girls who sometimes deliberately adopted exaggerated forms of femininity to challenge teachers' authority in the classroom, including, on occasion, the use of sexual joking (see Chapter 7). Her behaviour might thus be regarded as confusing and contradictory, and a male teacher responding to her in a sexual way might well argue that he was merely reacting to messages coming from her in the first place. Kelly et al. (1985), writing about the GIST project, notes that 'many of the sex-differentiated interactions that we observed originated not with the teacher but with the pupil', and it was partly for this reason that 'teachers remained unwilling to see their own part in either the problem or the solution' (p. 140). This seems to me to be a very important point. Obviously, teachers bear the major responsibility for the nature of classroom interaction, and so it is important for them to ensure that the way in which they relate to girls in the class is not likely to be damaging to the pupil's intellectual development. To understand what is happening within the classroom...
PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

clearly demands careful thought and analysis, and unless teachers are prepared to engage in this sort of discussion they may well continue to argue that sex differentiation in classroom interaction is nothing to do with them.

GIRLS' OPPOSITION TO OVERT DISCRIMINATION

Male culture, then, dominated not only the physical space of the school, but also the atmosphere of many lessons. As a reaction to this, girls tended to be attracted to all-female areas of the curriculum where they did not feel threatened. They also felt the need to distance themselves from boys' behaviour and the subject areas which they felt epitomised masculinity. If this were the total picture, we would be left with the rather depressing impression that Westshire girls were quite accepting of gender divisions in the curriculum and the wider society, but this would only be a partial picture. Although the process of gender construction involved the policing of gender boundaries, another very different theme could be detected in what the girls had to say about the school's more blatant attempts to enforce traditional gender divisions in the curriculum. This involved a highly critical awareness of the unfairness of gender divisions and a sense of outrage at how this injustice affected them on a personal level. Jan Ellis, for instance, said that in the interests of equality all craft subjects should be taken by both boys and girls:

I think boys should learn to cook 'cos they seem to think, 'Oh, girls can do it, leave them to it'. They expect girls to do everything. And I think girls should be able to do woodwork and metalwork.

Despite believing this in principle, however, she had no intention of actually doing these subjects herself, thus illustrating the gap between supporting feminist principles in theory but shrinking from putting them into practice. Another example of this was an incident which had occurred at Greenhill Middle School and which was commented on by almost all the girls. They had apparently not been allowed to do metalwork at this school because it was taught at Wellington Army Camp which,
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMINITY

According to Leora Sayers, was considered an unsuitable place for them to be:

The army people were swearing and they said it was not a girls' language. So the girls weren't allowed to do it. It was a bit daft.

Yvonne Roundhay said that she had been very annoyed at this and had gone to the head of year to complain, because even though she did not want to do it, it was wrong for her to be excluded.

There was, then, a conflict here which for many of the girls remained unresolved. On the one hand, they disliked the personal experience of discrimination and protested about it, but on the other hand they felt that they had an interest in maintaining a distance between themselves and the boys. The experience of the occasional girl who did take a technical craft subject tended to discourage others from following her example. Sian Roberts commented that she had not at all enjoyed being the only girl in a class of boys. The more you have to work with them the less you like them was her comment. It was interesting that even though most of the girls said that they were in favour of boys doing home economics, they complained about the disruptive influence of the two boys who were in their class, and said they thought it was a waste of time for them to be there. Had the process of crossing gender boundaries been easier, then perhaps more would have risked it.

GIRLS' SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN MALE SUBJECT AREAS

One of the few girls at Greenhill who actually said she liked physics and thought she was good at it was Catherine Thomas, and it was clear that she was challenging the traditional construction of femininity in many areas of her life. Despite being small and rather round herself, she resented girls' exclusion from various sports and had taken up weightlifting:

The first week at weightlifting I was told by the boys, 'You can't do that, girls aren't allowed to do that.' Rubbish . . . But you don't half get some power going, they really do.
PUPILS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

think they're so strong and you look at them and you think, 'Oh God, I don't know what they see in themselves' when you see them struggling to lift the bar. Boys really do think they're so strong. I'd rather challenge them, and they don't like that, girls especially challenging them to do something.

As we have seen, girls who crossed gender boundaries were likely to be treated with hostility by their peers, but Catherine had developed a number of strategies for dealing with this potential rejection. In lessons, she was always cheeky to teachers, and was regarded as something of an entertainment. She also helped other pupils with their work, and she made it very clear that her loyalties lay with other girls:

If there was a fight between a girl and a boy and I knew the boy and I liked him moderately and I hated the girl, I think I'd still side with the girl.

Susan Burton at Millbridge, who was hoping to take three sciences at 'A' level, had a similarly calculated strategy. She said she had been teased and called a fool by other girls for taking sciences and languages, but established her credentials as one of the girls by the way she dressed. For school, she said, her hair had to be 'sprayed solid', her skirt short and sometimes worn with fishnet tights, large dangly earrings and rather more make-up than was permitted. Mrs Burton told me how the physics teacher had at first regarded Susan as an empty-headed girl but had subsequently been forced to change his mind.

Mrs B: They look quite with it, don't they, and the teacher doesn't always realise that under that there is some intelligence. I'm sure that happens. You come in with funky hair and dangly earrings and they think you're really way out. You look fairly frivolous. It's only when they start to talk to you that they realise there's something there.

Susan clearly enjoyed playing on the contradictory messages she projected:

But that's their fault for taking your appearance so seriously. They're creeping round me something chronic now.
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMININITY

CONCLUSIONS

Both patterns of subject choice and pupils’ views of the gender appropriateness of particular subjects suggested that to some extent they shared the conservative perspective of the schools with regard to gender codes. Talking to girls and observing them in classrooms provided clues as to why many appeared unwilling to challenge the status quo. It appeared that, in the process of establishing their own gender identity, girls were using subject boundaries to mark out female from male terrain. Subjects identified as masculine tended to be seen as unattractive, uninteresting and suitable only for those who could be labelled ‘weird’. Curriculum content and the behaviour of boys and male teachers all served to encourage girls to encapsulate themselves within safe and known boundaries. However, it was not simply the case that girls were the victims of the kind of aggressive masculinity described by Mahony (1985). Many actively preferred single-sex classes and women teachers and chose subjects accordingly. It would also be incorrect to assume that girls were opposed to the principles of gender equality. Indeed, many were outraged when they felt the schools were actively discriminating against them in debarring them from certain curricular areas. This suggests that if schools were to work closely with girls in encouraging their desire for social justice, there might be considerable hope for success in altering the gender balance of the curriculum. As it was, the few brave souls who did make non-traditional subject choices were given little support in coming to terms with their gender identity in a hostile environment. It is a tribute to their creativity and resourcefulness that they managed to survive as well as they did.
PUPILS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE
Radical and conservative visions

INTRODUCTION
The previous chapter attempted to shed some light on why many girls made sex-stereotyped option choices and regarded subjects in key areas of the curriculum as representing either male or female terrain. The reasons were complex, hinging on pupils' desire to establish their own gender identity as well as protecting themselves from an unsympathetic male culture. The strategies employed by some girls who did successfully survive in male areas of the curriculum were touched upon. An interesting finding was that whilst girls felt that they had the right to stake out the boundaries of their own learning experiences, they were deeply resentful when they felt that the school was unjustly excluding them, and, in general terms, were in favour of the principle of equal opportunities. This chapter further explores these conflicting aspects of girls' culture in the context of their expectations of their future lives in the public sphere of education and work and the private sphere of the home and family. Again, I discuss data of both a quantitative and qualitative nature in order to represent the picture in as much detail as possible.

EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
As noted in Chapter 4, a number of teachers communicated to pupils their belief that gender inequality in school and the wider society was essentially caused by girls' lack of ambition and ability. In order to assess whether there were measurable differences between girls and boys in these respects, items on
the questionnaires distributed at Millbridge and Greenhill asked pupils when they expected to leave full-time education and the jobs they were hoping to do when they left school. There was no association between sex and expected length of pupil's full-time education nor between desired job and sex for either Millbridge or Greenhill pupils (see Tables 6.1 – 6.4). Girls were certainly not keen to leave school earlier than boys and they were as likely as boys to aspire to higher levels of employment. This suggests that a deficit model, which blames girls' lower status in the labour market on their lack of ambition, is inaccurate. However, what is noticeable is that the actual jobs aspired to by girls and boys were highly sex-segregated. Thus, in the area of professional work, girls said they would like to be teachers, nurses or social workers whilst boys saw themselves as scientists, computer programmers or pilots. Outside the professional sphere, many girls continued to aspire to office work, whereas boys saw themselves in the future in skilled trades such as an electrician or a plumber. The problem which needed to be explained, then, was not why girls were failing educationally nor why they were uninterested in the world of work. Rather, it was why so many continued to be drawn towards traditional areas of women's work characterised by low pay, low status and lack of advancement. The following section explores some of the reasons given by working-class girls for their decision to take up secretarial studies.

CONFUSION AND CONFORMITY - THE CASE OF SECRETARIAL STUDIES

In this section I explore the reasons given by girls for opting into secretarial studies, since these illustrate the profound ambiguities and contradictions underlying apparently conformist decisions. One might expect girls opting into secretarial studies to have fairly traditional attitudes with regard to appropriate work and behaviour patterns for women and men. However, as the following discussion reveals, they were far from passively accepting a subordinate role and there was evidence of opposition to the dominant ideology of femininity. This mixture of accommodation and resistance also characterised the young women training as clerical workers in Valli's (1996) study, discussed at the beginning of Part III.
Table 6.1: Expected level of full-time education of Millbridge pupils (by sex, class and achievement) and results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Easterleave</th>
<th>Leave with CSEs and 'O' levels</th>
<th>Technical college</th>
<th>Leave with 'A' levels</th>
<th>Higher education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 (13.4)</td>
<td>26 (19.8)</td>
<td>18 (18.0)</td>
<td>18 (18.5)</td>
<td>10 (10.0)</td>
<td>79 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20 (14.3)</td>
<td>28 (19.2)</td>
<td>11 (7.2)</td>
<td>15 (9.0)</td>
<td>36 (18.7)</td>
<td>200 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>18 (13.4)</td>
<td>26 (19.8)</td>
<td>18 (18.0)</td>
<td>18 (18.5)</td>
<td>10 (10.0)</td>
<td>79 (77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>20 (14.3)</td>
<td>28 (19.2)</td>
<td>11 (7.2)</td>
<td>15 (9.0)</td>
<td>36 (18.7)</td>
<td>200 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38 (26.7)</td>
<td>54 (37.0)</td>
<td>34 (25.2)</td>
<td>33 (27.5)</td>
<td>56 (28.4)</td>
<td>225 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achievement</td>
<td>9 (6.9)</td>
<td>11 (7.9)</td>
<td>6 (4.3)</td>
<td>7 (5.6)</td>
<td>16 (8.3)</td>
<td>49 (22.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below average achievement</td>
<td>26 (19.2)</td>
<td>29 (20.2)</td>
<td>10 (7.0)</td>
<td>13 (10.5)</td>
<td>33 (17.0)</td>
<td>116 (53.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low achievement</td>
<td>13 (9.8)</td>
<td>16 (11.5)</td>
<td>8 (5.7)</td>
<td>12 (9.8)</td>
<td>30 (15.6)</td>
<td>77 (34.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58 (41.5)</td>
<td>76 (54.0)</td>
<td>34 (25.0)</td>
<td>48 (38.4)</td>
<td>89 (47.0)</td>
<td>300 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education by sex</td>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>χ² = 34,099.44; p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education by class</td>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>χ² = 43,883.972; p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education by achievement</td>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
Table 6.3  Desired job level of Millbridge pupils (by sex, class and achievement) and results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Desired job level by sex</th>
<th>Desired job level by class</th>
<th>Desired job level by achievement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profession</strong></td>
<td>34 (21.6)</td>
<td>24 (20.0)</td>
<td>12 (23.5)</td>
<td>9 (12.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skilled</strong></td>
<td>24 (13.5)</td>
<td>29 (26.1)</td>
<td>13 (21.7)</td>
<td>14 (23.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unskilled/semi-skilled</strong></td>
<td>5 (4.3)</td>
<td>3 (4.7)</td>
<td>2 (3.7)</td>
<td>2 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vague/other</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
Table 6.4: Desired job level of Greenhill pupils by sex, class and achievement and results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Semi-professional</th>
<th>Skilled trade</th>
<th>Unskilled/semi-skilled</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>27 (22.7%)</td>
<td>12 (18.6%)</td>
<td>17 (14.3%)</td>
<td>44 (36.7%)</td>
<td>119 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>15 (12.6%)</td>
<td>3 (2.6%)</td>
<td>9 (8.1%)</td>
<td>26 (22.7%)</td>
<td>59 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>12 (9.1%)</td>
<td>9 (7.1%)</td>
<td>8 (6.7%)</td>
<td>18 (15.5%)</td>
<td>56 (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>3 (58.9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (51.7%)</td>
<td>6 (107.1%)</td>
<td>13 (64.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>11 (46.7%)</td>
<td>2 (7.4%)</td>
<td>3 (13.1%)</td>
<td>4 (16.8%)</td>
<td>6 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High achievement</td>
<td>9 (64.3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (51.7%)</td>
<td>4 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above average achieve</td>
<td>10 (51.6%)</td>
<td>7 (36.7%)</td>
<td>10 (51.7%)</td>
<td>17 (85.3%)</td>
<td>32 (57.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below average achieve</td>
<td>7 (37.2%)</td>
<td>2 (10.2%)</td>
<td>3 (12.2%)</td>
<td>8 (44.5%)</td>
<td>14 (25.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low achievement</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
<td>1 (5.4%)</td>
<td>2 (10.4%)</td>
<td>6 (30%)</td>
<td>10 (17.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27 (37)</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>17 (17)</td>
<td>44 (45)</td>
<td>51 (50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results of chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Desired job level by sex</th>
<th>Desired job level by class</th>
<th>Desired job level by achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>24.221 df(4) p &lt; .0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
PUPILS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE

The effect of opting for secretarial studies was to exclude many other possibilities, since at both schools it took up at least a double slot on the timetable. Discussions with parents revealed that personal experience of the local labour market was a major factor in explaining why working-class parents encouraged their daughters to take up secretarial studies even when this was at variance with the girls' stated interests. I wanted to see to what extent girls taking commercial subjects justified their choice in similar highly rational terms. What I had not expected to find, which amazed me in the early stages of interviewing, was that almost every girl expressed a lack of interest in the subject and hostility to the idea of working as a secretary. Forms of denial, in particular pragmatism, fantasy, and defeatism were all involved in the process of coming to terms with an inevitable, if unwelcome, future.

For Susan Piper, her choice of secretarial studies was justified in terms of a fall-back position which she firmly hoped she would not have to rely upon:

It's something to fall back on if you don't get the job you're looking for. 'Cos there's a lot of people looking for secretaries in garages and things like that. It's something just to fall back on really, isn't it?

Susan actually wanted to be a fashion designer, but she had little idea about how to set about achieving this objective and was gradually coming to see it as an unattainable dream. Most of the girls offered this 'fall-back position' as their main reason for choosing office-based subjects.

For some girls, it appeared that denial of the likely outcomes of their choices was centrally involved in the decision-making process and Jackie Rivers' ambivalence towards her future employment was typical:

Jackie: It's my ambition to be a secretary ... I think everyone wants to be a secretary at some point. With me it's just stuck.
S.R.: What's your picture of what a secretary's life would actually be like?
Jackie: I think it seems really dull. But I still want to be one. Just cooped up in an office all day. But it suits me.
S.R.: Why's that then? Because when you said 'cooped up
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMININITY

all day it didn't sound as if you thought it would be a very exciting job.

Jackie: No, secretaries in an office, it sounds sort of drab. But it carries some good moments with it as well, I suppose.

S.R.: What do you think the good moments would be?

Jackie: More exciting work, you know, like you might get to go abroad and work. See the world. You might be lucky.

Here Jackie is using the fantasy of secretarial work as high-powered and glamorous to offset a much bleaker reality. The metaphor of being cooped up, helpless and restricted, is very vivid and is expressed with more commitment than the image of excitement and high-living, which is a subsequent rationalization. Jackie's desire for independence is undoubtedly genuine, but she seems not to have a clear idea of how to set about achieving this in reality. In the absence of a pattern to follow, she plumps for subjects which are objectively very unlikely to give her the freedom she desires.

Another means of accepting a potentially dreary future was to use a form of denial, pretending that the future job would not really be secretarial work at all. For instance, some girls felt that working as a secretary in the police force or the army would be preferable, since it might hold out the hope of a bit more excitement:

Laura Sayer: I'd like to feel I was doing something for somebody instead of just sitting at a desk every day. I'd rather be outside than inside.

S.R.: But if you're doing secretarial work won't that involve being stuck in an office?

Laura: It's different than just writing letters. You'd feel as if you're helping somebody because you're doing something important.

For these girls, opting for secretarial studies was accompanied by the hope that for them the job would somehow be different, not the servicing routine which they knew to be the reality of most office work, but exciting and active.

Many girls who were doing commercial subjects justified this
on the grounds that they had already discovered their real goal was unattainable. Their replies expressed both anger and fatalism. Jackie Alcott, for instance, had wanted to go into the army but had been prevented by her Dad:

'He says all the women in there are slags. He says all the women go with all the army people. They're not very nice to know. So that was out.'

Polly Loder was almost apologetic about her real ambition:

'Well I'd like to be a fashion designer, but everybody wants to do that, don't they? [Sounds a bit embarrassed] Everybody that likes design and that – it's a bit far-fetched.'

Monica Sale, too, was doing secretarial studies because she had discovered how hard it was to be a mounted policewoman:

'It makes me really furious. They think we're really feeble just because men are a bit stronger. It's the same in the army. They won't let women fight. And at places like King's Park, the law enforcement academy, you're not allowed there either. All they do is like train the troops for the queen, nothing really hard. It's just a bit mucky and getting up early. I don't see why women can't do that either.'

The majority of girls, then, had little interest in the subject, and were simply doing it because of their recognition of the unlikelihood of their getting any other job. Many would rather be engaged in more adventurous and creative work, but were already realising that the careers service was unlikely to be offering employment in these sorts of areas. By justifying their decisions in terms of pragmatism, fantasy or defeatism, they persuaded themselves that their actions were perfectly rational and their future might not be as unremittingly bleak as they imagined. Some of these strategies are very like those described by Prendergast and Prout (1980) as underpinning girls' acceptance of the inevitability of motherhood. In the following section there is further discussion of this issue.

However, it should be noted that there was a minority of working-class and middle-class girls who not only expressed a strong desire for autonomy and financial independence, but had also thought carefully about how to achieve these goals.
Catherine Thomas, the daughter of a dairyman and nursing auxiliary, wanted to be a doctor. She had no intention of bowing to the suggestion which had been made by the school that a nursing career might be more appropriate:

I couldn't stand being a nurse and having to do the dirty work... I hate having orders given to me. Nurses might know something but they're not allowed to say it. Or if they do say it the doctors aren't very pleased... I like to voice my opinion and I could only do that if I was, say, a doctor or a matron.

Although most working-class girls, unlike Catherine, were resigned to the fact that they were very likely to end up in sex-stereotyped jobs, it was clear that most were determined to sort out their own lives, resenting advice and offers of help from parents and teachers. However, lacking a clear idea of how to secure financial autonomy in their future lives, their insistence on making independent choices was instrumental in locking them even more firmly into sex-segregated positions within the labour market. Jane Shelton typified the view expressed by many girls that by choosing secretarial studies and rejecting more academic options she was making rational choices about the future direction of her life.

S.R.: Do your mum and dad agree with the options you've chosen?

Jane Shelton: Well they wanted me to take a language but they didn't want to force me because it's my life. It's nothing to do with them really.

Helen Downes also said that she did not want any help from her mother, but at the same time felt that she was not very interested anyway:

My mum said it was my choice, my future, it was up to me. She says she spends all her time doing things for my brother and me and it was about time we started doing things for ourselves.

These findings were reinforced by data from the questionnaires, which showed that at Greenhill, in particular, working-class pupils and girls were less likely to receive advice on option choice from parents and teachers than middle-class...
PUPILS EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE

pupils and boys (see Tables 6.5 and 6.6). Data gathered from interviews with the mothers of Westshire girls also reinforced the view that working-class girls tended to resent suggestions from parents about possible directions and, in any case, very often their mothers did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable to help them. Mrs Murrell, for instance, a parent who worked in a small factory making head gaskets, said that when Sharon chose her subjects she was not influenced by her parents or anyone else for that matter:

When she chose her subjects she said, 'These are my subjects', and that was that. She picked them all out what she wanted to do and we asked her why and she sat down and told us, and we said, 'All right, you've got to do them.' No, she picks subjects I never would have expected her to so she's got to cope with them.

Similar accounts were given by many parents of working-class girls. Mrs Rennick said Pat was certainly not influenced by her or her husband:

I just told her to choose the subjects she liked best.

Mrs Field, too, said Janet's option choice was made quite independently:

She just took the subjects that I think she liked doing and was good at. So she decided to take them. I mean we didn't say anything to her about what she should or shouldn't do. It was her choice.

By way of contrast, middle-class parents in general, whether they had sons or daughters, tended to be very involved in their children's option choice, frequently making contact with the school through both formal and informal channels. A number of the parents knew teachers out of school and felt able to have chats with them about option choice when they met socially. Most admitted to exerting some pressure on their children to make sure they were making sensible decisions, and a number revealingly referred to 'our' subjects and what 'we' were going to do in the future. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the preferred course for boys was the physical science route, whereas girls were encouraged to opt for languages and, even for the brightest pupils, home economics was considered important.
Table 6.5 Summary of which people gave Millbridge pupils most useful advice when choosing subject options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Both parents</th>
<th>Father only</th>
<th>Mother only</th>
<th>Parent and teacher</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Nobody</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>26 (42%)</td>
<td>8 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>14 (23%)</td>
<td>63 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>16 (42%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>10 (26%)</td>
<td>29 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>10 (42%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (23%)</td>
<td>24 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>12 (52%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (14%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td>11 (29%)</td>
<td>27 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>14 (54%)</td>
<td>3 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (11%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>9 (19%)</td>
<td>26 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
Table 6.6: Summary of which people gave Greenhill pupils most useful advice when choosing subject options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Both parents</th>
<th>Father only</th>
<th>Mother only</th>
<th>Parent and teacher</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Nobody</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>24 (28)</td>
<td>9 (11)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39 (46)</td>
<td>85 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>9 (23)</td>
<td>3 (8)</td>
<td>6 (13)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19 (48)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>15 (30)</td>
<td>6 (13)</td>
<td>9 (19)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20 (43)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>10 (22)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17 (39)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>4 (28)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>3 (19)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (31)</td>
<td>27 (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
The parents of working-class boys, although they tended to be less involved in option choice than middle-class parents, often stressed that they had taken steps to make sure that the subjects that their son was taking would be adequate for the sort of work he was hoping to do. This sometimes involved making informal contact with prospective employers. Mrs Smith, for instance, whose son wanted to get an apprenticeship in the army, said they let him choose the subjects he wanted to, but her husband made two trips to the army information office to make sure these were the right ones.

Working-class girls, then, appeared to be distinctly different from other groups in terms of making decisions autonomously. This strong streak of independence is commented on by writers such as Coffield et al. (1986) and Wallace (1987), who have described working-class girls' transition to adulthood. Wallace, for instance, argues that the early commitment to motherhood and domesticity which working-class girls often make is not a random response, but a conscious decision to take control of their lives. In the context of subject choice, working-class girls' desire to act independently was important to their sense of self-esteem and autonomy. Unfortunately, their determination to make independent decisions based on the limited range of information available to them was probably one of the reasons why their option choices were markedly more sex-stereotyped than those of middle-class girls. Gaskell (1984), in her Canadian study of gender and course choice, points out that in later years the knowledge that they have voluntarily chosen a particular path may be particularly damaging for working class girls, since they may 'accept responsibility for the consequences of their choice - and blame themselves for the restrictions they face later' (p. 93).

Working class girls' decisions to opt for secretarial studies, then, was not indicative of a wholesale acceptance of traditional feminine ideology characterised by a belief in an essentially passive and subordinate role for women. On the contrary, they saw their actions as rational and responsible, and their rejection of parental advice was seen as evidence of the adult status for which they were striving. They did have some inkling that, once achieved, secretarial work might not offer a great deal of freedom, but this knowledge was generally suppressed.
PUPILS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE

Middle-class girls differed from their working-class sisters in that they were certainly not interested in opting into secretarial studies and were highly ambitious academically. At Millbridge, for instance, one of the girls' mothers told me that there was 'a little clique' who were all hoping to go to Oxbridge. However, they were also considerably undecided about what they might do there or the area in which they might work afterwards. Susan Burton, for instance, said that she wanted to be 'a psychologist or one of those people who finds out the mysteries of the world'.

Middle-class boys often had a clearer idea of the subjects they were hoping to do at 'A' level and even the precise degree course for which they were aiming. Working-class boys had often been given detailed advice by their fathers about suitable jobs and essential qualifications.

With regard to their future working lives, then, many working-class girls expressed a degree of ambivalence about the type of jobs to which their choice of subjects was likely to lead. A significant minority, on the other hand, were making choices which were likely to open up wider possibilities for the future and were very much aware of the significance of these decisions. With regard to pupils' view of their future role in the private sphere of the home and the family, similar contrasting views emerged. Let us first look at what some of the questionnaire findings reveal about pupils' present domestic involvement and the roles they anticipated for themselves and their partner in the future.

PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR: PRESENT AND FUTURE

Clearly, a key aspect of the culture of femininity is the nature of the domestic division of labour which is regarded as appropriate. A number of items on the questionnaire were designed to investigate whether there were any significant differences between girls and boys in their assessment of how this division of labour was currently being worked out in their own homes and what they considered desirable in their future families. A list of household tasks was given to Greenhill pupils and they were asked to say whether they regularly helped with these tasks or not. Table 6.7 shows that a number of jobs were done
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .0001</em></td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .0001</em></td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending clothes</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .001</em></td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .0001</em></td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .005</em></td>
<td>57.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking out rubbish</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .05</em></td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing car</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .005</em></td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor household repairs</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .001</em></td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making own bed</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
<td><em>p &lt; .001</em></td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for food</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidying own room</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying table</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 128

Significantly more by either boys or girls. Boys tended to take rubbish out, do minor household repairs and gardening, whereas girls tended to clean, make their own beds, mend clothes and do the ironing. Shopping, washing up, room tidying and laying the table were done by both sexes. Clearly, these divisions are in accordance with traditional views of the boundary between routine, indoor and clean jobs for girls and occasional, mainly outdoor and dirty jobs for boys. It is important also to notice the area of overlap, with boys as well as girls assisting with food shopping and other standard domestic chores.

An impression of the potential for future change, however, emerged from Millbridge pupils' accounts of the division of labour which they expected to have in their own families in the future. They were given a list of jobs and were asked: 'When you have your own family, who do you think will do these jobs in the home?'. Their responses, showing whether they thought the job would be done by men, women or both partners, are...
summarised in Table 6.8. Mending fuses and doing repairs were identified as male jobs, whereas cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, mending clothes and ironing were identified as female jobs. However, doing the shopping, washing up, decorating, disciplining the children, visiting the children's school, looking after the children, paying bills and earning money were identified as jobs which would be done by both men and women. Differences in pupils' categorisation of the jobs was statistically highly significant in all cases. Although the majority of daily servicing tasks were still regarded as female and the majority of occasional technical jobs as male, a large number of jobs, including both childcare and wage earning, were seen as appropriate for both sexes. This clearly represents a sharp move away from the view that the primary responsibility of women is to manage domestic matters and the principle male role is that of breadwinner. At the same time, the boundaries between women's work and men's work have certainly not dissolved. Interestingly, more girls than boys said both partners should earn money ($^2 = 4.526, df = 1, p < .05$) but this was the only significant difference between boys' and girls' responses. Overall, then, it would appear that the division of household tasks in pupils' families is such that both boys and girls are allocated or voluntarily undertake sex-stereotyped jobs with their attendant symbolic messages. In the future, they envisage sharing certain key areas of responsibility particularly in the areas of wage earning and childcare but certain tasks are still regarded as uniquely masculine or feminine. Oakley, writing in 1974, suggested that the modern companionate marriage still involves distinct sexual divisions even if the boundaries between male and female roles have blurred a little. Westshire pupils' view of the sexual division of labour reveals aspects of both the changing nature and enduring quality of masculine and feminine gender codes.

FUTURE FAMILY LIVES - QUESTIONING THE IDEOLOGY OF FEMININITY?

Discussion with girls at both schools shed further light on their attitudes towards the domestic and familial dimension of their lives. Many girls, particularly those of working-class origin, envisaged balancing part-time work with child care
Table 6.8 Single sample chi-square test applied to Millbridge pupils' expectations of whether women, men or both will do particular household tasks in their future families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household task</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Result of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mending a fuse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 101.594 ) df = 1 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing repairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 28.220 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning house</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 22.984 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 62.923 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending clothes</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 124.679 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 104.467 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorating</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 36.276 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sure there are clean clothes</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 140.894 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 51.889 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 56.185 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 77.722 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying bills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 66.109 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting children's school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 163.335 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning money</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 21.186 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking after children</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 123.321 ) df = 4 p &lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rather than seeing their careers as the fulcrum of their future experience. But at the same time, just as the prospect of being a secretary filled the girls with little enthusiasm, their feelings about being housewives, mothers and part-time workers were equally ambivalent, and many spoke of the negative rather than the positive aspects of the domestic role they envisaged. Many girls’ views of married life were very dreary, and at this point they were in no hurry to rush into it. Hazel Toms, for instance, commented:

I wouldn’t mind getting married, but I want to get on and enjoy life first.

This was her perception of what life was like for young married couples:

They buy a house and stay in it and don’t go out. They just watch the telly.

Children, although a central part of the projected future, were certainly not romanticised. A number of girls spoke of the violent feelings they could imagine themselves having towards children:

Nicky Thompson: They’re annoying. When you see them in the street and they’re crying you just want to go and strangle them.

The wife, according to Hazel and Janet, got the worst part of the deal:

Janet Ellis: The husband’s probably at work.
Hazel Toms: And you’re left with the screaming kids if you’ve got any, doing the housework.

Despite this negative view, they still believed that after a brief fling this was their inescapable lot in life.

For many working class girls there seemed to be an irreconcilable gap between the work they would really like to do and their responsibilities as mothers, and here, too, they expressed conflicting views. Earlier in our interview, Sharen Murrell said she thought it was a good thing for women with children to carry on working because otherwise they got fat at home, buying sweets for the kids and eating them themselves. She wanted to do something different, and being a long-
distance lorry driver was her life-long ambition. Later, however, she said she would like to get married and have children, but she did realise that the two were not easily compatible.

It wouldn't fit in with what I want to do 'cos you always have to think of the kids if you get called out for anything. You can't exactly dump them anywhere, can you?

However, this depressing vision of childcare did not stop many of the girls from supporting the ideology of full-time motherhood and, like their mothers, they were generally highly critical of women who wanted to have children and work while they were young:

Yvonne Roundhay: No, I wouldn't want to leave them while they are really young like some mothers do. I think that's wrong.

S.R.: Why d'you think that's wrong?

Yvonne Roundhay: Well, say if they have babysitters to look after them during the day they get more attached to that person than actually to you, because they spend more time with them. I think a mother should be at home when they are growing up, but when they are our age and they know where their mother is then they can go out.

At the age of thirteen, Yvonne was already anticipating a long wait for freedom after the arrival of her children.

A far less typical view was expressed by Catherine Thomas, who had this to say about children:

I wouldn't really want any. I'd make sure that I didn't have any. To me, they've got nothing to do with my life at all until I've finished [school], passed [my exams], but until then they don't count at all.

More commonly, girls supported traditional notions of the primacy of the private sphere in women's lives, whilst at the same time being highly sceptical of certain aspects of the ideology of femininity. Many were clear that they desired a fulfilling working life, but felt that the claims of the home would win. Some girls were able to articulate the nature of the
PUPILS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE

contradiction, if not resolve it. Clare Smart, for instance, was well aware of the gap between the romantic vision of domestic bliss and the reality, and articulated the contradiction clearly:

S.R.: Have you ever imagined what you'll be doing in ten years' time?
Clare: Yeah, loads of times. Well, I want a house that's modern and nice modern couches and everything, all in white and red and everything, and you've got this man of your dreams and everything [exaggerated voice] and you sort of fly away to holidays and go to all these places and then you look at somebody in real life and you think 'Good heavens.' [Laughs] 'Cos this couple I know and they were a really perfect couple and the husband walked out on the wife a few weeks ago and I found that out yesterday and it changed my entire impression of everything because they seemed to me to be the perfect young couple. They'd get a little son and one on the way and be just left her.

Very often, this articulation of apparently insoluble contradictions was made in the context of discussing their perceptions of their mothers' lives. Sometimes a daughter's perception of her mother's frustrations made her determined to avoid a similar situation herself. At other times, the tendency was to express a feeling of resignation. For Lisa Parkes, a working-class girl, determination to avoid a similar fate was clearly the overriding concern:

I just could never be a housewife. I wouldn't mind living with someone, but I'm not going to cook and clean for them. My mum's always complaining that she never goes out anywhere. . . . she'd like a part-time job but my little brother won't let her . . . He says she's not brainy and all that. He says: 'You wouldn't be able to pick me up from school.' He says he wouldn't go to stay with anyone else.'

Susan Burton, whose mother was a dentist and a single parent, was similarly very clear about the conflict which might occur between the demands of the public and private spheres and the solution which held the strongest appeal for her. She felt that
she had gained a great deal both from the perception of her mother’s successful career and from having to play a part at an early age in looking after herself and helping to run the house. Her attitude towards working-class girls who found themselves prematurely drawn towards domesticity was partly one of pity and partly of contempt:

Some girls in our group are getting married next birthday and I feel really sorry for them, especially the ones who are marrying soldiers. I can’t really see it working out. I know some who’ve been pregnant or had abortions already and I think ‘You stupid cow’. As far as I’m concerned, my job would come before my family - well, at least my husband, I’m not sure about my family.

So, although many working-class girls were aware of the inadequacies of their mothers’ situations and considered their own futures in this context, the majority reluctantly accepted that their lives would be similar. A minority of middle-class and working-class girls sought much more radical change. Despite their general sense of resignation, working-class girls also conveyed a sense of their critical awareness of the injustice of existing power relations. This emerged very strongly from items on the questionnaire designed to measure general attitudes to gender equality.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES TO GENDER EQUALITY

In the final section of the questionnaire, pupils were given a range of statements which they were asked to rate in terms of agreement or disagreement. These statements were intended to examine pupils’ attitudes to a number of issues, but particularly with regard to the issue of gender equality. They were similar in content to the statements presented to parents, but the wording was more direct and simple. Responses to each of these statements was analysed by sex and class of pupil for all pupils, (boys, girls, working-class and middle-class pupils) and the results are shown in Tables 6.9 and 6.10. At both Millbridge and Greenhill, boys tended to respond in a more sex-stereotyped way than girls. Significant differences were found between middle-class and working-class pupils at Greenhill,
with working-class pupils responding in a more sexist way. For Millbridge pupils, however, the responses of working-class boys and girls were only significantly different on the question of whether girls were strong enough for farm work. These responses are similar to those of the parents, in that fathers tended to express more sex-stereotyped attitudes than mothers. Middle class girls had the least sex-stereotyped attitudes among the pupils.

Factor analysis was then used to construct a scale of attitudes to gender equality, referred to as the sexist scale. From the pupils' responses to the questionnaires, factor analysis was used to identify those statements which discriminated between pupils most effectively on their attitudes to gender equality. For Millbridge pupils these were statements 2, 3, 6, 9, 13, and 16 (see Table 6.9). The sexist scales consisted of the sum of pupils' responses to each of these statements, with statement 16 on the Millbridge questionnaire recoded in SPSS so that (5) became the most sexist response. The sexist scales were analysed by pupil's sex, class and achievement (Tables 6.11-6.14). There was a significant relationship between pupil's sex and score on the sexist scale at Millbridge, with higher achieving pupils having lower sexist scores. This scale seems to provide further evidence that Westshire girls, regardless of their class position, are questioning the received culture of femininity and seeking more radical alternatives. This chapter explored the pragmatic reasons underlying working-class girls' orientation towards stereotypically female areas of the labour market and their acceptance of a traditional division of labour in the home. However, as pupils' accounts make abundantly clear, their acquiescence does not necessarily imply total acceptance of a subordinate role. It will be interesting to see whether these critical attitudes will be accompanied by stronger challenges to the status quo in future years.
Table 6.9: Mann-Whitney U test applied to statements 2 to 16 by sex and class of pupil for all Millbridge pupils, girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of statement</th>
<th>Working/middle class</th>
<th>Working/middle class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Most sexist response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>All pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only analysis of pupils' responses to statements concerning gender roles are shown. (2) Statement 2: 'Boys are better at science than girls'; statement 3: 'Men control classes better than women'; statement 6: 'Girls are not strong enough for farmwork'; statement 9: 'When unemployment is high women shouldn't work'; statement 13: 'It is more important for a girl to be good-looking than clever'; statement 15: 'A boy who wanted to be a woman’s hairdresser would be a bit of a softy'; statement 16: 'Women would make as good engineers as men.'
Table 6.10 Mann–Whitney U test applied to statements 2 to 15 (by sex and class of pupils) for all Greenhill pupils, girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Working/middle class</th>
<th>All pupils</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Most sexist response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>u = 456.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 322.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Working class boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 196.2</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 3.510</td>
<td>p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>u = 262.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 229.5</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Working class boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>u = 566.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 509.0</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Working class boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 113.2</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>Working class boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 0.842</td>
<td>p &lt; .005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) Only analysis of pupils’ responses to statements concerning gender roles is shown. (2) Statement 4 - men control classes better than women; statement 5 - girls are not strong enough for farm work; statement 12 - when unemployment is high women shouldn’t work; statement 15 - a boy who wanted to be a woman’s hairdresser would be a bit of a softy.
### Girls, Their Families and Femininity

Table 6.11: Mann-Whitney U test to analyse sexist scale by sex and class of pupil (for Millbridge pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Results of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by sex</td>
<td>$u = 1131.5$  $z = -3.332$  $p &lt; .001$</td>
<td>Boys more sexist than girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by class</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12: Chi-square test used to analyse sexist scale by pupils' achievement level (for Millbridge pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by achievement</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.13: Mann-Whitney U test used to analyse sexist scale by sex and class of pupil (for Greenhill pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Results of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by sex</td>
<td>$u = 975.0$  $z = -5.492$  $p &lt; .0001$</td>
<td>Boys more sexist than girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by class</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.14: Chi-square test used to analyse sexist scale by pupils' achievement level (for Greenhill pupils)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by achievement</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 27.639$  $df=2$  $p &lt; .01$</td>
<td>Lower-achieving pupils more sexist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn together data from the interviews and the questionnaires to shed light on girls' anticipated role in the home and the workplace. Again, we have evidence of contrasting constructions of femininity, with working-
PUPILS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE FUTURE

Girls expressing ambivalence towards the future limitations of their lives, which they anticipated in terms of a struggle to balance the demands of domestic responsibility and potentially unfulfilling work. They were generally not unaware of the frustrations and limitations of their prospective futures, since they could see clearly the conditions of their own mothers' lives. Very often, however, they chose to ignore this evidence. Prendergast and Prout (1980) discuss similar disjunctions between the normative construction of motherhood as the ultimate in feminine fulfilment and teenage girls' perceptions of their mothers' depressing circumstances. In the light of this clash between their own perceptions and the received wisdom, the girls rejected their private knowledge as illegitimate. Further, the authors suggest that girls reconcile legitimate and illegitimate knowledge by using a number of strategies or 'let-out clauses', such as promising themselves that they would postpone the experience until they had had a good time. The data presented here certainly confirm that girls experience a degree of dissonance between received ideology and private knowledge. Prendergast and Prout argue that if girls are to be able to use this 'proto-knowledge' to make choices about their future, they must be offered a framework of interpretation and given time to discuss the significance of their experience. Possibilities which they might wish to consider are 'non-dependent sexual relationships, economic systems which recognize the existence of motherhood and patterns of living which do not assume the predominance of female domestic labour'. Schools are the obvious places for such discussion to take place but at neither school in this study was any serious attempt made to discuss equal opportunities issues. As the national curriculum is introduced into secondary schools, the chance to discuss and develop common understandings of the operation of patriarchal relations are unlikely to be more forthcoming, since time for social and political studies is likely to become increasingly scarce.

A smaller number of girls, some, but not all of whom were middle class, expressed a very different view of femininity, whereby family commitment was not necessarily rejected, but was envisaged as representing only a partial component of a life in which work would also play a very major part.
In earlier chapters, we have seen the way in which many girls appeared to endorse traditional gender divisions in the curriculum whilst at the same time supporting the general principle of equal opportunities. This apparently contradictory position appeared to be related to conflict between normative definitions of acceptable femininity and their own observations of the reality of women's lives at work and in the home, often based on their perceptions of their mothers' lot in life. A minority of working-class and middle-class girls had developed more radical notions of femininity and were rejecting traditional curricular, vocational and domestic paths. This chapter uses the long periods which I spent observing and chatting in classrooms to analyse how these widely differing notions of femininity manifested themselves in pupils' everyday behaviour.

A number of writers have seen the classroom in terms of a power struggle between pupils and teachers. For instance, Davies (1984) focuses on gender-specific aspects of the struggle and Connell et al. (1982) and Connell (1986) explore the problem of discipline in working-class schools. They argue that because teachers are committed to the academic curriculum and the educational mobility of a minority of working-class pupils, this automatically necessitates the use of controlling strategies on the majority. Corrigan (1979) explores the pupils' perspective and suggests that, for many, education is experienced as a form of repression. Even for pupils who are well motivated, there is competition to capture the maximum amount of teacher time. For some writers, the concept of deviance has
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been replaced by the concept of resistance. Willis (1977) and Anyon (1983) have described pupils’ disruptive behaviour in terms of their rebellion against social injustice. Hargreaves (1982), on the other hand, has suggested that ‘resistance’ may be used as a catch-all phrase to describe any behaviour that is not positively pro-school, and as such it has lost its utility. In this chapter, I consider the utility of the term in making sense of some of the behaviour which I observed.

The following account suggests that conflict in the classroom was often manifested in the manipulation of traditional gender codes and struggles over competing gender codes. This happens in two ways. First, teachers base their coping strategies and sanctions on their typifications of male and female pupils. These are, of course, based on normative concepts of masculinity and femininity. Second, pupils base their opposition to schooling on the exploitation of the contradictions and inconsistencies of traditional gender codes, and sometimes challenge them outright. I will argue that both teachers’ attempts to maintain their authority in the classroom and pupils’ opposition to this power generally reinforce rather than undermine traditional gender codes. Some girls, however, do engage in activity which fundamentally challenges traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity, and I will also consider these. Paradoxically, the behaviour of these girls tends to be less overtly disruptive and more conformist than those girls who assume traditionally masculine modes of behaviour in their opposition to schooling. In the light of data presented in this chapter, the term ‘resistance’ is discussed. First, I will briefly describe the typifications of girls and boys which underlie teachers’ coping strategies.

TEACHERS’ TYPIFICATIONS OF GIRLS AND BOYS

Clarricoates (1980) found that many teachers, when they were asked whether there were any differences in the behaviour and attitudes of boys and girls in their class, said that it was possible to identify distinctive characteristics. Data presented here support her view. Usually, girls were described as more mature, neater and more conscientious than boys, and data from Millbridge teachers emphasized these themes.
All the teachers I spoke to commented on the maturity of the girls relative to the boys. Mrs Marshwood, an English teacher, had this to say:

Boys are much much more aggressive and immature. I find the girls quite amenable, you can talk to them on quite a normal level, whereas I find the boys, and I always have, very silly and childish, and that tends to carry on until the beginning of the fourth year.

The 'maturity' of the girls, which generally seemed to mean that they were better behaved and quieter, was often attributed to their more rapid physical development. For instance, Mr Jones, the head of biology, told me:

When you look at the girls most of them have been or are going through their growth spurt. Half the boys in the class are still little boys - some of them in mentality are still two years behind.

Many teachers, it seemed, were attributing girls' maturity not to any qualities they had worked hard to achieve, but rather to some quirk of biological development. Often 'maturity' was immediately linked with some other negative quality:

the girls are more sensible but perhaps more petty - well, girls tend to be like that for another year or two - 'she's not speaking to me' sort of thing.

(Mrs Lovell, head of house at Millbridge)

It is also interesting to note that girls' supposed maturity was used to excuse boys' poorer academic performance. At one of the options interviews I attended, Mr Mottram, the head of physics at Millbridge, who was interested in girls' under-achievement in science, had this to say to a boy whose science grades were rather low to be considering taking all three subjects:

Your grades are a bit low now, but research shows that boys tend to be a bit behind at this stage and then catch up later, so you should be all right.

Two other qualities which both male and female teachers frequently attributed to girls were their neatness and conscientiousness. In biology and geography, for instance, the
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teachers felt that the girls’ neatness accounted for their success. Mr Douglas, a geography teacher at Millbridge, said:

A bright girl will not only produce work that’s correct but a map, say, will always be meticulously neat. They seem to be capable of doing this, whereas very few boys will spend the time necessary to produce a very neat map.

This neatness, however, was perhaps not an unqualified advantage for the girls’ academic progress. Mr Tiller, a Millbridge maths teacher, told me that one girl presented her work so beautifully that he never liked to put any marks on it. In fact, far from being seen in positive terms, girls’ neatness and hard work were seen as evidence of their intellectual inferiority:

I think some of the boys have got behind the girls lower down through lack of discipline probably and the girls have been naturally hard-working and have tended to get ahead. And in maths, as long as you’ve got a modicum of intelligence you can get a very long way ... But when it comes to seeing through a problem, where a bit of flair is needed, then I think the boys have an edge. When it’s just a routine approach – you know, you do one on the board and they do the others with just a few small variations – then the girls, by virtue of following carefully what you’ve done, and taking it down neatly and reading about it and so on, they do better. I think the boys, if you wanted to devise another way of doing the problem, other than the one you’ve shown them, I think I would plump for a boy finding that.

(Mr Ginger, Millbridge deputy head)

Walden and Walkerdine (1982, 1985), in their study of discontinuity in girls’ performance in maths between primary and secondary school, encountered a similar phenomenon. Girls were believed to be ‘naturally’ good at the more routine approaches to mathematics, but less skilful in higher level problem solving and lacking in ‘flair’. They describe this as a ‘Catch 22’ situation:

If they fail at mathematics they lack true intellect but are
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMININITY

truly female. If they succeed they are only able to do so by following rules and if they surpass that hurdle then they become somehow less than female.

The qualities attributed to girls, then, of neatness, hard work and maturity were decidedly double-edged and they also coincided with prevailing cultural definitions of femininity. It would be easy to argue, as some researchers such as Clarricoates (1980) have done, that teachers impose their gender codes on passively receptive pupils, but I would suggest a further process is at work. Girls were certainly quieter in class, and in this respect my data support the findings of other researchers such as Kelly (1986). However, teachers' explanations of the reasons for this, in terms of biological development and inherent intellectual qualities, suggests that they were interpreting objective reality within a cultural framework which did not take account of the circumstances in the classroom producing this response. In the following sections, I will argue that gender construction in the classroom was an essentially two-way process. Teachers based their coping strategies (see Hargreaves, 1978) for further discussion of this concept) on their typifications of male and female pupils, and in this way transmitted traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Pupils responded either by conforming, or by resisting teachers' authority through the parody and contradiction of these gender codes. Much of this resistance, however, was ultimately destined to reinforce rather than undermine the status quo.

TEACHERS' COPING STRATEGIES

I will now consider exactly how teachers' coping strategies are based on their typifications of male and female pupils and reinforce traditional gender codes. Specifically, I will examine how teachers attempt to win the consent of boys to their authority by allowing them to control the physical space of the classroom, the attention of the teacher and the content of lessons. I will also look at how male camaraderie is established in the classroom through the use of humour and the verbal denigration of women. The control of girls through teachers' use of traditional notions of femininity will be examined, and
the establishment of female solidarity in certain areas of the curriculum will also be discussed.

Teacher authority, noisy boys and quiet girls

Although most teachers said that they spent an equal amount of time with girls and boys in the classroom, observation of many lessons showed that they were forced to spend the majority of their time with boys simply to preserve some semblance of order. Middle-class and working-class boys tended to employ similar strategies to bring about this particular outcome. I will describe an art lesson given by Lois Roughton at Greenhill School to show how boys manage to maximise their share of teacher attention, and the strategies which the teacher is forced to adopt to deal with their behaviour. The purpose of the lesson is to paint an ordinary object such as a Mars bar wrapper in a subtly different form. Boys and girls sit at different tables and early on a group of boys attract the teacher's attention by making racist comments in a deliberately confrontational manner which she does not challenge directly. Instead of giving in to these demands for attention, she tells them to get on with their work. Ben Hayter, a middle-class boy, grows a lengthy monologue about a brilliant idea which he had for his homework. It eventually transpires that it was too complicated for him to actually carry out. Later on, when Miss Roughton is talking to me, he calls, 'Miss, Miss,' across the classroom in a voice which is almost a whine, rather like a small child. She breaks off the conversation immediately and goes across to him. Shortly afterwards, she becomes annoyed with Ben and Justin who have been wandering round the classroom making loud comments on other pupils' work, and shouts at them. Ben insists on having the last word in this exchange: 'Oh Miss, we were just having an intellectual discussion.'

The lesson continues with the teacher responding rapidly to the boys' demands, which often seem to reflect the belief that as a woman she is there to service their needs and receive their complaints: 'The paint runs', 'The sink's not working', 'I don't like painting, Miss'. Ben gives the teacher advice on how to deal with his friends: 'I'd keep the packet of crisps Miss.' Another boy Walks round the class with a pencil stuck through his jumper pretending it is a nipple, and is told to sit down. At the
end of the lesson, a group of boys get up, and start to walk out in the middle of the teacher's explanation of homework, and Justin is kept behind at the end for an individual telling-off. By way of contrast, the girls have almost no disciplinary contact with the teacher, even though many are not doing much work either. At one point Miss Roughton walks over to a table where a group of girls are quietly chatting about a teacher at the Middle School who is splitting up from his wife. She says: 'This sounds more like a mothers' meeting than an art lesson.' And to me: 'This is where I get all my inside information from.' Later, Miss Roughton tells me that the boys in the group are able but immature, whereas the girls can be relied on to work quietly by themselves. This lesson provides a clear example of how the boys' behaviour, and the teacher's interpretation of it, has forced her to adopt a particular coping strategy. She rewards their demands for attention with her time, and allows the girls to chat quietly rather than get on with their work simply because she does not have enough time and energy to insist that they do this. Were she to focus more attention on the girls, the boys threaten that their behaviour might get completely out of hand. Her actions are understandable in view of the enormous pressures on teachers to keep classes quiet at all costs (Denscombe, 1980). However, it is also important to recognise that the way in which she justifies this division of time, in terms of fulfilling the boys' needs, prevents her from examining her actions critically. In this example, we can see how the gender codes which girls and boys bring to the classroom shape their behaviour and initiate a particular response from the teacher, which is then justified by her conception of natural male and female behaviour.

Lesson content

At both schools, it was apparent that the content of lessons was often shaped to hold the attention of potentially disruptive boys. A history teacher at Millbridge, for instance, was giving a talk on twentieth-century history and spent the entire lesson describing in graphic detail the sort of deaths which men experienced in the trenches during the First World War. He read one account of a man's head being blown off while his body continued to run forward, and when one girl complained
that she did not want to hear any more of this, she was told
that she must listen because this was how history was created.
Boys, on the other hand, made a great show of enjoying these
accounts. In English lessons, almost all the books which were
used featured boys as the main characters, often dealing with
the problems of the male adolescent. When I discussed this with
one particular English teacher she said that this had never
occurred to her before, but it was clearly not fair:

We certainly wouldn't expect boys to put up with listening
to stories about girls all the time, but we do expect girls to
do it.

When teachers did make an attempt to appeal to girls, this
sometimes also reinforced sexist stereotypes. An extreme
element of this was provided by Mr Suggnet's history lessons
at Greenhill. Queen Mary I's persecution of Protestants, he
told them, was due to the fact that she had had a very
unfulfilled life because she had not been allowed to marry for
political reasons. The girls in the class were asked to imagine
her situation:

When you leave school you may have a career and you
may want to return to it afterwards, but still at the heart
of your lives will be getting married and having children.
It's the most natural thing in the world despite what some
feminists might like to say.

Another blatant example of the reinforcement of traditional
gender roles through lesson content was provided in a physics
lesson at Greenhill. The physics teacher, Mr Lill, was explain-
ing electricity by asking the class to imagine that positive
charges were girls and negative charges were boys. They all
know, he said, that girls tended to run after boys, but were
nasty to other girls, and of course, boys did not like each other
unless they were queer. This analogy was used for several
weeks, interspersed with comments about queers and frutie
boys, and was even extended to the description of an ammeter
as a dirty old man standing on the street corner counting girls
going by. Mr Lill explained his strategy thus:

I always try to get rid of the abstract terms in physics.
That's why I talk about girls and sex. I say it's the girls.
who do most of the running round and the boys are interested but quite lazy. Quite apart from the fact that his explanation was rather inappropriate given the fact that most girls and boys preferred single-sex friendship groups, it did not occur to him that this explanation might be less than helpful in undermining the masculine image of science.

The examples which have been used here are of a rather extreme nature, and the content of the majority of lessons which I observed was more neutral than this. In many lessons, the masculine bias was fairly subtle; for instance, science lessons would often draw on examples from boys’ experience, and deal with subjects with which boys were likely to be familiar – such as electricity and magnetism. There were also many lessons which could not be said to be aimed specifically at either boys or girls. A small minority of lessons actually challenged traditional gender codes; for instance, one drama lesson involved an entire class acting out a space fantasy where they landed on a planet on which gender roles were reversed. This idea was conveyed to pupils in a very interesting way. The teacher, who was also in role, demanded to be taken to the group’s leader, and became very angry when a boy was picked for this part, saying that the space travellers were clearly joking. It took some time for the class to realise that a girl had to be picked as leader, and the boys were clearly reluctant to relinquish their leadership role. Overall, however, a significant number of lessons with all groups I observed were based on very traditional conceptions of girls’ and boys’ interests, and it was apparent that at times the teacher was deliberately appealing to the supposed attraction of violence for boys to hold the attention of a group of potentially disruptive male pupils.

**Humour and the derogation of women**

Some male teachers dealt with the threat of boys’ potentially disruptive behaviour by attempting to establish an atmosphere of male camaraderie based on sexual joking. I asked Mr Broughton, a woodwork teacher at Millbridge, who was also Head of House, whether it made any difference having girls in the classes he taught, and he described how he used the
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supposed universal appeal of the dirty joke in all boys' groups, which was not possible if girls were present:

All boys enjoy a dirty joke - I do myself as long as it's clever as well. And if it's all boys you can get them to remember things with it. For instance, you use those pipes over there, well the joints you call male or female for obvious reasons and we have a bit of a laugh over that. That's the nice thing about having all boys - if you've got girls there you can't really do that and you've got to watch your language.

Some of the male teachers' joking specifically involved the derogation of women: for example, at the end of a metalwork lesson boys were told that if they forgot their aprons again they would be issued with frilly pinafores and bra and panties. Cunnison (1989) also talks about the use of gender joking in the staffroom, sometimes as a means of asserting male superiority over women who might overtake them in the promotion race. She makes the point that it may not always be appropriate to use the term 'sexual harassment' to describe this joking, since women may sometimes play along with it or use it for their own ends. Although some of the girls were quite capable of using sexual innuendo themselves, many expressed uneasiness with this type of joking. Girls often objected to the vulgarity of male repartee: for instance, one physics teacher's references to nose-picking were the source of a number of complaints.

Humour, lesson content and allocation of teacher time, then, were all ways in which teachers created an ethos of masculinity in the classroom, which formed an essential part of their strategy for the containment of boys.

The establishment of female solidarity

Just as male teachers appealed to shared notions of masculinity as a central part of their classroom coping strategies, so women teachers in female areas of the curriculum drew on a culture of femininity to win girls' co-operation in the classroom. In art/textiles at Greenhill, for instance, Lois Roughton mingled with the girls as they engaged in a whole range of activities such as dying clothes which they brought in from home, screen-printing large covers for floor cushions and making clothes...
The atmosphere of this lesson, as girls tried on clothes and talked about boys, parents, friends and teachers, was more like a cosy chat in a bedroom than a school lesson. Working-class girls like Susan Piper and Helen Downes, who were often very disruptive, were always cooperative in this particular class. Clearly, these lessons were a welcome escape from the confrontational atmosphere of much of the school day, but also represented a strange contradiction. In some ways, they challenged male power through the establishment of female solidarity which underlies feminist consciousness. In other ways, however, these lessons were reinforcing the idea of the appropriateness of domesticity for women. Writers such as Holly (1987) and Wolpe (1988) have begun to draw attention to the importance of young women's developing sexuality in affecting their attitudes towards education. Early experiences of menstruation, for instance, may be extremely difficult for girls to cope with, particularly in an environment where this is regarded as something shameful. Prendergast (1987) suggests that many girls may use up an immense amount of energy concealing the fact that they have a period, trekking home at lunchtime to wash because the toilets are dirty at school and they will be jeered at by boys if sanitary towels are discovered in their bags. Clearly, schools which are concerned about gender differentiation in the curriculum must do some serious thinking about the general ethos both inside and outside the classroom. It is clearly their responsibility to ensure that where girls and boys are together there is a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere in which all pupils can learn effectively. Until this happens, girls will continue to seek out their own space, no matter what the educational cost.

Gender and coercive sanctions

When attempts to win the consent of boys to teachers' authority failed, then male teachers would use physical violence as a sanction, drawing on notions of the acceptability of male aggression as a means of control. Mr Broughton said that it was because of the availability of this sanction that he found boys easier to control:

The boy thinks he might get a smack either round the ear.
or up the hackside or whatever, whereas the girl knows you won't do it. I think there's this built-in thing that boys can be beaten into submission at home or at school. It's historical more than at present.

This teacher was not typical of male teachers at Millbridge, but since he was head of house he had considerable influence, being responsible for the discipline of a quarter of the children in the school. The symbolic power of the cane as the ultimate sanction against male pupils was clearly demonstrated at Greenhill. Shortly after the start of the autumn term, three boys who had been involved in feuding between the different middle schools were caned, and Mr Flanders, the head of year, held an assembly for the boys in which he deployed the cane and said that the boys who had been punished in this way were really cowards. Many teachers said they supported this show of toughness because it showed the power of those in authority in the school.

Sanctions used by male teachers in the control of boys, then, reinforced traditional notions of the legitimacy of male control through the use of violence. Similarly, traditional meanings of femininity were drawn upon in the control of female pupils. For some teachers, this was a consciously formulated strategy; for instance, Mr Jones, the head of biology at Millbridge said:

I certainly use sex in the way I teach. I tease girls much more than boys - with quiet girls it's the only way to get them to say anything. It's one of my teaching weapons.

Cuninison (1984) describes female teachers who also used their power as sexually mature women in order to control boys. However, I found this was a much more common strategy among men as a means of controlling girls. Only one woman at Greenhill said that she found older boys easier to deal with than younger ones. Because as boys matured it was easier to appeal to them on a semi-serious level of flirtation. Many male teachers referred to girls as 'love' or 'dear', and allowed the teacher to leave the class before the boys. Cajoling or humouring was often used by male teachers as ways of avoiding confrontation with girls. Pat Rennick, a Greenhill pupil, was sent out of RE for shouting at a teacher, and this is her account of what happened.
He says, 'Get out, I'm not having you shouting like this in my lesson. Come back when you're better behaved.' And then when he comes out he turns it into a joke. He's laughing and says, 'There's no need to get like that.' And I says, 'It's my Dad and that... I'm so used to my Dad keeping on to me, you know he teases me, I just crack up in the end, I can't help it.'

Pat is able to escape responsibility for her rudeness by drawing on the teacher's sympathy for her emotional state. Buswell (1984) describes similar incidents where male teachers control girls by appealing to their emotionality. Ultimately, she says, this is against girls' interests because they are learning how to survive through the use of manipulative strategies in relationships with men which are fundamentally unequal. Girls' exploitation of traditional gender codes as a form of contestation will be returned to later in this chapter.

So far, then, it has been argued that both male and female teachers appealed to traditional notions of masculinity and femininity in controlling girls and boys in the classroom. Pupils were able to contest teachers' power by adopting modes of behaviour which apparently reflected, but in reality parodied, these gender codes. They also brought their own conceptions of masculinity and femininity to the classroom, which did not necessarily conform to those of teachers, and the contradictions between competing gender codes could be used by pupils in their opposition to education. I will now consider exactly what form this contestation took, and whether it represented effective challenging to broader gender and class divisions, or whether it was simply a manifestation of individual anger without radical implications.

**BOYS' MANIPULATION OF TRADITIONAL GENDER CODES AS A MEANS OF CONTESTATION**

Boys and the culture of masculinity

In the previous section it has been argued that male teachers appealed to a shared culture of masculinity - based on acceptance of violence, sexual bravado, and derogation of women - in their attempts to win the consent of boys to their...
authority in the classroom. Some boys accepted this definition of masculinity, but far from seeing it as a legitimization of teacher authority, used it to challenge this very authority. It is interesting that this was most apparent at both schools in metalwork lessons, where traditional masculinity was presented in its crudest form in order to contain the most disaffected working-class pupils.

A description of one particular metalwork lesson at Greenhill will perhaps give some idea of the general atmosphere. In many ways the workshop felt like a factory, with very high noise levels caused partly by the work and partly by pupils kicking bits of metal around and shouting to each other above the din. Boys showed a great deal of physical aggression to each other, and sometimes hammered each other’s work destructively. Sexual imagery was used in a less than subtle way. One boy walked round with a bit of metal tubing between his legs pretending that he had an erection. Confrontation with the teacher was almost continuous, who shouted at them several times that this was ‘a man’s workshop, not a little kid’s workshop’. The atmosphere between the teacher and one particular boy, Desmond Rawlinson, was almost electric. Desmond crashed around the room muttering: ‘I hope he punches me and then I’ll punch him back.’ Ultimately, the head of year was sent for, causing great excitement and anticipation: ‘I bet he gets caned.’

Although not popular with the other boys, who regarded him as a bit of a bighead, Desmond was also looked on with a certain amount of admiration: ‘He’s a nutter, he doesn’t care what he says to anyone.’ This particular pupil was clearly challenging the teacher’s claim to a monopoly on the use of violence and aggression, and other boys followed his example in a less extreme form. Appeals to Desmond to behave like a man were clearly wasted, since his behaviour was a logical extension of the code of masculinity which operated in this classroom. The sanctioning of macho behaviour was a particular problem for women teachers who were not able to use the threat of violence as a means of control. Carol Jenkins, a woman RE teacher at Millbridge, talked about this:

The boys can ride their motorbikes through the social area and it really does not matter. I think that makes life very
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMININITY

difficult for women teachers because the law of the jungle starts to apply. The men who can actually assert themselves physically and be menacing are just fine, and the individuals who can't do that not only suffer because some individuals can do that but because you can't do it yourself. You fall back on methods of discipline that I don't approve of, and I wouldn't want to implement even if I could, which I can't.

Encouragement of a code of masculinity based on the legitimacy of male aggression was particularly prevalent in classes where working-class pupils predominated. It was, however, a dangerous strategy, in that it could be used to undermine as well as uphold teachers' authority. It also had the potential to undermine the authority of women teachers who had to base their discipline on what Cunnison (1984) has termed moral rather than macho authority. It is interesting to note that a pervading theme of recent literature (Connell, 1986; Weis, 1990; Crump, 1990) is the tendency for masculine culture to remain relatively unchanged whilst girls increasingly seek out new understandings of femininity.

Sexual harassment of women teachers

Another way in which boys could exploit accepted notions of masculinity was through their aggressive behaviour towards women teachers. Walkerdine (1981) has observed that liberal educational philosophy legitimises any expression of male aggression as natural and normal, and this allows boys to contest the authority of women teachers. Although this was not the normal pattern of behaviour at either school, I observed clear instances of sexual harassment at both. At Greenhill, for instance, three boys in a Main Group 5 class persistently abused their home economics teacher. In one lesson, she was called a wanker and told to fuck off by one of the boys, but instead of rebuking him for these comments, he was told to make less noise. On another occasion, James made a piece of dough into a penis and followed the teacher round the room with it. Again, the sexual implications of his behaviour were ignored, and he was told to get on with his work. Perhaps these boys felt that their gender identity was compromised by their
COMPETING GENDER CODES IN THE CLASSROOM

presence in a female area of the curriculum, and therefore felt
the need to assert their masculinity in this exaggerated form.
Boys, then, challenged teachers' authority by assuming an
exaggerated form of masculine behaviour which was
legitimised by the established gender code of the classroom. I
will now consider how girls, too, manipulated traditional
gender codes in order to challenge teacher power.

GIRLS' MANIPULATION OF TRADITIONAL
GENDER CODES AS A MEANS OF
CONTESTATION

The exploitation of the code of femininity

Just as some boys manipulated traditional constructions of
masculinity to oppose teachers' authority, so girls parodied the
accepted code of femininity in their contestation of schooling.
Almost all girls were involved in this to a greater or lesser
extent. For instance, uniform would be subverted by accompa-
nying it with red lacy fingerless gloves or many dangly ear-
rings. A continuum seemed to exist, with some girls abiding
completely by the rules of uniform, some diverging slightly,
and others using dress and make-up in an obviously rebellious
fashion. The latter group were predominantly, but not
exclusively, working-class. At Greenhill, a little make-up was
allowed to be worn by girls because this was considered to be
attractively feminine, but some girls would wear a large
amount of punk style make-up, clearly exploiting the fact that
it was impossible to draw a clear line between the conventional
and subversive forms of feminine style. In almost every lesson,
girls could be seen doing their hair, and in some cases this was
taken to the limits of absurdity. During one maths lesson,
Helen Downes produced a large make-up kit, with a mirror
which illuminated when the lid was open. She proceeded to
spread out the cosmetics on the desk top as if it were a dressing
table, and apply the make-up, asking for comments from the
girls nearby. Amazingly, the male teacher completely ignored
what was going on. For most girls, the styles they adopted did
not seem to represent a conscious challenging of the school's
notion of acceptable forms of femininity. However, there were
some exceptions. Susan Burton, a high-achieving girl at
Millbridge, for instance, talked about the way in which she deliberately wore make-up and short skirts because she resented the way in which teachers immediately assumed you were stupid if you dressed stylishly. For her, there was a certain amount of satisfaction in confounding their expectations. Other examples of girls' exploitation of the code of femininity was their use of male teachers' reluctance to confront (see earlier description of this particular coping strategy). This conversation with Susan Piper provides a vivid illustration.

S.R.: Do you think girls can get away with more with male teachers?

Susan: Yes. Like Mr Fison said to me the other day. 'Cos I didn't hand my homework in and he gave the boys that didn't a mouthful and he says to me he goes, 'You hand it in to me on Monday morning.' He goes, 'You bat your eyelids and it melts my heart.' So we put on our sweet and innocent look.

Particularly in masculine areas of the curriculum such as physics, girls exploited the assumption of helplessness by withdrawing and doing very little work at all. A few male teachers at both schools said they were aware of this strategy, but were unsure of how to deal with it:

I know one or two girls say things like, 'Oh, it's probably me. I seem to get most things wrong'. . . Sort of like, 'Oh women, they're the weaker sex. They don't get things right, they get things wrong. Therefore I've got this thing wrong. Therefore don't be cross with me. It's wrong. If you'd helped me . . .'. That's the kind of inference. And I'm sure some of them turn on a bit of charm or whatever to take the edge off things.

(Mr Douglas, geography teacher at Millbridge)

Girls, then, were able to use the assumption that females were quiet, helpless, emotional and very conscious of their appearance to avoid aspects of school that they found boring or difficult.

Girls' appropriation of male characteristics

A further way in which girls were able to contest the teachers' authority was by directly challenging the prevailing code of
femininity with their own cultural understandings. As we have already noted, the naturalness of girls' maturity, seen as synonymous with quietness and good behaviour, was assumed by most teachers. In both schools, recognizable groups of girls totally confounded these expectations. At Millbridge, for instance, one group of girls would exasperate the teacher by talking in just audible voices, making funny noises, pulling each other's hair, reading magazines under the table and always being on the wrong page. Julie explained their behaviour like this:

We really hate Mr. Pinkerton because he won't explain anything to us. But the lessons are quite good fun because we really wind him up. He really lost his temper with me once and hit me. He looked ever so funny.

Far from gaining status in the girls' eyes, this teacher lost credibility even further by resorting to physical violence, a sanction which transgressed the accepted code of femininity. The teacher himself felt confused about the way in which the behaviour of these girls deviated from his idea of appropriate feminine behaviour. He expressed this by referring to them as 'that posse of girls' and calling them by their surnames like the boys.

As we have already seen, sexual joking and allusions were taken to be perfectly normal for boys but unacceptable for girls. During one physics lesson, Helen Downes and Susan Piper openly challenged this norm. A diagram on the board showing a hand holding a metal bar elicited the following comment from Susan: 'Cor, I can think of something better to have your hand round.' Later, when the girls were told to hurry up with their work, Helen reminded Mr. Savage of the accepted code of femininity: 'You've got to be gentle with us sir.' When the class were gathered round the front bench listening to the teacher's explanation of an experiment, Susan repeated in a clearly audible voice: 'Undo your trousers. Undo your trousers.' Mr. Savage was clearly embarrassed and ignored her for several minutes. Finally he told her to go and stand in a corner without telling her why. When she demanded an explanation, he said: 'Because you keep on saying "Undo your trousers".' To which Susan replied: 'It's only a joke.'

This incident is very similar to the behaviour of the boys in
the home economics lesson described earlier. However, whereas such behaviour was quite common among boys, it was very rare among girls, and clearly caused the teacher a great deal of consternation. Part of the shock value of Susan's behaviour was that it confounded expectations of female sexual passivity and ignorance, and might thus be described as 'breaking role' (Cunnison, 1985). On several other occasions, these girls used similar oppositional strategies; for instance performing an elaborate striptease when asked to take off a coat in an RE lesson.

But even though Susan and Helen's behaviour might be seen as a challenge to the traditional code of femininity, this was undermined by their other actions. They described female teachers, even those who were generally sympathetic to the girls' perspective, as 'bitchy' and used sexually derogatory language such as 'dog' and 'slag' against other girls. Cowie and Lees (1981), reporting work they carried out in a London comprehensive school, describe similar examples of boys using sexually derogatory language against girls, and girls themselves using it against each other. Even though Susan and Helen expressed a great deal of loyalty to each other, they clearly felt no solidarity towards other women and girls, and were taking on an aggressive role in attacking them. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Connell (1986) notes the problems of women teachers in relating to the feminism of working-class girls, which is very different from that of the intellectuals. According to Connell, working-class feminism 'is often manifested in schools as uncontrollable behaviour by girls, sexual aggressiveness, hostility to the authority of teachers; things that define the pupil as a trouble maker, not an ally' (p. 191). He asserts that one of the effects of teachers' middle-class feminism is to split off a small group of working-class girls in an attempt to attach them to 'the teachers' mode of career-oriented feminism' (p. 192). At both schools, it was indeed possible to detect a small group of working-class girls who were less likely to challenge teachers' authority in the classroom and were determined to change the pattern of established gender relations. Catherine Thomas, for instance, a working-class Greenhill pupil, wanted to gain access to areas of work and leisure restricted to boys, and was actively critical of traditional female spheres of activity. Although she said she loved 'making
COMPETING GENDER CODES IN THE CLASSROOM

havoc in a class where the teacher was really pathetic', she also
believed in 'work time and playing-in time'. Disrupting lessons
through the challenging of gender codes would not have assisted
her in her ambition to become a doctor, and she was dismissive of
girls who wasted time in physics and metalwork. Her behaviour
was very like that of the black girls described by Fuller (1983),
who had to tread a difficult path between working for the
academic qualifications they needed to secure their indepen-
dence, whilst at the same time not appearing to condone the
school's authority. Middle-class girls like Susan Burton were
also involved in challenging gender relations in ways which were
acceptable to teachers, in her case by negotiating the right to be
both sexually attractive and intellectual. There is clearly sub-
stantial evidence here to support Connell's contention that a
number of versions of femininity are evident in the classroom,
which both the school as a whole and individual teachers either
reward or reject. A moot point which remains, however, is
whether the gender code of working-class girls like Susan Piper
is genuinely productive of radical change, as Connell argues, or
whether it is more likely to result in the reconstitution of
women's subordinate status.

CONCLUSION

Recent work in the sociology of education, reacting to over-
deterministic functionalist and Marxist accounts of schooling,
has tended to stress the problematic nature of social reproduc-
tion, and has highlighted pupils' resistance to many elements of
compulsory schooling. A number of writers - for instance,
Wells (1977) and Anyon (1983) - have argued that resistance to
schooling may ultimately reinforce rather than undermine
traditional class and gender codes. Anyon has pointed out that
resistance to the ideology of femininity:

is often a defensive action (no matter how creative) that is
aimed not at transforming patriarchal or other social
structures, but at gaining a measure of protection within
those.

(Anyon, 1983, p. 000)

Hargreaves (1982) has discussed the problem of discriminating
between actions which challenge social relations, and those

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which merely represent a negative response to education. Aggleton and Whitty (1985), in an interesting discussion of middle-class children's 'resistance' to schooling, maintain that a distinction must be made between individualised contestation and effective resistance to prevailing patterns of class and gender relations. One of the problems of making such a distinction is that it is impossible to know the long-term effects of pupils' resistances, nor to have complete access to their intentions. However, despite these problems of interpretation, it was apparent that much of the parodying and construalisation of traditional gender codes supported rather than undermined patriarchal relations. In their exaggerated displays of masculinity and femininity, pupils were locking themselves firmly into restricted gender roles. Even the few girls who deliberately rejected the conventional notion of femininity in their opposition to schooling were, in my view, strengthening gender divisions by uncritically adopting male modes of behaviour, and sometimes opposing other women. On this point, Connell would disagree with me. By way of contrast, girls who endorsed at least some of the school's aims, but were challenging male domination of particular areas of activity within the school, were probably offering more effective resistance to traditional gender ideology. Black (1987) has argued that disruptive classroom behaviour has occupied too much of the attention of educational sociologists, who have ignored the analysis of conformist patterns of behaviour adopted by the majority of pupils and especially by girls. Here, I have tried to explore the significance of both confrontational and conformist behaviour, and have suggested that we should not exaggerate the potential of contestational behaviour per se to bring about radical change in school.

In this chapter, I have analysed particular incidents in the classroom to illustrate the way in which male social dominance was achieved. Teacher coping strategies, based on their typifications of male and female pupils, were identified as a central means by which traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity were conveyed to pupils. Pupils' opposition to schooling was often based on the manipulation of these gender codes, either by adopting them in an exaggerated form or, in the case of some girls, by assuming modes of behaviour normally associated with boys. Far from weakening existing
gender divisions, contestation of this sort possibly strength-thened them. Girls who were not totally rejecting schooling, but attempting to use it for their own ends, were perhaps more likely to be successful in subverting the traditional code of femininity. The contradictions embedded in many girls' view of the world, conveyed so powerfully in the interviews, are also apparent in the nature of their interactions with other pupils and teachers in the classroom. My overwhelming impression was of the girls' lack of access to any sort of analysis which would help them to make sense of the different strands of their experience. The seeds of discontent which may form the basis of radical change were present, but without discussion or analysis, all that most girls could do was to work out their own personal survival strategy.
INTRODUCTION

Analysis of pupils' construction of gender codes suggested that although they were continuing to make traditional subject choices and in general terms felt that some subjects were more suitable for one sex or the other, in some respects they were beginning to envisage change in their adult roles. A minority of middle- and working-class girls were anticipating joint responsibility with their partner for work and childcare. In their general attitudes towards gender equality, girls exhibited a greater capacity than boys to critique traditional gender codes. Interviews and observation highlighted some reasons for their decision to stick to female areas of the curriculum rather than venturing into masculine territory. Working-class girls often saw no alternative to routine office work and accepted, albeit unwillingly, the restrictions motherhood would inevitably place on their lives. A minority of girls were envisaging far more major structural changes in the division of domestic labour to enable them to fulfil a greater role in the world of paid employment. This chapter shifts the focus to parents' constructions of masculinity and femininity and questions whether they are likely to exert a progressive or a conservative influence with regard to girls' developing construction of femininity.

This discussion is particularly relevant in the light of teachers' view that parents' attitudes represented the most significant obstacle to breaking down gender divisions in the curriculum. The school as an institution, on the other hand, was seen as a neutral or benign influence, trying to help each pupil to fulfil his or her potential, and both child-centred
ideology and the ideology of free choice were used as justifications of this position. The effect of this belief was, of course, to absolve the schools and individual teachers from responsibility for taking any action to dissuade pupils from making sex-stereotyped option choices. One of the aims of exploring parents' gender codes was to investigate whether teachers were right to make these assumptions.

I was also interested in exploring the validity of some of the theoretical ideas which have been put forward with regard to patterns of gender socialisation at home and at school. David (1981), for example, has argued that the family and the school are two key institutions which work in a mutually supportive way to reproduce traditional gender relations. Arnot (1982) has suggested that there may be a degree of dissonance between the official gender code of the school and that received from children from different social backgrounds, and discipline problems in the classroom may occur when such a clash occurs (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of this point). Little work has been carried out to test these ideas empirically, although the research of Kelly (1982) is a notable exception. One of my objectives, therefore, in carrying out detailed research with parents was to attempt to understand how their views on gender relations articulated with those of the school.

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE GENDER APPROPRIATENESS OF PARTICULAR SUBJECTS

As an indicator of their general attitudes towards gender divisions within the curriculum, parents were asked, like the pupils, to rate the importance of each subject on the third-year curriculum for girls and boys on a five-point scale. Mean ratings of subjects for girls and boys are shown in Figures 8.1 and 8.2. The pattern at both schools was broadly the same, with physics and chemistry rated higher for boys than girls and craft subjects also strongly sex-stereotyped. It is interesting to note that in the case of boys, academic subjects had higher mean ratings than technical subjects, whereas for girls, at both schools home economics was rated after English, maths and careers in front of all other academic subjects. The fact that home economics for boys at both schools was rated higher than needlework and at about the same level as French, indicates
that parents might be more sympathetic to boys crossing gender boundaries here than in needlework, for example. Tables 8.1 and 8.2 reveal which of these differences in ratings were statistically significant for Millbridge and Greenhill parents respectively. At both schools, the differences in parents’ ratings of physics, chemistry and craft subjects for boys and girls were found to be very significant. Women’s ratings of these subjects were just as sex-stereotyped as men’s and there were also no significant differences between working-class and middle-class parents, although middle-class parents made slightly less distinction between the importance of chemistry for boys and girls than did other groups.
The ratings of a particular subject for a single sex by women and men and working-class and middle-class parents were also compared (Tables 8.3 and 8.4). No significant differences were found for science, although a more detailed analysis showed that middle-class mothers at Greenhill rated physics for girls higher than working-class mothers. At both schools, there were far fewer differences in the ratings of subjects by women and men than by working-class and middle-class parents. Technical drawing, metalwork and woodwork for boys, however, were rated higher by working-class parents than middle-class parents at both schools. Similarly, at both schools, home
Table 8.1: Wilcoxon test applied to Millbridge parents’ perceived importance of subjects for girls and boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject assessed for All parents</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Sex for whom subject rated more important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>$z = -6.003$</td>
<td>$z = -6.68$</td>
<td>$z = -4.317$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>$z = -2.217$</td>
<td>$z = -2.784$</td>
<td>$z = -3.729$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td>$z = -4.953$</td>
<td>$z = -5.031$</td>
<td>$z = -5.052$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>$z = -7.688$</td>
<td>$z = -7.502$</td>
<td>$z = -7.629$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>$z = -5.953$</td>
<td>$z = -6.053$</td>
<td>$z = -6.053$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home economics</td>
<td>$z = -6.69$</td>
<td>$z = -6.869$</td>
<td>$z = -8.711$</td>
<td>$z = -3.027$</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework</td>
<td>$z = -6.138$</td>
<td>$z = -6.502$</td>
<td>$z = -7.629$</td>
<td>$z = -2.028$</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>$z = -2.043$</td>
<td>$z = -2.043$</td>
<td>$z = -2.043$</td>
<td>$z = -2.043$</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only those subjects have been included for which significant differences were found in ratings for boys and girls.
Table 8.2: Wilcoxon test applied to Greenhill parents' perceived importance of subjects for girls and boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject assessed for boys and girls</th>
<th>All parents</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>For whom subjects rated more important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>z = -5.012</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>z = -3.920</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td>z = -6.567</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>z = -7.138</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>z = -6.550</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home economics</td>
<td>z = -2.023</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework</td>
<td>z = -3.023</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>z = -5.159</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>z = -3.221</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>z = -2.366</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>z = -2.023</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>z = -5.159</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers</td>
<td>z = -3.221</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only those subjects have been included for which significant differences were found in ratings for girls and boys.
Table 8.3: Mann-Whitney U test applied to differences between women and men and working-class and middle-class parents at Millbridge in their assessment of the importance of a subject for a given sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Boys (U)</th>
<th>Girls (U)</th>
<th>Boys (z)</th>
<th>Girls (z)</th>
<th>Working-class/middle-class parents (U)</th>
<th>Working-class/middle-class parents (z)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1332.5</td>
<td>1376.0</td>
<td>-2.774</td>
<td>-2.705</td>
<td>1342.9</td>
<td>-2.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical drawing</td>
<td>1296.0</td>
<td>1335.5</td>
<td>-2.705</td>
<td>-2.774</td>
<td>1376.0</td>
<td>-2.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home economics</td>
<td>1368.3</td>
<td>1390.0</td>
<td>-2.859</td>
<td>-2.8873</td>
<td>1310.0</td>
<td>-2.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) Mo = subject rated more important by mothers; F = subject rated more important by fathers; W = subject rated more important by working-class parents; M = subject rated more important by middle-class parents; (2) Only those subjects have been included for which significant differences were found between the ratings of different groups.
Table 8.4 Mann-Whitney U test applied to differences between women and men and working-class and middle-class parents at Greenhill in their assessment of the importance of a student for either sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups whose assessment is compared</th>
<th>Women/men</th>
<th>Working-class/middle-class parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French Boys</td>
<td>u = 1623.5</td>
<td>z = -4.122 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 1593.0</td>
<td>z = -3.514 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Boys</td>
<td>u = 791.5</td>
<td>z = -2.052 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 884.0</td>
<td>z = -2.443 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths Boys</td>
<td>u = 1696.0</td>
<td>z = 2.092 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 1610.5</td>
<td>z = 0.290 p &gt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Drawing Boys</td>
<td>u = 724.5</td>
<td>z = 0.807 p &gt; .05 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 725.5</td>
<td>z = -0.01 p &gt; .05 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork Boys</td>
<td>u = 687.0</td>
<td>z = 0.522 p &gt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 446.5</td>
<td>z = -6.975 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork Boys</td>
<td>u = 725.5</td>
<td>z = -0.531 p &gt; .05 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 867.0</td>
<td>z = -0.602 p &gt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home economics Boys</td>
<td>u = 687.0</td>
<td>z = 3.977 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 446.5</td>
<td>z = 3.977 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needlework Boys</td>
<td>u = 806.5</td>
<td>z = 2.668 p &lt; .01 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 780.0</td>
<td>z = 3.099 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Boys</td>
<td>u = 387.0</td>
<td>z = 2.985 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 780.0</td>
<td>z = 3.099 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE Boys</td>
<td>u = 446.5</td>
<td>z = 3.977 p &lt; .0001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 387.0</td>
<td>z = 2.985 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Boys</td>
<td>u = 718.5</td>
<td>z = 3.108 p &lt; .001 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 502.5</td>
<td>z = 2.668 p &lt; .01 W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious education Boys</td>
<td>u = 923.5</td>
<td>z = 2.086 p &lt; .05 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>u = 724.5</td>
<td>z = -2.052 p &lt; .0001 M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) M - subject rated more important by mothers; F - subject rated more important by fathers; W - subject rated more important by working-class parents; M - subject rated more important by middle-class parents. (2) Only those subjects have been included for which significant differences were found between the ratings of different groups.
economic and needlework were rated higher by working-class parents than middle-class parents, but again, only for girls. So although middle-class parents made significant differences in the importance of craft subjects for boys and girls, they generally attached less importance to these subjects than working-class parents. This is certainly reflected in the sex and class of pupils who opt into these subject areas and may also explain the craft teachers' frequent lament that their subjects occupied very low status in the school. It is also interesting to note that languages for both sexes were rated higher by middle-class than working-class parents and working-class parents apparently placed more importance on careers than did middle-class parents. So it would appear that class, as well as sex of parent and sex of child, was an important factor in affecting parents' perception of subject importance.

An interesting comparison can be made here with the findings of Kelly et al. (1982). In this study, parents of third-year pupils in a Manchester comprehensive school were asked to rate the importance of subjects on the third-year curriculum for their particular child rather than for girls and boys in general. Few sex differences in the importance ratings of subjects for boys and girls were found, the only exceptions being woodwork and metalwork which were rated higher for boys, and home economics and needlework, which were rated higher for girls. Fewer class differences were also found, with home economics and needlework for girls being rated higher by working-class than middle-class parents, and physics for boys and languages for girls rated higher by middle-class parents than working-class parents. So, although the broad pattern between the Westshire and Manchester parents was similar, it would appear that there were more differences between Westshire working-class and middle-class parents. It is possible that some of these differences could be accounted for by the form in which the question was put, since Kelly asked about the importance of the subject for the parent's particular child whereas Millbridge and Greenhill parents were asked about the importance of subjects for boys and girls generally. However it is also possible that the findings represent real differences between parents in different geographical areas, with sex-typing of subjects being stronger among rural and small-town parents. Class differences would also appear to be more marked.
PARENTS AND THE CULTURE OF FEMININITY among Westshire parents, with working-class parents sex-typing certain areas of the curriculum particularly strongly. Variations in local labour markets, with narrower employment opportunities in rural areas might possibly account for some of these trends. A further factor which might have some influence is the attitude of the school itself. At Tall Trees School, where Kelly carried out her research, the female head and deputy head were both committed to the aims of the GIST project and the school operated a craft circus in the first two years so that all pupils did all craft subjects. At Greenhill and Millbridge, there was no similar positive endorsement of gender equality and the schools' reluctance to take this issue seriously may well have been apparent to parents. This might be an example of the way in which the school does not simply respond to parental attitudes, but actually plays a part in shaping them.

Like their sons and daughters, Millbridge and Greenhill parents were clear in their view of the gender-specific nature of particular curricular areas. Overall, physical science and craft subjects were the main areas where differences were found in the ratings of subject importance for girls and boys by all groups. There were also differences in these areas in the ratings of a particular subject for a given sex between working-class and middle-class parents and men and women. These areas have been identified as being of crucial educational importance, since they are necessary qualifications for the highest paid jobs in both professional and manual work. They also carry important symbolic messages concerning the appropriate behaviour, values and interests of men and women both in the workplace and the home. Given these views, it is not surprising that most parents were on the whole accepting of the school's role in the process of option choice.

PARENTS' VIEWS OF WHY GIRLS AND BOYS CHOSE DIFFERENTLY Despite the fact that many parents clearly endorsed gender divisions within the curriculum, most whom I interviewed said that they were in favour of the principle of equal opportunities and were not opposed to girls and boys entering non-traditional areas of the curriculum. When it came to the moment of subject
option choice, however, many felt very worried about their own children deviating from the norm. As we saw in Chapter 4, teachers blamed individual pupils, their peer groups and their families for the reproduction of traditional social divisions within the curriculum. When parents were asked why they thought option choice resulted in the remaking of these divisions, they located the source of sex-stereotyping outside rather than within the family. It is worth considering parents' views on this matter in some detail, since this helps to explain why most parents were apparently acquiescent in the system of option choice.

A minority of parents felt that pupils' decisions resulted from given pre-dispositions within their genetic make-up and hence there was no effective action which the school could take to alter the situation. Mrs Brewster, for instance, felt that the school had no right to encourage girls to take up science:

"No, I don't think it should be encouraged. If they're science minded, they're going to take up science anyway, aren't they?"

Most parents, however, like the teachers, subscribed to some degree of environmental determinism, blaming, amongst other things, peer group pressure, the media and the nature of toys given to children. Mr Smith, a long-distance lorry driver, suggested that boys' view of masculinity was instrumental in preventing more from taking up home economics:

"D'you think part of it is the boys think they might get hassle from other lads? I'm sure this is to do with it some time at school. Perhaps other lads have told them it's cissy . . . You do get a lot of this sort of bullying at school . . . I'm sure this must influence kids. And girls can be very catty and bitchy with one another."

Some parents felt that within their own families they had gone to great lengths to discourage sex-differentiated attitudes and saw it as evidence of the strength of peer group pressure when their children continued to be attracted to male or female areas of the curriculum.

Like the teachers, parents' perception of the overwhelming power of the forces of social conditioning led them to doubt the feasibility of innovations to bring about change. The views of
PARENTS AND THE CULTURE OF FEMININITY

Mrs Drew, a teacher, were typical of those of many parents. The reason for girls and boys doing different subjects was, she said:

"Purely habit handed down over the generations - the boys doing technical things and the girls don't. Some people say it's inborn that girls play with dolls and boys play with cars. But it's the toys you buy them and how they're brought up, isn't it? It follows on - as they go to school."

Despite the fact that Mrs Drew was quite prepared to talk in general terms about sex-role stereotyping in the family, she was still reluctant to apply this to her own particular family, insisting that it was purely chance that Angela did not enjoy playing with the computer, whereas Mr Drew and his son spent hours working out new programs. It would appear that environmental determinism has a marked impact not only on teachers, but also on parents' view of what can be achieved by the education system. Similarly, parents were very quick to blame what was happening 'out there', but not to analyse critically what was happening within their own families.

It should be noted that there was a group of parents, many of whom were middle-class professionals, who felt that the attitudes of the school and the teachers themselves were strongly involved in this channelling process. Mr Roper, a technical college lecturer, said:

"It's a combination of obviously well-ingrained social pressures which have persisted for a long time and will continue to persist. I suspect that the same pressures affect teachers, who again, I suspect, probably do tend to unconsciously reflect these pressures in their attitudes to the different subjects for the different sexes. I don't know about Millbridge, but I know that some schools are blatantly sexist in the way they direct children to certain subjects. I know some schools where girls aren't allowed to do metalwork because there are only enough places in the workshop for boys, that sort of thing."

However, whilst many parents felt that social processes both inside and outside the school were responsible for channelling their children into narrow areas of the curriculum, there was considerable opposition to the school actually taking positive..."
action to challenge this outcome. Some parents were suspicious of the idea that politically-motivated teachers might be attempting to influence their child's future and undermine their freedom of choice. Mr Fuller, for instance, a manager in a scientific instrument firm, was concerned about the implications of what he considered to be social engineering:

I think that depends on how it's done. I could say yes absolutely and mean with the right kind of teacher in the right kind of way, then it could be a wonderful thing because it would help to change our society into a better thing. I could ask a teacher like Mr Robin and I'm sure he tests children by saying, 'Why don't you do this, why don't you do that?' And that's good. But there are some teachers who would do it to provoke a change in society rather than a healthy thinking attitude from the children, and I think that's a problem.

Mr Robinson, a technical college lecturer, who felt that teachers channelled children into sex-stereotyped areas of the curriculum, was sceptical about their ability to take positive action to change this:

Well if I thought they could do it competently I'd agree, but I have little faith in the primary and secondary teaching profession in understanding the realities of life outside the teaching profession. I think there are very few who are qualified to advise children about what subjects they ought to be doing.

These fathers exemplified the limitations of a narrowly defined equal-opportunities stance. They were aware of the social pressures on individuals to conform to traditional gender codes but were opposed to attempts to challenge and change existing power relations. In this, they closely resembled members of the senior management team in the two schools, who were similarly hostile.

A minority of mothers had far more radical views on the role of the school both in creating gender divisions and in bringing about change. Mrs Brickell, a nurse educator, felt that a combination of factors was responsible for producing particular educational outcomes.
I think the boys are probably thinking more technically than the girls, and I still think very much that's the way society keeps them. I still don't think that in a lot of places people are ready for girls to be technicians and boys to be cooks, it's just not done, and I think there's a bias from teachers to do the same. Although they've been fairly positive in her reports about whether she should do the sciences or not, I wonder if perhaps more time is given to boys in the classroom than is given to the girls.

She felt that it was important for teachers to take action to change the out-dated view of femininity which characterised many of their actions.

Parents' accounts of why girls and boys opted for different routes reveal fundamentally different and opposing perspectives which emerge throughout the following account. First, there were parents who supported the existence of traditional gender divisions and saw these as inevitable. Second, there were the majority of parents who recognised the inequality of gender relations but were not in favour of a major restructuring of power. Finally, there was the small group, consisting almost exclusively of women, who saw gender inequality as a major social problem for which the school should take partial responsibility and should also play an important role in remedying by pursuing anti-sexist policies.

FAMILIES AND THE DOMESTIC DIVISION OF LABOUR

In order to investigate the gender codes which were evident in the everyday lives of families, parents were asked about the domestic chores which their children undertook regularly. Tables 8.5 and 8.8 report which jobs were generally done by girls, which by boys and which by both sexes. There were only four jobs at either school which were done by more than 50 per cent of children, so clearly these young people were adept at making themselves scarce when there was work to be done! In line with pupils' reporting of the domestic chores which they undertook, boys tended to engage in occasional outdoor tasks such as washing the car and gardening and girls were more likely to be involved in daily servicing jobs indoors such as...
Table 8.5 Chi-square test applied to household jobs done by Millbridge girls and boys according to their parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household job</th>
<th>Number and % of girls doing job</th>
<th>Number and % of boys doing job</th>
<th>Results of Chi-square test</th>
<th>Which sex is more likely to do job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>38 (50.1) 9 (13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 15.839$ df 1 p &lt; .0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making own bed</td>
<td>42 (56.9) 34 (66.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 8.459$ df 1 p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>42 (56.9) 14 (25.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 9.072$ df 1 p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>50 (67.1) 24 (43.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 6.968$ df 1 p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying table</td>
<td>42 (56.9) 18 (29.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 7.062$ df 1 p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing</td>
<td>23 (30.2) 7 (12.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 4.689$ df 1 p &lt; .05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking out rubbish</td>
<td>54 (70.1) 29 (52.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 13.006$ df 1 p &lt; .0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>13 (16.7) 25 (45)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 13.744$ df 1 p &lt; .0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor household repairs</td>
<td>3 (4.3) 21 (41.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$X^2 = 22.071$ df 1 p &lt; .0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>27 (36.1) 19 (33.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing car</td>
<td>9 (12) 14 (27.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending clothes</td>
<td>11 (14.9) 4 (13.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidying own room</td>
<td>54 (18.1) 36 (74.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.

$X^2 = 15.159$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 8.459$ df 1 p < .01
$X^2 = 9.070$ df 1 p < .01
$X^2 = 6.968$ df 1 p < .01
$X^2 = 7.062$ df 1 p < .01
$X^2 = 4.689$ df 1 p < .05
$X^2 = 13.006$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 13.744$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 22.071$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 15.506$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 13.744$ df 1 p < .0001
$X^2 = 22.611$ df 1 p < .0001

Jobs done mainly by girls
Jobs done mainly by boys
Jobs done equally by boys
Jobs done mostly by girls
Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
cooking and ironing. Shopping was one of the few areas where both sexes appeared to participate fairly frequently and to an equal extent. The amount of time spent by pupils at the two schools on household chores was also very similar (see Tables 8.6 and 8.9) and there were no overall significant differences between working-class and middle-class children. However, further analysis showed that at Millbridge working-class girls spent significantly more time on household jobs than working-class boys, whilst at Greenhill there was an overall significant difference between boys and girls, with girls doing more work than boys. At neither school was there a significant difference between time spent on household jobs by girls and boys in middle-class families.

Household tasks appear to be assigned in a strongly sex-
Table 8.8: Chi-square test applied to household jobs done by Greenhill girls and boys according to their parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household job</th>
<th>Number and % of girls doing job</th>
<th>Number and % of boys doing job</th>
<th>Which sex is more likely to do job</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>29 (49.2)</td>
<td>16 (24.6)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 7.027)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .01</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making own bed</td>
<td>54 (91.5)</td>
<td>34 (52.3)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 23.233)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .0001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>39 (64.6)</td>
<td>13 (23.1)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 15.801)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .0001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mending clothes</td>
<td>18 (30.5)</td>
<td>4 (6.3)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 10.704)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .0001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidying own rooms</td>
<td>34 (91.2)</td>
<td>39 (90.3)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 14.795)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .0001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironing</td>
<td>24 (66.7)</td>
<td>5 (14.6)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 21.544)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .0001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing car</td>
<td>11 (18.6)</td>
<td>29 (48.5)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 6.973)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>13 (27.3)</td>
<td>29 (59.4)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 6.179)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor household repairs</td>
<td>4 (6.3)</td>
<td>16 (24.6)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 6.014)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) <strong>p &lt; .05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>25 (55.4)</td>
<td>29 (54.6)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 0.017)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking out rubbish</td>
<td>16 (23.7)</td>
<td>20 (30.8)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 0.354)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying table</td>
<td>26 (35.8)</td>
<td>26 (35.2)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 0.017)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing up</td>
<td>14 (37.4)</td>
<td>20 (58.5)</td>
<td>![chi-square](X^2 = 0.017)</td>
<td>![df](d.f = 2) ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses

Stereotyped way, with girls - particularly in the working class - spending more time on them than boys. In this respect, they were similar to the rural girls described by Mason (1987) and the girls living in a more urban area whose family lives are discussed by Kelly et al. (1982). Clearly, the pattern of participation in daily domestic chores is significant, since it represents a
Parents and the Culture of Femininity

Table 8.9: Time per week spent by Greenhill pupils on household jobs according to their parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time spent per week</th>
<th>Less than 1 hour</th>
<th>1-3 hours</th>
<th>More than 3 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All pupils</td>
<td>22 (32.8)</td>
<td>33 (50.8)</td>
<td>8 (15.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>8 (26.7)</td>
<td>18 (60.0)</td>
<td>7 (23.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>14 (68.4)</td>
<td>15 (68.4)</td>
<td>1 (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>11 (54.6)</td>
<td>7 (42.2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>12 (54.9)</td>
<td>12 (54.9)</td>
<td>2 (10.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses

Table 8.10: Results of chi-square test applied to Greenhill parents' account of time per week spent on household jobs by their children by sex of child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>All parents</th>
<th>Working-class parents</th>
<th>Middle-class parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on household jobs by sex of child</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 19.015$</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 10.015$</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.001$</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.001$</td>
<td>$&gt; 0.05$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A marked difference emerged between those parents who strongly defended the traditional divisions operating within their own families and others who were questioning the status quo or who had already succeeded in bringing about changes in the domestic balance of power. A number of men stated very firmly their belief in the maintenance of strong gender boundaries within the family which should be reflected in the school curriculum. Mr. Alcott, for instance, who had previously been in the army and now worked for an insurance firm, stated this view very firmly.
Girls, Their Families and Femininity

Girls should concentrate more on the women's things. I'm a bit old-fashioned in that sense. There's jobs for women and there's jobs for men. I think she [indicating his wife] should have done more sewing and knitting at school.

When asked what he meant by 'men's jobs' and 'women's jobs' he went on:

Well, the women should do things like knitting and sewing and crocheting and things like that, the women's side of things in the family, and the men's side is mending the door locks and looking after the greenhouse and looking after the garden and painting, things like that, that's the way we work it.

However the fact that real life did not fit in quite so neatly with this idealised world view was indicated in their final comments:

Mr Alcott: Except she doesn't do any knitting and crocheting, etc.

Mrs Alcott: And he don't do a lot of painting. [Both laugh.]

It is interesting that there were no examples of professional middle-class men making such overtly reactionary statements concerning the role of women and men. However, whereas many women were willing to challenge the sexual division of labour, men were much less likely to do this, suggesting that their commitment to equality was rather superficial.

Whereas some men were concerned to define housework as essentially women's work, women who held a conservative view of gender roles in the home often based their beliefs on a strong endorsement of an ideology of full-time motherhood. It was noticeable that working-class women were often very critical of mothers who had gone back to work when the children were young. Mrs Rennick, the wife of a heavy-plant operator who was herself unemployed, commented:

I know a friend of mine, this lady's mother looks after her baby several days a week, which I don't really agree with. 'Cos I mean, why have a child? She should have a child and bring it up and then go back to work afterwards. I don't really agree with that. The baby was only three months old and she was back working three or four days a week. But apparently her mother did it for her daughter as well.
and so she agreed to do it for her own daughter. I suppose if they're happy with that that's fair enough, but it doesn't seem right to me somehow. I don't see why not if your children are older.

This suspicion of women who 'abandoned' their children to return to work was shared by many working-class women despite their recognition that they themselves had been damaged by the narrow focus of their life. Interestingly, working-class women tended to be more tolerant of middle-class women returning to work with young children than they were of women like themselves doing so. Mrs Killick, a mother who was a Millbridge cleaner, said:

Some women can continue to work while they have young children. I couldn't. I can't even run this [indicating the house] properly. I think if you're that way inclined then why shouldn't you? You go through your pregnancy six months, then rest for three months, then have the children and get the nannies and that in. And then if you're clever enough a lot of women work from home. I don't mean stupid things like glove-making and this sort of thing but proper work.

Mrs Rennick also felt that it was all right for career women to combine work and family, but this was not a practical option for ordinary women like herself. She said she admired 'good career women, women who are managing directors and that sort of thing', but in her view the problem was how girls at the age of 16 were meant to know that that was what they were cut out to be.

Although men tended to be less strongly opposed to women returning to work because of the dangers of child neglect, the majority felt that the best arrangement was for women to return to work after their children were older in order to supplement family income rather than for personal fulfiment. Despite the fact that both women and men supported the traditional sexual division of labour in the family, there were a number of working-class and middle-class women who challenged this, insisting that women could combine work and motherhood, but that a redistribution of domestic labour was essential. Mrs Brickell, a Greenhill mother who was a former nurse, now hoping to enter the field of nurse education, was very much of this view.
S.R.: D'you think it's possible for a woman to combine having a career and a family as well?

Mrs Brickell: Yes, very much so, very much so. I think if the family's prepared to work with her and she's prepared to meet the other things both ways. I mean I have had to work very hard at both and it has been hard work at times when you're not sure which way to go but I have got a very supportive family and I think that is important. I gave up a lot to have the family and when I decided everyone was old enough I went back to work.

Mrs Thomas, an auxiliary nurse and wife of a coach driver, was again very adamant that work and family were not mutually exclusive options for women, but also stressed the need for a change in men's attitudes to domestic responsibilities:

Your father can go out to work and he can think about work and he doesn't have to think about anything else until he comes home and actually has to do it. But... there's no point in me coming home at 6 o'clock and all we've got is deep-frozen chops down there in the freezer and we've got no microwave to defrost the damn things, or I haven't been out and bought the milk... A man concentrates on one thing at a time, a woman's always got more than one thing going on... It's not a question of whether I'd like to see it change because we're trying to equalise women's opportunities in employment, which means her role in employment is going to be the same as the man's and therefore we've got to bring the man in so they're not only sharing the job, they're also sharing the home.

Both Mrs Brickell and Mrs Thomas were determined that their daughters were not going to end up in dead-end jobs and were also critical of the school's failure to be sufficiently positive in tackling the problem of sex-stereotyping in the curriculum.

Overall, then, it would appear that although some women were questioning the sexual division of labour in the family, the majority of both women and men were reluctant to mount a direct challenge. Although women did not uphold the view that domestic chores were intrinsically women's work, many did...
PARENTS AND THE CULTURE OF FEMININITY

support the ideology of full-time motherhood and working-class women were particularly strongly opposed to the idea that a woman with a young child should participate in the labour market. This may be linked with the type of survival strategy described by Valli as characterising the actions of working-class girls training as office workers. According to Valli, the recognition of the double burden imposed on working-class women by the combination of work and childcare with inadequate backup facilities led to their insistence on the primacy of their domestic role. In the case of the Westshire families, an attachment to traditional gender codes within the family seemed to play a significant part in shaping parental attitudes to children's option choices. Teachers were not altogether mistaken in their view that parents might represent a barrier to equal-opportunities policies. Their explanations, however, tended to be too simple, failing to take into account important differences in the attitudes of women and men and working-class and middle-class parents. Neither did they recognise that there was a group of parents, most of whom were women, who were strongly advocating change.

PARENTS VIEWS OF WORK AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Parents' vision of the future role of their children in the public sphere of work was a further measure of their construction of masculinity and femininity. To access these views, I again used both quantitative and qualitative methods. A number of items on the questionnaire investigated parents' educational and occupational aspirations for their children. Whereas the questions about subject importance were asked for girls and boys in general, these questions were asked in relation to the parents' particular child. Tables 8.31-8.36 summarise findings with regard to educational aspirations and show that parents were just as educationally ambitious for their daughters as for their sons. Indeed, at Millbridge, parents of girls had significantly higher expectations than parents of boys. This is an interesting finding in view of the popular belief, reflected by many of the teachers at the two schools, that parents had very low academic expectations of their daughters - certainly among the parents who completed the questionnaire this was far from the case.
GIRLS, THEIR FAMILIES AND FEMINITY

Table 8.11 Millbridge parents' expectation of child's level of full-time education (for working-class and middle-class parents and parents of third year girls and boys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Easter Leave</th>
<th>Technical Leave</th>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leaver with</td>
<td>college levels</td>
<td>with A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaver with CSEs</td>
<td>levels</td>
<td></td>
<td>levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>5 (4.5)</td>
<td>37 (40.3)</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>17 (22.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>6 (4.6)</td>
<td>27 (40.5)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13 (33.8)</td>
<td>4 (14)</td>
<td>7 (19.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of third year girls</td>
<td>2 (4.4)</td>
<td>23 (48)</td>
<td>6 (12)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of third year boys</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>26 (52)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses

Table 8.12 Results of Mann-Whitney U test applied to Millbridge parents' expectations of child's level of full-time education (by class of family and sex of child)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Result of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child's full-time education by class</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( u = 951.5 ) ( z = -3.879 ) ( p &lt; .001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child's full-time education by sex of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( u = 1284.9 ) ( z = -2.546 ) ( p &lt; .01 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kelly et al. (1982) also found that parents of girls in both working and middle classes had slightly higher educational aspirations than parents of boys. Again, in terms of the level of work aspired to, there were no significant differences between expectations for girls and boys. (Tables 8.17 and 8.19). It should
be noted that class was a salient factor here, with working-class parents tending to have lower expectations. Further analysis, however, did reveal that although there were no differences in the level of work considered suitable for girls and boys, there were differences in the type of work.

Parents were asked to rate the suitability of specified jobs for their particular child on a scale from 1 to 5. Mean rating of job suitability and comparisons of group responses with regard to sex of child and class of family are given in Tables 8.21 and 8.23 for Millbridge and Greenhill parents. Ratings were generally quite low (less than 3.0) which suggests that parents were indeed thinking about the suitability of the job for their particular child, rather than its desirability in more general terms. The judgements of both sets of parents appeared largely to coincide with traditional sex segregation of the labour market. Stereotypically female jobs such as nurse, secretary and hairdresser were regarded as more suitable for girls, and engineer, draughtsman and electrician more suitable for boys. At Millbridge, it appeared that professional jobs were less likely to be sex-stereotyped than manual jobs. Thus, doctor, manager, social worker, teacher and computer operator were regarded as equally suitable for boys and girls. Greenhill parents were more traditional in this respect, with manager, teacher, shop worker and factory worker seen as equally suitable for both boys and girls, and all other jobs viewed as more appropriate for either boys or girls. No differences were found in the responses of men and women at either school. At Millbridge, there were no class differences either but at Greenhill, manager, teacher, social worker and doctor were given higher ratings by middle-class parents and hairdresser

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child's full-time education by child's achievement</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 35.555$ df 12 $p &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easier leaver</td>
<td>Leave with CSEs and O levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All parents</strong></td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>25 (29.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working-class</strong></td>
<td>4 (16.7)</td>
<td>26 (66.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle-class</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents of third-year girls</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents of third-year boys</strong></td>
<td>5 (5.3)</td>
<td>14 (24.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses*
and factory worker by working-class parents. In the Manchester study, Kelly also found that manual jobs were particularly likely to be sex-typed, whereas some professional jobs currently dominated by men, such as manager and doctor, were likely to be regarded as equally suitable for girls and boys. She suggests that females entering male territory may be more acceptable in areas of work where they do not get their hands dirty. It is important to note that there are now approximately equal numbers of women and men entering such professions as law and medicine and in future years it will be interesting to see how the career profile of women develops in these areas. It would appear, then, that even though parents are not

PARENTS AND THE CULTURE OF FEMININITY

Table 8.15 Results of Mann-Whitney U test applied to Greenhill parents’ expectations of child’s level of full-time education (by class of family and sex of child)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Result of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child’s full-time education by class of family</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$u = 226.5$ $z = -6.989$ $p &lt; .0001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child’s full-time education by sex of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$n.s.$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.16 Results of chi-square test applied to Greenhill parents’ expectations of child’s level of full-time education (by child’s achievement level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Result of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected level of child’s full-time education by child’s achievement level</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 87.371$ $d.f. = 12$ $p &lt; .0001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Job</th>
<th>All parents</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Parents of 3rd-year girls</th>
<th>Parents of 3rd-year boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top professional</td>
<td>19 (16.5)</td>
<td>6 (8.3)</td>
<td>13 (30.2)</td>
<td>11 (22.9)</td>
<td>11 (22.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/semi-professional</td>
<td>13 (11.3)</td>
<td>12 (16.7)</td>
<td>1 (2.3)</td>
<td>8 (11.9)</td>
<td>5 (10.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trade</td>
<td>29 (25.2)</td>
<td>17 (23.6)</td>
<td>12 (27.9)</td>
<td>19 (28.4)</td>
<td>10 (20.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled/semi-skilled</td>
<td>24 (20.9)</td>
<td>17 (23.6)</td>
<td>7 (16.3)</td>
<td>14 (20.9)</td>
<td>10 (20.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague/other</td>
<td>26 (22.6)</td>
<td>16 (22.2)</td>
<td>10 (23.3)</td>
<td>17 (28.3)</td>
<td>9 (18.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111 (100)</td>
<td>68 (100)</td>
<td>43 (100)</td>
<td>66 (100)</td>
<td>45 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses.
Table 8.18 Results of chi-square test applied to level of job desired by Millbridge parents for their child (by class of family, sex of child and achievement level of child)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired for child by class of family</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 16.005, df_7, p &lt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired for child by sex of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired for child by achievement level of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 48.243, df_12, p &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

opposed to their daughters striving for success in the education system and the labour market, they do not expect them to challenge existing gender divisions. Interview data provided further insight into the reasons underlying these attitudes and also revealed considerable tension between women and men in their view of the justice of these divisions. These tensions emerged at a number of points during the interviews but were particularly apparent when parents were asked whether they felt women and men had equal chances of promotion at work. Amongst a number of middle-class couples, men seemed to feel that women did have full equality at work, whilst their wives disagreed. Dr and Mrs Baker, for instance, expressed very different views:

S.R.: D’you think that women have equal opportunities at work nowadays?
Dr Baker: It depends on the job I suppose. In some jobs they have a better opportunity.
Mrs Baker: If you believe what you hear on the radio women have to be twice as good to get half as far. I mean I think in certain areas of business competition is so high and prejudice is still pretty deep. You’ll have to be a very determined young lady to force your way forward.
Dr Baker: My own experience is that it’s very hard to find a woman who’s very keen to have a career and can’t find an outlet because they’re a woman.
Table 8.19 Level of job desired by Greenhill parents for their child (for all parents, working class, middle class, and parents of third-year girls and boys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Semi-professional</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>unskilled/semi-skilled</th>
<th>Vague/other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>24 (22.9)</td>
<td>9 (8.6)</td>
<td>37 (36.6)</td>
<td>32 (30.7)</td>
<td>35 (33.4)</td>
<td>105 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>6 (7.5)</td>
<td>4 (7.5)</td>
<td>11 (20.8)</td>
<td>20 (37.7)</td>
<td>14 (26.4)</td>
<td>23 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>12 (32.4)</td>
<td>3 (8.3)</td>
<td>4 (10.8)</td>
<td>1 (2.7)</td>
<td>17 (43.9)</td>
<td>37 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third-year girls</td>
<td>9 (18)</td>
<td>5 (10)</td>
<td>7 (14)</td>
<td>12 (24)</td>
<td>17 (34)</td>
<td>50 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third-year boys</td>
<td>15 (27.3)</td>
<td>4 (7.3)</td>
<td>10 (18.2)</td>
<td>10 (18.2)</td>
<td>16 (29.1)</td>
<td>55 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses
Parents and the Culture of Femininity

Table 8.20 Results of chi-square test applied to level of job desired by Greenhill parents for their child (by class of family, sex of child and achievement level of child)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Results of chi-square test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired for child by class of family</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 22.765 ) df 4 ( p &lt; .0001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired for child by sex parents</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of job desired by parents' achievement level of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.21 Greenhill parents' mean ratings of job suitability for their particular child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Mean for all parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer programmer</td>
<td>3.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer operator</td>
<td>3.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>3.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>2.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>2.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>2.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>2.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop worker</td>
<td>3.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>2.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>2.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>1.783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dr Baker at this point appeared to be totally unaware that his wife was making a very different point, and also did not appear to feel that perhaps her views on this matter might be more relevant than his. The following exchange between Colin and
Table 8.22: Results of chi-square test used to compare Greenhill parents' suitability ratings of jobs (by parents of third-year girls and boys and working-class and middle-class parents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Which sex job rated higher</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Which class job rated higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>17.885</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>17.885</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>10.847</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>10.847</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>44.584</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>44.584</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair-dresser</td>
<td>60.316</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>60.316</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer programmer</td>
<td>12.257</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>12.257</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer operator</td>
<td>10.616</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>10.616</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>17.980</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>17.980</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>64.423</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>64.423</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>20.456</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>20.456</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>9.543</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9.543</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.312</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop worker</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.295</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td>ns</td>
<td></td>
<td>30.744</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>p &lt; .05</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Mean for all parents</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Which sex level job rated higher for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>2.862</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>2.840</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>2.719 56.961</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>2.628</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2.579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>2.431 32.045</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>2.400 32.045</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>2.353 27.074</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>2.322 20.322</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician</td>
<td>2.306 40.322</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>2.182 42.786</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>p &lt; .0001</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1.752</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>1.752</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: When the chi-square test was used to compare the ratings of working-class and middle-class parents, no significant differences were found.

Maureen York also shows how the husband's perception of the position of women in the labour market differs radically from his wife's view of the situation. I have quoted at some length because I think the dynamics of this conversation are particularly interesting:

S.R.: When Sally starts work, do you think she'll have equal opportunities with the men she'll be working with?
Mr York: I don’t think she will.
Mrs York: I think she probably will. (said at the same time)
Mr York: No, there’s still . . .
Mrs York: I think by the time she’s in a work situation . . . I’ve seen attitudes change quite substantially in
the last four or five years. Really, I mean that sincerely. There's a lot more acceptance of women in what have been traditionally men's jobs. I see it much more than you would in a school situation ... you're in a fairly cloistered environment. But out in the commercial world I see a lot more acceptance and I think by the time Sally is working I'll be even more so. And by the time Zoe, in ten years, there won't be any differences. I really believe that.

S.R.: Do you think that? [to Mrs York]
Mrs York: I'd like to think it, but I still think that women are put down.
Mr York: I think nowadays the only women who are put down are the ones who allow themselves to be put down.
Mrs York: No ...
Mr York: No. Let me finish. And the women who are prepared to allow themselves to be put down are decreasing all the time. And as they decrease, and the majority of women are prepared to assert themselves more ... you see men as a species won't want to find themselves in a confrontation situation with women where they can't win, so they'll tend to back off rather than get involved.

S.R.: Do you feel the differences are disappearing?
Mrs York: Well I'd like to think they would. Not working in the outside world, perhaps I'm not up to date with it all. I'm only going by what I hear and other people tell me. I'd like to think she'd have an equal opportunity. I think she should, but I still think it's up to the individual, and if they think they're better than a male opponent.

Within Mr York's terms, women's lack of power in the labour market is essentially an individual problem. A number of middle-class fathers expressed similar views and it was clear that although they hoped that their daughters would have successful careers, they were unaware of any structural barriers which might stand in their way. Mr Roberts, for
instance, believed that his daughter would make opportunities for herself if these did not already exist, describing her as the sort of girl who 'sails through things and tramples over obstacles'.

Middle-class parents who believed that equal opportunities had already been achieved were in fact in the minority. The majority of parents felt that women did not have equal chances of promotion, but there were interesting differences in their explanations of this situation. Some men felt that male dominance of the workplace was due to their natural superiority, and they were quite happy for things to remain like this. Mr Alcott, for instance, who was quoted earlier, expressed this view quite categorically:

S.R.: D'you think that men and women have equal opportunities at work nowadays?
Mr Alcott: No.
S.R.: Why's that?
Mr Alcott: I mentioned it previously. I think men's got the whole thing sewn up for themselves.
S.R.: And would you like to see that change?
Mr Alcott: No. I wouldn't like a woman boss. I think a woman responds better to being told what to do by a man than what a man does being told what to do by a woman. That's nature.
Mrs Alcott: [very quietly in background] I don't agree with that.
Mr Alcott: I'll take hundreds of years for a woman to be able to monopolise a man in the same way as a man can monopolise a woman. It doesn't matter what qualifications they've got. You see it at work... you see it all the time. We haven't got any women bosses in our place whatever. There's one in Public Relations, and she's for the howse soon - I haven't told you which firm I work for, have I? The person I'm on about is just no bloody good. Whether it be male or female it wouldn't make much difference.

Similarly Mr Gordon, a self-employed builder, did not think that women had equal opportunities, but was not over-zealous
Mann-Whitney U test applied to Millbridge parents' responses to statements 20, 24, 25 and 28 (by sex and class of parent) for all parents, women, men, working-class and middle-class parents.

| Statement | Women/men | Women | Men | Working class | Middle class | All parents |  
|-----------|-----------|-------|-----|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------
| Statement 20 | $u = 1370.5$ | $z = -2.517$ | $p < .01$ | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| Statement 24 | $u = 1220.0$ | $z = -2.444$ | $p < .01$ | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| Statement 25 | $u = 1495.5$ | $z = -2.223$ | $p < .05$ | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| Statement 28 | $u = 1495.5$ | $z = -2.135$ | $p < .05$ | ns | ns | ns | ns |

Notes: (1) Only those statements have been included for which significant differences were found. (2) Statement 20 = women do most jobs as well as men; Statement 24 = nursing is a good job for a boy; Statement 25 = academic qualifications are more important for boys than girls; Statement 28 = men are more successful at work because they are naturally more aggressive. (3) M = men's response more sexist than women's; Mi = middle-class parents' response more sexist than working-class parents' response.
Table 8.25 Mann-Whitney U test applied to Greenhill parents' responses to statements 15, 17 and 19 by sex and class of parent for all parents, women, men, working-class and middle-class parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>All parents</th>
<th>Working class</th>
<th>Middle class</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Working class/middle class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 920.0 z = -1.947 p &lt; .05 WoC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>u = 1442.0</td>
<td>u = 369.3</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>u = 236.5 z = -2.384 p &lt; .05 WoC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (1) Only those statements have been included for which significant differences were found. (2) Statement 15 = the man should be the main breadwinner in a family; Statement 17 = boys understand maths and physics better than girls; Statement 19 = women do most jobs as well as men. (3) M = men's response more sexist than women's response; WoC = working-class parents' responses more sexist than middle-class parents' responses.
for change. Officially women were supposed to have equal opportunities but the reason they did not was deeply rooted in tradition:

Mr Gordon: Employers prefer to employ men. They wouldn't say so in so many words, but that's still what happens.

S.R.: Would you like to see that change?

Mr Gordon: Pass on that one I think [laughs]. Don't know really. It's difficult in some industries to have women. No. Things seem to be all right as they are. I don't think there's any reason for change.

Some parents also attributed women's lack of equality at work to the fact that they were just not physically capable of doing certain jobs. Mr Woodbridge, a worker on a dairy farm, commented:

If you get the odd girls who wants to do shall we say the more masculine tasks then she isn't going to be given the same opportunity because she just isn't physically able to do it so therefore they're going to say, 'Oh, don't do that. Let some one else do it.' And although that might annoy the girl at the time, from the employer's point of view it's the obvious thing to do.

As far as he was concerned, girls should simply look at the situation in an unblinkered way and not attempt to do what didn't come naturally.

Many of the men quoted above, then, seemed complacent about the sexual division of the labour market, whereas women were much more likely to view these divisions critically.

To summarise, a minority of parents, mainly middle-class men, thought that there were no longer barriers to women's equality in the labour market, and it was the responsibility of individual women to take up the opportunities which were freely available. In couples where the man made this point, the woman often disagreed with him, drawing on her own experience as evidence. The majority of parents recognised the existence of gender divisions within the labour market and felt that women's opportunities were still limited. Working-class men in particular often defended the status quo, justifying
inequality on the grounds of men's natural superiority and women's physical weakness. These men felt there was no point in girls making non-traditional option choices, since they would be unable to get jobs in these areas anyway. Working-class women, as we noted in Chapter 5, often envisaged very few possibilities for their daughters and tended to take the pessimistic view that since office work was the most likely prospect, it was prudent to gain qualifications in this area to fall back on as a last resort. Unfortunately, by restricting their curricular choices in this way, the chances that this would be a first rather than a last resort were increased.

The divergence between women's and men's gender codes was further illustrated by items on the questionnaire designed to investigate attitudes to gender equality. Responses are summarised in Tables 8.24 - 8.29. Factor analysis was used to identify those statements which discriminated between parents most effectively on their attitudes to gender equality. These were statements 20, 24 25 and 28 for Millbridge parents and statements 15, 17 and 19 for Greenhill parents. Recoding several statements so that the sexist response was always 5, scales were then constructed for Millbridge and Greenhill parents which represented the sum of their responses to each of these statements. Further details of scale construction are provided in Appendix 1. Broadly speaking, women emerged as more supportive of the general principle of equal power relations than men. This supports the view emerging from the interview data that men generally support more traditional constructions of femininity than women.

CONCLUSION

As we saw in Chapter 4, teachers believed that parents were largely responsible for the gender-divided curriculum by conveying extremely sex-stereotyped ideas to their children about the value of different subjects in their future lives. This chapter reveals that some parents did indeed support traditional divisions and oppose change. Whereas men often wished to protect their privileged position in the home and the workplace, women based their opposition to change on support for the ideology of motherhood. At the same time, a number of contradictory and opposing elements in mothers' and fathers'
Table 8.26: Mann-Whitney U test applied to sexist scale (by sex of parent, class of family and age of parent) for all Millbridge parents, women, men, working-class and middle-class parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Results of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by sex of parent</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( u = 1496.0 ), ( z = -1.988 ), ( p &lt; .05 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>( u = 1840.0 ), ( z = -1.988 ), ( p &lt; .05 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by class of family</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by age of parent</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.27: Kruskall-Wallis test applied to sexist scale (by parents' expectation of level of child's full-time education) for all Millbridge parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Results of Kruskall-Wallis test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by expected level of child's full-time education</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 16.600 ), ( p &lt; .01 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...attitudes were also revealed, suggesting that teachers' view of parents as a homogeneous and uniformly conservative force is over-simplified.

Parents' attitudes to the division of labour in their own family appeared to have an impact on their views of appropriate curricula for girls and boys. Questionnaire data suggested that everyday tasks were still characterised by persistent gender divisions and interview data provided evidence of men strongly defending these divisions. Women's defence of traditional gender divisions within the family appeared to be underpinned by their attachment to the ideology of full-time motherhood. In this way, mothers' attitudes were often shot through with contradictions and, as we saw in Chapter 5, daughters were...
Table 8.28 Mann-Whitney U test applied to sexist scale (by sex of parent, class of family and age of parent) for all Greenhill parents, women, men, working-class and middle-class parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Results of Mann-Whitney U test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by sex of parent</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by class of family</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by age of parent</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>( u = 1457.0 ) ( z = -2.319 ) ( p &lt; 0.05 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>( u = 337.0 ) ( z = -1.989 ) ( p &lt; 0.05 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.29 Kruskall-Wallis test applied to sexist scale (by parents' expectation of level of child's full-time education) for all Greenhill parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Results of Kruskall-Wallis test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexist by expected level of child</td>
<td>All parents</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

well aware of these confusing messages. Again, often because of their own experience of managing a dual role in the home and the labour market, a minority of women were fundamentally challenging power relations in the family, and this was reflected in the encouragement they gave their daughters to consider alternatives to the traditional paths. Whilst hoping that their daughters would achieve success at school and attain successful employment, most parents recognized the continued existence of gender divisions in the
labour market. They varied, however, in the extent to which they saw this as a problem and in the solutions which they suggested. Middle-class men favoured individualistic strategies for their daughters, believing that if they were good enough they would be able to reach the top of their chosen profession. These men were clearly unlikely to offer very much to their daughters in the way of support or in consolation in the face of failure. Middle-class mothers, on the other hand, were generally far more aware of structural barriers to equality. Working-class men tended to see traditional divisions as natural and unchangeable and working-class women resented the restricted opportunities which were available both to themselves and their daughters, but again saw little hope of change. Where mothers and fathers were interviewed together, explicit disagreements on the issue of gender divisions and social justice often surfaced. Weis (1990) has discussed the way in which the cultures of Freeway girls and boys are currently set on a 'collision path'. These discussions suggest that the gender codes of parents, too, may diverge, with mothers increasingly attracted to new visions of women's developing role in the public sphere. Many men, on the other hand, appeared reluctant to challenge the known boundaries of male and female territory.

To some extent, then, teachers are right to recognise that parents may not initially be wholehearted in their support of equal-opportunities policies. However, the answer is not to abdicate all responsibility for change, but to think very carefully about how change may be implemented most successfully. If parents' support is to be won for equal-opportunities policies in school, then thoughtful communication of the school's goals is clearly essential, since, like teachers, parents have the power to sabotage educational reform through active or passive resistance.
Part IV
THE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER DIVISIONS
In Chapter 1 of this book, I indicated that there was an ongoing argument concerning the power of individual schools to affect both the culture of pupils and the nature of educational outcomes. Whereas neo-marxists in the 1970s saw schools and teachers as relatively powerless in the face of the massive force of capitalism, more recent commentators have argued on empirical grounds that schools do make a difference to the progress of individual pupils. The curriculum has been singled out by writers such as Connell (1986) as a highly significant aspect of a school’s culture. He states: ‘It is clear . . . that relations of class and gender are embedded in the curriculum; it follows that reform of the curriculum is itself, in some measure, a recontextualisation of these structures’ (p. 4).

Part II of this book corroborates this view, demonstrating how the organisation of option choice, the framing of particular subjects and the culture of teachers conveyed powerful messages to pupils with regard to the gender appropriateness of particular curricular areas. This is not to suggest that pupils and their families were passive in the process – indeed Part III provides much evidence on how pupils and parents received and responded to the schools’ gender codes.

If we are to accept that the schools were strongly implicated in the production of gender divisions, then, as Connell suggests, change in curriculum structure should be capable of producing change in pupils’ culture. Many grand claims have been made on behalf of the national curriculum which has recently been introduced into schools in England and Wales. For instance, an official statement on the aims of the national curriculum claims that its goal is to ensure that ‘all pupils, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, and geographic location, have access to broadly the same good and relevant curriculum’ (DES, 1987). Part IV examines this claim critically, considering whether the national curriculum represents a breakthrough for equal opportunities, a retrograde step or simply more of the same.
TH
E NATIONAL CURRICULUM
Solution or blind alley?

INTRODUCTION
Up to this point, I have considered the way in which Millbridge and Greenhill schools used the system of option choice to convey traditional and restricted gender codes to pupils. I have also considered the nature of the interaction between the gender codes of pupils, parents and teachers and the ways in which these impacted on each other. At the time when the research was conducted, it appeared that the more conservative constructions of femininity were still in the ascendancy and were reflected in pupils’ option choices. None the less, a minority of radical pupils, parents and teachers were actively questioning received notions of femininity and were crafting new gender codes. A minority of mothers and daughters (some middle-class and some working-class) and female teachers were emphasising the centrality of career as well as family in women’s lives. Working-class girls were notably emphasising autonomy, which often included rebellion against the discipline of school life. I have argued that the option choice system at Millbridge and Greenhill tended to encourage traditional outcomes and offered little support to those who were seeking to redefine the culture of femininity.

In view of these major criticisms of the option choice system, the introduction of a national curriculum in England and Wales under the terms of the Education Reform Act 1988 might be seen as possibly undermining the perpetuation of gender divisions within the curriculum. In the following chapter, I first provide a brief overview of the background to the national curriculum, I then consider the debate which has been waged
for many years concerning the potential power of a common curriculum to alter the established pattern of diverging curricular paths for girls and boys during the later years of secondary schooling. Having outlined the various possible outcomes of the national curriculum, I finally question what might represent a helpful balance between entirely free choice and a uniformly imposed, subject-based curriculum in terms of undermining differentiation in the curriculum for girls and boys and working-class and middle-class pupils.

BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The 1980s have witnessed a flurry of wide-ranging legislation, which has generally been speeded through the statutory process with unceremonious haste. Consultation with professional groups has tended to be minimal. For example, discussion documents on the national curriculum were sent out to the education community just before the 1987 summer vacation, with responses demanded by early autumn. One of the most significant aspects of the Education Reform Act 1988 is undoubtedly the prescription of a national curriculum, since previous British governments have been very cautious about intervening in this area. Deem (1988) argues that political caution is one of the reasons why governments have feared to tread in this area, recognizing that it was unlikely that they would remain in power for ever:

If the machinery exists for one party to capture the content and organisation of schooling and lead it in a particular direction, then it is capable of being used by other groups and to lead in other directions. This is perhaps something which the Cabinet and the Secretary of State have given insufficient attention, or, alternatively, perhaps the present administration cannot imagine ever being removed from power.

(Deem, 1988, p. 91)

It is also interesting to note the point made by Rendal (1985) that the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act relating to education were deliberately not extended to the curriculum:

It would have been impossible to deal with sex typing in
school curricula and textbooks, both because of the ministerial opposition it would have aroused and because the content of education was not at that time open to direct ministerial intervention.

(Rendal, 1985, p. 91)

Recent legislation on the curriculum, then, raises interesting possibilities with regard to what a subsequent Labour government might choose to do, no longer constrained by the idea that the curriculum was sacrosanct from political intervention.

What, then, has been the intention of the government in introducing legislation to impose a national curriculum? As I noted in Chapter 1, different rationalisations have been offered on different occasions, but the most frequently stated argument has been the desire to raise standards of education to improve Britain's economic position. A clear effect of the national curriculum, related to its hidden agenda, is a further curtailment of the powers of teachers and local education authorities, envisaged as the 'producers' of education. In some respects there appears to be a measure of inconsistency between this part of the government's legislative portfolio and other aspects, for it is clear that the national curriculum is centralising power in the hands of the Secretary of State for Education rather than being more to market forces and the power of consumers. Indeed, if the government's ideal of consumer power were to be realised in schools, one would expect pupils to have even more freedom of choice than they do at the moment. Deem (1989), however, points out that although pupils might logically be seen as prime consumers of education, throughout recent legislation they are characterised as appendages of parents, who, along with local business, are conceived of as the real consumers. Much philosophical inconsistency pervades legislation on the national curriculum which lies uneasily alongside other measures. Maw (1988), commenting on the Education Reform Bill, suggests that it 'is the outcome of ideological conflict, not between politicians, HMI and DES bureaucrats, but ideological conflict within the political Right in general and the Conservative Party in particular'. In her view, 'the tensions between control and devolution, nationalisation and privatisation, uniformity and differentiation are inexplicable without such a concept' (p. 63). I return to a consideration of the overall meaning and impact of
the national curriculum, specifically in relation to the education of girls, later on in this chapter. First, however, let us look in more detail at the content and changing format of the national curriculum.

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM - A MOVING TARGET

For the last two years of compulsory secondary education (Key Stage 4) the national curriculum for England and Wales comprises English, mathematics and science as core subjects and history, geography, design and technology, modern foreign language, music, art and physical education as foundation subjects. Scotland has to date escaped the imposition of a national curriculum, on the grounds that a core curriculum is already in place for the 14-16 age group. National testing, however, is now mandatory north as well as south of the border. Welsh is an additional core subject in schools where this is the medium of instruction and a foundation subject in the remainder of schools in Wales. The subjects specified in the national curriculum are to be taken by all pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools, and attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements are to be specified by the Secretary of State.

It was originally envisaged that in Years 4 and 5 of secondary school, the national curriculum would take up 80-90 per cent of a pupil's timetable, with the core subjects taking up 30-40 per cent of total time. However, it appears that Kenneth Baker was forced to abandon this idea at an early stage. Launching the Education Reform Bill in 1987, he said:

"We don't intend to lay down either in this Bill or in secondary legislation, a precise percentage of subjects. It was never the original intention. It will be up to schools, heads and local authorities to deliver the national curriculum and bring children up to the level of national attainment targets.

(Reported in The Guardian, 21st November 1987)

Clearly, Mr Baker may have been influenced by the fact that, had he insisted in setting time allocations for the different subjects, he would have been giving the teachers a very
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Powerful weapon in salary negotiation, given the current levels of teacher shortages in key subject areas. This is only the first of many revisions which contribute to make the national curriculum substantially different from its original conception, and at the time of writing it is unclear what its final format will be. I will now consider the debate concerning whether a common curriculum may be seen as a means of achieving greater gender equality.

Arguments for a Common Curriculum as a Step Towards Gender Equality

Interestingly, many women who have campaigned long and hard for educational equality have seen a national curriculum as representing an essential part of this programme. Byrne argues a strong case for teaching the same subjects in the same way to girls and boys:

"In common with most of my European colleagues, I believe unreservedly that equal means the same - that is to say, the same across sex, race, rural and urban children of similar abilities and aptitudes. It does not mean uniformity across the full ability range, or across genuinely different interests and personalities. But it does mean uniformity for boys and girls in all that relates to the common core of knowledge, skills and attitudes and experiences without which no one will survive in happy and fulfilled, efficient and adaptable adulthood. And that means that this country has got to cease its evasion of that difficult but not uncomfortable task of defining the common core - a task that even the Third World countries, leave aside our continental colleagues, have not been afraid to face."

(Byrne, 1985, p. 100)

Byrne’s argument is essentially that girls and boys will have no chance of achieving equality in practice until both curriculum and its resourcing in mixed and single-sex schools are equalised. As mentioned earlier, it was a source of regret to many women that the curriculum was not included in the educational provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act. As I and others (Whyte, 1986) have argued, aspects of the subject choice system have tended to contribute to gender differentiation.
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within the curriculum and to unequal educational outcomes more generally. Kelly (1988) has described the individualised curricu-

ulum as 'one of the great false turns of progressive education' (p. 168). She provides a strong defence of the potential of the

national curriculum to provide a better deal for girls, arguing that 'despite eight years of Thatcherism, science education is currently moving in a democratic direction'. She sees among teachers a far greater awareness of gender and multi-cultural concerns, and recognises the space for radicals to exploit the shifting demo-

graphic pattern to argue for the interests of marginalised groups. However, even among those who support a common curriculum,

there is considerable disagreement concerning its content, parti-
cularly with regard to science.

DEBATES CONCERNING THE NATURE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION WITHIN A COMMON CURRICULUM

Some equal-opportunities campaigns, such as Women into Science and Engineering (WISE), have operated on the rather simplistic expectation that all that needs to be done to achieve equality is to enlist females in traditionally male areas of the curriculum and the labour market without altering subject content or occupational structure and ethos. Other initiatives

have taken a rather more thought-out approach to the pro-

blem, arguing that it is not simply up to girls to fit into a male-

orientated curriculum. Rather, it is essential for the content

and presentation of the curriculum to take account of girls' legitimate interests and needs.

Bentley and Watts (1987) distinguish three different approa-

ches to the provision of a science curriculum which sympathe-

tically reflects girls' interests. These are termed girl-friendly

science, feminine science and feminist science, and they all

involve a recognition of science as a socially constructed process closely tied up with the values of those who practise it. Girl-

friendly science involves starting with the interests of girls,

which are likely to centre on human concerns before moving on to abstract principles. Thus the study of an abstract concept such as heat or electricity might begin with consideration of an as-

pect of the human body or the social world, and move through various stages towards an understanding of the
underlying principle. Feminine science focuses on altering the nature of classroom interaction, replacing competitive and aggressive behaviour with a caring and co-operative ethos. It also focuses on a more holistic view, encouraging the examination of social, moral and ethical questions. Feminist science, although incorporating some of the features of the two earlier categories, demands far more radical changes. Drawing on the work of writers such as Rich (1972), it involves a fundamental rethinking of what constitutes scientific method and knowledge. Those who advocate feminist science call for a revolting of subjective understanding and intuition. Thus Bentley and Watts argue that:

in a feminist school, science, feelings, reactions, values and intuitions become important starting points for the development of principles and theories. Evidence can be unique, anecdotal, partial and partisan, and seems to be so...to us this methodological and epistemological approach challenges the masculine heart of science, and brings to it the positive virtues of a feminist view of scientific enquiry.

(Bentley and Watts, 1987, p. 96)

Feminist science has been criticised on the grounds that it assumes that women have always been excluded from the realms of scientific enquiry and that there is something intrinsic to science which makes it incompatible with women's way of viewing the world. Kelly (1988) comments:

this view of feminist science tends to exaggerate the differences between males and females in a way that can easily slip over into biological essentialism and lead to reification of the very distinctions that feminists traditionally want to eliminate.

(Kelly, 1988, p. 159)

ARGUMENTS AGAINST A COMMON CURRICULUM AS A STEP TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

Feminist opposition to the idea of a common curriculum has again often focused on the status of science. The feeling that much equal opportunities literature imposes a simplistic deficit
model on girls has prompted some feminists to question the whole idea of a common curriculum for girls and boys as a solution to the problem, particularly in the area of science and technology. Elliott and Powell (1987), for instance, argue that the educational case for encouraging girls into these areas needs to be more carefully examined. Since almost all of women's work has suffered from de-skilling, and since women occupy the lowest positions in all areas of work, they do not accept that doing more science would necessarily improve women's status. In support of this point, they compare the position of women in Malaysia with that of women in Britain. Although in Malaysia a higher proportion of women do advanced engineering courses and study science than in Britain, this is not reflected in their social status, where a strongly Islamic state ensures that they remain subordinate. Thus, Elliott and Powell argue, the study of science and technology is not a sufficient condition for achieving equality. Indeed, the high status of science may be part of the problem, for this reflects a mechanistic and essentially macho world view, where the natural world is simply seen as something to be dominated. By encouraging girls to abandon cultural and aesthetic areas of the curriculum, feminists are reinforcing a deficit model of female achievement. Creating girl-friendly science is unlikely to be very useful, since this might create yet another female ghetto.

Writing from a psychological perspective, Harding and Sutoris (1987) see girls' rejection of science and technology as resulting from structures of parenting in western society. They refer to Chodorow's (1979) use of object relations theory, which sees gender inequality as stemming from the fact that it is women rather than men who act as mothers. As boys grow up, this causes them to suffer from separation anxiety, since they are forced to reject the mother in establishing their separate masculine identity. For girls, the experience of being cared for by someone of their own sex results in merger anxiety, which manifests itself as an inability to act autonomously and a shaky sense of their own boundaries. Boys thus prefer the pseudo-objectivity of the world of science where they do not have to engage emotionally, whereas girls are attracted to aesthetic and affective areas of the curriculum. These patterns will not be significantly changed until parenting customs are altered. We may succeed in attracting more
women into science but women will not succeed in science (or any other sphere) in greater numbers unless we provide girls with greater opportunities to develop autonomy' (Chodorow, 1978, p. 34).

Clearly, these writers see girls' absence from science and technology as a manifestation of a much wider social problem to which a common curriculum does not offer a simple solution. Indeed, Elliott and Powell would oppose such a measure as reinforcing rather than undermining the superiority of masculine areas of knowledge.

Other criticisms of the national curriculum stem from a belief that the government has no real commitment to gender equality, and is simply hoping to train more young people of either sex in scientific and technological skills to meet the needs of the economy. This point has been made by a number of writers including Arnot (1989a and 1989b), Miles and Midleton (1990), Burton and Weiner (1990) and Myers (1989). Myers points to the danger of using women as a reserve army of labour in that they can be dispensed with as soon as the crisis abates. She draws parallels with the situation which American women faced at the end of the Second World War as depicted in the film *Rosie the Riveter*. When the women were needed to work in heavy industry:

- creches flourished, easy-wear clothes became fashionable, recipes in women's magazines became short and simple.
- When the market forces changed and the men that survived the war returned, women's place was once again in the home, creches closed, skirts became tight, heels became higher and recipes became complicated.

(Myers, 1989, p. 559)

Quite apart from the criticism that the national curriculum reflects a response to market forces rather than a concern for social justice, there is the possibility that the real problems of sexism in the curriculum will simply be ignored. Arnot (1988a) sees it as a means of forcing girls into a male-defined curriculum which pays no heed to their legitimate interests and needs. She foresees the perpetuation of 'a national hidden curriculum in which traditional assumptions and discriminating practices still happily co-exist' (p. 9). If a national hidden curriculum were to be rigorously enforced, then girls' failure to
perform well might be explained in terms of the genetic inadequacies of the pupils themselves rather than being legitimated through child-centred ideologies or beliefs in the legitimacy of free choice.

RESERVATIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The Equal Opportunities Commission, which recommended the principle of a common curriculum to the government in 1985, made clear that it opposed certain features of the proposed national curriculum on pragmatic grounds (EOC, 1987). In its submission to the government on the proposals for the national curriculum, the Commission stressed that 'Arrangements for a national curriculum should ensure that girls and boys have equal access to the same curricular opportunities.' According to the EOC, the government would need to ensure that single-sex schools have access to the same curriculum as co-educational schools, which of course would entail large-scale expenditure to ensure that girls' schools are properly equipped with technology facilities. The Commission also expressed concern that home economics did not qualify as a foundation subject, suggesting that both boys and girls could benefit from lessons in personal independence which this subject could provide, with some re-orientation of its syllabus towards skills for living. If home economics was merely offered as a GCSE option in Year 4, the EOC pointed to the danger that 'girls flock into this examination option simply as a result of a general perception that girls should study home economics at some time during their school career'. Other reservations which the EOC expressed concern the need for a major reappraisal of the content of science and technology courses, to which insufficient attention was being paid. The Commission also emphasised the importance of careers advice incorporating a critical awareness of male and female received social roles, and recommended systematic equal-opportunities training in connection with the national curriculum for teachers.

Opposition to the national curriculum, then, has ranged from outright rejection of science and technology as a valid area of study for girls, to concern about the ability of the government to deliver what it has promised because of resource limitations.
Further doubts concern its underlying rationale and the danger that the real problem of unequal power relations between males and females within the education system will be glossed over rather than solved.

THE FUTURE IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

Feminist responses to the national curriculum, then, have varied from enthusiastic acceptance through suspicion to outright rejection and, clearly, since it is still only in the early stages of implementation, it is impossible to be sure which of these assessments is right. Critics note that it might well have some unintended beneficial consequences for girls and women teachers. Arnot (1989a), for instance, notes that teachers will have to collaborate to moderate assessment procedures, and that gender issues might emerge in these groups. Similarly, with the ground being prepared for the greater involvement of parents at various stages of the educational process, possibilities may well emerge for the development of equal-opportunity initiatives in which parents play a larger part. She suggests that in the past some LEA and school-based equal-opportunity initiatives may have failed to pay sufficient attention to the role of parents, assuming that they were passive recipients of policies rather than having any active role to play.

A further possibility is that it might have very little impact on the future direction of girls' education, partly because of the enormous number of changes in its form and content which we have seen since 1988. I have already mentioned Kenneth Baker's swift retreat on the issue of overall time allocation. The revision of the amount of time to be spent on science, which was announced in August 1988, has particularly serious implications for girls. An amendment was inserted which allowed for pupils to take a single-award science GCSE, amounting to 10 per cent of time per week rather than 20 per cent which was originally envisaged. This was nominally designed for those pupils 'who may need, for whatever reason, to spend more time on other subjects, for example, to develop a special talent in music or foreign languages'. It was acknowledged in a subsequent National Curriculum Council consultation report (NCC,
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1980 that this alternative model would provide an insufficient basis for 'A' level work, and, in practice, would mean that the career routes of pupils taking this option, most of whom are likely to be girls, will be determined at age 13.

The watering down of the original national curriculum proposals continues. At the end of January 1990, Mr MacGregor passed to the NCC his proposals for the merging of GCSE with the national curriculum, which suggested, amongst other things, that able children be allowed to drop art, geography, history, music and PE after age 14 if they have reached Attainment Level 8 (GCSE B). If this goes ahead, then the gulf between an elite group of middle-class girls on career routes and the majority of working-class girls heading for low skilled work might widen. Further, it appears that a fragmented and diverse range of vocational courses will continue to co-exist alongside the national curriculum as long as these ostensibly allow pupils to comply with attainment targets. In the past, these courses have been taken by working-class pupils and they have generally reinforced traditional notions of masculine and feminine work. It appears that they will continue to do so in the future. Given the complications in determining how vocational subjects and foundation subjects might be combined, it is interesting that at this point Mr MacGregor, Baker's successor as Secretary of State for Education, passed responsibility back to the schools, stating: 'In my judgement, it is right that the schools should be able to make these decisions, not the centre' (quoted in The Times Educational Supplement, 2.2.90.) The president of the Secondary Heads Association, Mr John Horne, did not appear to be delighted with this new responsibility, describing it in the same article as 'a curriculum planner's nightmare'. It is interesting to note that a recurring theme in these revisions is a renewed emphasis on the responsibility of schools to organise their own curricula and for pupils to exercise a degree of choice within certain broad parameters. As the national curriculum becomes more complicated, it increasingly resembles the option choice system. One explanation for these constant revisions might be that the government has realised the usefulness of option choice as a legitimating device for profoundly unequal educational outcomes. It may be against the government's interest that this illusion of freedom be replaced by coercion. Putting choice back into the national curriculum may be yet
another manifestation of the government's desperate struggle

to win support for a system which is increasingly losing
credibility in the eyes of many pupils and parents because of its
failure to deliver the promised goods. The changing emphasis
also represents unresolved ideological conflicts within the

Ultimately, I am sceptical as to whether over the coming
years we will see major changes in the sex differentiation of the
curriculum. First of all, it is clear that, as reflected in the
composition and deliberations of the curriculum working
groups, the NCC does not accord very high priority to gender
equality (Burton and Weiner, 1990) and this message will
certainly be conveyed to teachers. As my own research and that
of others indicate, many teachers place low priority on equal
opportunities and do not see themselves or the school as part of
the problem. There will clearly be ample opportunity within the
national curriculum for girls and boys to seek out traditional
routes, and it is unlikely that many teachers will have the time,
energy or commitment to encourage them to reconsider.

Second, the idea that all pupils will take a similar form of
technology up to age 16 seems unworkable. Given the shortage
of teachers and the non-existence of facilities in some schools,
the government would have to provide a significant injection of
cash to ensure that all pupils have access to appropriate
materials and equipment. There is currently no indication that
they have any intention of making additional resources avail-
able. Further, if home economics is to appear on the timetable
only as a GCSE option at fourth-year level, then it is highly
likely that girls will continue to be overrepresented in this area
because of the belief that training in domestic skills is an
essential component of female education. It will of course be in
the immediate interests of schools to ensure that large
numbers of girls continue to take up home economics, for a
mass exodus from the subject would produce a large number of
redundant teachers. For a range of reasons, it appears likely
that technology will continue to mean very different things for
girls and boys, and the EOC's concern that the national
curriculum may fail to provide equal access to the same
curriculum for all pupils is likely to prove well founded. There
is also no indication that there will be any systematic national
monitoring of the outcome of the new curriculum, and so the
effects may be obscured for a number of years. The only exceptions to this no-change situation may be schools who already have consciously formulated equal-opportunities policies and are able to use measures within recent government legislation to further their own agendas with the backing of parents and governors.

CONCLUSION

Although feminists have generally seen gender differentiation in the curriculum as a problem, they have differed in their view of appropriate solutions, some emphasising the importance of a common curriculum and others seeing wider societal changes as an essential precursor to change in school. The debate over science education has revealed the diversity of views with regard to priorities for change. Some writers have seen the provisions of the national curriculum as heralding a new age of democratic education, whilst others have seen it as even better adapted to servicing 'the requirements and the concern of white middle-class boys and men' (Arnot, 1989a). My own assessment of the national curriculum is that it is highly unlikely to produce very radical changes in gender and class differentiation of the curriculum. Further, it would appear that the national curriculum is not likely to be successful even in the government's own terms of raising standards and producing more school leavers with a narrower range of qualifications to meet the requirements of the labour market in the 1990s. One reason for this is schools' vested interest in maintaining the existing curricular structure and the individualised curriculum as a legitimating device for differential educational outcomes. Given the lack of resources, schools would find it hard to ensure that the same curriculum was being followed by all pupils even if they so wished. Baker deliberately made a decision not to carry out serious consultation with teachers – indeed, for him to do so would have been contradictory, since one of his aims was to diminish their power. However, he did not take account of the fact that, as much research in the area of social policy has demonstrated, the success of innovation depends to a large extent on the support of those at the grass roots who bear prime responsibility for its implementation (Illsley, 1980; Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977). Without the
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Co-operation of teachers, the national curriculum will be no more than a smoke-screen, enabling the government to claim that it is taking radical steps to improve standards, whilst in reality changing very little. Harland (1988) expresses this view very succinctly:

Put simply, the less we believe parliamentary government capable of resolving our educational problems, the more politicians charged with running an increasingly discredited system will seek new ways to demonstrate the legitimacy of their policies. They will find that they need to promise more and hence to control more; but the chances of success may well be slim. (Harland, 1988, p. 92)
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Progressive and conservative elements in the balance

INTRODUCTION
In this final chapter, I summarise the themes which have emerged from the preceding analysis of the management of curricular choice in two schools and will go on to make some suggestions as to possible courses of action which might lead to the achievement of a more democratic curriculum for all pupils.

SCHOOL CULTURE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE GENDERED CURRICULUM
At the start of Part II, I summarised the rather different views of the school's role in the reproduction of gender inequality to emerge from the Australian and British literature. The latter body of work provides a generally depressing picture, summarised by Acker (1987), who suggests that a range of factors hinder the promotion of feminist ideas in school. These range from government apathy to individual teachers' hostility towards feminism and suspicion of innovation generally. From Australia, a more optimistic view emerges. Connell (1986) suggests that although teachers as a group fail to share a common perspective on gender, nevertheless women teachers have acted as important vehicles for feminism. In the Australian literature we also find reports of schools whose culture is increasingly sympathetic to girls' experience and willing to promote their interests.

Crump (1990), for instance, discusses the way in which Australian government policy during the 1970s and 1980s encouraged schools to develop a broad curriculum which presented possibilities for change with regard to gender-
differentiated patterns of subject selection. Additional funds were provided through the Disadvantaged Schools Programme and the Participation and Equity Programme with the aim of reducing disadvantage and increasing secondary-school retention rates. Crump's research in one school which had benefited from such additional funding indicated that there was increasing understanding and sympathy between teachers and girls 'who were judged to be responding to a number of policy supported initiatives from the school, for example, ones which aimed to raise female student awareness of career issues' (Crump, 1990). Data from the Westhire schools generally supported the more depressing picture presented by the British research. The subject-choice system produced marked gender and class differentiation. Option-choice booklets and the counselling of individual pupils conveyed clear messages about the group for whom each subject was intended, whilst at the same time promoting an ideology of free choice. As Gaskell (1984, 1985) has suggested, the danger of such an approach is that it encourages feelings of guilt and self-blame in individual pupils for their perceived educational failure. Equal opportunities were mentioned in a desultory way by some teachers, but the underlying model was inevitably one of female deficit, with girls and their parents (rather than the school, the curriculum or the option-choice system) seen as the root of the problem. Chapter 4 shed light on the role of teachers in the production of a gender-differentiated curriculum. A cluster of ideologies and operating principles linked with their professional identity often underlay their acceptance of gender divisions as a relatively unimportant fact of life. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, teachers' support for the general principle of free choice within the curriculum, sustained by a belief in the values of child-centred education, prevented them from seeing sex-segregation as a problem. Pupils' superficial acceptance of their chosen subjects was apparently all that mattered, and the examination of group outcomes was neither important nor relevant. Kelly (1988) has been particularly critical of the individualised curriculum because it ignores constraints placed on the individual by his or her social context. Teachers' support for free choice was strangely at odds with another aspect of their professional ideology, a belief in environmental determin-
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ism. This led them to the view that rural parents were particularly avid in encouraging sex-stereotyped attitudes among their children, which the school could do little to remediate. The notion that it would be morally wrong for the school to champion political causes, such as equal opportunities, also figured prominently in their thinking. This desire to adopt a non-extremist position is identified by Connell (1986) as another of teachers' key operating principles.

Male teachers in the school often adhered to a traditional ideology of femininity, characterising women's principle role as that of home-maker and mother rather than worker. This was used to justify male dominance of power positions within the teaching profession, but also clearly impacted on their judgement of appropriate curricular and career paths for girls.

Some but by no means all women teachers were angry about the gendered hierarchy in the school. The fact that some women teachers, particularly those who had been promoted or had opted for part-time work, were prepared to justify the status quo demonstrated the difficulty of establishing a common political cause. A minority of male teachers were overtly hostile to feminism and there was a general suspicion of promoted women teachers who were seen as unfeminine and asexual. Amidst all this hostility and apathy, a small minority of female teachers identified themselves as active feminists and struggled to bring about improvements in their position. A minority of male teachers were overtly hostile to feminism and there was a general suspicion of promoted women teachers who were seen as unfeminine and asexual. Amidst all this hostility and apathy, a small minority of female teachers identified themselves as active feminists and struggled to bring about improvements in their position. In one school, male hostility was powerfully illustrated by the instant suppression of an independent women's group, perceived as far too subversive. The culture of the schools, then, was generally unhelpful in encouraging feminist ideas to flourish.

GIRLS, THEIR PARENTS AND THE CULTURE OF FEMININITY

In Part III I went on to consider whether girls and their parents were developing and reflecting gender codes which were likely to represent a challenge to that of the schools. First, considering the pupils' perspective, I drew attention to the way in which different commentators have characterized girls and the culture of femininity. Earlier accounts focused on the reproductive qualities of this culture, particularly the prevalence of the ideology of romance among working-class girls (McRobbie, 225.
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Sayer (1988) and Valli (1986) stressed the dual elements of accommodation and resistance, as girls challenged patriarchal relations but ultimately sought a way of surviving safely within them. More recently, some accounts of girls' culture in Australia and the United States have emphasised the way in which changing economic conditions (Weis, 1990), liberal educational programmes (Crump, 1990) and the increased impact of feminism (Connell et al., 1982; Connell, 1988) have brought about radical changes in girls' self-perception. The general view emerging from this literature is that girls no longer see themselves as primarily home-makers subordinate to male interests, but place equal or greater emphasis on their role as workers. One of the central aims of my study was to investigate the extent to which radical change could be detected in the ideology of Westshire girls, reflected in their subject choices and their culture more generally.

Overall, what emerged was a diverse pattern of competing elements within the gender codes of Westshire girls. They were clearly sceptical of the school's half-hearted attempts to urge non-traditional subject choices upon them. Like the young women in Griffin's (1985) study, they were unenthusiastic about being the token girl in a male subject, preferring the warmth and security of female areas. Griffin comments: "This was not a mark of their conservative views, but a pragmatic decision made in a situation of limited available options, an affirmation of the value of female friendship groups" (p. 191).

Option choices, then, were still generally traditional, and for working-class girls this often meant spending a significant amount of time on office skills and domestic craft subjects. All girls were notable by their absence from applied science and technology, and physics remained an almost exclusively male preserve. Working-class girls justified their traditional choices in terms of the conditions of the local labour market where work opportunities were severely limited. They also accepted that motherhood and domesticity would play a very important role in their lives, though most girls were unconvinced by romantic visions of these occupations.

Despite these traditional choices, their behaviour and attitudes were far from passively subordinate. They expressed hostility towards sex discrimination, support for equality in the workplace, and prided themselves on choosing subjects auto-
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Some contested teachers’ authority in the classroom, at times through an overt expression of sexuality which male teachers found particularly disconcerting. Middle-class girls were generally pursuing a more academic curriculum than their working-class peers, but were still more likely to opt for arts rather than science subjects. Whereas working-class girls had a clear idea of the sort of job they were likely to get, middle-class girls were vaguer, but were still highly ambitious in terms of educational achievement. A majority of middle-class and working-class girls were developing more radical conceptions of their future lives, opting for non-traditional subjects and career paths and quite explicitly challenging the sexual division of labour in the family. They were also concerned with negotiating acceptance among their peers, aware that espousing feminist ideas too overtly might lead to rejection. Although the girls felt that individual teachers of non-traditional subjects had done their best to encourage them, overall they would have appreciated more support from the school.

It is interesting to compare these versions of femininity with those identified by other commentators. Connell et al. (1982) and Connell (1986) characterise working-class Australian girls who challenged teachers’ authority as reflecting a form of working-class feminism which is likely to lead to an ongoing challenge of male domination. They comment: ‘most of the active school resisters are strong young women who are not about to become doormats to the local boys if they can stand up to parents and schools’ (p. 178). Within the Westshire context, I was slightly more sceptical of the potential of working-class girls’ contestation of schooling to produce a genuine shift in power relations within the school hierarchy. Despite their rejection of female passivity, these girls were still moving into areas of the curriculum which would undoubtedly lead into typically low-paid female areas of the labour market, effectively precluding future financial autonomy.

At both schools it was possible to identify a group of girls who were adopting a version of feminism which emphasised the importance of educational and career success. This group represented both working-class and middle-class girls, and their form of feminism struck me as offering more potential for long-term change than the more dramatic actions of the
THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND GENDER DIVISIONS

working-class school resisters. Connell (1986) points to the danger that women teachers are likely to approve of this version of femininity since it is much closer to their own, and react with hostility to working-class girls' more challenging behaviour. He argues that academic success is in reality only an option for a minority of pupils, but if it is held up as the only approved form of behaviour then those who cannot conform will be pushed into more extreme forms of behaviour. Clearly, this point needs to be taken seriously. I would suggest that while it is important to regard academic and career success as legitimate goals for girls, it is equally important for teachers to understand the different forms which working-class femininity may take and to encourage working-class girls to develop active plans for change rather than pursuing purely negative strategies. This might in part be achieved by teachers and pupils working together to develop a critical understanding of the domestic division of labour and the local labour market, so that they can recognise the common elements in their experience.

Among girls, then, there was a range of gender codes which were to some extent informed by class. Parents' versions of femininity were similarly complex. There was a general tendency to endorse conventional gender divisions in the curriculum among all parents, but interview data revealed the diversity of reasons for these opinions. Working-class men were most trenchant in their defence of traditional gender roles in the home and the workplace. Middle-class men claimed to support the general principle of equal opportunities but opposed any positive action. Support for the ideology of full-time motherhood informed working-class women's defence of traditional gender codes. Like the pupils, a minority of middle-class and working-class women strongly supported changes in women's social and economic status. Teachers' view of a homogeneous group of conservative parents was thus inaccurate, but among certain groups very traditional attitudes were prevalent.

This brings us back to the fundamental question of whether the picture presented by the Australian and American research - of progressive shifts in the gender codes of female pupils, and, to a lesser extent, schools - might also apply to the Westshire context. It was clear that, in general, women and girls had more...
radical views on gender issues than men and boys. Indeed, a hallmark of many recent studies is the intransigence of male culture as opposed to the developing nature of female culture. The relatively progressive nature of female gender codes, however, should not blind us to the conservative elements in the culture of Westshire women and girls. This conservatism was underpinned by both ideological and material factors. Thus, although motherhood was no longer romanticised, the sense that women still had prime responsibility for parenting was very strong. In economic terms, the structure of the local labour market led working-class girls in particular to make safe if restricted choices encouraged by their mothers. Getting a job was clearly considered more important than breaking out of the established order. Further, the schools, through their adherence to a range of ideologies — including those of free choice and environmental determinism — continued to act as a brake on progressive developments.

The picture, then, is both of stagnation and pressure for change in parents’ and pupils’ gender codes. In this my findings differ from those who suggest that very rapid changes are taking place in the culture of femininity. Reasons for these discrepancies are undoubtedly linked with the specific conditions of the local labour market as well as other factors such as different emphases in government policies and on the general acceptance of feminist ideas in different contexts. There is also the possibility that individual researchers may interpret similar events in different ways. Crump (1990), for instance, questions the common feminist view that male domination of the social space of the classroom is a problem for girls. He comments: ‘Though male behaviours and attitudes at Carpenter did rob female students of teacher time in many classrooms, this did not necessarily advantage males.’ I would suggest that being robbed of teacher time could not possibly do anything but work to girls’ disadvantage. In the present study, I certainly interpreted failure to challenge disruptive male behaviour in an effective way as an indicator of a school ethos which was hostile to girls’ intellectual and social development.
Finally, in Part IV of the book, I considered the likely impact of the national curriculum in England and Wales on gender divisions. Feminist arguments for and against a national curriculum were discussed, and the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed national curriculum were also assessed. Three distinct views of its possible effects were identified. First was the possibility suggested by Arnot (1989a) that, if rigidly enforced, the national curriculum would have a damaging effect on girls by forcing them to take up a range of subjects designed to meet the interests and needs of middle-class white males. Second was the view put forward by Kelly (1988) that the national curriculum would have an overall democratising effect, in particular, opening up science and technology to girls as well as working-class and minority ethnic pupils. Finally, the outcome which I considered most likely was that the national curriculum, in its final form, would make very little difference to the diverging curricular paths of girls and boys. Since its initial inception, the national curriculum has become increasingly loosely defined and less stringent in its requirements. It is now clear that vocational courses such as secretarial studies will continue, that technology will mean very different things for girls and boys, and girls will be able to take a reduced science course which will not equip them for further study in the area. Ultimately, it seems that the government has not dared to undermine seriously the ideology of free choice which, as we have seen, has served as a useful legitimating device for differentiated educational outcomes. Further, the lack of commitment to equal opportunities has meant that the government has shirked from introducing a genuinely common curriculum and tackling sexism within the hidden curriculum. This study shows clearly the complexity of the cultures which currently bring about the divergent curricular paths of girls and boys. In order to change these cultures, teachers, parents and pupils must be convinced in terms of social justice as well as market forces that women and men are entitled to an equal share of responsibility both at work and at home, and an equal education to prepare them for their dual roles. To enable teachers to engage in such discussions, a comprehensive programme of in-service work on equal
opportunities would be essential. Parents and governors would also require the opportunity for on-going education in this area. For pupils, equality issues could be studied as cross-curricular themes as well as in personal and social education, which at the moment is in danger of being squeezed off the timetable completely. If such discussion does not take place, then it is very likely that parents, teachers and pupils will both deliberately and unconsciously subvert the idea of a common curriculum, so that divisions based on gender, race and class continue to exist in both the overt and the covert curricula. In response to this situation, I believe that feminists, rather than arguing against the idea of a common curriculum, should point out what needs to be done to make this a reality.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The preceding analysis is clearly critical of the system of subject option choice. To quote Kelly (1988): 'Whenever choice occurs, the disadvantaged use it to disadvantage themselves further' (p. 168). The national curriculum does not hold out much hope that it will bring about a significant change for the better by equalising educational outcomes. There appears to me to be very powerful socialist and feminist arguments for the existence of a common curriculum. Reynolds and Sullivan (1980) are highly critical of the emphasis in child-centred education of allowing pupils control over the content and context of their learning. They argue that it is obviously detrimental to base a pupil's curriculum on their sub-culture if that culture is distorted and limited by political and economic factors beyond their understanding or control. Such an education, they argue, is ultimately anti-intellectual and fascist. By way of contrast, they propose that the curriculum should retain 'the rationality and content, but not the values of contemporary bourgeois culture.' Ultimately, they argue, the values of socialism can only flourish in a society 'controlled and developed by the democracy of the universally, compulsorily and excellently schooled' (p. 191). I would support the view that a common curriculum, genuinely informed by equal opportunities principles, is likely to promote greater social justice not only for girls, but also for minority ethnic and working-class pupils. Although the idea of a common curriculum clearly enjoys
The national curriculum and gender divisions

widespread support among those who are committed to greater educational equality, its precise nature continues to be disputed. Lawton and Chitty (1987), outlining their recommendations for a national curriculum, draw on the idea of an entitlement curriculum outlined by HMI in the third Red Book (DES, 1983).

The conviction has grown that all pupils are entitled to a broad compulsory common curriculum up to the age of 16 which introduces them to a range of experiences, makes them aware of the kind of society in which they are going to live and gives them the skills necessary to live in it. Any curriculum which fails to provide this balance and is overweighted in any particular direction, whether vocational, technical or academic, is to be seriously questioned. Any measures which restrict the access of all pupils to a wide-ranging curriculum or which focus too narrowly on specific skills are in direct conflict with the entitlement curriculum envisaged here.

The entitlement curriculum, then, identifies particular areas of knowledge to which all pupils should have access as of right. In Curriculum 11-16 (DES, 1977) eight areas of experience are identified: the aesthetic and creative; the ethical; the linguistic; the mathematical; the physical; the scientific; the social and political; and the spiritual. Rigid adherence to traditional subject divisions is rejected and the emphasis is on 'the quality of the teaching process and the needs of individual children'.

Lawton and Chitty term such an approach 'the professional curriculum' and contrast it with the national curriculum which they see as essentially bureaucratic, being based on traditionally defined subjects in order to fulfil bureaucratic rather than educational purposes. The obsession with age-related benchmark testing is a clear reflection of this bureaucratic tendency.

This has all sorts of bureaucratic advantages in terms of presentation of statistics and making comparisons between teachers and schools. But age-related testing makes it extremely difficult to avoid normative procedures, norm-related criteria and judgements about how
a statistically ‘normal’ child should perform. Age-related, norm-referenced examinations tend to drive everyone (teachers, parents and governors) into thinking of a sizeable proportion of the age group as failures and neglecting to stretch the above-average. It is a recipe for mediocrity and insensitivity.

(Lawton and Chitty, 1987, p. 5)

Lawton and Chitty, then, drawing on the work of HMI, make a strong plea for an entitlement curriculum based on broadly defined areas of knowledge. The problem with this is that it is in many ways very similar to that which the schools in this study already claimed to operate and which produced such unequal outcomes.

Ultimately, it seems to me that to overcome these difficulties it is essential to start from the premise that all areas of the curriculum must be suitable for and taken by a representative cross-section of pupils. I would support the idea of an entitlement curriculum whose aim is to ensure that all pupils gain access to areas of knowledge which are deemed important within the culture. It would then be vital to monitor each area carefully to ensure that pupils within it were not divided by gender, class or race. For instance, if all pupils were ostensibly taking science but in reality girls were absent from physics and most working-class pupils were taking general science, then this should be recognised as a problem requiring investigation and action rather than an inevitable and natural state of affairs.

Some subjects would almost certainly require radical overhauling to ensure the equal representation of all groups. In the case of home economics, for example, it is very likely that a new designation would have to be found to dispel the notion implicit in the name that it is about preparing girls for a servicing role in the family. Its content would also have to be rethought, with a new emphasis on helping all pupils to develop self-sufficiency skills, fostering an understanding of food and society, food technology and production and so on. Other subjects such as history and geography, which have less clear-cut gender boundaries, would also have to examine their subject matter to ensure that it reflects an equal concern for girls’ and boys’ interests. Clearly, emphasising the requirement for equal uptake of subjects would have to be accompanied by a range of
Despite the heavy-handed bureaucracy and centralised control of the national curriculum, it is unlikely to succeed in terms of improving the situation of girls or in terms of raising standards generally, because it is not informed by a concern for the democratisation of all areas of knowledge. Pupils may perform better in the areas where they are to be tested, but that is not the same thing as raising educational standards in a wider sense. The answer does not lie in the former system of pretending that all pupils are able to operate as entirely free agents and take the consequences of their actions. What is needed as a starting point is a firm commitment to the principle of equal representation of all social groups in all areas of the curriculum. Local Education Authorities are currently encouraging schools to engage in a systematic process of setting goals and monitoring progress towards them in the interests of public accountability. It is vital that equal opportunities feature as a major goal of school improvement.

This book has attempted to shed light on the processes resulting in the production of gender divisions within the curriculum. Although clearly the cultures of pupils and their families are implicated in this process, it is also the case that schools and teachers are active agents. It follows from this that reform of the curriculum has the potential to bring about real change in the construction of masculinity and femininity. The present national curriculum is unlikely to fulfil the extravagant claims made on its behalf, but that does not mean that we should conclude that all curricular reform is doomed.
APPENDIX 1
THE CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH

THE RESEARCH TIMETABLE

The order in which the different parts of the research were conducted is as follows:

March 1983 - July 1983
Observation at Millbridge.

June 1983
Administration of Millbridge parents' questionnaires (240 distributed, 125 returned, 52 per cent response rate).

June 1983
Administration of Millbridge pupils' questionnaires (150 distributed, 119 returned, 79 per cent response rate).

May 1983 - June 1983
Interviews with Millbridge pupils (10 carried out).

May 1984 - July 1984
Interviews with Millbridge parents (15 sets of parents interviewed).

July 1983 - September 1984
Preliminary analysis of data.

September 1984 - July 1985
Observation at Greenhill.

January - July 1984
Interviews with Greenhill pupils (27 carried out).

May 1985
Questionnaires administered to Greenhill parents (200 distributed, 127 returned, response rate 64 per cent).

May 1985
Questionnaires administered to Greenhill pupils (175 distributed, 132 returned, response rate 75 per cent).
January 1986 - July 1986 Interviews with Greenhill parents
(16 sets of parents interviewed).

Overall, about 200 hours of observation at Millbridge and 400 at Greenhill were carried out. Details of which classes were selected for observation and who was interviewed are given at the start of the appropriate chapters.

DEFINITIONS OF CLASS AND ACHIEVEMENT USED IN THE TEXT

Class is a notoriously difficult term to define. There are not only debates between Marxists and Weberians, but also between those who adhere to a traditional definition of class based on father's occupation (for instance, Goldthorpe, 1983) and those who insist that mother's occupation must also be taken into account (Britten and Heath, 1983; Heath and Britten, 1984). In my study, class was defined on the basis of both the mother's and the father's occupation. Millbridge pupils were defined as working class or middle class on the basis of the information they gave on the questionnaires about their parents' work. For Greenhill pupils this information was derived from pupil admission forms and interviews. Class was assigned to a particular family according to the broad definitions used in the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations. Parents' occupations were grouped thus: (1) professional and managerial; (2) intermediate (semi-professional); (3a) white collar; (3b) skilled manual; (4) semi-skilled manual; (5) unskilled manual. Families were considered middle class if either the father's occupation was 1, 2 or 3a or if the mother's occupation was 1 or 2. The families of women in group 3a were not considered middle class because their pay and status is more comparable with that of manual workers. For some of the analysis, category 2 and 3a were merged, as were categories 4 and 5. Critics of the Registrar General's Classification of Occupations have argued that it is inadequately theorised, but it is difficult to find any definition of class that pays equal attention to the status of women and men, and so despite its inadequacies it seemed to provide a useful working definition.

Pupils' achievement in both schools was calculated by taking an average of their third-year examination grades awarded in
English and maths, where the highest achievement score was 1 and the lowest was 5. Pupils were then divided into four groups: high achievement (1.0-1.5); above-average achievement (2.0-2.5); below-average achievement (3.0-3.5); and lower achievement (4.0-5.0).

DETAILS OF DATA COLLECTION

Administration of pupils' questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to five third-year, mixed-ability English groups at Millbridge Upper School in June 1983, representing an approximate total of 150 pupils. This was about 70 per cent of the year group. I went into each class at the beginning of an English lesson and explained that the overall purpose of the study was to investigate what pupils thought of school and were hoping to do in the future. I emphasised that filling in the questionnaire was voluntary, but almost all of the pupils participated in the study. Three of the teachers allowed pupils to complete the questionnaires in class time and I remained in the classroom to deal with any problems that arose. In the other two classes, the pupils took the questionnaires away with them and were asked to bring them back the next day. Not surprisingly, the response rate amongst this group was slightly lower. Of 150 questionnaires issued at Millbridge, 119 were ultimately returned, representing a response rate of 79 per cent.

At Greenhill, pupil questionnaires were administered during May 1985 to six mixed-ability tutor groups. Most of the pupils managed to complete the questionnaire during the half-hour morning tutor group session, since they were shorter than the questionnaires used at Millbridge. Of the 175 questionnaires which were distributed (this represented approximately 45 per cent of the age group) 132 were returned, a response rate of 75 per cent. At both Millbridge and Greenhill, there were an equal number of girls and boys in the groups to whom the questionnaires were distributed.

Descriptive data from pupils' questionnaires

Of the 119 who replied to the Millbridge pupils' questionnaire, 54 (45 per cent) were boys and 65 (55 per cent) were girls. Of the 132 Greenhill pupils who completed the questionnaire, 68...
APPENDIX 1

Table A1 Distribution of boys, girls, working-class and middle-class pupils at Millbridge school in different achievement groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Higher achievement</th>
<th>Above average achievement</th>
<th>Below average achievement</th>
<th>Lower achievement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 (24)</td>
<td>33 (38)</td>
<td>40 (46)</td>
<td>17 (21)</td>
<td>118 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>10 (8.5)</td>
<td>13 (11.5)</td>
<td>22 (47.9)</td>
<td>6 (11.6)</td>
<td>41 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>10 (29.2)</td>
<td>20 (60.0)</td>
<td>14 (27.7)</td>
<td>6 (12.2)</td>
<td>40 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
<td>17 (52.8)</td>
<td>19 (54.0)</td>
<td>28 (82.4)</td>
<td>14 (37.9)</td>
<td>78 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>12 (29.3)</td>
<td>14 (34.1)</td>
<td>32 (42.4)</td>
<td>8 (11.6)</td>
<td>46 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses. (1) Using the Mann-Whitney U test, middle-class girls scored higher than middle-class boys (U = 118.5, Z = -2.4800, p < 0.01); middle-class girls scored higher than working-class girls (U = 310.0, Z = -2.3521, p < 0.01). (51.5 per cent) were boys and 64 (48.5 per cent) were girls. For Millbridge pupils, 75 (66 per cent) were working class and 41 (34 per cent) were middle class, which was about the same proportion as for the parents. For the Greenhill pupils whose class could be determined, 71 per cent of pupils were working class and 29 per cent were middle class. This suggests that of the pupils whose class could not be determined, a significant proportion were probably middle class.

Tables A1 and A2 show the distribution of boys, girls, working-class and middle-class pupils in these achievement groups at Millbridge and Greenhill respectively. The overall pattern was for middle-class pupils to have higher achievement ratings than working-class pupils and girls to have higher achievement ratings than boys. Although middle-class pupils' academic superiority is well known, it is still widely believed that girls under-achieve in school. However, DES statistics in England and Wales show clearly that over recent years, deficit models are no longer appropriate to describe girls' performance. Achievement levels at Millbridge and Greenhill bear out these general trends.

Administration of parents' questionnaire

At Millbridge, two questionnaires were sent out to each family via pupils, and parents were requested to complete and return
### THE CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH

#### Table A2: Distribution of boys, girls, working-class and middle-class pupils at Greenhill school in different achievement groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Higher achievement</th>
<th>Above average</th>
<th>Average achievement</th>
<th>Below average</th>
<th>Lower achievement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 (12)</td>
<td>18 (13.2)</td>
<td>27 (19.7)</td>
<td>20 (15.2)</td>
<td>20 (15.2)</td>
<td>132 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girls</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (7.8)</td>
<td>20 (28.7)</td>
<td>20 (28.7)</td>
<td>4 (6.3)</td>
<td>4 (6.3)</td>
<td>68 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working class</strong></td>
<td>2 (2.8)</td>
<td>20 (26.3)</td>
<td>21 (27.0)</td>
<td>20 (26.3)</td>
<td>20 (26.3)</td>
<td>60 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle class</strong></td>
<td>9 (23.3)</td>
<td>16 (43.3)</td>
<td>2 (7.4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27 (71.3)</td>
<td>39 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses. (2) Using the Mann-Whitney U test, middle-class girls scored higher than working-class girls (U = 97.5, Z = -3.8457, p < 0.000); middle-class boys scored higher than working-class boys (U = 45.0, Z = -8.7786, p < 0.0001) either one or both.

Questionnaires were sent out to 120 families, thus 240 were distributed in all. After several verbal reminders to the children, 125 questionnaires were finally returned, a response rate of 52 per cent. Some parents might have been deterred by the fact that they had been sent two questionnaires and felt there was not enough time for both parents to complete one. Also, the fact that pupils took the questionnaires home and returned them meant that some wastage was inevitable. Ninety-six of the questionnaires were from families where both parents completed the questionnaire and twenty-nine were from families where only one parent completed the questionnaire.

At Greenhill, parents’ questionnaires were given to pupils in four mixed-ability tutor groups at the same time as the pupils were completing their own in May 1985. The pupils were asked to take the questionnaires home to their parents and return them as soon as possible. Again, two questionnaires were sent home to each family and each parent was asked to complete one. Altogether 200 questionnaires were distributed and 127 ultimately returned after one written reminder. This represented a response rate of 64 per cent, rather larger than the Millbridge figure. Ninety were from families where both
parents completed the questionnaire and thirty-seven were from families where only one parent completed the questionnaire. An advantage of asking both mother and father to complete a questionnaire was that a reasonable balance of women and men in the sample was obtained (although still more women than men returned questionnaires). A disadvantage was that some families returned two questionnaires and others only one, so that this may have biased the sample.

DESCRIPTIVE DATA FROM PARENTS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires were coded and analysed using SPSS. At Millbridge, 51 (42 per cent) of the questionnaires were completed by parents of boys in the third year and 72 (59 per cent) by parents of girls in the third year. This discrepancy might have been because girls identified with the project more closely and put more pressure on their parents to complete the questionnaire. Also, parents of girls may have felt more positive towards the aims of the research. About 44 per cent of respondents were fathers and about 56 per cent were mothers. At Greenhill, 66 questionnaires (52 per cent) were completed by parents of boys and 41 (48 per cent) by parents of girls. Of Greenhill respondents, 36 per cent were women and 64 per cent were men, the same proportion as at Millbridge. Of the Millbridge parents, 67 (52 per cent) were working class and 43 (48 per cent) were middle class and of the Greenhill parents, 67 (53 per cent) were working class, and 39 (37.8 per cent) were middle class. Data on parents’ work were obtained from the Millbridge parents’ questionnaires, but for Greenhill parents these data had to be extracted from pupil admission forms and interviews and are therefore less reliable. Where it was not possible to determine class with a reasonable degree of certainty, a missing value was assigned.

A further variable that was investigated was the school’s definition of the child’s achievement. As stated earlier, pupils’ report grades for maths and English were averaged to give them an overall score, and these were then divided into four equal groups. Tables A.3 and A.4 show distribution of Millbridge and Greenhill pupils respectively in different achievement groups. Of Millbridge parents who responded, only 240
The Conduct of the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A3: Achievement levels of Millbridge parents’ children (for girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A4: Achievement levels of Greenhill parents’ children (for girls, boys, working-class and middle-class pupils)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Whole numbers are shown first, followed by percentages in parentheses

Third of the respondents had children of below-average achievement and this might have been because these children and their parents were less keen to participate in the research. At both schools, middle-class parents tended to have higher-achieving children, although on the Mann-Whitney U test this was only statistically significant at Greenhill. Daughters of parents at both Millbridge and Greenhill had higher achievement ratings than sons, although this was only statistically significant at Millbridge.
Pupils' interviews

Interviews with Millbridge and Greenhill pupils were semi-structured. Pupils were asked why they were choosing certain subjects and dropping others; why they thought girls and boys often took different subjects; what it would be like to be a girl or a boy in a non-traditional subject area; future educational and work plans; and whether women and men experienced equal treatment at work. The conversation often moved on to a discussion of male and female teachers, and ways in which girls and boys responded in these classes. Pupils were also asked about their friendship groups and the ways they thought girls and boys related to each other inside and outside the classroom. I did not ask directly about relationships with parents because I felt that this might have been too intrusive, but many girls spoke about their relationship with their mothers and their feelings about how their own future might differ.

I interviewed sixty-three pupils, ten at Millbridge and fifty-three at Greenhill. At Millbridge, all pupils were interviewed individually, and at Greenhill interviews were carried out either with individual pupils or with groups of two or three. Interviews with girls tended to be lengthier and to reveal more about personal experience than those with boys.

Pupil observation

At Millbridge, I spent a term and a half, from March to July 1983, observing a third-year, mixed-ability group. They were split up for maths, French and design technology, and I would follow a different pupil each week to their classes in these subjects. At Greenhill, the period of observation was longer and more intensive. I spent at least three days a week in the school for the academic year 1984-1985. At this school, the third year was divided into five main groups, which were all supposedly mixed ability. In reality, there were more higher-achieving and middle-class pupils in Main Group 1, since it contained all pupils doing two languages. Half the period of observation was spent with a Main Group 1 class and half with a Main Group 5 class.
The interview schedules used with Millbridge and Greenhill parents were semi-structured, consisting of questions concerned with parents' accounts of their children's choice of subjects, their views of the importance of design subjects for girls and boys, their explanation of male and female pupils' tendency to be concentrated in different areas of the curriculum, and their opinion of whether the school should intervene to encourage less traditional option choices. Other questions concerned parents' expectations of their child's future educational and occupational paths, their account of their child's domestic and leisure activities and their assessment of how their child was coping with school and responding to teenage culture. A series of questions was included to explore parents' attitudes to the position of women in the labour market and the relationship between motherhood and work. Finally, parents were asked how they felt their child's experience of education differed from their own. A basic list of questions was used in each case, but the wording of questions was not strictly adhered to, and supplementary questions were often used to elicit more detailed information. If I found the conversation moving on to another topic which was interesting and relevant, I made no attempt to return instantly to the interview schedule. In this way, I hoped to obtain enough common ground in the material covered in different interviews to enable comparisons to be made, whilst at the same time allowing those being interviewed to present their own explanations and interpretations of their experiences.

Fifteen sets of parents from Millbridge Upper School were interviewed during the summer of 1984 and sixteen sets of parents from Greenhill Upper School between January and July 1986. Approximately equal numbers of these were working class and middle class. Fourteen of the families lived in either Millbridge, Greenhill or Seatown and seventeen came from the villages and countryside surrounding the small towns, so the balance of town and rural families was about equal. Twenty of the families had daughters in the third year of the Upper School and eleven had sons. The reason for this imbalance was that the major focus of the study was on the creation of girls' educational and occupational disadvantages, and therefore 16th it was...
important to look at girls' families in particular depth. Parents of boys were included in the study because this was essential for the purposes of comparison. I generally chose parents whose children I had observed in class and whom I had interviewed, so that I could compare children's and parents' accounts. Parents were generally contacted by telephone and only one, a policeman's wife, declined to be interviewed. I made it clear that I was quite happy to talk to either the mother or father alone or else both parents together. Ultimately, thirteen of the interviews were with mothers only, fifteen were with both parents and only three were with fathers only.

Teachers' interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 19 out of a total of 50 teachers on the staff of Millbridge Upper School in the summer of 1983, ten of whom were men and nine of whom were women. Interviews were carried out with 38 Greenhill teachers out of a total of 100 during the summer of 1985. Twenty-three of these were men and fourteen were women. At both schools, I tried to interview teachers whose classes I had observed, in order to triangulate their accounts of what was happening in their classrooms against pupils' accounts and my own observations. Other teachers whose lessons I had not observed were also interviewed in order to ensure a representative sample of different age groups, subjects taught and positions within the school hierarchy.

The interviews consisted of a series of questions about the third- and fourth-year curriculum, the option choice system, the performance and attitudes of girls and boys in particular subjects and their responses to male and female teachers. At the end of the interview, teachers were asked about their views of whether women and men had equal chances of promotion in teaching. At Greenhill, this was particularly apposite, since an HMI report on the school published in 1984 had criticised the fact that a relatively small proportion of women teachers were in positions of responsibility in the school and had recommended that the school should redress the balance.
APPENDIX 2
OPTION CHOICE SCHEMES
AT THE TWO SCHOOLS

MILLBRIDGE UPPER SCHOOL FOURTH-YEAR
COURSES 1983-4

Notes for guidance to students

These notes give an outline of the courses to be offered in the fourth year but are all dependent on adequate staffing being available and a sufficient number of students choosing the course to make it viable. Please read them, ask for help if there is anything you do not understand, and think about them carefully. At the beginning of the summer term you will discuss your ideas with staff and your parents, and suggest six, seven or eight courses you would like to do in addition to English, mathematics, physical education, religious education and careers.

English - Everyone will take the basic English course
Mathematics - Everyone will take a basic mathematics course

Options

Modern languages - If you are making good progress with a language you should continue to study it
1 French
2 German

Sciences - You should choose at least one
3 Physics
4 Chemistry
5 Biology
6 (General) Science

Humanities - You should choose at least one

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APPENDIX 2

7 History
8 Geography
9 Religious and social studies
Design and creative arts - You should choose at least one
10 Technical drawing
11 Woodwork
12 Metalwork
13 Combined technical courses
14 Music
15 Art
16 Pottery
17 Home economics
18 Needlework
Additional courses
19 Use of English
20 Computer studies
21 Electronics
22 Rural studies
23 Commerce
24 Community service
25 Typewriting
26 Parentcraft
**TUTOR GROUP**

**INTERMEDIATE YEAR - PROVISIONAL OPTIONS SCHEME 1985-86. GREENHILL UPPER SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin O</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Technical studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a) One subject to be ticked in each column.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Column 1 = non exam, except where indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.E.</td>
<td>Pre-Catering</td>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>Pre-Catering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2 periods).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Computer graphic design</td>
<td>Textile Technology</td>
<td>Textile Technology</td>
<td>Computer graphic design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Columns 2-6 = 'O' Level/C.S.E. subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3 periods).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | | | | | | | (d) 'O' Level R.E. available in core.
| | | | | | | | (e) Latin & Music groups miss one period of P.E. |
| | | | | | | | (f) Arrows indicate subjects that spread over more than one option. |
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WITHIN SCHOOL WALLS
The Role of Discipline, Sexuality and the Curriculum

ANNMARIE WOLPE

Volume 75
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Acknowledgments

This book is the outcome of collaborative work between the staff and pupils of Berkeley School, without whose help and cooperation nothing would have been achieved.

The welter of material was patiently and efficiently transcribed by Daphne Couch and Shirley Webbe who, over the years, were enthusiastic, helpful and very encouraging. They were directly responsible for my resumption of the project at a period when both time and energy were at a low ebb.

The Nuffield Foundation awarded me a grant enabling me to carry out the last set of interviews and to begin the final assessment.

I am grateful to Harold Wedge, Elizabeth Wilson, Pippa Howarth and Mike Cole for critical comments on the book and to a number of people who have commented on sections of the work, in particular Tanja and Nish Audey.

Finally, there is my family who have patiently nurtured me through the long period that this book has taken to reach completion.
Introduction

This book is the culmination of work spread over more than a decade. The empirical material is derived from data obtained at a comprehensive school over two periods: initial work involved two years' "participant observation" in the school, followed by interviews of the original cohort two years later, and then with some of them as young adults after they had left school four years on. It is, therefore, a longitudinal study. The theoretical perspective governing the analysis of the data represents my own development and those which have occurred both in the sociology of education and in feminist literature. I have had the benefit of these developments in the course of formulating and organizing the data in the form in which it is presented.

The introduction is divided into four sections. The first presents the background to the study; the second is a brief outline of the methods employed in the investigation; the third summarises different theories relevant to such a study (indicating both their utilities and their limitations), and the fourth is a brief statement on the order of the book.

Background to study

Arising from an earlier study on the recruitment and career patterns of women in professional engineering, I became concerned with the processes through which female gender roles and gender identity are constructed, defined and reinforced within a secondary school setting. The effect of these differences is apparent in the examination results of boys and girls. It seemed quite clear at the time that girls' school performance was lower than boys' if certain
Within school walls, examination results - particularly those relating to academic subjects - were compared.

In accordance with academic convention, I developed a working hypothesis which was as follows:

That the specific gender identities with which pupils enter the secondary school tend to be clarified and reinforced by the following factors: a school organizational structure which differentiated between pupils on the basis of gender; the transmission to pupils by teachers through the curriculum specifically and generally via the cognitive and value systems which are confirmatory of differential gender identities particularly in so far as these are related to pupils' future occupational roles which are themselves conceived of in gender terms; the peer-group relationships and culture.

Like so many academic hypotheses it is difficult to read and comprehend. What I was arguing and planning to do was as follows.

The hypothesis began from the presupposition that pupils enter schools with already formed gender identities and all that that implies, but that the school system reinforces these identities through a number of different processes. In order to understand these the most productive method would be studying everyday life at the school. The processes needed to be identified and these included a number of formal structural constraints including school uniform, school assembly, the way in which registers are kept, playground facilities, staff hierarchies and so on, all of which automatically contribute to the differentiation between boys and girls and hence to the reification of gender stereotypes. Given this basic structure it was thought at the time that the curriculum and the way in which it is taught would be an important, if not crucial, aspect of the process of differentiation. It was anticipated that obvious differentiation on a gender basis would occur in some subject specialities such as home economics. Other distinctions would have to be identified in what is now known as the hidden curriculum of values and ideas which teachers themselves hold about gender differences and which are transmitted largely undetected in the classroom. A direct relationship was taken as given between the school experience and pupils' future roles in both the workforce and the family. In conventional terms, women's role (irrespective of whether they work or not) is defined in terms of family duties, and men's in terms of the workforce.
Introduction

acknowledged the fact that pupils were part of a peer group culture which also contributed to the reinforcing of gender roles.

After preliminary groundwork I was lucky enough to conduct the study in a new comprehensive school, which I shall call Berkeley, whose first intake, of 200 pupils, was in 1972. I was able to monitor the developments very closely; I was attached to one particular class and followed it through the school day, accompanying members on school outings, interviewing staff, parents and pupils alike. I was thoroughly immersed in the school and its activities.

The school is in Greater London and has all the problems associated with metropolitan areas. It is located in a predominantly working-class area with a large, mixed group including all ethnic minorities.

In its first year of operation the school occupied the top floor of an old building which also housed pupils who had some form of disability. This created some difficulties to begin with, but territorial boundaries were easily recognized and observed. By the second year the school had taken over the whole of the premises. These measures were purely temporary and plans for the building of a new architect designed school according to the planners’ priorities were going ahead. In its third year the school occupied its new purpose-built premises.

In 1974 I got a full-time teaching post and was unable to complete the study. However, I did return to the school in the hot summer of 1976 to interview the same pupils who were then completing their fourth year of school. I had not had any contact with the school during this interim period. I had, fortunately, managed to interview most of the pupils when I received a letter from the headmaster baring me from continuing with the interviews. This came quite unexpectedly and the reasons given were perhaps more complex than those expressed in the letter. The letter reads as follows:

Dear AnnMarie,

Having given my approval to the continuation of your research in school I regret having to write this letter. However, I have become increasingly concerned at the reaction of members of staff who have been approached about interviews either for themselves or children in their care at a time of increasing pressure as we approach the end of term.
Within school walls

I regret, therefore, that I have to withdraw the facility I offered you and I would only be prepared to reconsider a continuation of your research after some close and detailed study of proposals you may have for next term. No doubt you will let me have these detailed notes so that I can see what time factor is involved for both pupils and staff alike. I should add that some of our antipathy towards the resumption of your research has been the erratic nature of this work hitherto which I understand is through no fault of your own but is none-the-less very unsettling in its effects upon the school. With the increasing pressures of work at this stage of the term I feel unable to devote any more of my time to consideration of this issue and I reluctantly must therefore cancel my interview with you on Thursday 8th July.

I look forward to hearing from you.

I replied expressing my regret at his decision and saying that spreading out interviews was methodologically unsound. I did not attempt to return to the school as I did not have the time to do so. Apart from anything else, I had conducted almost all the interviews with the pupils that I required.

Following an award of a Nuffield Fellowship I was able to resume work on the project once again in 1980. At this stage I wanted to interview the same cohort who were now young adults in order to establish what they were doing, how they had effected the transition from school to work, study or home, and what their reflections were on their school careers.

I again tried to establish contact with the school, partly out of courtesy and partly to obtain detailed school records. By this time there was a new headteacher to whom I wrote. He did not respond by letter and following a phone call I made to him he was seeing the previous headteacher and would discuss this with him. Within a few days I was told that he would not see me at all. He refused to have anything to do with me and gave me no reason at all for his refusal.

It is difficult to establish why I had given offence but this may lie in some of the written material I published in 1976 which included some of the comments made by the headteacher in regard to the issue of sexuality amongst his pupils.
Introduction

Method

Prior to selecting and beginning work in a secondary school I conducted a number of interviews with educationalists in a range of fields and then found a comprehensive, co-educational secondary school in which I could conduct a 'participant observation' study. The phrase is somewhat of a misnomer: I did not anticipate participating in terms of actual teaching, although it was agreed that I would do so should the occasion arise (which never did occur). However, observation was to be the order of the day and this would be conducted in depth, over at least a two-year period. Observation techniques overcome the limitations of an interview schedule, which are many (Hindess, 1973), and the advantages of this research technique were spelled out in the now famous Willis study (1977). I do not want to repeat the same discussion here. Suffice it to say that, at the time the initial work was conducted, there was little available data on classroom interaction as it related to gender differences. What work had been done had largely focused on boys. Nor was there a great deal of information on how the curriculum differentiated between boys and girls, both in terms of the content of the subject matter and the way in which teachers taught. I anticipated at the time that the observations would be rich in providing evidence of a differentiation process in the classroom.

However, there are difficulties of combining subjective observations with a structural analysis, and I found this a major task. This book is an attempt to build a bridge between these two. The shift from the macro level of structure to the micro level of interpersonal relationships is not an easy one to maintain, nor is the interrelationship between these two levels simple to establish.

In terms of research conditions I was extremely fortunate. The head gave me carte blanche. As far as the top echelons of the school hierarchy were concerned, I was able to discuss many aspects of the school and its development with the head, I was allowed to sit in on the planning sessions he held with his deputy headmaster, I attended all staff meetings, and was given information by the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The staff were asked to cooperate with me and they seemed to accept my presence there without any noticeable difficulty and I could move freely around the school. The presence of a resident research worker added to the prestige of the whole development.
Within school walls

I recorded all meetings and interviews on tape and in addition kept daily notes of observations which were also transcribed. By the end of two years I had a huge volume of material. This was supplemented by the subsequent interviews.

The nature of my research project was known to the headmaster but not to the staff. I believed that if they knew that I was primarily interested in gender differentiation it would have had an effect on the way in which they answered questions or presented material to me. As far as they were concerned I was monitoring the development of the school and even when one or two of the teachers would turn to me and say 'What are you doing?' they never stopped long enough to listen to my answer.

It was an exciting time in the school because the newly appointed teachers were extremely enthusiastic about the school and its prospects. In that first year many of the younger teachers devoted a great deal of time outside their normal duties to consolidating their work in regard to team teaching - Humanities and English were to be interdisciplinary - in setting up activities out of school hours, and in conducting home visits. They worked long hours beyond the call of duty and their enthusiasm was contagious - the pupils and many of their parents played an active part in the school and its development.

During the second year certain changes began to occur which were largely tied up with the head's concern that some of his members of staff conflicted too publicly with him and constituted a threat to his authority. A number of these teachers left the school at the end of the second year for a variety of reasons, one being the head's ability to block their promotion and keep them in subordinate positions. Originally the school had been designated as a community school. This constituted one of the areas of concern for the head and so in the second year that designation was dropped.

Aims and theoretical influences

This book sets out to examine the processes in school which contribute to the firm fixing of female gender identities at the micro level of the classroom. Although the analysis focuses on classroom interaction, account will be taken of structural conditions, specifically class and ideologies.

In the course of conducting the analysis at the micro level, several theoretical positions are critically appraised, particularly some of
Introduction

The current feminist accounts of girls' overall level of underachievement. There is no one single feminist theory on education. There are a number of different strands which will be discussed in the relevant sections throughout the book. However, just as there has been a tendency, as Stubbs (1987) points out, of a sectarianism in the sociology of the classroom between neo-Marxists, symbolic interactionists and functionalists, many feminist accounts have failed to exploit some of the important insights made by other analyses, including those concerned with the structures of class and ideology. This book is concerned to re-insert multi-dimensional factors into feminist accounts of girls' education.

The important contributions on how class and ideological structures intersect in the education system were derived largely from the work of French Marxist writers, Althusser (1971) and Poulantzas (1975). Their major concern was primarily with the reproduction of capitalist relations of production, and Althusser's essay on ideology and ideological state apparatus was to have a great impact. Within this overall framework analyses were made by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) who spoke of 'cultural capital' which is transmitted by and stored in the schools. 'Cultural capital' acted as a 'filtering device in the reproduction of a hierarchical society.'

These structural analyses added a dimension to the new sociology of education which had dominated sociology during the late 1960s. This latter work drew on the sociology of knowledge as well as contributions made by ethnomethodologists. What was argued was that 'Knowledge (transmitted) to education is neither absolute, nor arbitrary, but is "available sets of meaning", which in any context do not merely "emerge", but are collectively "given".' (M. Young, 1971, p. 21). To comprehend fully the interaction process 'the curricula, pedagogic and assessment categories held by school personnel' were regarded by Young and others as crucial to understanding the schooling process, and studies on classroom interaction became all-important (Hargreaves, 1967, Hargreaves et al., 1975, Ball, 1981).

But through the influence of Marxist analyses sociologists of education turned their attention fully to the reproduction of social relations of production with the schools being seen as a vital part of this process. Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, conceived of education as the means of the reproduction of the class structure and as the mechanism for equipping new recruits to the workforce.
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with the appropriate values and ideas (ideologies) about their role in the labour force. They introduced the concept of the 'correspondence' principle which was that 'the organization of education - in particular the correspondence between school structure and job structure' (p. 13) occurred at the level of social relations. They said:

The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the workplace, but develops the types of personal demeanor modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relations of education . . . replicate the hierarchical division of labor. (p. 13)

This was achieved through the working of the hidden curriculum and ideological structures.

Although Bowles and Gintis recognized inequalities in terms of gender and race and 'adult male supremacy in the household', gender differences did not comprise an important aspect of their study. Their main concern was to demonstrate the role of economics and they said that: 'the roots of unequal incomes and inequality of opportunity alike lie not in human nature, not in technology, not in the educational system itself, but in the dynamics of economic life' (p. 89). This economic reductionist analysis presents the educational system as functional for the capitalist economy.

But there was a growing dissatisfaction with the radical analysis expressed in reproduction theories based on the economy, and its failure to deal with the individual actor.

Willis (1977) changed all this. Concentrating on youth and shop floor culture he described how working-class lads rejected formal education. His analysis drew on the theoretical developments from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), Birmingham University. The studies emanating from the Centre concentrated on forms of cultural reproduction and Willis was able to demonstrate how working-class 'lads' colluded in their own continued subordination in the workplace as a direct outcome of their adherence to their youth sub-culture. They rejected education; they were not concerned with escaping from the working-class ghetto. Willis emphasized the role of cultural formations which generated the resistance of working-class lads to the dominant culture while still
at school. He argued, unlike Bowles and Gintis, that working-class youth reproduced their own inequality. Where the "correspondence" principle had failed to provide an adequate explanation for the phenomenon of working-class rejection of educational opportunities, in spite of the expansion of educational facilities, the notion of cultural reproduction seemed to present an answer. Willis' important contribution heralded the concern with the 'importance of human agency and the notion of resistance'. As Gordon (1984) says: 'Willis' analysis explicitly sets out to challenge the mechanistic notions of parental reproductions which have dominated the structuralist position' (p. 5). The concept of resistance has proved a popular analytical tool emphasizing the role of cultural reproduction. Willis' influence has been extensive, even though critically received by some [the most recent being an accusation of romanticism by Walker (1986)].

Aronowitz and Giroux (1986) have considered some of the problems associated with the concept of resistance and argued, correctly, that resistance theorists face two tasks:

First, they must structure their own assumptions to develop a more dialectical model of schooling and society; and secondly, they must reconstruct the major theories of reproduction in order to abstract from them their most radical and emancipatory insights (p. 72).

These authors have highlighted the tendency of resistance theorists to submerge or overlook the insights gained through reproduction theories.

But all this work has been almost exclusively male-oriented. The Centre's main focus of interest was the spectacular male youth sub-cultural groups. Analyses were not made of girls' groups as McRobbie and Garber pointed out (1975). As for resistance theories, there has been only limited analyses made of gender differences (Anyon, 1983).

Just as girls were invisible from youth sub-cultural studies so were they from all the studies on education. In the late 1960s, we began to address this serious omission through, inter alia, a critique of theories of education, which, whatever their approach, tended to treat the school population as homogeneous in terms of gender, ignoring the specificity of girls' position. It was clear that these approaches could not account for the differences in educational
Within school walls experiences of boys and girls and so several of us turned to examine classroom interaction. It was assumed that such an account could only be made through an analysis at the micro level, that is at the level of individuals, and this, in turn, led to a focus on classroom interaction.

Amongst many feminist writers there was a general dissatisfaction with Marxist analyses which were seen to ignore totally the specificity of women's condition. Some writers have dismissed all Marxist analyses on the grounds that the determinant role accorded to the economy results in its inability to account for women's subordination. Thus:

All varieties of Marxism, whatever their internal differences, see the oppression of women as ultimately following from our relationship to the economic system: they see our oppression as following from our connection (or lack of it) with production. Thus, our subordination to men is not theorized in terms of the benefits which accrue to them, but in terms of the benefits of capitalism. (Mahony, 1985, p. 66)

These benefits reflect the patriarchal nature of our society, according to Mahony. She, as with many other feminist writers, draws on the notion of patriarchy. But patriarchal relations, according to her analysis, must override all other forms of relationships. For example, although MacDonald (1981) acknowledges patriarchy her work is dismissed by Mahony because she 'sees patriarchal relations as being maintained in the interests of the sexual division of labour which benefits capitalism' (p. 66). The major factor, according to Mahony, is the universal power that men are said to exert over women. Macdonald, on the other hand, concentrates on women's sexuality within heterosexual relations.

Patriarchy and patriarchal relations have been variously described as Segal (1987) has pointed out, but common to all the accounts is the control over women's sexuality:

'Patriarchy' has been defined in a variety of ways within different feminist frameworks and discourses: as a social system of male domination, as the power of the father in the family, as the universal principle and symbol of male domination, or as men's power to exchange women to form kinship groups. But central to all these definitions of...
patriarchy was men's power over women's sexuality and fertility. (p. 49)

Some have represented the ultimate manifestation of male power as their control over women's sexuality. Whatever the case may be, all accounts establish male power as a universal principle whereby failing to differentiate between the various forms of power. There are no social formations involving gender differences which are not attributed to patriarchy. According to this formulation, the source of male power must be derived from an essential quality: by virtue of men being men, this power can only be biologically determined. Thus the notion of power in the context of male domination over women is a form of biological essentialism and as such can never be altered. Furthermore given that its source resides in maleness, its existence is not subjected to questioning. Its existence is inevitable.

Some male writers have also begun to use the terms patriarchy and patriarchal relations when talking about gender differences. Willis, for example, who was not concerned with working-class girls, dealt with gender matters through an assertion of prevailing patriarchal relations. Introducing and using the concept of patriarchy appeared to make it unnecessary to explore gender differences more fully. It is as though the act of acknowledging unequal power relations between men and women is sufficient. So the general form of patriarchy is used to explain differentiated forms of male power which occur in relation to various social conditions. Such an account is quite inadequate. The differentiated forms of male power can only be accounted for by analyses which take into consideration the specific conditions which give rise to these situations.

Take, as an example, differentiations which exist in relation to class. Men from the middle class may well have power over women in both the middle and the working class but the nature of this power would differ according to the relationship of the men to the particular group of women. It may be determined through the labour market, or it may be determined in the home. Whichever form the differentiation takes, it is the form of power that needs to be defined and then discussed in relation to the specific conditions which give rise to the form of domination. Male power may then be identified as taking different forms reflecting specific social formations and periods. This formulation respects the notion that all
Within school walls women are victims of an indiscriminate form of male power. Indeed, women are not always powerless. Middle-class women may well exert power over black, working-class men. In spite of the feminization of poverty, the rise in the number of families headed by women may be seen as an indicator of women assuming power within families.

The question which now needs to be addressed is how the concept of patriarchy has been applied in the analyses of girls' education. There have been complex theoretical accounts by Deem (1978) and MacDonald (1981) which have combined the notion of patriarchy with accounts of economic and family structures. But over the past few years there has been a growing literature which confines itself to an analysis which presupposes an overall male dominance through patriarchy. This work has been concerned to identify where this occurs and what effect it has. Three main areas have been identified: classroom behaviour, sexual oppression within the school, and the curriculum.

The studies of classroom behaviour have been concerned to demonstrate that boys behave in a dominant way detrimental to girls' academic progress and development of self-esteem. The unintended consequence of this work has been to establish a stereotypical profile of boys' behaviour and one of how girls are said to respond. As for sexual oppression, the feminist literature has focused on how girls have experienced boys' behaviour as sexually oppressive, with the girls portrayed as victims of boys' aggression. This focus has led to a narrow view of sexuality within the school. Finally, in regard to the curriculum there have been two distinct areas of interest. The first is within the context of how the curriculum is male dominated as seen in 'male knowledge', 'male language', 'male forms of assessment' and so on. The second has identified specific areas within the curriculum which are necessary prerequisites for access into certain occupations, particularly in science and technology. These areas of the curriculum are heavily male dominated and the work has been concerned not only to identify these but also to seek means of ensuring that more girls study such subjects.

A methodological offshoot of the feminist work has been the extensive use of experiential accounts by girls. In an attempt to counter what has been seen as the inhuman face of Marxist analysis which has ignored the experience of the individual subject, this mode of analysis has gained a great degree of credibility. These
subjective accounts of girls' and women's experiences are similar in analytical terms to the phenomenological and other subjective studies referred to above. All such accounts focus on the meanings given to the experiences by the significant actors. But this convergence is not acknowledged by the feminist writers who argue that their methodology is unique and has been developed out of women's experiences (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Furthermore, because the accounts are given by girls these are seen to reflect reality on the basis that it is only girls and women who can fully understand the nature of their oppression.

These studies have resulted in the development of strategies and campaigns to combat the differential practices in schooling which are seen to disadvantage girls. Some have been directed towards raising the level of consciousness of both teachers and pupils about classroom interaction which denigrates girls and affects their work. The curriculum has also been critically examined with regard to its content and the method of teaching in order to break down the existing - albeit invisible - barriers which occur in particular subject areas which are almost totally male dominated. Finally there is a campaign for a return to single-sex schools.

There has been a positive outcome of this work. At the most general level it has contributed significantly to making girls and women visible in the educational scenario to the extent that it is now commonplace, as mentioned previously, for many people to recognize the need to take account of gender differences. At a more specific level it has contributed to the formulation of a number of LEA programmes including some by such huge authorities as ILEA to combat sexism in schools, including the appointment of officers specifically charged with these tasks. At the level of classroom interaction it has had an electrifying effect on many teachers who have been made aware of the way in which the hidden curriculum operates and the part they as teachers play in perpetuating inequalities in the classroom. Such a level of consciousness can only be welcomed.

While the outcome of all these strategies is extremely important in alerting teachers and pupils to the danger of discriminatory practices, they cannot in themselves alter the final forms of division of labour either in the home or in the workplace. The way in which the demand for female labour is generated, and the way female labour is treated, is not simply the outcome of patriarchal practices. It changes according to different social circumstances and over different historical periods as Davidoff and Hall (1987) have so
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authoritatively demonstrated in their extensive historical study of middle-class men and women in rural and urban English society.

While accepting the importance of gender positioning, the specificity of girls' education cannot be understood outside of the set of social formations in which they exist. These include structures external and internal to the school.

To begin with external factors, the girls' class position reflecting their family background needs to be established. Associated with their class position is the nature of the school they attend. Headteachers may experience relative autonomy in relation to the day to day running of their schools and this is likely to increase with the proposed control they may have over resources, but they are bound by a range of external constraints which in turn determine certain characteristics of the school.

Apart from these external forces there are the structures within the school which create the environment in which learning occurs. These are the disciplinary measures which physically constrain pupils within the confines of the school building. The control over pupils is extended through the teaching of the moral code which sets the parameters of acceptable forms of behaviour, including that relating to sexuality. Finally there is the structure of knowledge and the control which that exerts over pupils.

These three systems of control exist and operate for all pupils, irrespective of gender or any other differences. In order, therefore, to understand what happens to individual groups within the education system, these structural constraints need to be taken into account. The problem then becomes one of understanding the structural analysis with an account of the interaction processes of the individual subject. These individual actions and reactions are, in turn, not viewed as unique to the subject but as strongly influenced by external forces of diverse nature. Hence the understanding of girls' education can be successfully undertaken when all these factors are taken into account, and not through comparison with boys' achievement and as an effect of boys' behaviour at school.

It is hoped that this book challenges the one-sidedness of so many studies that have appeared and offers a broadly based framework in which the daily working of a secondary school may be viewed. In the face of the continued increase made into educational provision in this country it is necessary to conserve and improve the existing facilities. To do so the restrictions imposed by both class and gender differentiation need to be countered. If this book
can contribute in any way, however small, to this I will consider
the difficulties encompassed in developing the theoretical frame-
work to have been vindicated.

The order of presentation
The book is divided into three main sections. The first is Discipline
and Control, the second is Sexuality and the third is the Curriculum.
The views of both teachers and pupils are given throughout and
discussed in terms of the particular sections.
The analysis begins with what appears to be the very heart of
school organization: discipline. Through disciplinary procedures,
the distinctive character of the secondary education as a form of
rigid social control is established and this affects girls and boys
alike. It is necessary to establish what these controls are before
one can distinguish how gender differentiation occurs. Gender
differentiation will be discussed not only through the administration
of discipline but also in relation to classroom interaction and
behaviour.
Sexuality is inexorably interwoven with gender identity and,
consequently, is likely to play an important part in adolescents’
lives. Aspects of sexuality permeate many different facets of
school life although they may not be recognized or acknowledged
as such. Officially sexuality is subsumed under the heading of
moral order and taught in parts of the curriculum. In addition the
manifestation of sexuality within the everyday life of the class-
room will be identified and discussed.
The curriculum not only represents dominant values and
ideologies in our society, but also what constitutes legitimate
knowledge. It is in regard to the curriculum, both overt and hidden,
that differentiation occurs both as it affects class and gender
relations. What is available, to whom and how it is taught, are
obvious elements in the process of differentiation within sections of
our school population and has direct repercussions on pupils’ future
life chances.
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